

Press Release
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Clash of the Codes

Next weekend's inaugural Clash of the Codes tournament will feature Southland's elite sporting trio – the Steel, Sharks and Stags – but there won't be a ball in sight.

Instead, members of the three franchise teams will be armed with a racquet and shuttlecock to do battle on the badminton court alongside New Zealand's Commonwealth Games team, which is due to be named next week.

"It's neutral territory for the three Southland teams so we're expecting an entertaining spectacle as some of our sporting heroes grapple with the dynamics of a completely new code," Sport Southland's ILT coaching manager Paul Westbury said.

"It's a great opportunity for the three franchises to compete together at a community event."

The Commonwealth Games team will be based in Invercargill from June 30 to July 10 for an intensive training camp in preparation for the New Delhi event in October.

Their coach Thana Arikrishnan will prove an experienced tournament director for the Clash of the Codes tournament, while the game's future stars from Southland Girls', Southland Boys' and James Hargest College will add their talent to the mix on court.

Sport Southland-organised event will be held from 2-3pm on Sunday, July 4, at the Paul Skelt Memorial Hall at Surrey Park, followed by a social function at Stadium Southland.

Following on from hosting the prestigious Oceania Championships earlier this year, Badminton Southland's calendar is brimming with exciting events in the coming months, including the Southland Open and Masters Championships on July 2-3, the South Island Division One Neill Cup on July 30-31 and the Southland Under-13 and Under-17 championships on August 28-29.

The Invercargill Licensing Trust and the ILT Foundation recently approved funding of \$19,000 and \$75,000 respectively for the organisation.

Badminton Southland administration and development officer Sue McCormack said the grants were "a huge boost".

"We're rapt. It will benefit all aspects of our sport from coaching the junior players through to the senior and high performance ranks," she said.

ILT Foundation and Invercargill Licensing Trust chairman Alan Dennis said the success of badminton in the deep south was a credit to all involved.

"Badminton Southland continues to set the benchmark for their northern counterparts - and not only in their own code. The tireless dedication and professionalism of those involved is inspiring and the elite events being attracted to Invercargill is testament to that," he said.

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