

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023

As our first 'real' full year without some kind of COVID-related disruptions, the BACT family of clubs grew to 21 (from 19 as at the end of 2022), with a membership base of nearly 1,000 members. Most clubs are at capacity due to the very familiar woes of not nearly sufficient available and suitable indoor sports facilities in which we can play badminton.

A very warm welcome to the Canberra Badminton Academy (CBA) and STDN Club. I am particularly pleased that Benson's CBA joins three other clubs that are either focused on junior development or undertake considerable work in helping juniors; namely Daniel's Capital Juniors Club; Ko's Northside Juniors Club; and Val's work with the Phoenix and Tuggeranong Vikings Clubs. While there remain insufficient places for juniors to train and play outside of school hours (given that all the above named clubs are at or near capacity), it is great that those clubs all have a focus on junior development at all levels.

BACT nearly held the full gamut of events over the year, all of which were extremely well attended; two InterClubs; a Junior Championships; and, for the first time in three years, an ACT Open. While the Match Secretary will provide more details on these events, I was particularly pleased that the ACT Open had nearly 250 players across all four grades and that the Open grade had over 50 players. All events in all grades were able to be held and we even had sufficient players for a consolation event in many grades. Australia's No.1 ranked player (Ricky Tang) played and won the men's Open singles and it was wonderful to see an ACT player coming runner-up in the women's Open singles (Anjali Pradip). I particularly want to thank Sheehan, Brideen, Cassandra and Terry for their work on the various tournaments, particularly the ACT Open, as well as Ko and Xing in relation to the Junior Championships. For detail on the Open please see: [ACT Open 2023 – Better than ever – ACT Badminton Association \(badmintonact.org.au\)](#).

It is hoped that the proposed BadmintonWorx badminton facility in Fyshwick that I mentioned at last year's AGM and Annual Dinner will be up and running in time for the ACT Open in November next year. While I will discuss this matter more at the AGM and the Annual Dinner, I have been advised that things are back on track after some initial problems and that the DA application should be submitted for public consultation in early December 2023 and, all things going well, the facility may be completed by end 2024. This really will be a game-changer for badminton in the ACT and will no longer mean that our tournaments are cancelled by the AIS or other venue constraints. Closer to the time of completion, I intend to negotiate an MoU with the facility owner in order for it to become the 'Home of Badminton in the ACT'. I will advise all BACT members (via email through the Rev system) when the DA has been submitted and I would strongly encourage all BACT members to write in to support it. I will clearly be actively lobbying the ACT Government, other political parties, relevant ACT government departments and the media to support the DA.

However, for 2024 we will still need to rely on venues like the ANU and CGS for our various tournaments. I hope to have a more 'formal' arrangement with CGS given their kind offer not to charge for the hire of their sports hall for our Interclubs in exchange for the coaching of their students. It would be interesting if other such arrangements could be made with other private schools (this should be explored further by the incoming BACT Committee in 2024).

BACT obtained some very significant publicity through the ABC TV story in April (lead story on the sports segment on that day) on how 'Badminton is Booming' in the ACT and highlighting the capacity constraints, particularly in the Gungahlin region (see: ["BADMINTON IS BOOMING" ABC TV NEWS STORY – ACT Badminton Association \(badmintonact.org.au\)](#)). I want to thank Daniel and his club members for participating in the story. It is only through publicity like that, that we are able to gain traction with government for more suitable indoor facilities in the ACT. It was disappointing, however, that neither the ABC or Prime 7 were interested in doing a follow-up story at the ACT Open (and nor the Canberra Times in covering the event).

Some more thanks to Ko and Xing for coordinating the ACT's first BA Foundation coaching course and for Sheehan for coordinating an Umpiring course. BACT now has a good number of qualified coaches and umpires to assist in coaching in clubs and schools (including through the Sporting Schools program) and

umpire at both ACT and interstate events. Hopefully we will not need to rely on interstate umpires anymore and will have coaches to travel with our juniors to various events.

Reflecting on the BACT 2021-24 Strategic Plan and 2023 Operational Plan, BACT has done quite well in meeting the key objectives. I will do a short presentation highlighting some of these outcomes at the AGM. For your reference, the link to the Strategic Plan: [2021-2024 BACT Strategic Plan](#). I have attached a copy of 2023 Operational Plan to the email that includes this report.

On more mundane matters, while I finally sorted out a 'fix' with the Rev company that provides our membership data base for BACT (along with the individual portals for each club) to remove duplicate member numbers allocated to one person, clubs still need to ensure that they effectively maintain their club portals. Please continue to do a clean-up using the 'Membership Finder' link I have provided all club managers. I will do likewise over the Christmas break so that it is all finalised before the 2024 rollover.

I also wish to yet again reiterate the importance of all BACT clubs to keep in mind the range of integrity matters, such as anti-child abuse and anti-discrimination, which we all need to abide by both from a social responsibility point of view and as they form part of our formal relationship with BA. I have previously suggested that club managers appoint an Integrity Manager to be the main point of contact in relation to any complaints or concerns within clubs. I am pleased to hear that many have done just that. Otherwise, club managers will be the designated club integrity officer. BACT Vice President, Alan Kisbee, is BACT's Integrity Officer and the first point of contact for clubs on those matters. I am also happy to discuss these matters with anyone. All policies and links (e.g. to BA's website) on these integrity matters are included in the Document Library on the BACT website and I would urge all club managers and members to examine these resources. One or two potential issues in relation to integrity matters came to my attention during the year, but these were all sorted out one way or another. But I need to highlight the point that if any players and club managers have a reasonable suspicion of any kind of child or other abuse then they should immediately report it to the police.

Following last year's review of the ACT Government's Sports Grants program and the development of the Government's new Strategic Plan for Sport & Recreation in the ACT, I filled out the necessary complex forms to ascertain how BACT will be 'graded'. A 'grading' of 1, 2 or 3 will provide for yearly funding allocations for the next three years. While I do not envisage any real changes to the amount BACT will receive each year (circa \$8,000 to \$10,000), at least we will not need to go through the cumbersome application round each year. But the need for BACT to secure different sources of funding, particularly sponsorships, remains. I made a real effort to secure some sponsorships for the ACT Open this year and, while unsuccessful, I am quietly confident that I may secure some funding (e.g. for the prize money for the ACT Open) for 2024. We need to start small. Btw, the Australian Sports Foundation funding project (that provides for full tax deductibility for individuals to donate to the BACT) remains live in case any others are interested. Many thanks to those that have already donated (see: [Badminton ACT - Australian Sports Foundation \(asf.org.au\)](#)).

Following on from the very successful inaugural BACT Annual Dinner & Awards night last year, our 2023 AGM will again be followed by our 3rd BACT Annual Dinner & Awards night at Gungahlin Eastlakes Club in Gungahlin on 9 December 2023. At the time of writing this report (late November) it is anticipated that around 150 members will attend from 16 BACT affiliated clubs. An incredible achievement that nearly all BACT clubs will attend. Once again, many thanks to Indu Sealey, BACT's Social Secretary and an Associate Committee Member, for taking the lead in organising this event. This event is now well and truly a regular part of our yearly calendar of activities.

In conclusion, I would again like to thank Vice President Alan Kisbee, Treasurer Ray Kan, Secretary Sheehan Lim, Match Secretary Brideen Allen and BACT Webmaster Aaron Chuah for all their hard work over the year. As many of you know, Brideen will be retiring from the APS next year and leaving the ACT. While Cassandra will nominate for the position (and handled the ACT Open with considerable aplomb), I want to thank Brideen for all her hard work over the last four years in the role and on the BACT Committee since 2010, as well as running the Southside Club. Her dedication is truly inspirational to all of us and she will be missed.

I personally hope that, like Cassandra and Sheehan, others from the 'next generation' will consider a role on the BACT Executive Committee in 2024. I, for one, think that it really is time for a younger cohort of BACT members to take BACT forward, particularly with eventual construction of the ACT's first dedicated badminton facility which really will change the role and activities of badminton and BACT in the ACT.

I also hope that Ko, Xing, Daniel, Benson, Val and many others working with them can continue their great work in developing the ACT's juniors, from beginners to those wanting to participate in dedicated ACT teams at various BA national events during 2024.

I encourage members to attend the BACT AGM on 9 December 2023 and hope to meet many of you who have already registered through your clubs (registration has now closed) to attend the BACT's 3rd Annual Dinner and Awards night that follows the AGM (at the same venue).

I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and New Year holiday period.

Olaf Schuermann
President

