



Karen Hawyes brings her love of squash to Terrace

Karen Hawyes has been playing squash for over 35 years and still loves it now just as much she did when she began. Her mother was a squash coach and the manager of a private 12-court squash club in Johannesburg, South Africa. She began playing as a young child and went on to represent her province in various national tournaments for the next several years. During that time, she was ranked as high as 14th in the country.

It was on the courts that she met her husband who was a competitive squash player as well as a coach. After they married, they decided to buy the squash centre and over the next two decades grew its membership to over 300 members and offered league playing, school programs, and elite academies.

In early 2015, she and her family moved to Terrace, B.C. where she currently works as the Base Manager for WestJet's operations there. She says she has played in every northern tournament she can, but that hasn't involved very many and typically means travelling to Smithers and Prince Rupert. A couple of years ago, she and her family were part of a small group of local players that converted two unused racquetball courts in an apartment building into squash courts and launched the Terrace Racquets Association. Today, they have around 50 members of all ages, 70% of whom are women.

She says she loves squash because it provides a full-body workout that for 45 minutes or so can be as mentally intense as it is physically intense. Indeed, she believes playing helped her recover more quickly after giving birth and, more recently, after surgery and chemotherapy for breast cancer. "Just do it!", she tells people who are thinking of learning to play.