

2017/18 Open Grade Report

Steady and consistent has been the theme for the past season, with numbers maintained in most Open Grade competitions.

Saturdays have seen 6 A Reserve and 6 A Grade teams do battle in the afternoons. This regime is the envy of most South Island regions, many of whom are amalgamating, and downsizing, so it is pleasing that our competitions remain a fun and competitive environment. It is encouraging to see some tennis *parents* returning to tennis in A Grade and A Reserve where they are very welcome, and they get to play with, against or nearby their youngsters and show them how it used to be done!

The Mid Canterbury Browning Shield team, playing at our home courts here at the Ashburton Trust Tennis Centre in February, continued the winning habit, by retaining the coveted Browning Shield, probably the most comfortably of the past 5 years we have held it. That is a tribute to those who were able to make themselves available. It won't be so comfortable next year, as a few of our players have moved on.

One such loss, is our Methven man from Japan, **Koji Kawamata**. Koji's enthusiasm knows no bounds – he, via Terrace Downs Resort, sponsored NZ's Davis Cup Tennis Team, also Michael Venus specifically, and he would travel to see them play, and pop up in Melbourne or India to catch some of his other high-profile tennis friends during their competitions. Koji will be missed in the Methven lineup, and the Browning Shield team. One disappointment for him was not to be able to play Seniors Tennis for us as he is old enough now! We wish Koji, his wife, daughter and dogs the best of success over in Thailand.

Phil Crozier has had a busy year. He took out the **Mid Canterbury Sports Awards' Robilliard Trophy** for Outstanding Services to Sport, and was only just able to be there on the night to accept it, as he was only a few hours from checking in at the airport to escort a tour party to Australia. He has assisted in keeping the legacy of Ian Jones's escorted tours going, and by all accounts he did a marvellous job there as well.

Phil continues to do a great job as our Bar Manager, making sure everything is ship-shape and legal, and that players are well catered for on the Thursday night **Sunset Doubles**. This competition continues to thrive, with the maximum number of teams competing again. To Murray Amyes and his team – keep up the great work, and we will keep putting on the comp if the players keep on coming to play it! Geraldine players are now regulars, so the good word is spreading!

Twilight tennis is still going well on Wednesday nights, with the three-handed teams, and handicap system for matches. Thanks again to Peter Yates for his management of this. We hope there may be a few spaces for some players or teams in the coming season.

Masters Mixed continues on the grass courts at Allenton, but make the most of it, as each season presents new challenges for grass courts, and not many regions are fortunate to have a grass court competition! It is for Over-35's, and each week players have 3 games of doubles against players of similar level.

We have a number of players from Mid Canterbury who also travel to the Christchurch region for tennis, amongst them **Tessa McCann and Ashleigh Leonard in Premier Women**, and **James Watt in Premier Men**. Canterbury Country has had a team in the Christchurch **Men's Division 2**, which had moderate success, and one in **Men's Division 3**. That team was winning Div 3, then the grades were rehashed, and the team ended up in Div 4, which it won, securing promotion, one would hope, back up to Div 3. There were 3 sets of fathers and sons in the team, so it was one with the future in mind. Country are again hoping to have good representation in **Womens Divisions**, and **Mens Divisions in Christchurch**, so there are **clear pathways for players** in the Mid Canterbury and Canterbury Country systems.

Gala Cup, or Mid Canterbury Championships by definition, saw the return to the top of **Rhys Cromie**, who won the **Men's Singles title for the 9th time**, over first-time finalist **Aidan Mitchell**. He also combined with the sprightly **Peter Leonard** to win the **doubles**, over future stars **Sam Bubb & Tyler Leonard**. Not content with that, he won the **Mixed** title with **Ladies Champion Tessa McCann**. The secret to winning doubles.....pick the best partner!

Tessa beat Ashleigh Leonard in the Ladies Singles final, and partnered Larissa Allan to take Larissa's first Gala Cup Doubles title.

Tessa had a stellar season, also winning the Canterbury Open Ladies Singles, convincingly, and was runner-up in the Otago Open – playing with skill and maturity far beyond her 16 years of age.

Underpinning all of our competitions, from an **administration** point of view, is **Katherine McDonnell**, who does sterling work behind the scenes, but has been spotted on court herself, brushing up her tennis skills, so good on her!

The coming season, we are hoping to **combine our competitions person**, or convenor, to oversee **both junior and senior competitions**, as there is often an overlap, and this should enable a more harmonious relationship with all of the competitions.

Many thanks

Tony Brosnahan

(Open Grade Convenor)