

Who runs the coaching at Thornleigh Squash Club?

[Thornleigh Squash Club](#) is widely regarded as the premier squash venue in New South Wales, featuring nine glass-back courts and a thriving player community. The coaching programme is led by Head Coach Mike Dickens, whom alongside Geoff Davenport (Maash Squash Club / Jets) are the only current [World Squash Federation Level 2](#) accredited coaches leading structures within clubs on Sydney's North Shore.

Coaching Leadership & Philosophy

Mike Dickens brings a proven, international track record in building structured, high-performance squash pathways within club environments. His approach centres on creating clear, progressive systems that support players at every level from complete beginners to elite competitors.

At the heart of his philosophy is a simple but powerful principle: every player should have a goal, supported by a structured plan to achieve it. This aligns closely with the broader club vision of developing lifelong participation in the sport.

Coaching Journey & Expertise

Mike's coaching foundations were formed in the UK's squash strongholds of South Manchester and Leeds, where he developed junior programmes and coached across all standards.

Following a period competing on the PSA Tour, he was appointed Sports Manager at Chapel Allerton Tennis and Squash Club. Tasked with revitalising the club, Mike led a complete transformation between 2003 and 2010 both in infrastructure and performance.

He introduced a **pyramid-style pathway**, creating a seamless progression from grassroots participation through to elite performance. This structure established the club as a global training hub, attracting top international professionals while simultaneously strengthening grassroots engagement.

Notable achievements during this period include:

- Developing one of the UK's strongest squash programmes and pro player hub

- The hub included world-class professionals such as Alister Walker (Highest World Ranking, 12) Stephen Coppinger (HWR 14), Shaun Leroux (HWR 37), Scott Arnold (HWR 54), Aaron Frankcomb (HWR 38), Jonny Harford (HWR 59)
- An environment for other top world class professionals to drop in and train such as James Wilstrop (HWR 1), Ong Beng Hee (HWR 7)
- Supporting elite coaching through collaboration with Neil Guirey
- Winning the Premier Squash League title in 2009 the highest level of club competition globally ([semi-final news report](#))

This high-performance environment had a powerful flow-on effect, significantly increasing participation across all levels and producing top-tier junior results, including a European U19 Champion.

Continued Development & Global Experience

After relocating to Wales in 2010, Mike continued to expand junior programmes at Newport Squash Club, developing national champions and building strong school outreach initiatives all while working in the corporate world for the next 10 years.

- Coaching Welsh National Junior Champions Lewis Poole and Eve Griffiths
- Assisting Welsh Junior Head Coach Greg Tipping's with national junior training squads.
- Captained the Wales over 35 national team against England, Scotland and Ireland.
- Represented Wales over 35 for 4 years.

Relocates to Australia

Since moving to Australia, Mike has:

- Introduced hundreds of new players to squash
- Built strong relationships with schools
- Driven growth in female participation
- Coached both Australian National Junior Champions and Masters-level competitors
- Become NSW Junior Performance Pathway Head Coach
- Led the coaching for the NSW - National State Championship winning team 2024 and 2025.

- Australian over 35's National Championships runner up, NSW over 35's runner up

Impact at Thornleigh Squash Club

Since joining [Thornleigh](#) as Head Coach in August 2025, Mike has made an immediate and measurable impact by refining and strengthening the club's coaching pathways.

Key outcomes include:

- Establishing a structured junior pathway with ~60 active participants
- Partnering with multiple high schools for regular training programmes
- Creating a clear development “conveyor belt” for emerging talent
- Supporting high-performance success, coaching multiple elite juniors including Kasper Cheung winning the Australian Junior Open title at age 17.

Importantly, Mike has built on Thornleigh's already strong foundations streamlining systems to ensure consistency, progression, and long-term player engagement.

Vision

Mike's strength lies in designing **sustainable, scalable coaching structures** that elevate both participation and performance. His work ensures that every player regardless of starting point can progress through a clearly defined pathway in a supportive, high-quality environment. This is supported by a strong internal framework of coaches guiding junior and adult development

In partnership with Club Manager Rex Thomas, the shared vision is clear: to develop not just better players, but **lifelong squash participants (“Squashies for life!)**.