

## **PROMOTING PARTICIPATION IN SQUASH AND RACKETBALL**

### **MAKING BEST USE OF YOUR SQUASH COURTS – GUIDANCE NOTES**

#### **1. PROVIDING AN ATTRACTIVE PRODUCT**

- (a) Courts should be maintained in good condition, and in particular be clean, warm and well lit. Floors should be swept daily and wiped weekly to prevent dust accumulation, which can make them slippery. The basic temperature should be at least 65 degrees C with additional heating optional for the players. Deficient lights should be replaced as soon as possible. Players should be advised that non-marking footwear must be worn and that it should not be the footwear they arrive in, as that can bring dust and dirt onto the courts.
- (b) Changing rooms should be of good size (because if the court booking times are the same, all the players will be changing and showering at the same time), warm, well-decorated and cleaned daily, and with lockers in which clothes and valuables can be secured. Notices about footwear (see above) should be displayed in the changing rooms as well as on the court doors.
- (c) Arrangements for booking courts should be simple and well publicised for details of a computerised booking system). If cash meters work the court lights, they should take a variety of coins and be capable of ‘pausing’ (ie switching the lights off temporarily) if an interruption is necessary or if the players end their game prematurely. However, it should be made clear that players only have the right to the court between the times for which it is booked, not for the amount of time left on the meter.
- (d) Rackets and balls for both squash and racket ball should be available for loan or hire. If possible, they should also be on sale, along with other related merchandise (shoes etc.).
- (e) The Rules of Squash and Racketball should be displayed adjacent to the courts along with any explanatory notes about their interpretation (see [www.englishsquashandracketball.com](http://www.englishsquashandracketball.com)).

#### **2. PUBLICISING THE PRODUCT**

- (a) Posters, both internal if the venue attracts more than squash players, and external – libraries, shops, other sports venues etc.
- (b) Leaflets with a little more detail to pick up and take away in the same places, and for existing players to hand out to friends and colleagues.
- (c) Adverts and reports of current activities in the local press.
- (d) A Website, with links to it from YOUR County Association and other relevant websites, with its address quoted on all publicity materials.
- (e) A good sized notice board, in a prominent position, giving up to date and professionally presented information about all playing activities, coaching availability, how to get involved etc.

#### **3. ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO USE THE PRODUCT**

- (a) Individual mini-leagues.
- (b) Internal team leagues.
- (c) Tournaments – Open, Handicap, Ladies, Juniors, Over 35’s etc.
- (d) Ladders and ranking lists.
- (e) ‘Club’ sessions.
- (f) Junior Club, plus outreach to local schools (mini-squash etc.).
- (g) Individual and group coaching.
- (h) Organised fitness sessions.
- (i) Special promotional events eg open session for ‘lapsed’ players.
- (j) Teams in local, county and national leagues.
- (k) Teams in national competitions such as the Clubs Knockout.
- (l) Information about external opportunities for individual players – eg Masters regional and national tournaments, County Championships etc.
- (m) An Annual Dinner and Presentation event.
- (n) Internal training sessions on refereeing, the Rules of Squash and Racketball etc.
- (o) Information about how to qualify as a Coach or Referee, and financial subsidies for those going on external courses.
- (p) Demonstration matches featuring top players.
- (q) Special introductory courses or events for targeted groups eg ladies, unemployed, disabled, ethnic minorities etc.

Note: Priority should be given to organizing those activities, such as internal team leagues, which commit players to play at least weekly on days and times which are pre-determined. A regular commitment is more likely to encourage the player to continue playing and to participate in other activities which offer a variety of competition both within and beyond the home venue.

#### **4. COACHING**

- (a) Have a Coach attached to the club/centre who is England Squash and Racketball qualified to at least Part II level and currently registered with ESR (for insurance and child protection purposes as well as level of effectiveness in being up to date with new techniques etc.).
- (b) Provide a variety of coaching and other courses and events as above.
- (c) Ensure the Coach is aware of and links players with external opportunities when appropriate eg Area Academies for juniors, Masters events for Over 35s.
- (d) Host courses for Coaches run by England Squash and Racketball.
- (e) Encourage players to train as coaches as above.
- (f) Have a special section on the notice board for coaching.

#### **5. RACKETBALL**

- (a) Promote Racketball as above – it is a valid alternative to squash, as well as being particularly attractive to the less mobile.
- (b) Have a Racketball Organiser – player, committee member etc.
- (c) Ensure the Coach offers Racketball courses.

## **6. ORGANISATION**

- (a) If the venue offers more than squash, have a Squash 'Club' of players using the centre with delegated authority to run the activities above and liaise with management about all matters to do with the maintenance and use of the squash courts.
- (b) Affiliate to England Squash and Racketball, to take advice of its resources and guidance, qualify your players to take part in ESR accredited activities, work towards Charter marks demonstrating levels of good practice in your organisation, and Approved Centre Status for links with local schools, and to support the development of squash and racketball nationally.
- (c) Take advantage of any training offered by external bodies such as your County Sports Partnership for Committee members and Honorary Officers, on organisational matters such as Finance, Chairing of meetings, minute and record taking, legal responsibilities etc.

## **7. MONITORING THE USE OF THE PRODUCT**

- (a) Establish, maintain and update basic records relating to numbers of members (possibly in various categories) and usage of the courts.
- (b) Use the information in planning further development (eg in deciding which groups might most productively be targeted to use the courts when they are less used, or when further organised activities might be promoted (eg a midweek 'club' session in the daytime).
- (c) Provide information as required by external bodies such as the County Sports Partnership, County Squash Association and England Squash and Racketball.

## **GUIDANCE ON USING THESE NOTES**

Check through them one point at a time, tick the things you already do, and sort out the ones you don't into a priority order which reflects your own club/centre situation. Tackle them at a pace which is comfortable and which ensures that each activity is sustainable over a reasonable period. If you need a contact (eg someone from England Squash and Racketball to discuss affiliation) or guidance in developing a particular activity (eg internal team leagues or tournaments) contact your County Association. It can provide you with information and, if you wish, arrange for someone to visit you and give appropriate help and guidance.

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