

BRIARS SQUASH HOW IT STARTED

The game of squash was first played in the private schools of England during the late nineteenth century. The game was modified and refined when British servicemen took it to the Middle East, India and Pakistan. During the 1950's professionals from these countries toured Australia. Tremendous interest was generated by these tours.

In 1956, Bill McLoughlin's courts in Shaftesbury Road, Burwood, were opened and a group of Briars members started to play socially. In the spring competition of 1957, members made up two teams and played for the Burwood Squash Club. The next year there were four teams with 24 regular players. In 1962 the B2 team won the pennant.

In 1968, the late Doug Vanderfield realised squash was an ideal way of keeping fit for other sports. He proposed that it should become a major sport within the Club. In that year, under the chairmanship of Ross Anstey, four Briars teams were entered in the pennant competition. During the next two years Squash proved itself to be a worthy addition to the Club by firstly being self-supporting and secondly capable of fielding teams strong enough to win pennants. In 1970 approval was granted for Squash to become a major sport and Ian McGregor became its first official chairman. Five teams were entered that year, three made the semi-finals with the B4 team winning the grand final. Since then, the Briars Squash Club has become well known for its strong competitive teams and its hospitality. In fact, in 1976 the Club won four pennants which was only bettered by one other club in the Western District Competition. Up until 1977 the Club had won fourteen pennants.

The highlight of 1977 was the success of our A1 team. We became holders of the Doug Vanderfield Shield for the first time. The late Briars President had presented this trophy to the Squash Association in 1960 to be held by the winning A1 team. Our previous best effort was in 1960 when the A1 team were runner's up. At the end of 1977, the chairman, Ray Pontifex, took the opportunity to bring all teams together at the one centre on the one home night. Until 1978 when we started playing at the new courts in Belmore Street, teams were split between Ashfield and Shaftesbury Road.

Other Briars Squash activities include two highly successful.

tours of New Zealand. The first was in 1973 and the second in April 1978. Two weekend trips to play B1 squash have been made to Dubbo. We in turn have hosted Dubbo R.S.L. Club twice in Sydney. Another similar annual competition held against the Banks town Squash Club.

Lars Brander -Nov 1978