

Tennis South Canterbury 2019 AGM

President's Report

It is my pleasure to present my 2019 report.

Running tennis is very busy – just ask Mandy. And as a Board we could easily get distracted by the day to day noise and forget to think about the bigger picture.

Questions like - what are the influences on tennis today, how and when it is played, by whom looking for what kind of experience? And then to look into the future. What will be the answer to those same questions be 10, 20 or 30 years from now? What will tennis look like for the next generation? And what do we need to do today to ensure that tennis is enjoyed by as many people as possible supported by a financially sustainable Tennis South Canterbury into the future as far as we can see?

We also need to think about this marvellous venue, the Trust Aoraki Tennis Centre. Could any provincial New Zealand town wish for such a tremendous facility? It is a credit to those whose time and effort got us to this point. But we also need to think about how we maintain it – and in doing so what role grant organisations might play in the future. Can we rely on them to the extent that we have to date? How are changing sport and recreational trends in our community going to impact on both funding and use? What needs do other sports in South Canterbury have, each of whom has issues to grapple with on facilities, membership and future use?

The outcome of our debate and investigation is the Future of Tennis discussion paper you have all been distributed. We will never see the future with absolute clarity. But we are hopeful that through discussion, debate and feedback with and between us all we can at least understand what steps we might need to take. And to do so within the context of a “living document”. That as the environment changes around us we have built a framework that is able to adapt and grow to meet whatever new challenges arise.

What else did we do over the last 12 months?

- Financial sustainability is vital. It was important that we achieved a resource consent that gave us the flexibility for the Function Centre to be used for a wider variety of functions including music. This has been done. We are now reviewing our marketing. Who will use the Function Centre, where do we find them, what should they pay and what accessories are required for a successful function to happen?
- We are committed to growing tennis. More people participating more often. For this reason Mark Offen has been contracted to work alongside Mandy as well as out on the court for a greater number of hours. This investment has a cost. We are prepared to use a portion of our reserves to explore whether a greater focus of resource on coaching and development will build on the gains we have already made in the last 24 months.

And noting that is the collective efforts of all the coaching resources in South Canterbury that are important.

- Playing numbers in juniors are slowly increasing and we continue to work hard to help clubs with their memberships.

Junior interclub teams increased from 28 in Term 4, 2018 to 34 in Term 1 2019.

The Hot Shots programme has increased attendance from 66 in 2018 to 138 in 2019.

We connected with 910 pupils in 13 schools.

Fun days have attracted good crowds and encouraged children to play tennis and have fun while developing their skills.

- Communication continues to dominate. My experience with a variety of organisations is that one can never communicate too much or too often. We do this through our website, Facebook, emails and communications from Mandy, a club forum and AGM, an offer for Board members to attend club committee meetings, a Pass it On newsletter, replying to individual tennis member queries, and an intention to revisit our member survey. We believe transparency and openness to be vital. Despite all of that we still get feedback that our communication needs work. So, we continue to focus on that just that.

While in a solid financial position we have also achieved operating losses before taking depreciation into account for four of the last seven years and achieved an overall deficit of \$72,550. Bequests and capital fund raising have helped maintain our cash position but the challenge of breaking even or achieving a small surplus each year is unmistakeable.

Included in our Future of Tennis document Appendices is a look into the future of what our finances could look like – with \$1.918 million to potentially be funded between now and 2045. Aligned with a slow shrinkage of our reserves if we continue to generate annual operating losses – now is the time to plan.

However, as we face these challenges a quote from Margaret Mead comes to mind “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has”. It is that collective will that brought us to where we are today with top class facilities, good people and a wish to maintain what we have for the next generation. Together we will examine and plan for a positive future.

I gave us a score-card result of 6 to 7 out of 10 last year and noted that the foundations are in place. We now need to build on them. In the last 12 months we have endeavoured to do just that. Whether successfully or not, you as the members will be the ultimate judges.

Ultimately tennis is about people. Without them there will be no progress and so I need to offer some thanks.

Thank you to the continuing input and expertise of Board members Glenn Black, Irene Emond, Ferg Hazlett and Tony Zwies, Callum Wood and Stu Piddington. Their respective skills, volunteer time and enthusiasm have been crucial to progress we have made this year. Thank you also to the Investment committee of Ken Ellis, Ken McKenzie and Ian Bowan as independents and Dale Walden from Forsyth Barr.

As she has throughout my tenure Mandy Gillies deserves special mention. Without her hard work and her passion for tennis we couldn't function. We shouldn't underestimate just how busy and wide ranging the daily activities of TSC can be and how hard Mandy works.

My thanks also to sponsors. In particular Trust Aoraki, Alpine Energy, Wilson, Pub Charity and all our sign holders.

Thank you also to all who have made a contribution and commitment to our sport, it is very much appreciated and valued. Each club has dedicated people who work tirelessly. I thank you all for the support you have given to tennis in South Canterbury over the last year.

And tonight, we recognise three individuals who have served tennis over many years in announcing the 2019 Service to Tennis Awards. Our congratulations to each of them.

Thank you.

Stephen McFarlane
President
Tennis South Canterbury