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National Coach's Report 2021

Kia Orana all,

Here is a brief report on our Junior Program throughout 2021.

At the beginning of Feb 2021, our weekly Junior after-school program got started after a holiday program on the last week of January.

For most part of Term 1 (approximately 13 weeks), the interest of children wanting to play and learn tennis was excellent and there were a lot of new enrolments. Red, Orange and Green dot lessons were conducted for the various age groups, and advanced training for our elite junior players.

Throughout all the school terms during 2021, the number of students participating at the after-school program remained the same, with a few kids going to other sports yet their spot replaced by new enrolments.

My biggest problem at the program was that many kids are doing many sports and trying to fit them in during the week has been a challenge. At the same time, it's been hard encouraging kids and parents to have kids specialise in tennis especially around the age of 9 – 12 years old. On top of this, the lack of overseas travels due to COVID-19 has made the situation hard. As in the past, these trips have always been a positive way to keep kids from 9 years old to the older age groups motivated.

For 2021, I did not run as many red, orange and green dot tournaments on Saturday, but will be changing that this year to get our 11 and Under players more eager to compete. I am looking forward to more competitive local 11 or even 12 and Under match play competitions as well.

So far for 2022, the response for new enrolments and current players willing to be part of the program has been positive. It has been a great start for our Junior Program for 2022.

ANZ, AOPP and JTI schools program

For 2021, the schools program had been very successful during Term 2 and 3 with two mini tennis tournaments at the end of the terms. During Term 2 and 3, we managed to reach out to Apii Avarua, Nikao, St Joseph's, Takitumu, Arorangi, Rutaki, Te Uki Au and Apii Papaaroa for the first time. Age groups for the tournaments were 8, 9 and 10 & Under categories with two boys and girls registered to play in each age group.

The schools thoroughly enjoyed the program and also the competitions that were held.

Our main issue with coaching sessions was the weather, but luckily some schools have indoor facilities. We did experience a lack of tennis balls, but made do at what we had available. For approximate statistics on the number of children involved, I would say approximately 600 to 800 kids (possibly more), with only 10 to 15 percent enrolling for after-school coaching.

A full yearly report has been completed for ANZ, Australian Open Pacific Pathway, and the ITF Junior Tennis Initiative program for 2021.

Once again, I would like to thank all parties for the funding of the school mini tennis program for 2021.

National Junior Squad

Training got well on its way from early February during Term 1. The elite coaching program was restructured during Term 2, 3 and 4 where I was to provide six weeks of coaching to our best up and coming juniors. With unfavorable weather, this program usually extended beyond the six weeks.

For our top Juniors, it was great to have participate in the Vaka Tennis, Village Competition and also the Rarotonga Championships. Once again, the lack of overseas tournaments has not been easy for me to keep players motivated at times. In numerous occasions, I do get asked personally about this situation.

This year, I am looking at having our top junior players in smaller groups at similar hitting levels and mixing our top junior girls and boys with some of our senior players.

What's needed from most of our elite players is the drive of wanting to play, and the will to put in the hard work both on and off court.

Let's all hope for a wonderful year for our Juniors and not to forget our club members. A big thank you to Tennis Cook Islands.

Kia Manuia!

Malcolm Kajer