



Inspiring Women in Sport Across Canada 2021



Rachel Au

Squash BC

Athlete/Volunteer/Board Member

“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 is not 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.

As a player, Rachel 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. In 2015 she started playing doubles squash and came in first place in the women’s open division of the BC Open Doubles Championships in both 2018 and 2019.

Rachael is currently a law student at the University of British Columbia and a member of Squash BC’s Board of Directors.



Michelle Craig

Squash Quebec
Athlete/Coach/Mentor

Michelle Craig is one of twenty Mentors serving in Squash Canada's Informal Mentoring Program. Like many players who learned as juniors, Michelle started playing squash with her parents.

After graduating from University, Michelle became involved with coaching a varsity team. There she felt that, through coaching, she was able to support other university players. A highlight included winning the OUA Championships in the last year of her undergrad.

Michelle now plays doubles and enjoys learning the game from mentors in both Montreal and Toronto. Michelle believes that squash is a great way to make friends and join a community, especially when moving into a new city!



Ashley Cullis

Squash Nova Scotia
Athlete/Volunteer

Ashley Cullis has been playing squash for 19 years and credits her passion for the sport to the inclusive and social squash communities on the East Coast. She started playing in Mill River, PEI in 2002 and has been playing out of Halifax, NS since 2008, with a few years spent in Ottawa and Vancouver.

Ashley has represented Nova Scotia at two national tournaments and has been involved in various volunteer roles locally and with Squash Canada. A highlight of hers was serving as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Women's World Team Championships in 2014. She was the recipient of the 2019-2020 Senior Female Athlete of the Year award through SportNS.



Caroline de Vries

Squash Alberta
Athlete/Referee/Volunteer

Caroline de Vries is an avid player, referee and volunteer in squash in Canada. She is a founding board member of the Edmonton Squash Club, former member of Squash Canada's Female Engagement and Gender Equity Committee and has been involved with the growth and development of the sport for many years.

In 2020, Caroline achieved a Provincial Referee certification in singles squash. Caroline has led as Tournament Referee at National and Provincial tournaments in Alberta and has provided officiating and mentoring support at numerous other events.

Caroline continuously looks for ways to give back to squash and, in 2018, arranged a group home and automobile sponsorship program for members of the Edmonton Squash Club.

Caroline was awarded the *2019-2020 Squash Canada Certificate of Achievement*.



Karen Hawyes

Squash BC
Athlete/Volunteer

Karen Hawyes loves squash just as much now and she did when she began playing over 35 years ago. Her mother was a squash coach and the manager of a private 12-court squash club in Johannesburg, South Africa. Karen began playing as a young child and went on to represent her province in various national tournaments for the next several years.

In early 2015, she and her family moved to Terrace, B.C. 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.



Julie Do

Urban Squash Toronto/Squash Ontario
Athlete/Volunteer

Julie Do was introduced to squash in middle school. Through the support of a local volunteer, she decided to engage into the sport, joined Urban Squash Toronto (UST), and now, 6 years later, has never looked back!

Even though squash is an individual sport, Julie feels that her program encouraged teamwork both on and off court. She loves the encouragement and camaraderie and her squash community has become a second family to her.

In addition to playing in local and provincial tournaments, Julie also volunteers her time mentoring and tutoring in the classroom at UST. It is through this experience that Julie found her passion for teaching and is currently pursuing a post secondary degree in education.

Julie is an honour roll student, has been named UST's student of the month several times, and is a three-time recipient of the Jamie Nicholl's post secondary scholarship. She was team lead of her Northview Heights Secondary School squash team.

Julie feels that squash has increased her public speaking skills and confidence overall. She hits a mean lob serve and plans to make squash a lifetime sport.



Encouraging Women in Officiating

Women interested in advancing their squash singles and doubles officiating skills benefitted from access to clinics, mentorship and virtual courses in 2020. In March 2020, more than 15 women participated in an all-female singles refereeing clinic at Women's Squash Week in Alberta. Participants leveraged mentorship from 4 certified officials to increase their skills and knowledge. In December 2020, more than 20 female players pursued their Doubles Officiating Certification via a Virtual Certification Course and Online Assessment, led by National Referee and Examiner, Mariette Rabacal.

