



• Marie Smith has been named NSW Pony Club Association (PCA) Zone 14 Volunteer of the Year.

A reward for perseverance

Josh Bartlett

BEGA's Marie Smith capped off an excellent career with the Zone 14 Pony Club Association when she received a huge honour recently.

Marie was named NSW Pony Club Association (PCA) Zone 14 Volunteer of the Year for 2010.

Members of the zone nominated her for the award, their application claiming "there is no one in Zone 14 more deserving of this award than Marie Smith".

"It's a huge honour and very nice to be recognised," Marie said.

"It's a nice little trophy to receive but it was a surprise to be nominated."

Marie was the zone's secretary for five years before taking on the Zone Chief Instructor role for over two decades.

She stepped down from the position earlier this year.

Zone 14 covers the 11 pony clubs between Eden and Milton, a three and a half hour drive between these places.

Her role included overseeing instructions in the zone, grading all children and keeping some law and order.

Ten months of the year were spent travelling up and down the coast each weekend to help out at club events or to

watch each child ride or compete.

Marie's dedication is tireless, generous and unselfish.

She first began involved in the sport over 40 years ago when she joined the Snowy River Pony Club at Dalgety.

Her contribution and diplomacy has ensured the harmonious running of Zone 14.

Marie has freely given her time to attend the Pony Club Association State meetings in Sydney and attended most State Championships to cheer on local competitors and assist organisers.

There is not a member of Zone 14, young or old, who doesn't know and respect Marie.

"The biggest enjoyment for me has been watching the little children being so tentative when they start but after a year on their pony they are cantering around with a big smile on their faces," Marie said.

There is not enough space to do justice to this wonderful person.

Marie's contribution to Bega Pony Club alone warrants her nomination for this award.

She will continue to assist at the club.

"I love being the Bega Pony Club 'Nanna'."

Back at the top

Josh Bartlett

TROY Northey has achieved his dream of winning again at the top level in his sporting field.

The last time Northey competed at a national squash event was in 1990 when he won the men's doubles.

Twenty years later, he has repeated his performance, winning the Interstate Team Series of the Australian Master Squash Championships held recently in Hobart.

Northey's team entered the tournament as number one seeds in Open Division One and was expected to be among the frontrunners.

"We played four matches which provided interesting results, particularly in the final," Northey said.

"We started with solid wins over Victoria and ACT and then were lucky enough to have our day off scheduled before our semi-final against Tasmania.

"They had knocked off a few seeds during the tournament so we had to play our best to win.

"In the final, our number three was blasted off the court and then we were down 2-0 in the second and looked gone.

"But our two came back and won in five and all I had to do was go out and win which luckily I did, winning in four."

Northey said it was an "awesome" feeling to win.

"I couldn't believe it to



• Bega's Troy Northey (right) with his NSW teammates after winning the Interstate Team Series of the Australian Master Squash Championships.

be honest," he said.

"After the final I was so full of adrenaline and I felt good.

"NSW hadn't won a National event in 15 years so it was a pretty epic achievement."

Northey's teammates live in Bathurst and Cootamundra which he said reflects that "squash is in a pretty healthy state in regional NSW".

"We were the top seeds but it was accumulative of the rankings of the whole team," he said. "We all had to play well to reflect on our seeding.

"Fortunately our number two and myself went through undefeated but I don't think the results were indicative of the matches played.

"Before the tournament I just wanted to be competitive and the level

of fitness required and quality of squash was certainly as expected.

"The play was very competitive and it was a real buzz."

Northey started intense training at the start of the year in a bid to play at representative level.

"I didn't set my sights on getting to the Nationals; I just wanted to get into the state team," he said.

"All the senior players at the Bega Squash Club have helped me train and I also thank my masseuse Chris Collins who has worked on my body for the past couple of months.

"The next Australian Titles are in Rockhampton in Queensland next year.

"I've got the bug again for nationals and hope-

fully I can gain selection again.

"But like all sports you have to qualify for our state each year so it's going to be Groundhog Day again."

Until then, Northey said he still faces a hectic schedule.

"I have two State Masters' tournaments coming up with the first at Goulburn next month and the final one at Wollongong," he said. "In between times I'll just keep playing down here in our great competition and any regional tournaments.

"My national teammates and I could be nominated for the Australian Trans-Tasman team take on New Zealand and other Pacific countries as well.

"But I'll just have to wait and see."

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