



## Grasshoppers Talent Spotting At Wellington Open Tournament



The Renouf Tennis Centre played host to the prestigious Tennis NZ Money Tournament and Wellington Open this weekend (19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> March 2010). But it was the Mini Grasshoppers Tournament which took place on finals day that really drew the crowds!

40 budding future tennis champs aged 5–10 registered for play bright and early on Sunday morning, each with a parent volunteer in tow to umpire and lend a hand. Directed by Grasshopper Tournament Coaches, Andy Wheeler from Capital Coaching based at Thorndon Tennis Club and Francis Glover from Tennis Inc Coaching Academy, Tawa Lyndhurst TC, the players were treated to a morning of fun competition using modified nets, courts and rules.

Players came from clubs and schools throughout the Wellington, Hutt Valley and Kapi Mana regions, with most children coming from St Mark's Church school in Wellington and Churton Park Tennis Club. St Mark's are just completing their first year of a 3 year Grasshoppers Tennis in Schools programme. The fact that St Mark's kids have had such a positive experience of tennis in school and are now aware of the pathway into clubs and local grasshoppers tournaments clearly shows that successful links are being made between the schools, the clubs and the coaches.

Commented Andy Wheeler, Grasshoppers Tournament Coach, *"we had an almost even split of boys and girls in both age groups and the quality of sportsmanship and skill displayed by the grasshopper players is to be commended. For some, this would have been their very first competitive tennis experience, but all took it in their stride and looked like they were having lots of fun"*

All participants received a Grasshoppers tournament certificate and some token giveaways from sunsmart and ASB whilst the runners-up and winners in each age group received some top prizes provided by Tennis Central. Perhaps the highlight for some was the well deserved complimentary fruit juice and sausage sizzle!

Results:

### **Red Group (5-7 years)**

Winner – Zino Varouhas-Poole (5) from Hataitai School and the Renouf Tennis Centre  
Runner up – Mick Reid (5) from Kapanui School and Waikanae Beach Tennis Club

### **Orange Group (8–10 years)**

Winner – Nicholas Hall (9) from Churton Park School and Tennis Club  
Runner up – Ben Taylor (9) late entrant (club/school unknown)



Zino Varouhas-Poole (right) & Mick Reid (left)  
Winner and runner up of the Red Stage (5-7yrs)



Nicholas Hall (right) and Ben Taylor (left)  
winner and runner up of the Orange Stage (8-10yrs)

Said Charlie Cordwell, CEO Tennis Central, *“by all accounts this event was a resounding success, so much so that we hope it will become an annual fixture alongside the Wellington Open. After all, these kids are the future of the game, and we figure if they have the chance to watch and play alongside some top NZ players it might just inspire them to keep on practicing – maybe one day we’ll have a Grasshopper coming through the ranks to represent NZ”.*

Tennis Central would like to thank all children, parents and supporters for participating and helping with the smooth running of the event. Thanks also goes to Greg Moller, our official photographer for the day, sunsmart and ASB for donating some great prizes and the Grasshopper Tournament Coaches who helped organise this event and made it possible.

Grasshoppers is a Tennis New Zealand National initiative aimed at children aged 5-10. It is a curriculum based fundamental skills programme available to all primary schools and provides the perfect formula for schools, coaches and clubs to work together to increase participation in a sport that can be enjoyed for life.

**To find out more about Grasshoppers contact Katie Oman, Tennis Central  
Regional Development Manager on 04 3859709 or [katie@wellingtontennis.org.nz](mailto:katie@wellingtontennis.org.nz)**