

04 November 2024

NSA Chairman's Report - 2024

The 2024 season sprang into action earlier than the norm at the end of Feb (2023 was mid-April) and last time we commenced this early was pre-covid days. Northern Squash Associations continues to maintain their strength with an ever-increasing calendar packed with events – Local, Provincial, National, and International.

On court, which the reason we exist, NSA fills up 70% of the Calendar weeks. Over and above 17+ clubs and their activity, the province managed the:

- **NSA Closed:** Won by Reece McLachlan & Kim McDonald
- **2 x PSA:** Harlequins & Pretoria Country Club
- **SA Regionals:** Won by Damian Groenewald & Awande Malinga
- **Winter League:** 13 Men / 3 Ladies won by Uitsig Men & CSIR Ladies
- **Doubles League:** 12 Sections dominated by the students this year.
- **IPT:** 6 Teams sent to Cape Town claiming A-section Men Bronze & Ladies Silver

Leagues

With 3 League variants taking up half the calendar year, 2024 proved challenging with international events. Too many matches played outside of the allotted dates does not create the desired camaraderie of team play and spirit. This unfortunately will continue with the expanding international exposure of the sport and trying to fit the season in before the October break; but we shall minimize the impact.

Doubles League saw a 20% drop in teams, especially the top players. The schedule, changed from 2023, did not help matters with too many matches played in “own” times. This unfairly burdens the host clubs who give up their facility and prepare entertainment. 2025 will again attempt a doubles league after the conventional winter league to ascertain the viability of continuing thereafter. It will be a shame to lose this event.

Tournaments

Harlequins hosted their second successful PSA bringing doubles into the fray. PCC also joined for their first taste of collaboration with the Association.

The NSF Associations collectively decided to support those clubs willing to host a PSA with a financial contribution towards their costs of the event in the hope of expanding to more clubs. We encourage clubs to come forward and put their hands up.

2025 will see the PCC NSA moves to the end of the season to avoid the bottleneck of tournaments during the April to June period.

2024 Management Committee

Brett Cousins (Chairperson), Cornelia Read (Treasurer), Gerda Dreyer (Administrator), Blaar Coetzee, Kersey Cousins, Jacques Kruger, Bronwen Martin, Tracy Randall, Mark Schickerling & Angelo Shaik

The NSA Closed and SA Regionals, successfully hosted by smaller clubs, a practice the NSA shall continue to spread the game to so called “lesser known” suburbs.

IPTS

Considerable expense was incurred for the premier event of the year. Fortunately reserves created from hosting the 2023 event allowed for a surplus to ensure the comfort of our six provincial teams.

With missing players due to World Juniors and availability, results were exceptional. Men’s A narrowly lost out in, making the Finals finishing a credible third. The Ladies had a heartbreak loss to EP whilst beating the ultimate champion WP to finish runner up. An incredible fact is the average age on these sides is under twenty-five!

Rounding off an exceptional week was the awarding of the Best Organized Province. And with the 2025 IPT’s in Gqeberha, NSA has been recognized and commissioned to run the website and live stream the event on behalf of EP and SA Squash. Kudos to the team and Kelsey whose work in 2023 is still being acknowledged amongst the squash circles.

Notable National Performances 2024

- Juniors: 7 represented South Africa in Texas (Chanté Leppan, Connor Earle, Elzandri Janse van Rensburg Juan-Corne Brand, Judah Phillips, Luhann Groenewald, Matthew Earl)
- Students: 3 represented USSA at the FISU Championships (Helena Hudson, Lara Patrick, Megan Shannon)
- Seniors: 3 selected for the World Team Championship in Hong Kong (Damian Groenewald, Luhann Groenewald, Ruan Olivier)

Not discounting performances at SA Nationals, Growthpoint IPTs, and various PSA’s, without a doubt Northerns remains strong.

Closing

In closing I thank the committee members for their support, input and noble advice keeping me in balance. We may not interact face-to-face with the advent of technology but when required I know I can rely on them.

Special thanks to Tracy Randall for hours and days she sacrifices to complete the insurmountable task of registering all our clubs with the Designated Safety Officer accreditation. We are the only province to date, to achieve this feat.

Finally, Gerda, who remains the glue that keeps us together, once again, without any doubt, kept our backend wheels well-oiled and turning. Her incredible support, at any time of the day or night ensured that our players could enjoy their on-court time whilst the engine room keeps purring.

Regards

Brett Cousins
NSA Chairperson