

Roberts & Morrow

North Coast Open

Coffs Harbour, NSW

PSA CHALLENGER
TOUR

Star Line Up for Squash Open
Peter Saxby

Players are gearing up in preparation for the start of the PSA Challenger Tour 5 Roberts & Morrow North Coast Open which gets underway tomorrow from 6.00pm. Players seeded 9-24 in the Men's Open will battle it out to advance to the second round on Friday night where they come up against the top eight seeds for a spot in Saturday's quarter finals.

The Women will be in action on Friday morning commencing at 10.00am for a place in the quarter finals which will be played alongside the Men's matches on Friday night and a big crowd is expected to watch the players in action.

On Saturday it's quarter finals and semi finals for the Men, and semi's for the Women, so visitors will be kept rivetted to the courts by the calibre of matches being played by all the international players.

The Women's draw has six players ranked in the top 100 world rankings so spectators can expect some great match ups during the rounds on Friday. The line up is headed by Hong Kong and World #49 Vanessa Chu, who has visited the Coffs Coast previously in 2014.

Vanessa stated "Yeah I'm so happy to be back after a few years and to be #1 seed. I've train hard in the last few months trying something different to improve myself because I know they're all good players. Some of the players I've played with them before but some of them I haven't so I've watched some videos to help me out. I'm really excited for the tournament."

Australian players looking to perform well include Sarah Cardwell, WR59 seeded 2 who will be playing her 300th PSA match in the opening round on Friday and Jessica Turnbull WR 70 seeded 3. Turnbull has been in good form winning the South Australian Open earlier this month and will be looking to continue that form here as she is no stranger to the Coffs Centre.



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Early this week Jessica indicated *"I'm super excited about the possibility of qualifying for world champs, having a ranking that is just outside the cut off is very frustrating, but having events like North Coast on the calendar makes bridging that gap a bit easier, plus it's on home(ish) soil so that's a big bonus as well!"*

Rising talents Ooi Kah Yan and Aifa Azman both from Malaysia and Georgina Adderley from Scotland, will be making their first appearances here in Coffs Harbour, arriving from competing at the World Women's Under 19 Championships. Each will be looking to create something special during the tournament with Azman drawn to play Cardwell on Friday to advance to the round of eight. Georgina Adderley and Jessica Turnbull are likely to meet Friday night if successful in their opening first round matches earlier in the day.

In the Men's Open, players from New Zealand, Malaysia, Scotland, USA and Japan head up the seedings with Australian's Nicholas and Tom Calvert leading the Australian charge seeded at 7 and 8 respectively.

Kiwi Evan Williams the #1 seed has been quietly preparing for the challengers he will face, having been a finalist here in 2018.

When asked about coming to Coffs Harbour Evan commented *"preparations have been great. Been working on a few things with my coach to help me push on from my good form through NZ in June. Hugely excited about the potential world open spot."*

How does the North Coast Open rate? *"Can tell a lot of people are interested as the draw in Coffs is much stronger than the other tournaments. A fantastic initiative from PSA to help the lower levels experience the year's biggest event. The courts and facilities are awesome"* he said.



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Mohd Syafiq Kamal and Addeen Idrakie of Malaysia seeded 2 and 3 are likely to meet in the semi-finals but first Kamal has to overcome a likely challenge from Moustafa El Sirty from Egypt, who was runner up in World U19 Championships and finalist at the South Australia Open and Shepparton International last weekend.

Williams is likely to encounter the inform Angus Gillams from Scotland, the #4 seed in the semi-finals. Gillams, a winner at his last three PSA events in Gibraltar, the South Australian Open earlier this month and Shepparton International at the weekend sees the Scot as one to watch in his first appearance here in Coffs Harbour.

Angus commented about preparations for the North Coast Open stating *"Well after coming back from injury I'm improving every tournament so to win 3 events has given me a lot of confidence."*

Are you excited about the possibility of qualifying for World Open? *"Yes, you've got a very strong 5k event because of the possibility to qualify for the worlds, would be great to play against the world's best."*

Local interest will be centred on the performance of Jacob Ford (Wildcard) who has drawn a tough first round match up with Rhys Dowling AUS but has familiarity and home town court advantage to perform at his best.

This year's Open program has plenty of depth with players seeking the coveted winner's prize of a place in the World Championships so spectators are invited to come and check out the action throughout the weekend with the finals to get underway from 1.00pm Sunday. There is no cover costs for viewing and the players will be competing for high stakes guaranteeing some great match ups.

The success of the event has been boosted with the support of Coffs Harbour Council, Coffs Coast Events and Roberts and Morrow in staging the event in Coffs Harbour and attracting players from 15 countries to take part.

There will be a strong support program together with local players keen to challenge regional and interstate visitors in the graded events.

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NORTH COAST OPEN 2019



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