

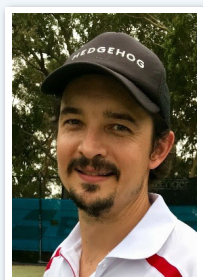
# Around the Courts

Superb Tennis Newsletter July 2022

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## Member In Focus



**Chris Ireland:**  
Photographer, artist and film maker

This month we meet Chris who tells us about his life outside tennis and why tennis has become such an important part of his life in recent years.

### Hi Chris, tell us your tennis journey.

6 years ago I underwent a spinal fusion operation with my spine fused from L4 to S1. My rehab consisted of swimming but the physio wanted me to try to restore some mobility so she suggested hitting a ball against the wall. One Sunday I tried the hitting wall at Mills Park while Tristan was playing social tennis with two others on the adjacent court. He insisted that I join them to play doubles. I took my first tentative steps on my tennis journey, shuffling around the court, hitting almost everything into the net.

### What do you enjoy about playing at Superb Tennis?

I love the social network at Mills Park: it's an intersection for people of all ages and walks of life. I've made some friendships that have led to some amazing life experiences, such as being trained by Ian Westmoreland as a community volunteer mentor, and working alongside David Wooldridge to help put a medical centre inside a social housing block in Kirribilli. It's the one constant in life, that despite turbulence, remains a relaxing place to be.

### What aspects of tennis are you trying to improve at the moment?

I've been trying to work on having soft hands at the net. Coming from a 15 year history with competitive squash, groundstrokes come more naturally, but the more technical aspects of tennis are challenging. I'm inspired by the delicate yet brutal volleys of Jason Drever and Peter Poon. Pete has taught me a lot about volleying after a comp or two played together, so has David Wooldridge, my long-time doubles partner. Jason has taught me where not to hit when he is at the net (anywhere within 3 metres of him).

### We see you playing doubles at Mills Park frequently - what would be your favourite strategy in doubles?

Favourite strategy: baseline slug outs cross court, culminating in a net rush and volley kill. Most successful strategy: hitting deep into the toes at the baseline and waiting for my net partner to mop up. Strategy required: to adopt some sort of strategy.

### Do you have a favourite doubles partner? What do you enjoy about playing with him/her?

David Wooldridge. I call him SuperCoach because he tells me what to do and when, so I try to do it. He's kind of like Google. I say "Hey Google, what is the best follow-up shot to a low slice that has me leaning forward when the net poacher crosses?"

We also know how to keep each other focused. He knows I tend to make several consecutive errors so he distracts me after my first error by asking me about photography.



### Now tell us about your career as a film maker.

It's funny, many people at Superb know me as a film maker, and it's true I've made a film. It was a National Geographic documentary about two time world surfing champ Tom Carroll. The thing about films is they take a long time to make, in this case 18 months. So for the first little while it came up while introducing myself to people they decided I was a Hollywood director!

Member In Focus - Chris Ireland

In actual fact I direct commercials, and this represents about half my commercial workload. You'll have seen these when you're trying to watch something interesting on YouTube and you are forced to watch my ad for six seconds before you skip it.



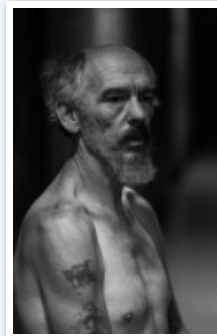
But more accurately, I'm a photographer and artist, who occasionally makes short commercial films. I make ads for money and shoot art for love.

Photography has opened many doors and given me quite an adventure. I've ridden in the cockpit of an MRH-90 helicopter for Australian Defence Force, also mounted cameras on the turret of the army tanks. I've been in FA18 Hornets, hoisted up in cranes and scaled mountains. I've also met a few interesting people. I've toured with The Birds of Tokyo, photographed Pat Rafter and Guy Sebastian, interviewed champion surfer Sally Fitzgibbons and made a film on Tom Carroll. I'm not usually a name dropper but also I worked for a celebrity photographer who introduced me to Cate Blanchett, Nicole Kidman, Megan Gale and Jennifer Hawkins. But my favourite subjects are ordinary humans.

Making a film is like tennis: when you go home from a day's work you only recall the highlights.



**What is something that would surprise our readers about your work as a film maker?**



People may be surprised to know I've made a 10 year photo documentary project on a housing commission block in Kirribilli called "All Things Considered". It follows the life of 25 residents and seeks their perspective on love, luck, circumstance and regret. It's an exploration of Australia's social mobility and the role public housing plays in modern life. It

featured recently on SBS thanks to Ian Westmoreland (he gave them tip-off about the work). I'm currently raising money to publish a book on All Things Considered and tour a photographic exhibition. Take a look:

[www.atcexhibition.com.au](http://www.atcexhibition.com.au)

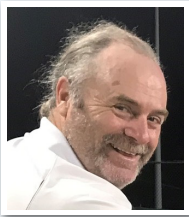
**When you're not making films or playing tennis how do you spend your time?**

When I go missing at home, it is either assumed by my 9 and 11 year old boys I'm either "at tennis" "on the toilet" or "in the darkroom".

I am a passionate print maker and I built my own darkroom. During lockdown I taught myself platinum and palladium printing, which is a beautiful form of printing learnt 130 years ago where the image embeds into a paper fibre using light-sensitive palladium. You hand coat the emulsion onto the paper so it's very Zen. The resulting prints last 1,000 years. If you come to my house you'll see the walls crowded by images of my wife and sons, made in the darkroom.



## From our Superb President - Eddy Watson



Welcome everybody to our latest newsletter, and thanks to Matthew for putting it together! I love getting to know more about our members through their profiles.

Good news! We plan to complete our court resurfacing program by June 2023, with the last 3 courts at Mills Park due to be resurfaced.

The winter months are always a bit of a challenge for our night time comps, with the low temperatures being a factor for some players, so there has been a drop in numbers for our new comps starting recently or about to start. Congratulations (and thanks) to those whose love of playing tennis keeps them playing, and we look forward to welcoming back others for the spring time comps.

Our 10 year leases for the Mills Park and Berowra Tennis Centres were due to expire at the end of this month. Unfortunately, Hornsby Council has not been able to initiate the process for the open tender of the leases for a number of reasons, so they have extended our lease for one more year until end of June 2023. While that extension is welcome, it does leave us in a bit of a holding pattern, unable to progress further any plans for redevelopment of the Mills Park clubhouse to bring the bathroom/changerooms in particular up to modern standards. Without a long term lease in place it's not possible to apply for/negotiate funding options to undertake the work required.

In August 2023, we will be celebrating our club's 100th birthday. The inaugural meeting of thirteen tennis clubs operating in Hornsby was held on 14 August 1923. These clubs formed the Hornsby District Tennis Association. To celebrate this event we have a small sub-committee who are looking at events that we will be holding. If you are interested in being involved, or have a bright idea, you can contact either our Secretary, Stuart Hillier, or committee member Marc Donnelly.

Congratulations to **Jordan Thompson** on his recent ATP Challenger level title win on grass at Surbiton and then making the final at Nottingham going down 4-6, 4-6 to Dan Evans. It's always good to be in form leading in to Wimbledon!

- Steve Thompson's elite students have also enjoyed amazing success:
- **Renee Alame** won the Under 12 years Australian Girls' Championships.
- **Andre Filep** was finalist in the Darwin ITF Junior tournament.
- **Chanel Awkar** was a semi finalist in the Under 14s Australian Girls' Championships.



L to R: **Eddy Watson** - Club President and **Tim Brackenreg** - Pro Shop & Coaching Services.

## Berowra Tennis Centre Upgrade



**Jonathan Gray**  
Project Director

Good news! The clubhouse has reopened with new facilities for players and coaches. The new toilet/shower is now complete with the accessible toilet to be completed in the near future. With court upgrading and clubhouse renovations complete, the focus on the project now turns to the solar power works and electric vehicle charging stations for the remainder of 2022.



A summary of achievements include:

- Resurfacing of the courts, new winder posts and new championship nets
- New LED court lights to dramatically improve lighting plus reduce energy use by 30%
- Completion of unisex toilet/shower, with more efficient water heating and storage
- Capture of rain water from clubhouse roof gutters, retention and re-use
- Chilled filtered water and filtered, boiling water in the clubhouse
- Disability ramp access to Court 2
- All clubhouse windows have been replaced and a wider sliding door installed
- New metal roof

Our members have embraced the improvements at Berowra with record numbers of players hiring courts for casual use. To book a court, just jump onto our website, with discounts for members.

**Temporary carpark closure.** The carpark at Berowra Tennis Centre will be closed from 18 July for approximately two months. All access will be via the pathway through the bush on Boundary Street. The carpark closure is required to install the electric vehicle charging stations.

## Mills Park is turning Blue!

During April/May we replaced ageing green court surfaces on three courts (1, 7 & 8) with new blue synthetic grass to match the other 4 courts resurfaced in the last two years. The new surfaces are settling in well and we expect them to provide "superb" tennis for many years. We plan to complete the program of resurfacing the remaining 3 courts by next year, which may include two hard courts.



## Social tennis is booming!



**Matt Noone**  
Social Tennis Coordinator

Over the past couple of months record numbers of players have been enjoying social tennis at Mills Park – on weekend afternoons and Wednesday nights. Sets are mixed and graded when possible to give players variety and challenge. We have traditionally not kept scores, but are considering a trial of recording scores on Saturdays to generate [Universal Tennis Ratings \(UTRs\)](#) for all players. The use of UTRs may help us to provide more balanced sets for all players and help players monitor their improvement.

Let me know what you think about the UTR proposal or any other feedback on how to improve social tennis by texting me on **0418 203 596**.



# Competition Results – Winners are Grinners

## Tuesday Night

Congratulations to the winning teams for the “Summer” comp that we thought would never end due to rain during Feb – April:

A1 – **Scared Hitless**

A2 – **Up Leos**

B – **3D** (The Drever family transferred their dominance on Thursday nights to win B Division on Tuesday night comp, and as their reward they have been promoted to the more challenging tennis in A Grade – good luck guys!)



## Thursday Night

Congratulations to **Simply Smashing** to win the comp over Fault Less (misnomer this time, perhaps?)

Nicole and Mandy from Simply Smashing get their hands on the prize, which we hope they will split with Elijah and John. Cash prizes will become history as we move to fabulous new prizes – see article below.



## New prizes for competition winners

Your Superb Tennis committee has decided to issue consistent prizes to adult competition winners: stylish engraved beer mugs and elegant stemless wine glasses. We hope these fantastic prizes will motivate you even more to win your next comp!



## Substitute players for competition

Want to try competition without weekly commitment or cost? Play as a substitute player (aka reserve or fill-in) to replace missing competition players due to injury, sickness or other reasons. To register your interest in being a substitute player, complete the online form [here](#). You will be contacted by the team captain or competition secretary to invite you to play when a space is available, sometimes at short notice.

