

Squash Australia Performance Pathway Monthly Report

October 2012

AIS Squash Program

The AIS Squash Program has had a number of AIS athletes competing over the past month with the highlights including;

1. Donna Urquhart won the Crocodile Cup in Hong Kong
2. Mike Corren won his 42nd and 43rd PSA titles with victory in the North Coast and Christchurch Open's
3. Sarah Cardwell was a finalist in the North Coast Open, Coffs Harbour
4. Christine Nunn was a semi finalist in the North Coast Open, Coffs Harbour

A career high ranking was achieved on the October 1st World Rankings by Jessica Turnbull 97.

AIS athletes will be competing throughout October in the US, Macau, China and Australia.

The AIS Squash program has begun making the transition from a residential only program to having an increased emphasis on camps based delivery. This will see the Brisbane training base be utilised for camps combined with individual and group intensive training weeks. With an increased investment in camps, one of the two AIS units that are currently leased will not continue in 2013 leaving one unit available for athletes to attend camps and intensive training weeks.

The AIS will now value add to all 14 scholarships holders rather than being limited to the Brisbane based athletes. This will see AIS Senior Coach (Anthony Ricketts) work closely with the AIS athletes and their individual coaches. While this may see Anthony spend less time coaching on the squash court, his time will be largely spent overseeing the planning and monitoring of all AIS scholarship holders, running camps based activities and imbedding AIS resources into the program.

In this light, September was a planning month for the AIS Squash program. The AIS worked closely with all 14 AIS scholarship holders in developing and refining their individual performance plans (IPP). This saw Anthony travel to Melbourne to meet with the Melbourne based AIS scholarship holders and their individual coaches. In addition to this, Anthony utilised Skype to develop the performance plans for internationally based scholarship holders.

While it might have been a time consuming process for many of the athletes, it was certainly a worthwhile and important period in setting the foundation for the athletes to succeed on the world stage. This planning phase is a critical component in establishing the goals of the season and the necessary things to happen in order to achieve them. This can be otherwise summarised by 'planning your work, and working your plan'. With this planning now done, the attention will turn to both implementing and monitoring the plan as the professional season unfolds.

Squash Australia Performance Pathway Monthly Report

In addition to this, the sports science/performance analysis component of the AIS Squash program took another step forward. With the AIS looking to enhance its understanding of the demands of professional squash, they have committed to incorporating a significant amount of time into performance analysis. With Anthony heading up this performance analysis component, he spent some time in Canberra defining the specific needs of the program, and worked closely with the performance analysis department in order to have the system operating by early 2013.

The AIS Squash program has also been actively pursuing the opportunity to engage a PhD Scholarship holder to work with the program to undertake a study on squash with a particular emphasis on performance analysis which will dovetail nicely into the work Anthony will also be undertaking. The collaboration between the University of Queensland, Australian Institute of Sport and Squash Australia will provide a fantastic opportunity to improve the knowledge base of the sport.

The servicing requirements of the program will also lead to changes in the delivery mechanisms for a number of the AIS Squash service team and will see a wider input into more athletes as a result. Access to servicing such as strength and conditioning, psychology, nutrition and medical services will be offered more broadly in the future

The AIS also attended the Australian Junior Championships in Hobart. This was a great opportunity to see Australia's future champions in action. These matches illustrated talent, athleticism, passion and sportsmanship – all critical ingredients to becoming a world class professional squash player. The AIS/Squash Australia high performance team will continue to invest in the performance pathway to make sure the players on show in Hobart have every opportunity to continue Australia's proud history in the sport.

Malaysian Open

The AIS Squash program had five athletes (Rachael Grinham, Donna Urquhart, Sarah Cardwell, Cameron Pilley and Matthew Karwalski) competing in the Malaysian Open from the 10 – 15th September.

First up in the qualification of the PSA 50K event was **Matthew Karwalski** playing against rising Egyptian star **Mohammed Abouelghar**. Matthew had recently played Mohammed in the British Open where he lost in five games. Matthew was keen to reverse this score line and came into the match well prepared. However, Matthew found it difficult to impose his strengths upon his talented opponent and went down in three games 11 – 6, 13 – 11, 11 – 4.

Sarah Cardwell was also in the qualification draw of the 70k WSA event. With Sarah reaching the finals of the WSA event in Coffs Harbour the day before, she only arrived in Kuala Lumpur the day of her match. Coming up against Hong Kong player **Tong Tsz-Wing** and only one qualification match to play in order to make the first round, Sarah had everything to play for. It was a physical encounter that saw both players working the ball to all corners of the court. Although Sarah put in a courageous performance it was disappointing to see her go down in five hard fought games 7 – 11, 11- 4, 11 – 5, 7 – 11, 11 – 5.

Squash Australia Performance Pathway Monthly Report

First up in the Women's first round was **Rachael Grinham** against the experienced **Omneya Abdel Kawy**. With Rachael losing the last three encounters, it was always going to be a difficult match. Although Rachael played great squash, which saw her drag Omneya into the back corners with a beautiful fading crosscourt length, it was always Omneya who got the winning shot away first. This saw Rachael go down in three sets 11 – 7, 11 – 7, 14 – 12.

Donna Urquhart came up against **Lucia Fialova** from the Czech Republic in the first round. This was a perfect opening game for Donna, as it provided an opportunity to find confidence in both her length and short game. Donna won convincingly 11 – 4, 11 – 6, 11 – 4. In the second round, Donna came up against World Number 1, **Nicol David**. Donna had lost the last 5 encounters against Nicol, but took a positive attitude into the match. Donna produced some of her best squash played to date. Her perfectly weighted drives were followed up with attacking volleys that allowed her to take control of many of the points. In the end, Nicol had to work extremely hard to win the match 11 – 6, 8 – 11, 11 – 8, 11 – 7. However, Donna took both a belief from the match that she is capable of beating the top players and a renewed confidence in her game.

Cameron Pilley's opponent in the first round was the Spaniard **Borja Golan**. With Cameron losing to Borja twice this year, he was keen to reverse this trend. Cameron played good disciplined squash, in turn making for a tremendous display of squash. With Cameron having solid leads in two of the games, it was disappointing for him to go down in four games 11 – 9, 4 – 11, 11 – 6, 11 – 7. While it was not the result Cameron was after, there were certainly many positives from the match which will serve him well as the season progresses. Although many of the matches from the AIS players might not have produced the result they were after, many positives were taken from the trip. All players engaged in watching their matches on video following their games, where specific areas have been identified on how we will endeavour to reverse these results in the future.

AIS/National Senior Women's Camp

Sarah Fitz-Gerald conducted a national senior women's camp in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia with AIS Scholarship holders and Australian Senior women's team members Rachael Grinham, Donna Urquhart and Sarah Cardwell. Unfortunately Melody Francis and Tamika Saxby were unable to attend due to injury. The camp was held in conjunction with the Malaysian Open and was held over three days from the 13th -15th of September.

The three days incorporated numerous opportunities to bond as a team while accessing world class training opponents which Sarah had organised. Camille Serme (France) WR 12, Omneya Abdel Kawy (Egypt) WR 28, Delia Arnold (Malaysia) WR 23, Joshna Chinappa (India) WR 51 provided excellent competition on the first day of practice at the National Squash Centre in Bukit Jalil.

The second day consisted of training amongst team members on the all glass court at the Curve Mall which was an ideal preparation for the World Women's Team Championships which will be played on 3 all glass courts in France.

Squash Australia Performance Pathway Monthly Report

The final day of the camp saw players return to the National Training Centre where they were joined by world class players including Jenny Duncalf (England) WR 4, Laura Massaro (England) WR 2, Omneya Abdel Kawy (Egypt) WR 28 and Nour El Sherbini (Egypt) WR 5. The opportunity for the players to hit with quality opposition was again invaluable.

The camp was very successful and provided numerous opportunities for the team to bond together in the lead up to France. The Australian Women's Team will also be conducting a pre-event camp in Marseille, France just prior to the World Women's Team Championships in November.



Under 21 National Talent Squad

The Under 21 National Talent Squad will undertake their first camp in October, from the 8th until the 12th, at the AIS in Brisbane under the guidance of AIS Senior Coach Anthony Ricketts. There are four attendees who include National Junior Men's Champion TJ Rarere (QLD), Daniel Wright (VIC), Darcy Evans (TAS) and Wes Cusick (NSW). The squad will have the opportunity to work with AIS service providers covering a range of disciplines including strength and conditioning and psychology.

Squash Australia Performance Pathway Monthly Report

National Talent Squads

The 2013 National Talent Squad continue their WSA program over the next 6 weeks with 4 competitions in Queensland including the Ipswich, Queensland, Mackay and Caboolture Open's. These events will provide an ideal opportunity for athletes to further improve their world rankings as they push towards attaining the ranking and physical benchmarks necessary to attain National Team selection.

Recommendations regarding the National Talent Squad structure for 2014 and beyond have been forwarded onto the board of Squash Australia from the High Performance Committee for consideration. Based on the outcome of this process further advice regarding the structure of these squads will be provided.

High Performance Committee Meeting

The High Performance Committee had a face to face meeting at the Australian Junior Championships in Hobart. The committee is made up of 5 national coaches, which includes Anthony Ricketts (National Senior Men's), Sarah Fitz-Gerald (National Senior Women's), Rod Eyles (National Junior Men's) and Vicki Cardwell (National Junior Women's) and myself (National Head Coach). Gordon Young, Performance Pathways Manager, is a Squash Australia ex officio representative.

A wide range of topics were discussed and a copy of the outcomes from the meeting is posted on the Squash Australia website.

Northern Territory Visit

I recently visited the Northern Territory in mid September to inspect the new Darwin squash facility that has been built. NT Squash has done a fantastic job in conjunction with the NT Government and other key stakeholders in the construction of a new world class facility.

The centre has 12 courts and with moveable walls can convert into 4 doubles courts. The doubles courts will all be fitted with the only 13 inch tins in Australia, which is the new international standard for doubles at major international events such as the world Doubles Championships and Commonwealth Games.

The Darwin facility also has cutting edge technology incorporated into the building including cameras overlooking some of the courts, wireless technology throughout and big screen televisions to watch the action on.

I also met with the Northern Territory Institute of Sport (NTIS) and the NT Department of Sport and Recreation and had very interesting discussions with both parties. The NTIS is very supportive of squash and currently service NT athlete Rhys Dowling with funding and sports science. With the construction of the new facility they are looking to become more involved in squash and they have offered to provide support to any national level camps that may be run in the new facility in particular in the build up to the Commonwealth Games in 2014.

Squash Australia Performance Pathway Monthly Report

The NT Department of Sport and Recreation were again very supportive of the interest shown by the national body in squash and have a range of funding grants and opportunities that may be available to the sport in the future.

Underpinning Programs

An application was received by the Northern Territory for Underpinning Program support for 2013. They join currently funded states Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania for funding consideration for the Underpinning Program support from Squash Australia in 2013.

Ongoing discussions have taken place with the states mentioned in regards to the development of a Performance Pathway manual for each individual state and territory. A number of the states are progressing very well in the formulation of the manual and I look forward to continuing to work with the state and territories in the development of this important document. The formalisation of a Performance Pathway Committee and also the identification of a State Coach for each state and territory to work with the national program are the two other key objectives that have been identified.

AIS/National Camp Dates

AIS/National Senior Men's

1. *October 22nd – 26th 2012, AIS Brisbane*
2. *December 17th -21st 2012, AIS Brisbane*

AIS/National Senior Women's

1. *November 7th-11th 2012, Marseille, France*

Under 21 National Talent Squad

1. *October 8th – 12th 2012, AIS Brisbane*
2. *December 10th – 14th 2012, AIS Brisbane*