



INDOOR COMMUNITY TENNIS

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The Suncoast Racquet Club's group of passionate tennis players is now reaping the rewards of their hard work in their new state of the art indoor tennis facility. We would like to inform the people on the Sunshine Coast of how it came to be, and clear up the myths that are circulating about the club. Many people are unaware of the whys and wherefores of how it happened. Some have pre-conceived ideas that it is an "elitist sport" and that it is only for a select group of tennis players from the Sechelt area. The Board of Directors is made up of members from Langdale, Gibsons, Sechelt, and Halfmoon Bay. The board and all of our members are keen and dedicated and want to see an indoor tennis facility that will welcome tennis players from all over the coast. More than 30% of our members are from the lower half of the coast, contrary to the myth that the club is only for Sechelt. The Club is eager to let the general public know that anyone can play in the new facility irrespective of where they live on the coast.

- How did we do it and why is it located where it is?
- Where did the money come from?
- Who can use it?
- It is too expensive to join!

With the demise of the Wakefield Bubble in 2005 the club began the long and time consuming process of finding a suitable home for a new building. The club spent a year looking at land at Crowe Road, Wilson Creek, Davis Bay and finally in Sechelt. We approached the Indian Band, we had meetings with all regional councils, we looked at several ideal locations but prices were prohibitive. We lobbied municipal, provincial and federal governments for funds or grants. No one had any money to help us. We approached recreation bodies, gaming and lottery corporations and exhausted every possible avenue to obtain help. Finally we applied for a recreation grant from Sechelt and were successful in being granted \$50,000 towards the building of 2 tennis courts but with one proviso; it had to be in Sechelt. We were offered a 20 year lease on crown land beside the Sechelt Arena for a nominal sum of \$1 per year. How could we turn it down? This is why it is located where it is and so began our quest to build our new facility.

The never ending hunt for funds began. The club had \$45,000 of our own which came from Initiation Fees kept purposely for a new building fund. Now armed with this and the \$50,000 from the District of Sechelt, the Club approached the Sunshine Coast Credit Union and was successful in getting a \$100,000.00 loan, which was granted only because it was backed by several members' guarantees, including the Board of Directors.

Clearing of the land began in 2006, drawings were done and all the preliminary details were worked out. A project manager was hired and the building process began. All through the building process the Volunteer Board of Directors met and negotiated with members with everyone agreeing to help finance the project by paying their annual dues with no play. We had to overcome many hurdles, including promised donations that didn't materialize, and ever escalating labour and building material costs. Several fund raisers were held raising another \$10,000 and then a huge stroke of luck came our way; a club member offered to finance a large portion of the cost of the building. This spurred on several other members to contribute with smaller loans including the whole Board of Directors paying 3 years dues in advance.....and so the building was completed. The doors opened in August 2008. We now have a wonderful indoor tennis facility which ended up costing close to \$900,000 and was solely funded by members (minus the \$50,000 which the District of Sechelt donated.)

For some of the skeptics out there, there was no government funding that gave us free money. We are paying for all of our expenses with our member's dues, and user fees from the general public. Yes we did have some help with donations in kind, and through tax deductible donations made through the District of Sechelt. For those of you who did help we are extremely appreciative of the faith you have placed in us. However, the majority of the money raised is through loans that now have to be paid back. Donations either through tax deductible contributions or donations in kind through material or labor would still be very much appreciated.

We agreed with the District of Sechelt to allow the general public to have 15% usage of the courts as part of our lease agreement. The general public has been included in many programs; drop ins, tournaments, lessons etc. They can also use the courts as a guest of a member at any time, by paying a nominal fee. The club researched a suitable fee structure by looking at comparable clubs. We implemented reasonable fees that cover firstly and foremost our loans, and then of course, the operating costs. We have a variety of membership classes including reduced fee structures for juniors, couples and families.