

Chapter 1.

SQUASH IN AUSTRALIA

A. HISTORY

The origins of the sport of “Squash” are somewhat hard to establish but the game of “Squash Racquets” as it was known as until recently probably had a number of influences in its creation.

An English schoolmaster made the first reference to a rebounding ball game in 1851. More recently, in 1865, a game which had evolved from the English game of “Racquets” was played in an enclosed court at the Harrow school. This led to the building of similar courts at Rugby and other private houses and clubs.

By the turn of the century Squash Racquets had evolved into a game not unlike the game played today. The rackets used were quite similar (but not nearly as efficient) but the balls differed greatly. They were constructed of thin rubber and were quite soft. They also had a number of holes in them which caused them to collapse when hit hard. This squashy ball and the connection with “Racquets” probably formed the origins of the name of “Squash Racquets.”



First Squash Court in NSW
-Yaralla Estate, Concord, Sydney

At that time, there was no standard size for courts. The Tennis and Racquets Association started to work towards a standard size in 1911 and formally completed the process just after World War 1. In 1922 the first Squash Championships were held. It was, however, only considered to be a “second” sport for most of the early part of the century.

In Australia the first courts were built in 1913 at the Melbourne Club in Collins Street, but we had to wait until 1934 before an association was formed. Although named “Squash Rackets Association of Australia” (SRAA), it was mainly concerned with local competition.

The SRAA took on more of a national role when, in 1938 the Squash Rackets Association of Victoria was established and a total of eighteen clubs from Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia joined. Australian Championships were only open to Victorian members until 1938 when they became truly national. Both individual and interstate team championships were held in that year.

Squash remained a sport that was played mainly in clubs and in the armed services until after World War II when some public courts were built. By the late 1960’s Squash was introduced to a wider

audience through an ever increasing number of public Squash centres. This reached a peak in the early 1980's when over 1200 Squash centres containing about 5000 courts were in operation in Australia. Australia played a key part in making Squash a world wide game played in over 120 countries.

The SRAA shifted its headquarters from Melbourne to Sydney in 1960 and moved again in 1976 to Brisbane where it now resides. In 1971 it merged with the Australia Women's Squash Rackets Association and was renamed the Australian Squash Rackets Association. It became Squash Australia in 1990.

Despite the changes that the sport has undergone from its uncertain beginnings, it is clear from all that has been written on the sport in that time, that the game of Squash has exercised a certain power over its aficionados, a power that still draws people to the game today.



2006 Commonwealth Games, Melbourne.
Australia won:
3 Gold, 3 Silver, and 2 Bronze medals.

B. BASICS OF THE GAME

Playing the Game

Squash is a game played on a four walled court using a racket and a ball. Both singles and can be played on a court although an official doubles court measures 1.22 metres wider than a singles court.

In the singles game, two players take turns to hit the ball onto the front wall in an area defined by an out line at the top and a “board” on top of the “tin” which runs across the court at the bottom.

A rally begins when the server, standing in one of two “service boxes”, hits the ball directly to the front wall (above the service or “cut” line and below the out line) to rebound into the opposite quarter of the court bounded by the back and side walls and two lines. (the half court line and the short line)

The player receiving may choose to hit the ball before it has bounced but must hit the ball before it has bounced twice. The rally continues so long as the ball goes onto the front wall before going down or out. (Down being into the tin or the floor and out being on or above the out line, which surrounds the court at the top of each of the four walls.) After the serve, the ball may hit any wall before hitting the front wall as long as it does not go down.

The doubles game is similar except that instead of players taking turns to hit the ball, either of each team must hit the ball in turn.

Scoring

Squash has two scoring systems which are both used at local and international level. The traditional nine point scoring system known as the “international” system sees players gaining the serve before being able to score a point. If the receiver wins a rally they win the serve, but if server wins a rally they score a point and get another serve. The first player to reach nine points wins a game except when the score is eight all. In that case the first player to get to eight chooses to whether to play to nine or ten points. A match consists of the best of five games.

The Point A Rally Scoring system (PARS) is simple in that after each rally a point is scored by the winner of the rally. Games are scored to either eleven (11) or fifteen (15) points except in the latter case, where the first player to fourteen points chooses whether the game goes to fifteen or seventeen points. A match is also the best of five games.

C. THE AUSTRALIAN SQUASH STRUCTURE

1. SQUASH AUSTRALIA

Squash Australia, a company limited by guarantee, is the organisation officially responsible for the development and promotion of the game of Squash in Australia. It is made up of eight members, each of which is the representative body for Squash in each of the states and territories. Squash Australia is also a member of the World Squash Federation (WSF).

A board of directors which is elected by the members is responsible for the administration of the company to the policies decided upon by the members. A Chief Executive Officer manages the day to day running of the company. See the “Organisational Chart” on the next page.

Squash Australia derives its operating funds from a number of sources:

- **Member Affiliations**

Each member (SSA) pays a fee based on the number of players registered with them. (Form of registration varies from state to state.)

- **Australian Sports Commission (ASC)**

The Australian Government supports many sports through the ASC. Funds are provided to Squash Australia for specific purposes (e.g. administration, national teams, coach education etc.) The Australia Institute of Sport (Squash Unit) is also funded under the ASC umbrella although it is responsible to the AIS not Squash Australia.

- **Sponsorship**

Substantial revenue is raised through sponsorship at different levels from product sponsors for teams through to a major sponsor which supports the sport nationally subject to certain performance criteria. Sponsorship arrangements often have criteria built in to ensure sponsors gain commercially in return for the funds that they provide.

- **Resource Materials**

Some funds are raised by the sale of resource material and some products.

2. STATE SQUASH ASSOCIATIONS

Each State and Territory Squash Association (SSA) is a member of Squash Australia but runs separately from the National body being answerable to its own members. While some SSA's have similar structure, each has its own rules of governance which have been independently developed. See the SSA in your state for their constitution or articles of association.

Each state has their own form of membership or affiliation/registration. Squash needs the support of its players (through their registration) for Associations to administer and promote the game. Funds generated by player registration/affiliation helps to provide the following:

- **Additional government support**

One of the main factors affecting government subsidisation of sport is the number of player registrations and the amount of money raised through the player base and other sources.