

RLTA President's Annual Report 2005

This past year has been witness to many changes around the RLTA. With the loss of our former coach and manager Jeff Schneider to the professional coaching circuit at the end of 2004, we have experimented in 2005 with some significant changes in how the our centre is run. In January, we welcomed a new tennis coach to the RLTA in the form of Jani Kroyherr whose primary responsibility was to breath new life into our junior development program. We also welcomed long-term RLTA stalwart Betty McCoy to take on the challenging role as our site and club administrator.

The year started in spectacular fashion when, in the early hours of a January morning, the shape of our Long Street tennis fence was dramatically altered. The driver of a white sedan travelling down the Smith Street hill lost control of his vehicle while trying to negotiate corner into Long Street and was fortunate to survive relatively unscathed after wiping out several panels of both the roadside and tennis court fences. In her usual quiet and efficient manner, Betty negotiated with fence builders and insurance companies to have the fence restored to its former glory as quickly as possible.

The new coach Jani started the year with a series of free holiday clinics to give students and parents a chance to meet him. Jani's combination of youthful enthusiasm and excellent technical ability seems to have struck a chord with parents and students, the numbers in the junior development program more than doubling in 2005. To help with this increased workload, Jani was ably assisted by Col Brown and Ashley Debenham.

Our new clubhouse was officially opened on Sunday 1st May 2005. More than a hundred members and former members had a wonderful afternoon in balmy autumn weather to witness the ribbon cutting by our State Member for Cleveland Darryl Briskey, accompanied by life members of the RLTA, Merna Bach and Jack Finney. To mark the occasion, several exhibition matches were organised, including a celebrity doubles match between Darryl Briskey, his Federal counterpart Andrew Laming and Redlands Mayor Don Seccombe and Deputy Mayor Alan Beard.

But the new clubhouse was not the only addition to the RLTA complex in 2005. The Queensland State Government saw fit to subsidise new environmentally friendly lighting for our courts 1 to 4, bringing them into line with the popular upgraded lighting on courts 5 to 8. RLTA members should be rightly proud of our wonderful new facilities, and we should all be diligent in maintaining such standards. In years gone by, we have had immense help from members in taking part in various working parties to help replace courts, build fences and plant trees. This year was no exception, with many people helping to put finishing touches to the grounds and the clubhouse. Reg Griffin organised several groups to help transform all of the besser brick walls around our courts. These bricks were either painted a shade of "Wimbledon" green or lined with green court grass to improve both their looks and functionality. To help ensure that our past is not forgotten, Katrina Dalzell took it upon herself to refurbish all of the old honour boards before they were transferred to the new clubhouse. Graham Ireland not only helped install the refurbished honour boards, but also used his framing skills to mount a comprehensive set of tennis rules and an autographed Wimbledon poster in the new clubhouse.

There have been many other volunteers contributing in various ways to their club, but there are two that deserve special recognition. Keith Collier and his offsider Pat Cleary have spent a great deal of their year ensuring that the courts are maintained and ready for play, that the courts surrounds are clean and tidy, and that the gardens are always in flower. It is arguable whether it has been the new clubhouse or the efforts of these two gentlemen that have had the greatest impact on the atmosphere at the RLTA in the past year. Certainly we all owe them a great debt of gratitude for the pride that they have taken in the centre.

The veterans at the RLTA deserve recognition for their on-going support and fund-raising activities in 2005. Their raffles have raised enough to purchase a new BBQ for the new clubhouse and are well on the way to helping purchase new furniture.

Another subtle, but significant, change that has taken place in 2005 has been an upgrade to our web site (www.rlta.org.au or www.redlandstennis.com). For those of you who are not yet familiar with the internet, I can assure you that the club's web site will undoubtedly become an ever increasingly important source of information for club members. It not only provide team lists and fixture draws but also is the best place to find out whether play is possible at times of inclement weather (when you can't get through on the phone!).

Tennis Activities

The big news in 2005 on the tennis front was that the RLTA won the Tom Ferguson Shield for the first time ever! Betty McCoy did a sterling job in not only helping RLTA host the event, but also putting together one of our strongest teams ever. These inter-district competitions are always a lot of fun, but as we found out in 2005, they are even more fun when you win!

However, a more sobering note was our efforts in the inter-club challenge with the fledgling Redland Bay club. Organised by the coaches from both the RLTA and Redland Bay, this event was a first in 2005. Hopefully it will be the first of many, and that the result will be reversed next time around.

Our fixture competitions continue to be well supported with the new facilities completed in 2005 obviously attracting the attention of past players. Our membership for 2005 was just under 500 and growing. Monday and Thursday night competitions are at capacity for the available courts. While the Vets at the RLTA have abandoned their fixture competition in 2005, they have replaced it with social tennis, which is still strongly supported. The Wednesday night inter-club competition with Wynnum District was still popular this year, with our new coach Jani Kroyherr leading the way, but with changes happening at the Wynnum club in 2006, the competition's future is under a cloud.

Saturday morning junior fixtures remain well supported but another important goal for 2005 was achieved through the re-introduction of junior fixtures on Wednesday afternoons. This was not without its teething problems, but it certainly now provides more tennis opportunities for our juniors in 2006. We must especially thank Betty McCoy for persevering in getting the fixtures up and running and we must also thank Jani Kroyherr for encouraging the junior players to participate.

Thank you's

Firstly I would like to thank all of the RLTA committee for their continued support in 2005, especially the honorary secretary Bruce Young and honorary Treasurer Bill Tapper for their help in keeping the club functioning and the bills paid. However, I would especially like to say thank you to Betty McCoy for her efforts as the site and club administrator for 2005. With all the changes taking place this year, the job has been all the more difficult and the hours have been less than sociable. In the interests of maintaining her sanity and her family relationships, Betty will be taking a step backward in 2006. Her commitment to the RLTA will be maintained but her responsibilities are to be divided amongst several different parties.

Ian Somers

President RLTA.

