In The Nick

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Matt Bishop Captures 8th National Title

By Judy Myrden

SMUfit squash player **Matt Bishop** won the Men's 45+ Canadian Senior National Championship title in **Vancouver, B.C.**, last month for the third time adding another national title.

Upcoming Events

Jul 25: Squash Canada AGM



Matt Bishop, center, along with his daughter, Lilly Bishop, and Greg Myers played in the Canadian National Squash Championships in Vancouver last month. (Photo by Melissa Shakespeare.)

This is the 48-year-old's eighth national squash title since 2008, winning his first Men's 30+ championship.

"Relieved is the feeling," Bishop told **In The Nick** in a text message shortly after winning the match. "It's been a challenging stretch of squash and busy amount of travel over the last month."

Bishop won the most recent title - only dropping one game in the semi-finals - in the three matches at the **Arbutus Club** from April 28-May 2.

He said he didn't do anything different in the final match.

"I have a formula that works so sometimes the hardest part is remaining consistent to trust the process," he said.

He described playing squash is an "individual selfish pursuit", so to help manage his prematch nerves he donned a t-shirt with the name "SOUCH" on the back, referring to his very good friend and squash player **Ray Souchereau**, who died of pancreatic cancer in 2018.

Bishop said he thought "he wanted to keep him close. Limits, like fear, are often just an illusion."

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This advice for playing other than for yourself, comes from his former squash coach **Neil Harvey**. When looking for an edge his advice was to put the weight of your teammates, friends, country, family, on your shoulders, said Bishop.

“This has been the difference maker mentally,” said Bishop.

He was accompanied on the trip to Vancouver by his wife, **Melissa Shakespeare**, who two weeks prior completed the Boston Marathon, and daughter, **Lilly**.

“This year I was so grateful Melissa and Lilly were there. Melissa was the difference maker in between games,” he said.

He cited the semi-final match when he lost the third game and was getting tired.

“She really provided the proper tactics… to secure the 4th game.”

Besides Bishop, **Greg Myers**, of the **Valley**, also played in the Men’s 45+, winning one match and losing two other matches.

Bishop’s daughter, Lilly, played in the tournament in the Women’s B Division.

Black Shirt Referee **Abdo Abdallah** attended Nationals as an Official, where he earned his 4th and 5th national signatures, securing his standing as a certified Canadian National-Level Referee.

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Squash Nova Scotia AGM Recognizes Athletes, and Volunteer

By Judy Myrden

Two Valley junior squash players were recognized for their rapid success over the last year, along with a squash volunteer, with awards at the **Squash Nova Scotia** (SNS) Annual General Meeting.

Jeremi LeBlanc, of **Canaan**, received the award for the U19 Most Improved Junior.

LeBlanc, an active member of both a Junior Program and the **Squash Junior Provincial Team**, commits an average of 5 to 6 sessions each week combining fitness, team practices, solo training and match play, concisely pushing himself to improve every aspect of his game, said SNS President **Ryan Breetzke**.

Over the past season he played 18 tournaments, earning eight first place finishes, seven second-place finishes, and three third place finishes.

His hard work and perseverance paid off with LeBlanc's Club Locker rating increased from 3.02 to 4.05 within one year, said Breetzke.

"Beyond regular training and competitions, he participated in two training camps and is always willing to spend time on the court supporting younger and newer players through matches and drills," said Breetzke.



Squash Nova Scotia President Ryan Breetzke presents Jeremi LeBlanc with the award for U19 Most Improved Junior. (Photo by Judy Myrden.)

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King's County junior squash player **Sophia Myers** was awarded the U15 Most Improved Player Award.

Breetzke said she competed in 18 tournaments this past season, "using each opportunity to improve her skills and confidence."

Her progress led to her Club Locker rating increasing from 2.38 to 3.28.

"Her determination and steady improvement make her a promising young athlete to watch in the years ahead," Breetzke said.



Judy Myrden receives the Service to Squash Award at the AGM. (Photo by Heather MacElwee.)

SMUfit squash player **Judy Myrden** was recognized for volunteer work co-ordinating **SMUfit Ladies Monday Night** Squash and Editor-In-Chief of the monthly squash newsletter **In The Nick**.

She won the Service to Squash Award in recognition of her volunteering.

Besides handing out awards, Breetzke and other members of the Board gave reports on the finances and activities of the board over the past year.

As of March 31, 2026 the association has a cash balance of $61,029 compared to $53,175 in 2025.

"The future of squash in Nova Scotia remains very promising and we are confident in both our long-term direction and our ability to continue growing the sport across the province," Breetzke told about 40 people who attended the association's AGM at **The Gorsebrook Lounge** adjacent to **Saint Mary's University** on May 8.

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“See Her, Be Her” Is Officially Launched

By Cindy Wheeler

Squash Nova Scotia (SNS) hopes to inspire girls to play the sport through a new program recruiting and training girl coaches.

The program is called “See Her, Be Her” and SNS funded a one-day Community Instructor Course and Safe Sport Training to certify four young female players by Provincial Squash Coach **Janet MacLeod**.

Squash players **Brooklyn Boudreau**, **Gabby Morin**, **Lilly Bishop** and **Zoe Boody** participated at the one-day course held May 9 at **SMUfit** courts in **Halifax**.

These younger female coaches, in addition to roughly 20 others, will then lead a series of sessions geared toward U12 and U10 this Fall. The course will be advertised in local public and private schools and on social media.

The genesis of the idea comes from the SNS IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility) sub-committee headed up by **Cindy Wheeler**, Director of Membership and Volunteer Development.



A one day coaching clinic promoting girls to play squash was held in Halifax on May 9. From left to right: Cindy Wheeler, Squash Nova Scotia Director of Membership and Volunteer Development, Gabby Morin, Brooklyn Boudreau, Provincial Squash Coach Janet MacLeod, Zoe Boody and Lilly Bishop.

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Tennis Nova Scotia also used a similar initiative called, “Girls Leading Girls” and had good success growing girls participation.

The name reflects a cycle organizers hope to create.

Girls see young women leading in squash, and are inspired to keep playing, and eventually step into leadership themselves. Over time, this builds a sustainable culture of participation, empowerment, and mentorship, ensuring that more girls stay in sport and thrive—on and off the court.

In Canada, sport participation by girls drops sharply during adolescence. By the age of 16, about half of girls have left sport, compared to only one in ten boys.

The reasons are complex: lack of confidence, body image pressures, unwelcoming environments, and, importantly, the absence of female role models in leadership positions. With only about one in four coaches being women, many girls struggle to picture themselves continuing in sport, let alone stepping into leadership roles.

A girls’ squash program led by young female coaches directly addresses this gap. When girls see coaches who are close to their own age and who have chosen to stay in the sport, they see possibility for themselves.

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Valley 902SquashEd Raises Record Haul for Student Scholarships

By Justin Ching-Johnson

The **902SquashEd** program hosted its fifth annual **Tournament for Education** raising $5,000 - the largest amount of money since its inception.

The non-profit, in partnership with **Horton High School**, aims to empower students of African descent through the sport of squash and educational mentoring.

The squash tournament was held May 22-24 at the **King's County Squash Club** in **Kentville**.

Since its founding, the program has hosted the squash annual squash tournament, raising more than $16,000, going towards scholarships for high school stunted pursuing university degrees.

"Our mission is to provide access to this exciting and challenging sport, while promoting academic excellence, personal growth, and community engagement. We believe that squash is more than just a game; it's a path to success," Squash Coach **Janet MacLeod**, told **In The Nick** in an email.

The four graduating students receiving scholarships are **Julia Akao**, **Alemnesh Sanche-Spencer**, **Cohen Riley-Zwicker**, and **Kayin Burrell**.



2026 scholarship recipients share photo with program coordinators. From left to right: Janet Macleod, Julia Akao, Alemnesh Sanche-Spencer, James Wiseman, Cohen Riley-Zwicker, and Kayin Burrell.

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Of the group, Akao will attend **Acadia University**, in **Wolfville**, to study Kinesiology, while the others will attend **Saint Mary's University** in **Halifax** where they will study Criminology in the Fall.

"(They) are amazing multi-sport student-athletes who have worked very hard to not only learn the game, but also to improve and compete at the highest level" said MacLeod, who helped organize the tournament along with **James Wiseman** and **Greg Myers**.

The event hosted over 50 players from Halifax, the **Annapolis Valley**, and **Prince Edward Island**. Full tournament sponsors, and results can be found on Club Locker.

Support 4 Sport Awards

And speaking of recognition in a separate event seven Nova Scotia squash athletes and volunteers were recently recognized at an awards dinner in Halifax at the Halifax Convention Centre.

Each year Sport Nova Scotia asks provincial sport organizations, including the squash community, to nominate deserving players or volunteers and officials across the province who exemplify special qualities with each award.

These awards are a meaningful recognition of their dedication, hard work and achievements over the past year.

The following award winners were recognized on May 23:

Lee Kirby - Official of The Year
Cameron Reid - Volunteer of the Year
Luke Boody - Junior Male Athlete of the Year
Adele Workman - Junior Female Athlete of the Year
Matt Bishop - Senior Male Athlete of the Year
Katherine Stringer - Senior Female Athlete of the Year
Janet MacLeod - Coach of the Year
902SquashEd - Community Association of the Year
Captain Abdo Abdallah - Team of the Year - Crazy 8's



SMUfit squash player Luke Boody and Provincial Squash Coach Janet MacLeod, of Wolfville, received their awards at the Sport Nova Scotia Support 4 Sport ceremony in Halifax on May 23. (Photo by Leah Boody)

Contributions to **In The Nick** are welcome! Send in your letters, stories, or feedback to us here: **InTheNick@nssquash.ca**

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