

New York New York

Who'd have thought 3 months ago that I would be off to New York this month? What a journey so far – so many thanks to so many people.

I will be attending a 3 day ITF Level II (White Badge)Referees' Course 22nd – 24th Feb 2010 at Flushing Meadow New York USA.

Mid November Tony Glentworth mentioned the course to me. Following this up on the internet, I received backing from my husband for this once in a lifetime opportunity. Applications closed on 13th Dec. I completed the application form, and Tony and I put together thoughts for Tennis New Zealand's letter of support. Acceptance was received on 23rd December with much excitement. The next step was to make application to SPARC for a Prime Minister's Scholarship. With immeasurable guidance and support from Aidan O'Rourke the application was strongly supported and willingly submitted through Tennis New Zealand to SPARC. On 2nd February SPARC confirmed that the scholarship had been awarded to the full value requested – so I am off to New York.

This course is specifically a referees' course. ITF courses in the Southern Hemisphere are rare and focus on chair umpiring. My goal is to focus on refereeing, and this course offers the opportunity for this. 16 officials were selected for the school, and I am the only candidate from outside of North America.

I am looking forward to increasing and confirming my knowledge and skills. I will be extending my knowledge of the interpretation and application of ITF rules, and on site and on court management. Attendance in the USA will further expose NZ Tennis officiating to international trends, practices and applications.

My constant companion currently is the ITF Rules of Tennis, Duties and Procedures for Officials, and the Pro Circuits Rule Book. Who'd have known there was so much to learn? Then I received my reading material from the course, 6 more books of 100 pages each. Thank goodness for the long plane trip. I am working with New Zealand Tennis Umpires' Association and other ITF qualified officials in New Zealand to prepare for the course.

Information gained in New York will be shared with officials and the wider tennis community.

I cannot say thank you enough to Aidan O'Rourke, Pat O'Rourke, Tony Glentworth, Tennis New Zealand, New Zealand Tennis Umpires Assn and SPARC. And thank you to all for your best wishes. I will be doing my best for New Zealand.

'If I can make it there, I can make it anywhere'.

Rosemary Hargreaves
Referee