

NEWS AT THE NET

March 2023



Welcome

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2023 and what a start to the year wheelchair tennis has had!

During the middle weekend of the ASB Classic, we were invited to take part in the ASB Classic's inclusion activation at Manukau Tennis Centre. Cameron Norrie (currently ranked No.12 in the world) attended the event and played a match tie-break in a wheelchair. Thanks Cam for being a great guy and giving our sport a go.

Following on from the activation event, wheelchair tennis was then invited to perform a demonstration at Stanley Street on Centre Court just before the Mens Semi-Finals. Thanks to Travis and Glenn who flew up from Christchurch to play. They played with Ajeet Rai and KP Pannu. Both are NZ Davis Cup players.

Finally, I would like to make a special mention of Leslie Wilkinson (*pictured right*) who many of you know resigned from our committee last year. Leslie was one of our longest serving committee members and tournament director for close to 20 years. Leslie gave her time freely and with such enthusiasm that she will be sorely missed. Thanks Leslie – we have challenged you over the years over different ITF rules, codes of conduct and the inevitable drumming up and divvying up the 10,000US\$\$ prize money we had to dish out for running an ITF3 event! With all this in mind, you always rose to the task and enjoyed the camaraderie of the never ending wheelie banter – not to mention a compulsory wine at the end of the tournament day!

Thanks Leslie (and Steve/ Alan) for everything wheelchair tennis. We just might call on you again for the odd award ceremony if you're free! With that in mind the committee has unanimously voted to make Leslie a Life Member of NZ Wheelchair Tennis.

Nikki Howlett, President



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ASB Classic



It's semi finals day at New Zealand's Premier Tennis event the ASB Classic. As the crowd pours into the venue, the top 2 NZ Men's players are warming up on court with the 2 top wheelchair players.

An epic 10 point tie-breaker showed off the skill, mobility and shot-making ability of all the players. The buzz and nerves playing in a full stadium was awesome after the covid holiday from events. A huge thanks to Ajeet Shakan Rai and K P Pannu for entering the spirit of the day and not thrashing every shot. The best team won on the day?

Furthermore, sincere thanks must go to Nikki Howlett for utilising her contacts to make the event possible, and New Zealand Tennis (Terri Ann Scorer) and Auckland Tennis turning inclusion into action by promoting this wheelchair tennis demo event. Great memories made and will be cherished forever.



100 Years Celebration

A group of NZWT players, committee and volunteers past and present celebrated 100 years of everything Waikato Tennis at the St Andrews Gold Club last November.

The event was celebrated with some amazing history dating back 100 years of course and included some entertaining guest speakers and some great prizes – thanks Owen Henderson. Also some beautiful food and an event in time definitely worth acknowledging.

Clockwise, from top left: Shane Harvey, Jack Harvey, Nikki Howlett, Alan Dodwell, Leslie Wilkinson, Chris Harvey, Tiffiney Perry and Wayne Chase

Adaptive Tennis Day

On Sunday 08 January, Tennis New Zealand hosted an Adaptive Tennis Day at the Manukau Tennis inviting ASB Classic runner-up Cameron Norrie to help promote the various forms of Adaptive Tennis.

After warming up and doing a few drills in a Tennis Wheelchair, Cam Norrie went onto hit with some other groups including autistic children and Blind/Low Vision (BLV). Cam returned to the Wheelchair Tennis group to finish the event with a Tie-breaker (first to eleven) doubles match. Dave Sherriff was paired with Cam Norrie and the other pair was James Rollo and former Paralympic player Tiffiney Perry.

With many of the attending tennis groups and officials watching, the match progressed with an audience greater than the wheelchair players were used to having. Cam won the toss and chose to serve first. He hit the ball well- as you would expect of someone with an international ranking as high as No.8 last year. His wheelchair skills were surprisingly good for an ambulant player, but as you would expect he wasn't as mobile as the regular wheelchair players.

The pairings proved to be even as the match progressed with neither team getting a lead greater than a few points before the other pair would close up the score again. It was an enjoyable spectacle with all players hitting some good shots and featuring long rallies.

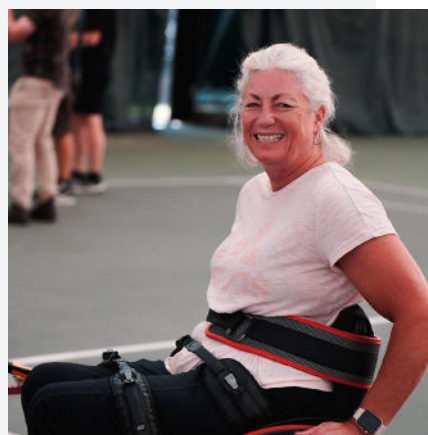
Fittingly the match was tied at ten all, coming down to a winner takes all sudden death point. With Dave serving to his regular doubles partner, he sliced the serve to go extremely wide of James to finish the match with an ace.

It was an enjoyable experience for the players involved who would like to thank Cameron Norrie for attending while he was competing in the ASB Classic, the ASB Classic organisers and Tennis New Zealand for hosting the event.



Meet Rene!

My name is Rene Ruahe coaching at the Manukau Tennis Centre. I've had the privilege of assisting wheelchair tennis players since 2022 with their game and technique. Preparing for tournaments or just improving their skills, enjoying the wonderful game of tennis and meeting great people. I have learnt a great deal from the players who just have a "get on with it" attitude sparking me into action. I have 10 years of coaching tennis and currently hold a JDC and first aid certificate.



2022 National Champs

Our 2022 National Champs were held in Hamilton at the Perry Arena in December.

It was a huge weekend of Tennis as always with many games squeezed into the weekend of Doubles Saturday and Singles Sunday format. This was spread across two divisions.

Winner of the Main Draw is always fiercely contested usually between our top two players Travis Moffat and Glenn Barnes and this year was no different. Travis came out on top winning 9-5. Doubles saw the pair team up winning at their round robin undefeated with Runners up Danny McBride and Brendon Mes. Second Draw Winner was Wesley Pigg.

Great camaraderie as always across the whole weekend and we were fortunate to have Tennis NZ Board Chair Terr-Ann Scorer to watch the singles finals and present our prizes.



Thank You!

We are very grateful to all of our sponsors & supporters and the organisations that work with us to help deliver Wheelchair Tennis opportunities in New Zealand!



Thank You for Reading!