

Advantage Napier

Did you know that Napier is home to one of the most entrepreneurial sports equipment manufacturers in New Zealand? 'You cannot be serious?'

editorial roger moroney
pictures richard brimer, hotshot

It takes good sports to create good sports, and Roger Forsyth and the crew at HotShot Sports Equipment in Napier have those bases well covered.

The company, which Roger started back in 1998 with a staff of just one, being himself, may be small in stature compared to the big factories in far-off places where things are made cheaply, but it is a giant in terms of reputation and quality. Roger cuts to the chase quickly on that count. "We are making the very best stuff and that's what it is all about – value and quality for money."



"The one thing we have never deviated from is quality."

Above: Roger Forsyth on one of his new outdoor gym prototypes.

Above right: Custom playground equipment designed and manufactured by HotShot.



Indeed, for the reputation of HotShot (The Playmakers) has grown from regional accolades across Hawke's Bay to national ones across the whole of the country. "The one thing we have never deviated from is quality. That is number one. It has to be the best," Roger says. "We are a small crew but we have a professional approach. We spend a lot of time on research and development, and ensuring we have the very best extrusions and moulds in use. It's about going the extra mile. We respond to feedback from the customer and develop the equipment around their needs."

From day one, Roger simply wanted to create the best available custom-made sports equipment in the country, and the letters of thanks and continual requests from all over the land for his expertise underline that. He has come a long way since arriving in Napier 40 years ago from Wellington where he had

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Business HotShot

> worked as an automotive engineer. “We came to Napier for the good weather, and to raise the family.”

He worked for a time in the auto wrecking business, running Napier Auto Supplies, but sold it all up and went to Australia for a couple of years in 1980. Returning to Napier Roger put his heart and soul into the sport he loved, tennis. This is where things began to heat up. It was a game he was good at, and even more adept at coaching young enthusiastic tennis players.

Roger had built up the appropriate coaching certificates and what had initially been a hobby coaching at various schools, ended up with him becoming coach for Hawke’s Bay Tennis. As a member of the Greendale Tennis Club in Taradale (where he is now a Life Member) he one day decided to build some better net posts – a set without adjusting crank handles on the outside.

He designed and built an internal winder system and once installed was asked to build another for someone else. By focusing on

re-designing tennis equipment it just started to grow and the sporting net widened literally.

One day Roger bought a basketball hoop and noticed when he laid it on a flat surface it wobbled. “I thought then, I can build something better than this.” Laughing he admits, “that’s my downfall...when I say that.”

It is a philosophy of designing something better and building it stronger and as close to perfect as possible, that still drives him today. He created an early website and drew enough work to keep him busy then moved into a small workshop site in Pandora, on the edge of Napier, where his wife Joy joined him. She also loves sport, and when not at work sorting despatch and packaging Joy is often spotted on the volleyball court.

He soon began branching into other fields of sports equipment. Market research and attendance at trade fairs in Australia and Germany confirmed that the quality of the HotShot product was second to none. And the ‘quality driven’ company just grew.

“I took on a guy and the business just

kept growing,” Roger explained. That guy was engineer Gareth Phillipson who is now Roger’s right-hand man and an inspirational member of the HotShot team. Fabricator and engineer Brent Stuart joined the company about five years ago and business receptionist and general all-round ‘gopher’, Bev Hutchins, joined about three years ago. “It’s a good team that works well together,” says Roger.

It’s this team that has HotShot recognised as the number one sports manufacturer in the country. Roger is proud of what has been achieved, yet quietly modest about it. “I like the creative side of it. When I am asked if I ‘can you make something like this’, it starts a whole creative thinking process that I enjoy looking into.”

Some of Roger’s best ideas re-designing or improving anything from a hockey or soccer goal, to an easily removable or mobile netball post and hoop, usually emerge around four in the morning. The thinking never stops.

For instance two years ago Roger added ‘The Playmakers’ catchphrase to HotShot



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These pages: Some of the extensive range of sports and recreational equipment from HotShot designed and manufactured right here in New Zealand.



as they moved into the gymnasium side of sports. They recently finished fitting out gymnasiums at two Auckland schools and one in the Waikato.

Roger’s latest hot product idea is the development of a unique range of fitness equipment. Two years in the making, he soon hopes to see the launch of a 30-piece, state of the art outdoor fitness centre that is likely to take the world by storm!

Having built a reputation for creating multisport equipment that is mobile, and easily rolled on and off fields and courts of play, Roger now builds equipment for 15 sporting codes. The variety and choice is as remarkable as the products themselves. HotShot build about 10 varieties of soccer and hockey goals, adjustable, bolt-on or clip-on basketball and netball hoops and import seven different models of tennis nets. The list and variety just goes on and on.

And yes, among the HotShot range of more than 50 products HotShot still turns out tennis posts. Game, set and match HotShot Sports Equipment.

www.hotshot-sports.com

