

HALL OF FAME

The S&RV Hall of Fame seeks to recognise and enshrine players, coaches, referees and administrators who, have made an outstanding contribution to squash and racquetball at the elite level.

An individual can be inducted into the Hall of Fame as an athlete, official or administrator in squash and/or racquetball.

Betty Meagher

Just five words concisely summarise Betty Meagher's contribution to the sport of Squash in Australia:

“BETTY MEAGHER WAS WOMEN'S SQUASH”

In the words of many who were around the sport in the 40's, 50's, and 60's, the women's game only came about through the enormous leadership skills, dedication and passion of Betty Meagher.

- Betty won the Australian Women's Amateur Championship in 1946, 1949 & 1950.
- Betty won the Victorian Women's Amateur Championship in 1946/47 & 1949.
- First Australian female squash player to tour overseas, which was in 1950 with Gordon Watson to the United Kingdom.
- With her husband Alan, owned and operated three squash venues – Flinders Lane in Melbourne, Elwood and the Station Street courts in Moorabbin. Betty and Alan were regarded as the pioneers of public court development in Melbourne.

In 1947 Betty established the first Victorian women's interclub pennant competition with 4 teams competing, with her team St. Kilda Black winning 4-0 in the first round of the competition.

Under Betty's guidance the first official Australian interstate women's team's match, Victoria against New South Wales, was held in Melbourne in 1951 with the home state *prevailing 4-0, and Betty winning her match in straight games.*

In 1952 Betty established the Victorian Women's Squash Rackets Association (VWSRA), which she ran from her Flinders Lane Squash Centre, where she also conducted her accountancy business. At this time the Men's game was played in private clubs, virtually all were “out of bounds for women.” Betty served as the VWSRA President, Administrator and a committee member over the next eleven years, then continued on as its Auditor. The VWSRA eventually merged with the Squash Rackets Association of Victoria (SRAV), the Men's body, in 1976.

In 1952 Betty also established the Australian Women's Squash Rackets Association (AWSRA), which was also based at her Flinders Lane squash courts. Betty again was the driving force of this organisation, and over the next 14 years was its President, Administrator and Committee Member. Betty and Judith Fitzgerald (nee Tissot), had met with the Squash Rackets Association of Australia (SRAA) in 1950 regarding having one national association, and although the SRAA did not agree to the proposal, the AWSRA were made an Associate Member of that body. After 14 years in Melbourne the AWSRA headquarters moved to Sydney in 1966.

With the inception of the VWSRA and AWSRA, it meant that the women squash players were able to completely take charge of their side of the sport and subsequently began to attract a lot of newspaper coverage, which led to the women's game flourishing in Victoria.

In 1963 the VWSRA bestowed their first Honorary Life Membership on Betty Meagher. By 1963 the women's interclub pennant competition comprised 14 grades, a match and pennant committee plus 3 records officers.

Allen Minchington

Allen Minchington has provided over 40 years of service to the Victorian squash community as a player, coach, venue operator and administrator and was recognised for his contributions through Life Membership of Squash & Racquetball Victoria.

He was a Victorian Senior state team member, Junior and Senior State Team Coach and Team Manager on numerous occasions. A highly sought after coach, who wrote numerous articles on coaching and the sport for the media and squash magazines.

Allen was the Victorian State Match and Pennant Chairman for 10 years. For nearly 40 years owned and managed the very successful Oakleigh, Portman's and Dromana Squash Centres, which boasted extremely large numbers of interclub players, the vast majority coached by Allen, who brought considerable success to these venues.

Throughout his period as a venue operator, he was heavily involved with the committees of the Southern Districts Squash Association, Southern Squash League and Victorian Squash Federation.

Tom Spark

Ballarat Squash Champion 1975 (age 20) - 1980

Victorian Number One player (followed his move to Melbourne) 1981 and 1982

Victorian Team Representative 1981 Adelaide, 1982 Sydney, 1986 Hobart

Victorian Country Champion 1976 – 2006, 20 titles in 30 years

Victorian Masters Champion 16 Titles 1991-2003, 2007, 2009, 2013

Australian Masters Champion 12 titles

1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, (35-39 age group)

2001, 2002, 2003 (45-49 age group)

2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 (50-54 age group)

New Zealand Masters Champion 1993, 2005

Member of Masters Tran Tasman Test Team (held biannually) 1993, 1995, 1998, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009

World Masters Squash Championship

1994 Winner (35-39 age division) Queensland

2001 Winner (45-49 age division) Melbourne

1993 Finalist Edinburgh Scotland (35-39 age division) runner up

1999 Finalist Sheffield England (40-44 age division) runner up

Tom started playing squash at age 16, filling in for his brothers in pennant and quickly became Ballarat Squash's number 1 player and the Victorian Country champion. He learnt the game without any coaching. He watched, read books and developed his own technique and style.

Tom travelled from Ballarat to Melbourne to play A grade Sunday night pennant at Keon Park as a number 4 and then mid-week pennant State first grade pennant with Northcote in 1978 and 1979 (Premiership both years). In 1979 he won his first open title at Mountain District.

Tom secured a State first grade Number 1 position in 1980 with Thornbury and had success at the Monash Open, Mountain District, Warrnambool and the Ballarat Opens. He then moved from Ballarat to Melbourne in 1981 to undertake a Trade Teaching Qualification and continued to play there in 1981 and 1982.

Tom quickly became the number one player in Victoria with consistent pennant and tournament wins over Roger Flynn, Steve Vocetti, Des Murphy, Mark Mounsey and Bruce Alexander. Tom's titles resulted in his selection in the Victorian state side in 1981 and 1982.

At the height of this playing career, in 1983, Tom moved to Shepparton for work with his young family. From 1983-90 Tom continued to maintain a high standard and won country and Open tournaments although not playing pennant in Melbourne. He overcame three years of discrimination between city and country players to be selected to represent Victoria in the State Team in 1986 (To be eligible for selection in the state team players were required to train with the state squad each weekend and restricted its team to State pennant competition players. With a young family and career this was impossible). He was one of the first country squash players to succeed at the State level and many have followed.

Turning 35 in 1991 saw the beginning of a new era with Tom embracing Masters Squash. Here he continued to excel, winning 16 State titles, 12 Australian Masters titles and 2 New Zealand Masters titles.

Tom was honoured by his selection in the Australian Masters Tran Tasman Test Teams held biennially in the years 1993, 1995, 1998, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009. However the pinnacle of Tom's career was his World Title win in the 45-49 age division in Melbourne in 2001.

Tom has competed in and won the Victorian Country Championship 20 times in 30 years. His first title win was at age 21 and last his last title at 51 years of age. He has also been a stalwart of the Hopman Cup Country Teams Championship through playing and organising teams.

Tom saw Country squash venues being sold off and squash in the Shepparton region dying. Tom initiated the formation of the GV Squash Club Incorporated to invigorate squash in the Goulburn Valley, is a Committee member and was awarded a Life membership of the Club for his contribution.

Tom became a professional coach in 1980 and continues to be generous with his time in regard to coaching and advice to all levels of players. He has assisted many a young player with their game including VIS players Paul Frank, Cameron White, Rachelle Lyons and Audrey Day.

Tom is highly regarded and respected in the Squash fraternity. He is a quiet achiever who plays the game with the highest integrity. Tom's portrait sits proudly in the foyer at the Ballarat Squash Club and in 1999 they named the junior pennant "The Ballarat Spark's Junior Club" in recognition of Tom's contribution to Squash. The GV Squash Club has a "Tom Spark Award" for their junior players. Tom was honoured to be the face of "Grays Breast Cancer Campaign" won many Sports Star awards and was a 2000 Olympic Torch Bearer. All of which bear testament to his esteemed standing in the community.

Tom's decorated Squash career has risen from a mixture of ability and total dedication. Running, cycling, gym sessions, solo court practice, mental conditioning and travelling for match play have all been part of his regime. As a country squash player Tom has maintained an incredibly high standard of play and fitness which is a testament to his dedication and discipline. Tom is a true champion on and off the court and has worked to benefit country Squash players and promote the game of Squash.

Geoff Wilcock

Geoff began his squash career as a nine year old at the Mordialloc Squash Courts and was soon playing Junior Pennant in a team with a tiny Sarah Fitz-Gerald. He played with a wooden junior racquet that had been

recommended by his first coach, Judith Fitz-Gerald. As a coach and mentor, Judith was a significant influence for Geoff during his career.

Still in primary school, Geoff's first big tournament win was the Under 12 Victorian Boys Championship. He went on to play in the Victorian Junior Team numerous times. At thirteen, Geoff joined his first Men's Pennant team at Kings, in Oakleigh where he played with his Dad, Alan Wilcock. It is not known who was higher in the team order of merit! By sixteen, Geoff was playing in his first State Grade team. As a junior, he won numerous regional and state titles.

By the time he was nineteen, Geoff had had a go at the relatively new game of Australian Racquetball and he won the Victorian Racquetball Championships held at Keysborough. He followed this up by winning a total of five Australian Racquetball Open titles. He actually possesses the perpetual plaque for this tournament in consideration of how many times his name appears on it. Not bad for a squash player!

The international stage beckoned and at 23 Geoff joined the world tour and reached a career high world ranking of 49. Memorable matches for Geoff included playing Jansher Khan, then the world No. 1, in the Australian Open at Albert Park in 1993, and the great Jahangir Khan in the World Open in Adelaide in 1992. Jahangir was Geoff's hero and his favourite player to watch – probably still is!

Geoff's career highlights include winning his first international squash title in Sydney.

Geoff has also coached both squash and racquetball for many years. The Friday night squash clinic he started 20 years ago is still running today at Beaconsfield and he rarely misses a week. He is on the Coaching Sub-Committee of S&RV and is in high demand for private and group coaching.

These days, Geoff plays squash in the Mornington Peninsula Open Pennant in a team with his sister, Sandra, and they were proud winners of the Grand Final last season. He has also returned to racquetball and recently won the Ballarat Open Doubles in September last year and the ESRA Open Doubles in February this year, with partner Greg Paine.

Geoff also continues to play his other favourite sport of cricket and his team also won the grand final just last weekend. Unsurprisingly, he is quite good at this game too!

Geoff Wilcock is a highly talented player and gifted coach, and a very deserving recipient of the Hall of Fame accolade.