

On the 17th March 2006 Brisbane Region placed the following News article on their website. Unfortunately, as expected it isn't accurate. It incites panic and doesn't tell the complete story. Read in isolation it is a very irresponsible article indeed. Even the heading is misleading because NO PLAYER has been BANNED.

The BLACK wording has been extracted from the Brisbane Region article and the BLUE wording is the Q Squash position.

“The Q Squash board has decided to not accept memberships from any players that play on the Northside of Brisbane.”

One must appreciate the Q Squash Board is facing a major problem as a consequence of a recent decision made by the Squash Brisbane Board. The Squash Brisbane Board who administer the Northside Pennant Competition have made a monumental decision *“As of Monday 20th February all players participating in Squash Brisbane Fixtures Competitions will cease to automatically be affiliated with Q squash by virtue of the previous PAYG system. However, they will continue to be covered by a Player Accident Insurance policy.”*

The Squash Brisbane Board provided no reason for their decision, provided no warning of their intent and have refused mediation.

All players were previously members of Q Squash under a GROUP SCHEME. Squash Brisbane has terminated memberships ... NOT Q Squash.

In fact Squash Brisbane has even kept the component that was previously paid to Q Squash to affiliate all players. They have misleadingly told the players that the cost of playing the pennant has not changed. It has. To receive the same benefits a player previously received they now have to pay their pennant fee PLUS a membership to Q Squash.

The Q Squash Board is extremely concerned about the long term financial impact this decision will have on Queensland Squash and the impact it will have on delivering events and supporting representative teams.

This decision also impacts on Squash Australia and its capacity to continue operating and delivering major events and developing our talented juniors.

The Board is also concerned for the players. They are being misled by Squash Brisbane concerning the cost of playing on the Northside.

The Q Squash Board is seeking to protect itself from insolvency but also to stop panic membership applications. The Q Squash Board is working with Sport & Recreation Queensland and Squash Australia to hold talks with the centre operators and hopefully find a solution which is beneficial to all stakeholders and participants.

“They have also restricted membership benefits to all new Southside and Country players as well as suspending all membership payments to the Regions.”

The Board has simply told Brisbane Region and the Country Regions that membership applications will not be processed until a final decision is reached relative to Squash Brisbane.

It is true that Q Squash has suspended all payments to the Regions. Q Squash no longer receives a payment from Squash Brisbane and hence we cannot provide payments to anyone if the funding has stopped and the future is uncertain. This would be an irresponsible action by the Directors and could lead to a financial disaster.

“This decision is in no way supported by Brisbane Region Squash and we are actively trying to get these decisions overturned.”

It is extremely disappointing but it would appear Brisbane Region Squash is only obtaining membership for the representative juniors. They are not acting on behalf of all members and they are not working with Q Squash in the best interest of brokering a solution.

“The affect of not accepting Northside players (metropolitan players that play in the Squash Brisbane) competition as members (even though they have been members for years) means that these players are no longer able to compete at the Queensland State titles or be selected in any Queensland or National teams.”

This might be a consequence. The Board has advised the Regional Representatives that some players may be affected by this Squash Brisbane decision.

Unfortunately, affiliation at this point works on the basis of the MAJORITY paying a small amount toward membership and NOT a MINORITY paying a small amount.

Membership on the Northside can be broken down as follows: 90% of seniors previously paid membership whilst 10% was paid by juniors. This is based on team submissions. That membership equates to approximately \$50,000. As you can see the figures are significant and will have a major impact on Q Squash.

As you will appreciate even a 10% junior funding is not capable of funding the State Body but more importantly the higher level events we conduct for the players. It will also have a significant impact on Queensland’s ability to participate in major championships.

There were at least 105 competition juniors on the Northside. Brisbane Region has applied for 21 memberships. One must be asking: why has Brisbane Region discriminated against the other juniors? Let’s not forget about the seniors who might be in a position where they might be wishing to represent Queensland as well!

“We believe that using juniors and their representative chances to try to get things sorted out with Squash Brisbane is 1. not in the interests of the Sport. 2. immoral to use juniors in this manner, they are the future of the sport. 3. discriminatory based on where you live. 4. completely against all ideals of a state body. 5. not in compliance with their own rules and constitution.”

The Q Squash Board has not made any decisions which specifically target juniors. We care about the seniors just as much. The Board has made a decision regarding ALL memberships.

The Board is also very mindful of the impact this will have. We are trying to broker a solution in the best interest of ALL stakeholders and players.

Brisbane Region can make these accusations but the real issues here are: why has Squash Brisbane made such a unilateral decision without any consultation whatsoever and why have they refused mediation?

Kim Schramm
CEO Q Squash