

Have Fun, Play Squash!

Big Nix | School and Club Resource



**Kiwi
Squash**
Have Fun, Play Squash

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What is Kiwi Squash?

Kiwi Squash is New Zealand's nationally branded junior squash development programme. This initiative is designed to attract children aged 5-12 years into squash-based activities. For 9-12 years the programme progresses to include general movement, squash coordination, squash technique and strategy. Kiwi Squash is aligned to the athlete's stages of development physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally.

The programme includes:

- A comprehensive resource manual that outlines eight lesson plans
- A DVD visual aid, demonstrating over 60 activities
- Parent information leaflets
- Promotional posters
- A range of equipment and equipment packs
- Specialised training on the programme
- Kiwi Squash Coaching Guide

How does Big Nix work?

The programme is run over eight sessions which are approximately one hour long and incorporate the development of general movement, ball control, technical and gameplay based skills appropriate to the development age and stage of the children. You will find a learning outcome to achieve along with information for the setup of the activity, equipment required, can you see, questions you could ask and some variations to enhance the learning experience.

It can be run by teachers, coaches, student coaches, volunteer and/or parent helpers. It should be led by the Kiwi Squash Facilitator and assisted with one or two other people (e.g. coach, parent, senior student, squash helper, teacher). The technical skills should be delivered by the appropriately qualified person but the movement, coordination and game-based activities can be shared as required.

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Delivering Big Nix

The programme is set up in three distinct phases which are:

1. General Movement and Ball Control
2. Technique
3. Gameplay

For Big Nix deliveries we would normally divide the group up into three groups of around eight children with each one focussed on one aspect of the programme.

General Movement and Ball Control

These are skills developed using the gross and some fine motor movements of the head, legs, arms and trunk and are prerequisites for developing sport specific skills as they develop. It is important that these skills are developed at this time to ensure that each child has the opportunity to achieve their physical literacy potential.

In the resource they are separated into two separate activities: general movement, ball control. The general movement activities help to develop forward, backwards, lateral and diagonal movements along with squash based movements such as a split step and lunge. The ball control activities help to develop some finer ball control skills which will assist when developing technique and striking in a game situation.

Technique

The technical aspects may be some of the most difficult aspects for children to master. The coach should be especially mindful of keeping the coaching at a basic level in the early stages particularly without moving to some of the more complex parts of the swing or shot.

For each technical component the coach will explain and demonstrate to all members of the group, allowing them to practically attempt this by feeding the ball appropriately to them and then providing feedback.

Gameplay

In this part of the programme we divide the groups of eight into two players who take part in a game where we score to 11 points. This is refereed by two players. The remaining four players pair up as coaches picking a player each and providing them with some feedback. Players, coaches and referees then swap round and repeat. At the end, reflect and review as to if this made a difference to the score/outcome.

Positive feedback should be provided around:

- Effort
- Serving
- Application of any Technical skills
- Application of any Movement skills

At Week 5 these aspects should be the key focus for development, not the winning, of the informal games. At Week 8 re-focus on the development aspects but you can recognise the best performances of the day.



Lesson 1

8

General Movement

Forwards, Backwards & Lateral

Ball Control

Introduction

Technique

Grip, Drive and Serve

Gameplay

Introduction to the Game

Lesson 2

19

General Movement

T Movements

The Lunge

Ball Control

Wall Taps

Technique

Drive & Serve Return

Gameplay

Matches with Refing & Coaching

Lesson 3

27

General Movement

Split Step

Ball Control

Hockey Dribble

Technique

Volleying

Gameplay

Matches with Refing & Coaching

Lesson 4

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General Movement

Front Court

Ball Control

1, 2, 3, 4

Technique

The Drop

Gameplay

Matches with Refing & Coaching

Lesson 5

40

Gameplay

Informal Games

Lesson 6

42

General Movement

Mid Court

Ball Control

Lined Up

Technique

Boast & Back Corners

Gameplay

Matches with Refeing & Coaching

Lesson 7

48

General Movement

Back Court

Ball Control

Volley Hitting

Technique

The Lob

Gameplay

Matches with Refeing & Coaching

Lesson 8

54

Gameplay

Tournament



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Lesson 1

1

General Movement

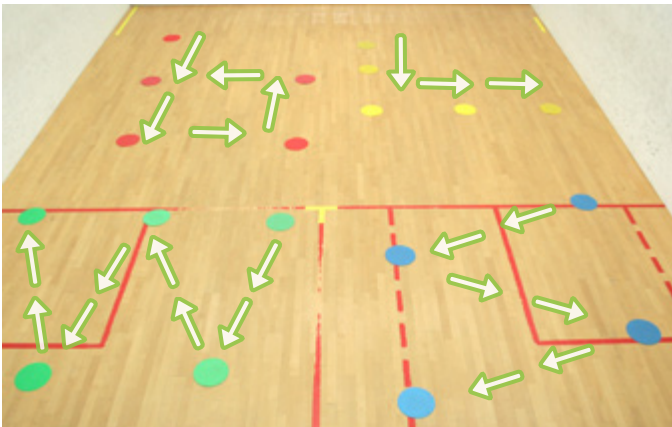
Forwards, Backwards & Lateral

10 mins

Learning Outcome: Development of forwards, backwards and lateral movements.

Activities

- Split the court into four distinct quarters to create the four shapes below using spot markers:
 - Box run
 - Lateral zig zag
 - Forward and backward zig zag
 - Giant L



- Assign two players to each area/shape.
- Player 1 completes the movement at 50% pace, followed by Player 2.
- Player 1 then goes again but at 75% pace, followed by Player 2.
- Player 1 repeats at 100% pace, followed by Player 2.
- Once each activity is completed three times by each player, all teams change to a new shape until all shapes are completed.

Questions you could ask?

- Does bending at the knee assist with balance and movement?
- What part of the body will assist you with your balance?

Can you see?

- Heads up, soft knees, on toes.
- Use of arms for drive and balance.

Learning Outcome: Introduction to the racket and ball and basic hand-eye coordination.

Activities

- Two groups of four players are standing in a circle facing inwards. One ball is placed on a racket and then has to be passed around the circle without dropping the ball. Start with:
 - Once around
 - Twice around
 - Have races
 - Spread out the players to full stretch



- Now with a ball each get them to walk around the full court area trying to keep the ball on the racket...
 - At snail pace
 - Walking
 - Jogging
 - Running
- Now complete the same tasks while attempting to bounce the ball on the racket.
- With two players to each wall, get them to hit the ball against the side wall without letting it drop on the floor (ie. a volley) with a forehand swing. Repeat with a backhand.
- Now try forehands and backhands alternately without letting the ball drop.

Questions you could ask?

- Do you have the racket face open?
- How high do we need to hit the ball on the wall to make it easier to consistently hit the ball and keep it going?

Can you see?

- Watching the ball.
- Gentle touches.
- Good grip.

- Learning Outcome:**
- Develop a basic understanding of how to grip the racket correctly.
 - Develop a basic understanding of the technical concepts and coaching points of a forehand and backhand drive.
 - Develop a basic understanding of serving technique.

1: The Grip

The grip is one of the most important technical aspects of squash - everything else that you will teach in the game all stems from having a good grip.

With a good grip comes the ability to handle the racket and control the racket face consistently and effectively. A player with a poor grip cannot perform shots accurately and will soon run in to difficulties when under pressure.

Use the same grip on the forehand and the backhand - the speed of the game does not normally allow you to change grips (like you can in tennis).

Key Coaching Points

- Place your hand on the grip approximately halfway up and grip the racket as though you are shaking hands with it.
- The thumb and index finger should make a v running down the top inside edge of the racket shaft.
- Curl your index finger around the handle and make sure that you leave a gap between the index finger and the bottom three fingers - this is important to allow you to keep control of the racket head. Do not hold the racket in the same way that you would hold a hammer.
- The racket face should be slightly angled or open so that you can just see the strings of the racket face.
- Cock your wrist in an upward position, which should make a 90 degree angle between the racket and your forearm.
- Hold the racket steady and firm so that you feel as though you have control of the racket head.
- After each shot, return the racket to this position and do not let the racket head drop towards the floor - for good control of the racket and allow quick reactions.
- The wrist remains cocked and does not flop around or down – this will result in a lack of control.

Reminder of key points:

- The racket hand is placed on the racket handle so that a v is formed by the thumb and straight index finger.
- The thumb rests on the index finger side of the middle finger.
- The fingers are slightly angled around the handle.
- The fingers are comfortably spread; the grip is firm but not vice-like.
- The size of the handle should JUST enable the index finger of the non-racket hand into the gap between the finger ends and the pad of the thumb of the racket hand.
- The shape of the handle is a matter of personal preference; it should have the 'right feel' to the player.
- The position of the hand is again a matter of personal choice; in the conventional position the end of the handle presses into the heel of the hand.

The term 'cocked wrist' refers to the angle made at the wrist joint of the racket hand, between the line of the forearm and a line extending along the hand, parallel to the extended fingers. This should be the general rule but as players progress they may make use of the wrist to cause deception for their opponent.

The Grip: Error Detection and Correction

Errors related to the grip are mirrored affecting the stroke on both sides. Below are some common errors seen with the grip.

1. Hand placed on top of the grip with the racket head facing down.



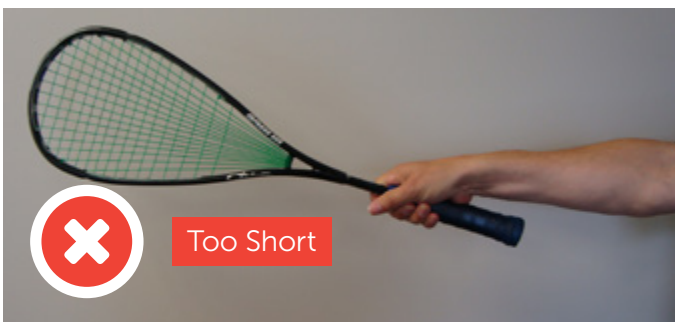
2. Racket face too open, grip held too far round.



3. Racket gripped hammer style with no gap between top two fingers and thumb wrapped straight round the grip.



4. Racket held too short or too long.



2: The Drive

The Drive is a shot that can be hit straight or cross-court in an effort to put pressure on an opponent in the back corners.

The straight drive is played close to the side wall in an effort to make it difficult to return. The other advantage is that a good drive will draw an opponent away from the T area, giving you control of that area.

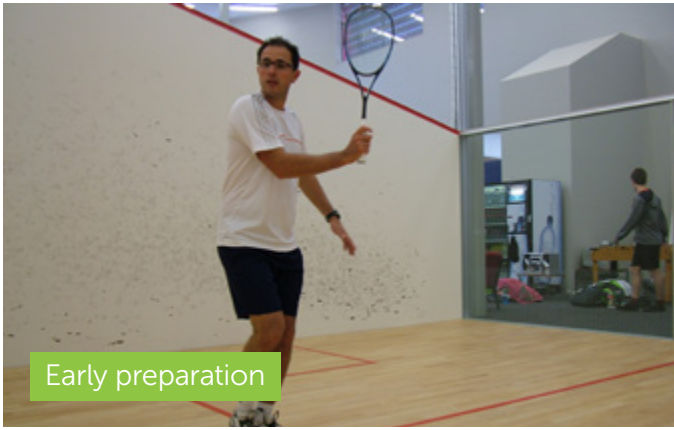
A cross-court drive goes on a diagonal to the back of the court. The shot can be very effective if hit well, however it can cause problems if not hit wide enough as it can be picked up by the opponent on the volley.

Coaching Points: Forehand Swing



- Take the racket head up and back, ensuring that you have a full backswing with good spacing between the elbow and the body.
- Begin with the elbow at 90 degrees, 'throw' the racket head forward, extending your arm as you do, so that at the point of impact the arm is fully extended.
- Turn the shoulders and hips away slightly in the early phase with them finishing square to the side wall before striking for a straight drive. For a cross-court the shoulders should be in line with where you want the ball to travel.
- Weight is transferred from back foot to front foot. Lunge with your lead foot, with the knee bent, keeping your back foot down. Front knee should be just behind the foot (not in front of it).
- Staying balanced, hit through the ball, pressing the racket head forward towards its target.
- The ball should be struck level, or slightly in front of the front foot.
- Watching the ball closely, return to the T.

Coaching points: Backhand Swing



Coaching Points

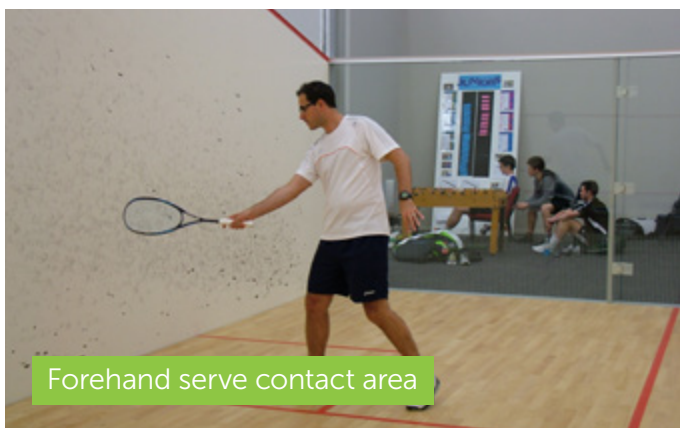
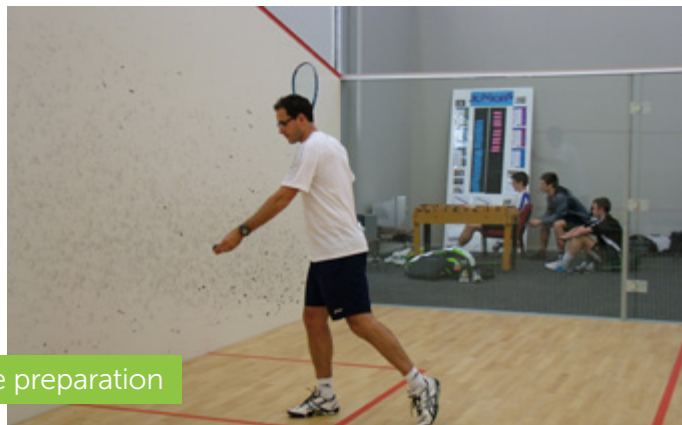
- Take the racket head up and back, ensuring that you have a good start position - elbow away from the body at 90 degrees with the racket head pointing upwards.
- Downswing should be on and through the ball.
- Elbow should be extended in the follow through, left arm acting as a balancing lever.
- Turn the shoulders and hips away slightly in the early phase with them finishing square to the side wall before striking for a straight drive. For a cross-court the shoulders should be in line with where you want the ball to travel.
- A little turn away from the ball with the shoulder and a slight rotation of the hip will help you to load the racket up in the preparation phase.
- Weight is transferred from back foot to front foot. Lunge with your lead foot, with the knee bent, keeping your back foot down. Front knee should be just behind the foot (not in front of it).
- Staying balanced hit through the ball, pressing the racket head forward towards its target.
- The ball should be struck level, or slightly in front of the front foot.
- Watching the ball closely, return to the T.

3. The Serve

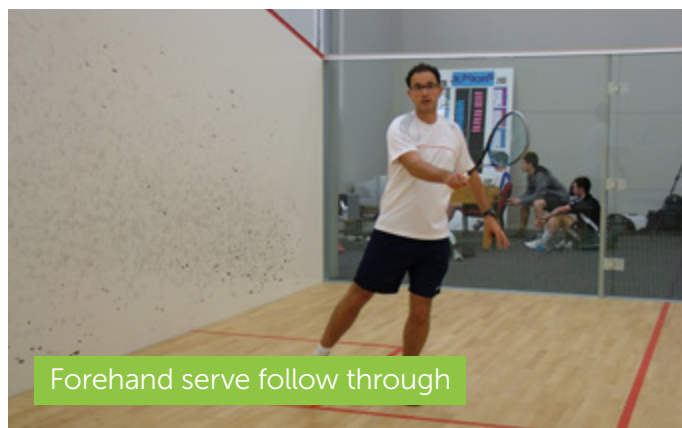
The serve is one of the key shots in the game of squash and can influence the rally outcome significantly. A good serve can give you the upper hand or just as easily put you under pressure. Although there are some variations the lob serve is generally acknowledged as the most effective.



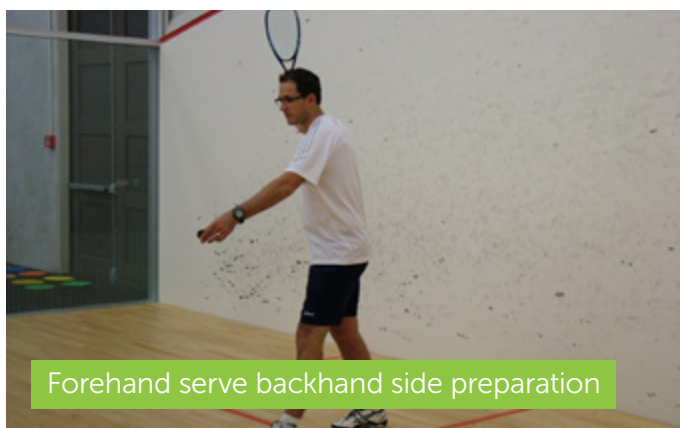
Forehand serve preparation



Forehand serve contact area



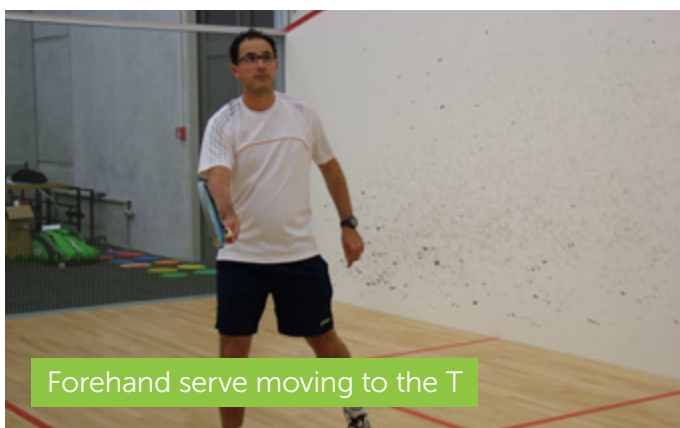
Forehand serve follow through



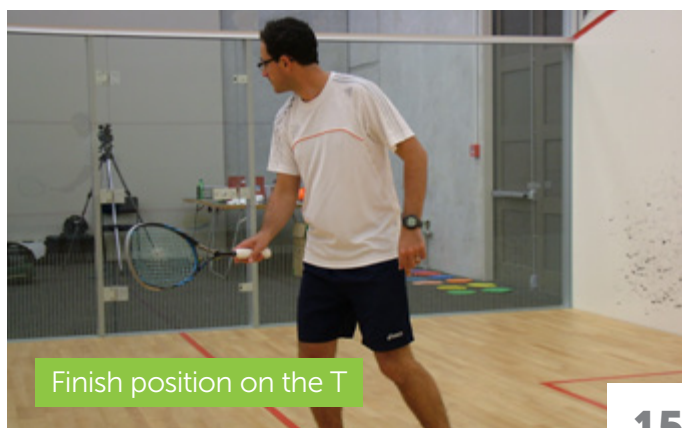
Forehand serve backhand side preparation



Forehand serve backhand side point of contact



Forehand serve moving to the T



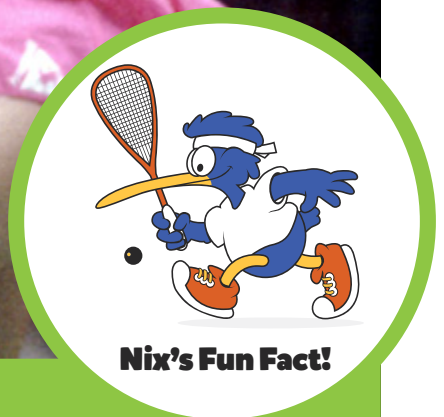
Finish position on the T

Coaching Points

- Stand in a balanced position towards the front of the service box with your shoulders parallel to the side wall. The serve is usually played as a forehand shot from both sides of the court.
- Racket head should be brought up with the racket face open pointing upwards (you should be able to see the strings).
- Select a spot on the front wall to use as the target.
- Throw the ball up slightly in front of yourself, striking the ball using an underarm motion while keeping the wrist firm; the arm should be fully extended on contact.
- You should be aiming high and approximately halfway across the front wall to allow the ball to strike the side wall near to the back of the court.
- Ensure that the racket head follows through and up, finishing with your hand around head height in front of your body.
- Move directly from the service box to the T.



New Zealand's Squash Dame!



Dame Susan Devoy

Arguably the world's greatest Women's player, Dame Susan was a squash and sports legend within New Zealand in the 1980's and early 1990's, winning four World Championships and eight British Opens. Dame Susan is the Patron of Squash New Zealand.

The Scoring

In most cases, a match is the best of five games. Each game is played scoring one point per rally, until one player reaches 11 points (unless the score reaches 10-10). At 10-all, one player needs to win by two clear points to win the game, e.g. 12-10, 13-11, 17-15.

If the players are graded C1 and below the matches are played scoring one point per rally to 15. If the score reaches 14-all, one player must win by two clear points, e.g. 16-14, 17-15, 18-16.

The Warm Up

Before the start of a match, both players are allowed up to five minutes (2.5 minutes on each side) to warm up both themselves and the ball, on the match court. When a ball has been changed during a match, or if the match has been resumed after some delay, the players warm up the ball to playing condition.

The Service

The player to serve first is decided by the spin of a racket. Play commences with a service. The server continues serving until losing a rally, when the opponent becomes the server.

The player who wins the preceding game serves first in the next game. At the beginning of each game and when the service changes from one player to the other, the server can serve from either service box. After winning a rally the server then continues serving from the alternate box.

To serve, a player stands with at least part of one foot on the floor within the service box. For a service to be allowed, it must hit the front wall directly, above the service line and below the out-of-court line, and its return must reach the floor within the back quarter of the court opposite to the server's box (unless volleyed first).

Acceptable Return and Rallies

A return is acceptable if the ball, before it has bounced twice on the floor, is returned correctly by the striker onto the front wall above the tin and below the out of court line, without first touching the floor. The ball may hit the side walls and/or the back wall before reaching the front wall.

A return is not acceptable if it is:

- Not up (ball struck after bouncing more than once on the floor, or not struck correctly, or a double hit).
- Down (the ball after being struck, hits the floor before the front wall or hits the tin).
- Out (the ball hits a wall on or above the out of court line).

Lets

A let is an undecided rally. The rally does not count and the server serves again from the same box. For example, a let may be allowed if the ball in play touches any article lying on the floor, or if the striker refrains from hitting the ball owing to a reasonable fear of injuring the opponent. A let must be allowed if the receiver is not ready and does not attempt to return the service, or if the ball breaks during play.

Interference

When it is their turn to play the ball, a player is entitled to freedom from interference by the opponent. To avoid interference, the opponent must try to provide the player with unobstructed direct access to the ball, a fair view of the ball, space to complete a swing at the ball and freedom to play the ball directly to any part of the front wall.

A player, finding the opponent interfering with the play, can accept the interference and play on, or stop play. It is preferable to stop play if there is a possibility of colliding with the opponent, or of hitting him or her with the racket or the ball.

To view the full manual

Visit the Squash NZ Learning Portal:



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Lesson 2