

RACHEL AU EXPLAINS WHY SQUASH HAS A MAJOR IMPACT ON ALL ASPECTS

“Everything!” is the way Rachel Au describes the aspects of her life that playing squash has impacted. Currently in her mid-20s, she has been playing the game since age six when her father began teaching her to play at the Evergreen Squash Club. She believes that she isn’t a naturally gifted athlete, but playing squash taught her to be disciplined, and she has since realized that she can achieve almost anything by putting in the time and effort to learn.

She says she loves the fact that squash can be so mentally rewarding and physically demanding at the same time. “Physical chess” is an apt description of the game she uses from her father. She says, “It’s a game that’s constantly evolving, and there’s always room for learning and developing.” In addition to being a great cardio workout, she feels squash has given her many opportunities to travel and lots of long-term friendships.

She acknowledges that the squash community is dominated by males and has few Asian players, at least in Canada. However, playing competitive squash has made her more comfortable being challenged and being in situations where she is in the minority. Indeed, she’s currently a law student (at the University of British Columbia), also a relatively male-dominated field, but she says she doesn’t find it daunting because she’s used to breaking the status quo



While participating in the juniors’ program at Evergreen, she won several BC championships between 2004 and 2008 and was on the Canadian Junior Women’s Team in 2009 and 2010. After graduating from high school, she attended Cornell University and participated on the women’s varsity squash team, during which time it was ranked sixth in the US. In 2015 she started playing doubles squash and came in first in the women’s open division of the BC Open Doubles Championships in both 2018 and 2019. In 2018 she also won the Women’s Open division of the Canadian Doubles Championship and played in the Can-Am Cup and the Lapham Grant Squash Tournament (Crawford doubles team). In 2019, she won bronze for Team BC in the National Women’s Team.



She has numerous role models in squash. Among them is Melanie Jans, who coached her for a while when she was playing as a junior. (Melanie is a four-time Canadian champion and currently ranked in the Top 25 in the world.) From watching her, she says she learned to “play with integrity”. Julee Devoy, her coach at Cornell, was relatively hands-off in her approach but always had a great deal to say that, in turn, made her love squash and learn to train herself.

As a member of Squash BC’s board of directors since 2018, she currently oversees the very demanding and evolving portfolios of High Performance, Doubles, and Competitions. One board member told us she approaches her

volunteerism on the board the same way she approaches a squash match: “strategic, commitment to a goal, and understanding the various dynamics in her surroundings to maximize output.”