

# Jessica Evans: Spearheading Women's Squash in the Fraser Valley



Growing up in Surrey, Jessica Evans says she “played almost every sport there is”, including rugby, soccer, and basketball, but squash is what she has become most passionate about. She’s been playing for approximately 10 years now, after being introduced to it by friends when she was living in Vancouver. Very soon, she was playing both singles and doubles squash, sometimes six days a week, at the Vancouver Racquets Club. At age 30, she currently lives in Chilliwack, loves the slower-paced lifestyle there, and very recently opened her own custom framing business.

She describes herself as naturally competitive and finds playing squash extremely challenging and rewarding. She believes it provides such a good balance to maintain both physical health (e.g., cardio and flexibility) and mental health (e.g., think strategically, set goals).

Before the pandemic restrictions were put in place, she was a member of the Chilliwack Squash Club and played on a men’s team in the local squash league. She was instrumental in developing a women’s program in the area that involves drop-in playing and lessons one night a week and has led the Women’s Squash Week events there for the last several years. In the spring of 2020, she was selected by Squash BC as an ‘Emerging Female Leader’ for her work championing the sport. Because of her new store opening, she recently stepped down from a local committee that is working to have more squash courts built in the city.

She says she has quite a few role models in the squash community who she believes taught her, among many things, determination and how to deal with the mental aspects of the game. These include squash coaches Shawn Zwierzchowski and Steve Lawton as well as women players such as Abby Kidd and Beverly Lawton.

She has completed her Level 1 coaching certification and volunteered (before the pandemic) a couple of hours a week as a Squash Instructor for junior players at the Mission Leisure Centre. When teaching young girls, she says “having fun is the most important,” to be gentle with them, and to encourage them not to get frustrated.

Like many of us who have had no place to play for the last year, she has found it a challenge to keep up her squash skills. Being a creative type (she owns her own framing business remember!), she has set up a large mirror in her backyard is doing ghosting drills there “to make sure I don’t do everything wrong when I get back on court!”

