
THE WORLD SERIES OF SQUASH

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INTRODUCTION

During the past ten years, Squash has begun to grow dramatically in many parts of the world. In the UK, it has grown at a rate far exceeding any other sport and there are now over two and a half million participants. This is more than soccer, cricket, or golf and only swimming and tennis have a higher participant following among active sports. On present expectations, Squash will continue to grow at the rate of about 20% per annum.

Squash is also Europe's fastest growing sport, particularly in Sweden, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands. Countries in Southern Europe are developing at a slower rate. Expansion and development further afield is similar with Australia, New Zealand, Canada, U.S.A., Mexico, Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and South Africa booming; Japan, the Middle East and South America are only just beginning to develop. Worldwide, Squash may become the boom sport of the 1980's in the same way that tennis has been the boom game of the 1970's.

In addition to the growth in participation, there has been such enormous interest in spectator Squash that glass-backed courts are now commonplace and an all-glass court has been pioneered and should become available during 1979 for use in major events. This would increase the number of spectators substantially (about tenfold) and would also increase the television and film possibilities. In September 1978, 610 people watched the final of the World Series of Squash in Stockholm on a glass-backed court specially erected in a tennis stadium.

Rex Bellamy, the distinguished correspondent on tennis and Squash for "The Times" of London, has recently written in his book "The Story of Squash"; -

"There can be no doubt that professional squash will continue to be an expanding segment of the entertainment industry, with more and more sponsors realising the vast extent of this new market for their products."

"This is the most exciting period in the game's history. Among other things squash has proved that a major participant sport (as opposed to a spectator sport) can grow and flourish without the benefit of massive publicity and thousands of spectators. In both areas squash has been restricted by its intimate nature, though the advent of glass walls and the introduction of television are enabling more people to watch it. Squash has not been vigorously and widely promoted. It has assumed its present stature because of its obvious advantages for those who play games as distinct from those who watch them. It offers enjoyable, concentrated exercise for the entire family at any time of day all the year round and has the great virtue of simplicity".

Television companies in several countries are interested in Squash. In the UK, the BBC have televised the British Open Championships for the past four years. Last year, Independent

Television televised Squash on a national basis for the first time. Altogether ten events will receive television exposure in the UK this year. In other countries, television people are interested provided the world's top players are competing.

Media coverage of top professional Squash is also developing. There are three magazines solely devoted to Squash in the U.K., two in Sweden, Germany, Australia and at least one each in the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Switzerland, Singapore, South Africa, Canada and some other countries. Media interest is increasing rapidly and several newspapers now have specialist Squash writers who provide regular coverage on the game. There is even a "Squash Writers' Club".

THE WORLD SERIES OF SQUASH IN 1977 AND 1978

Following the increased interest in spectator squash and the potential demand for the best the game has to offer (particularly with the new increased viewing facilities) IMG conceived, at the beginning of 1977, the idea of a properly coordinated circuit of professional squash tournaments linked together by a points system. This was based on similar circuits in tennis and other sports with a Masters event at the conclusion of the circuit for the top players on points. The winner of such a Masters event would certainly be a champion and would probably be considered the best player in the world.

Until the World Series of Squash was introduced in the autumn of 1977 there was little coordination between the various professional tournaments around the world. Pakistan International Airlines provided sponsorship in 1977 for four WSS events - in Germany, Sweden, Pakistan and England. In 1978, six circuit events were held - in Holland, Sweden, Germany, Singapore, Egypt and England (London) with the Masters in Pakistan. All the world's best players participated and the 1978 Series was an outstanding success in every way. Television covered the events in Stockholm (about 25 minutes), Krefeld (20 Minutes), Singapore (2 hours), and Cairo (about 10 minutes). There was no coverage in Holland but in London BBC were due to televise when a strike prevented them. (BBC covered the event in 1977). Coverage by other media was extensive, except in Holland where it was disappointing.

STATUS OF WSS

Towards the end of 1978, The International Squash Professionals Coordination Council was formed with representatives of the International Squash Rackets Federation (the governing body of the game), the International Squash Professionals Association (the players) and the promoters/tournament directors. The ISPCC has given its full backing to the World Series of Squash and is enthusiastic about the effect this circuit will have over the years on the development of the game as a spectator and participant sport.

SCHEDULE

The period from 1st October to 9th December (10 weeks) has been

set aside exclusively for the World Series of Squash. During this period six Series events will be staged with the Masters in England at the end of the circuit with extensive television coverage.

PLAYERS

All the world's top players have expressed their intention to compete in the Series, including Geoff Hunt, Qamar Zaman, Mohibullah Khan, Gogi Alauddin, Hiddy Jahan, Bruce Brownlee and Jonah Barrington.

FORMAT

Each event will have a main draw of 16 players with a qualifying competition at each venue so that the best local players can have the opportunity to compete with the world's best players.

PRIZE MONEY

There will be a minimum of £10.000 of prize money at each event, payable as follows: -

Winner	£2.300
Runner - Up	£1.500
Losing Semi Finalists	£900
2nd Round Losers	£500
1st Round Losers	£300

Total £10.000

In the Masters the top eight players would split the prize fund of £10.000 as follows: -

Winner	£3.500
Runner-Up	£2.000
3rd Place	£1.500
4th Place	£1.000
5 - 8	£ 500

Total £10.000

SCHEDULE

It is possible to choose venues according to the main sponsor's demands within the following list of squash facilities suitable for such an event:

Great Britain	Canada
West Germany	Australia
Sweden	Singapore
France	Hong Kong
Holland	Egypt
Switzerland	Japan
Ireland	Thailand
U.S.A.	Malaysia

SPONSORSHIP

A circuit sponsor is being sought for £100.000. This would give the sponsor the name of the Series - ie. "The X World Series of Squash" and about 70% of all the on-site publicity. Each venue has the right to sell a small percentage of the on-site advertising/publicity to cover local costs relating to the tournament - eg. promotion, advertising, programme, printing, hotel accomodation and subsistence for all the players etc.

The above sponsorship figure is split as follows: -

Prize money for 7 events at £10.000 each	-	£70.000
IMG implementation Fee	-	£16.000
Promotional Expenses, Advertising, Travel, Press Officer etc. (£2.000 per event)	-	£14.000
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	-	£100.000
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Alternatively, events can be sponsored by individual companies for £17.500.

CIRCUIT MANAGEMENT

John Beddington of International Management Group will be overall director of the circuit, with total responsibility (as in the past two years) for coordinating all details with venues, sponsors and players.

Each venue is expected to provide first class hotel accomodation and meals for the 16 players as well as the Circuit Director, Press Officer, Assistant Circuit Director and possibly up to two others (eg. sponsors representatives, press etc.) during the period of time they are there specifically for the event.

JB/mkh