



# CASE STUDY:

INNOVATIVE WAYS OF CREATING A FEMALE FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

**INVERCARGILL MUMS AND BUBS**



**SQUASH**  
NEW ZEALAND

## OVERVIEW

New Zealand research shows that women continue to participate less than other adults. Furthermore, time is often cited as the main barrier for people getting active. Squash for women is well known for the four F's: **Fitness, Friends, Family** and **Fun**. Four Invercargill women from the same antenatal group were looking for a fun, affordable and child-friendly way to exercise. Using ILT Stadium Southland's squash courts - which are located near the main entranceway within a multi-sports venue - a Mums and Bubs squash group was formed... even though most of the mums had never picked up a racket before!

### CHALLENGES

#### Environment

Finding a place to get active that is light, comfortable and allows mothers to look after their little ones.

#### Timing

Mothers are busy and cannot always take part in highly organised sport.

#### Promotion

Getting the message out that sport can be for mothers and doesn't have to be highly structured to be fun.

### SOLUTIONS

#### Glass walls

The ILT Stadium Southland's squash courts feature glass walls with a large carpeted area behind. This allows the mums to each take turns having a hit on the court while the others can sit, watch and look after the other babies.

#### Contact

The group use a Facebook page to post regular updates and communicate with each other.

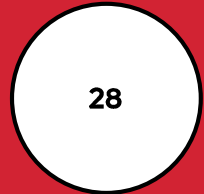
#### Support

The group receive support from their Regional Sports Trust (Sport Southland) who support fun initiatives that help people get more active in their communities.

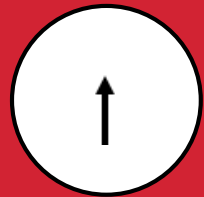
### RESULTS



Friendly and social atmosphere.



Members in the Facebook group.



Community involvement.

## CONCLUSION

People are turning away from the traditional sport setting in favour of social activities. Since its inception the group has introduced more people to squash and is seen as a place where mothers can come down and connect with others. The success of the Invercargill Mums and Bubs group so far has been creating a fun social atmosphere with no rules. The group operate with a participant-focused philosophy that is geared to their individual needs - whoever can come down on the day has a hit.

The success of the Invercargill Mums and Bubs group has been as the result of various partners, most notably:

- ILT Stadium Southland supported with friendly, accommodating staff, being breast-feeding friendly and having good baby-changing facilities. They also purchased a playpen for the group's use.
- Sport Southland, through the Healthy Families Invercargill initiative, helped to champion the group through the local media and there has been a good response with several new people getting in touch with the group.

Sport Southland Healthy Families Manager Jared Cappie mentioned "they had a mother join through the (newspaper) story who travels 30 minutes away just for this and a good 3 or 4 others have as well".

To see the group in action [click here](#). Front page photo credit: Southland Times.