

**WORLD
SQUASH**

WSF

WORLD SQUASH FEDERATION

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 - 2020



Leading the way for Squash

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INTRODUCTION

In its international context this plan gives an introduction for WSF to share with its Regional Federations, Member Nations and other stakeholders.

It is intended to indicate a number of priorities and aims, though there will inevitably be others that become significant during the period the plan covers.

This document is designed as a strategic framework rather than a detailed set of objectives. It contains an overview of the strategic landscape, a proposed vision and mission and a set of strategic goals. It is designed as a framework rather than a detailed plan to enable WSF to remain flexible within a rapidly changing global sport environment. Having said that, underpinning every strategy should be an implementation plan, which should also be adjustable in content and priority in response to changing circumstances. Accordingly a proposed set of priority goals is also included.



VISION

Squash is experiencing a mixture of sustained global growth along with plateauing and decline in some areas, within a sporting world that recognises and respects squash as a genuine competitive and recreational sport as well as an authentic Olympic sport; one which would enriches the spirit and values of Olympism if a place on the Summer Games Programme is achieved in the future.

MISSION

On behalf of its Member Nations and other relevant international stakeholders, WSF's mission is:

- To provide effective leadership and collaboration for raising squash's visibility and profile; principally via its World Championships and participation in Major Games.
- To enhance the global support infrastructure for squash, including refereeing, coaching, technical expertise and event management; ensuring squash remains a clean sport - and the encouragement of grass-roots development and participation particularly within emerging squash nations.
- To responsibly direct squash's future as a globally recognised and respected mainstream sport.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

WSF is the International Federation for the sport of squash and as such has worldwide responsibility for every facet of the sport other than the professional Tours.

Currently WSF has 76 nations in Full Membership and a further 36 Associate Member Nations. WSF also has five Regional Federations under its auspices.

Control of policy and management comes from an Executive Board – all elected volunteers, who give time to setting the direction of the Federation.

The total income for WSF, of which the two main constituents are product Accreditation fees and national Membership fees is small. This sum creates limitations on the size of the WSF secretariat staff and also funding available for activities and initiatives.

Linked to this is the reliance on voluntary support via volunteer committees rather than paid staff and departments.

Despite these limitations the WSF takes responsibility for ongoing areas including representing squash internationally, rules, refereeing, coach education, media support, anti-doping, championships and technical; while also solely funding squash's Olympic bid efforts.



A. EXTERNAL FACTORS LIKELY TO IMPACT UPON PROGRESS**Political - Olympics**

The failure of the Olympic campaign, presents an element of sober reality, with squash remaining outside the Olympic arena until we can launch another viable bid. However, Squash has benefited in many ways from the positive response to the challenges of its Olympic campaign, not least in the quality of the sport's presentation. That said, the diversion of core resources to the Olympic campaign in recent years has squeezed WSF's 'normal business' activities. Without Olympic status, lack of funding will remain squash's biggest constraint to realising the potential of the sport globally.

The Olympic campaign has fostered improved collaboration between the professional tours and the WSF, a relationship that we need to sustain.

Technology

Technological developments have an increasing influence on sport. We have witnessed the effect of technological improvements in rackets, courts and balls, but also in broadcast opportunities through Ultra HD and, with the falling cost of broadcasting, getting the sport on new channels. The rapid diversification of media channels, particularly the growth of social media, constantly challenges conventional communication channels, but provides real opportunities to reach new audiences at minimal cost. Having said that, WSF needs to invest in ensuring that it remains at the cutting edge of new forms of communication to capitalise on the opportunities of capturing new audiences.

The application of new software such as apps will also become increasingly important to ensure we attract and retain the youth interest and new markets too. Also, as a global organisation, WSF needs to take maximum advantage of advances in communications technology; improving and embracing more and more open dialogue across all aspects of WSF business. Technology shouldn't replace face-to-face meetings, but can improve how WSF works.



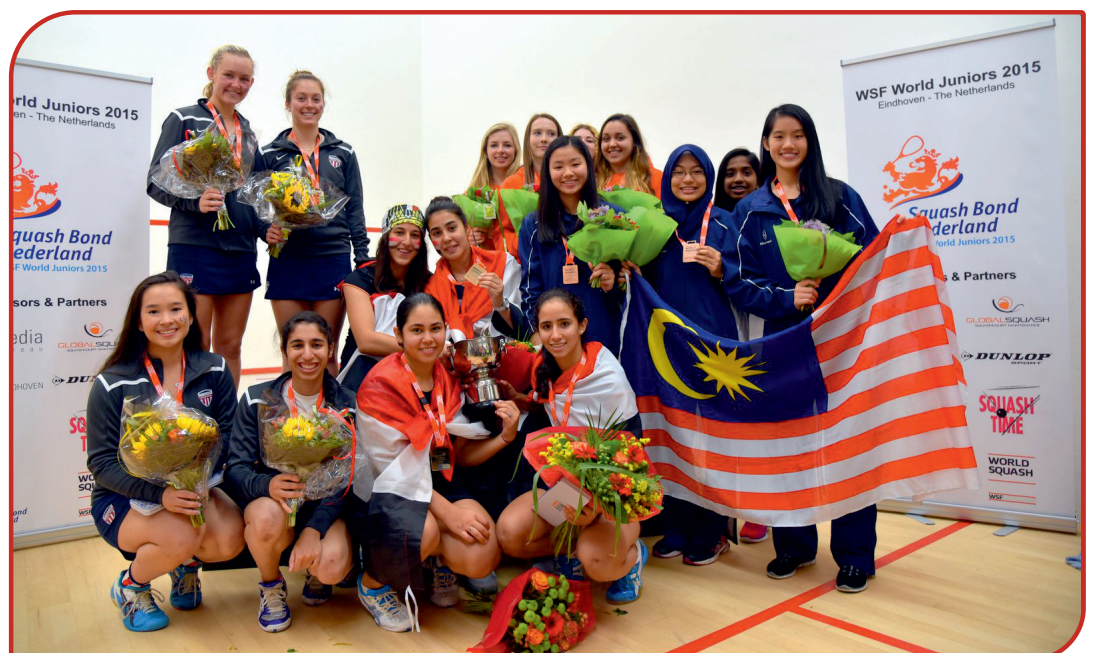
Economic

The turbulent state of the world economy will continue to affect our potential to grow and develop the sport, whether that be the cost and risk of new capital developments or our ability to sell the sport to new consumers (players or spectators), broadcasters and sponsors. A buoyant squash market will also encourage new coaches to enter the market and contribute to an upward cycle of sustainable growth. An economic downturn or insecurity will do the opposite, particularly in emerging squash markets.

A growing global market for squash drives growth in court, equipment and other squash-related markets and suppliers. A larger and more competitive market enhances WSF's opportunities to negotiate sponsorship and other support.

Socio-economic

Squash has an interesting mix of mature and emerging new markets. The traditional (largely Commonwealth) markets have reached a maturity that threaten future growth and sustainability. These nations are experiencing an ageing squash population, a struggle to sustain numbers of players and therefore the vitality, viability and re-investment in courts and 'clubs' has declined. In these nations squash can be perceived as a more traditional sport - and therefore not as 'cool' to young people when choosing how to spend their time and income. In developing and promoting the sport, WSF needs to ensure that squash is attractive to potential young players and new markets. The application of new technology will be key in this respect.



WSF STRENGTHS

WSF is the IOC Recognised International Federation for the sport of squash, and has 112 nations in Full or Associate membership, with a significant number of growth areas. These include growth in some potentially very large markets (e.g. USA and India), in some rapidly emerging markets (e.g. Poland) as well as some small emerging new nations (e.g. Turkey).

WSF presides over a sport which is considered an ideal current 'lifestyle' sport, Squash is a relatively close-knit global community in its leadership. There is a passion and unity within the sport that encourages a positive and optimistic climate. It relies on an extended network of expert volunteers who WSF can call upon, and who have very little cost beyond out-of-pocket expenses.

WSF and its five constituent Regional Federations generally have the necessary committees and commissions in place to govern the sport, working to provide the necessary infrastructure for the leadership and delivery of areas such as championships, refereeing and coaching.

The sport has a well-developed professional Tour, recently enhanced by the merger of the men's and women's Tours into a single body. Through PSA the sport has achieved enhanced quality, consistency and footprint of broadcast output via SquashTV. The 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games was a major success with regard to the presentation of squash and its visibility via breadth of broadcast reach.

WSF WEAKNESSES

The main constraint upon WSF comes from lack of income streams. Not 'owning' the professional Tours means there is no income from player memberships, event registration, player levies, broadcast, sponsorship and partnership opportunities.

The result of this, together with limited exploitation of commercial rights and opportunities, inevitably means limited funding to develop initiatives.

Similarly a small staff and the lack of funds to employ specialists i.e. a dedicated staff member or department for each major area of business is not possible. Instead there is a strong reliance upon committees and volunteers, which can be less efficient. Every area including the ability to show leadership and innovate, refereeing, coaching, marketing, championships and interaction, along with WSF supporting regions and nations, would benefit from increased income.

The issue of funding levels is not exclusive to WSF though, with our Regional and National Federations having to wrestle with similar funding issues.



WSF OPPORTUNITIES

The biggest game changer would be eventual acceptance onto the Olympic Games Programme, leading to greater funding, sponsorship and partnership opportunities.

Irrespective of this, there are opportunities to strengthen management in specific areas to support the general WSF secretariat administration. More emphasis on marketing and commercial facets, developing SPIN opportunities will pay dividends.

Strengthening the linkage between WSF, Regional and National Federations is another general area where attention will result in opportunities to improve the cohesiveness and quality of arrangements across the sport.

On the championship side expanding the basket of events, exploiting their commercial opportunities and improving their integrated administration via stronger input are desirable.

Development in the areas of refereeing and coaching is also possible; building upon the standardisation and quality of courses that is already underway.

THREATS TO WSF

Although the structural elements of the sport along with a fully formed professional Tour are already in place, not getting onto the Olympics Games programme has been a great setback.

The decline of the sport in some 'mature' nations not being stemmed and others falling into this category, will require positive marketing and promotion action at both international and national level.

A breakdown of the WSF refereeing pyramid, whereby control cannot be maintained at the upper end, WSF must ensure opportunities that encourage a wider pool at the base.

A scandal caused by illegal wagering, doping cases or in another aspect of the sport.



1. GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Provide effective strategic and political leadership for the sport globally, to ensure it maximises its potential, influence and development opportunities. To ensure WSF achieves the most appropriate balance between short and long-term strategy and planning, while balancing the associated risks.

What will success look like? A leadership team respected within the sport and in global sport for its robust and agile governance and leadership of squash's future success.

2. PARTNERSHIPS

To build and sustain effective partnerships with organisations and individuals with similar values and ambitions for the future success of squash; ensuring WSF clarity over contribution and accountability of each party.

Such partnerships may include WSF Regions, Professional Players' Association, Championship hosts, the IOC, Championship and Major Games' hosts, sponsors etc., but WSF may in future also need to consider less traditional partnerships.

What will success look like? A strong and healthy network of partners and supporters committed to a collaborative approach to long-term growth and success of the sport.

3. CHAMPIONSHIPS & MAJOR GAMES

To lead and oversee the effective attribution, delivery and presentation of high quality Championships and Major Games for squash. To challenge the current programme of Championships and Events; reviewing how we do things in response to changing needs and expectations of the sport and its audiences and consumers (spectators, players, sponsors, etc.).

What will success look like? A programme of truly world class Championships and Events with a growing audience around the world 'consuming' the sport via a variety of established and emerging channels.



4. INFRASTRUCTURE

To ensure squash has the best support infrastructure possible at world level. To identify and engage available resources as effectively as possible, including funding, expertise, volunteer workforce, technology, etc.

Infrastructure includes refereeing, coaching, facilities, equipment, medical, anti-doping, workforce, etc.

What will success look like? A structure that not only operates well at every level but also integrates smoothly at local, national, regional and worldwide levels.

5. DEVELOPMENT

Provide a framework and network of expertise capable of advising and supporting the needs of new and emerging squash nations. The scope of this is likely to include the range of activities and expertise covered in goals 1 to 4 above.

What will success look like? Readily available suitable information and support throughout all levels of the sport.



LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE**1**

WSF to become more of a beacon and reference point where stakeholders look for effective, efficient and ethical management and administration.

Strong governance by the Board, Committees and Commissions, supported by the WSF office is essential; with a policy structure, all fed downwards and outwards within the sport and beyond.

WSF to improve and extend leadership of its constitution, policies and the implementation of them.

- **WSF to be viewed as progressive and efficient**
- **Widen the spread of talents in leadership roles**
- **More specialist managed panels “leading” than committees “reacting”**
- **Promote greater female involvement in management of the sport**
- **Update the WSF Constitution to reflect the sport and the requirements of its membership**
- **Look at the level and basis of WSF membership fees and its voting structure**
- **Communicate as regularly, widely and effectively as possible with PSA, Regions, National federations and stakeholders**
- **Ensuring transference of knowledge at every opportunity**
- **Strengthen relationships with stakeholders**
- **Integrate with the Tour**
- **Expand external relationships**
- **Learn from other sports**
- **Safeguard financial reserves**
- **Integrate disciplinary mechanisms even further**
- **Maximise regular positive media output across the spectrum of communication tools**



KEY PARTNERSHIPS – REGIONS & NATIONS

2

It is important that the Regional Federations are fully integrated with the WSF and identified as an arm of the World Federation, developing both the structure and strength of each, to the benefit of the sport as a whole.

- **Regional body positioning as a delivery arm of WSF to be solidified**
- **Each Region to appoint a Media Director**
- **Strengthen the links and cohesiveness of uniform policy delivery with the regions and onto nations**
- **Encourage the formation of National Federations where they don't already exist**

FINANCIAL PLANNING & DATA MANAGEMENT

3

For the WSF to be able to carry out policies and initiatives greater income streams are needed. The commercial outlook and expertise to deliver this needs to be developed.

- **Develop enhanced income streams to provide budgets for strategic goal delivery**
- **Develop a financial plan that projects income streams and costs for the whole period covered by the strategic plan**
- **Ensure regular online collection of national data**



DEVELOPMENT**4**

Prioritise leadership via the provision of materials and support for the continued introduction and retention of new players.

- **Separate development (broad based) from coaching**
- **Use our features e.g. healthy, competitive, sport-for-life**
- **Assist National Federations to 'pop up' temporary courts in public places e.g. beaches and shopping malls**
- **Maintain the WSF Ambassadors Programme and encourage regions to undertake similar schemes**
- **Put a panel in place to develop and evaluate developmental ideas**
- **Provide schools and urban programmes that are adaptable by Member Nations**
- **Develop Para-Squash**
- **Focus strongly on youth and affordability**
- **Emphasis 'fun' play as the priority – elite play will follow for some**

COACHING & COACH DEVELOPMENT**5**

Ensure best practice, uniform and transportable coaching qualifications across the sport.

- **Roll out the Coach Education Programme featuring qualification standardisation for full Regional and National Federation adoption**
- **Look into every means of ensuring learning and best practice**



REFEREEING & REFEREE DEVELOPMENT**6**

Address the twin aims of enlarging the pool of referees and improving the officiating standard within it.

- **Develop programmes that will lead to an increased pool of qualified referees and then nurture them so that more move upwards in standard**
- **Ensure continuing WSF control and coordination to support the top refereeing tier**
- **Improve assessment systems, spread and consistency**
- **Review the Rules of Squash and update them to reflect the changing needs of the sport**
- **Explore ways of making play more continuous at higher levels**

COMPETITION**7**

Competition is the shop-window for the sport and the aspiration for many players. The upward pathway for players needs to be clear, with National and Regional Federations effectively linking and managing, while enhancing PSA liaison and cooperation.

- **Regional and National Federations to put standard match management rules in place, based upon World Championship Regulation procedures (seeding, scoring, panels etc.)**
- **Push for squash involvement in all Regional Games and other multi-sports events**
- **Provide a full programme of World Championships**
- **Ensure that the rights fees and requirements for hosts are balanced**
- **Consider ways of raising World Championship team participation levels, especially female events.**
- **World Championship Regulations to reflect Tour Regulation changes, where appropriate**
- **Increase WSF World Championship information delivery uniformity**



MARKETING

8

Ensure that income streams, raised profile and quality output options are realised.

- **Review the WSF's assets, categorise, then secure partnerships for them**
- **Lead compilation of sports-wide structural, marketing and demographic data**
- **Develop the commercial value of WSF Championships**
- **Develop branding elements of the WSF logo**
- **Review Digital marketing possibilities**

OLYMPIC GAMES

9

Keep pushing for the inclusion of squash on the Games Programme in conjunction with stakeholders.

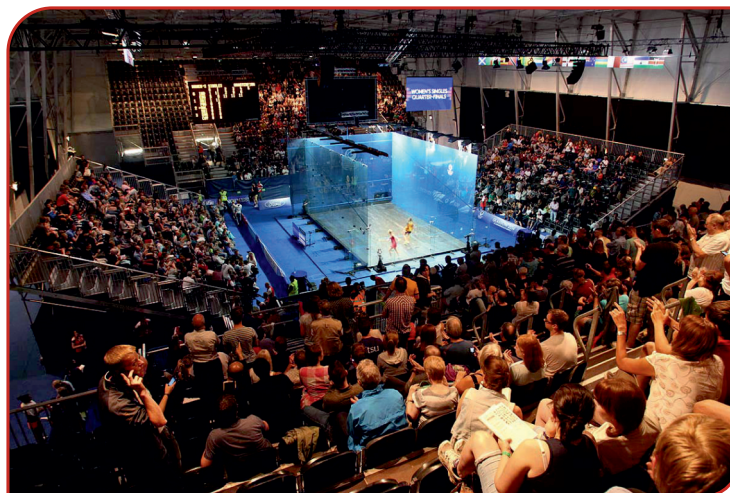
- **Review why the recent bid failed and how best to overcome IOC resistance to adding squash.**



SQUASH GENERAL FUNDAMENTALS**10**

Implement policies to manage and grow the sport and ensure its' effective management of all facets.

- **Maintain WADA Compliance**
- **Disseminate anti-doping information ever more widely**
- **Improve player behaviour, rules knowledge and match management understanding at club team level**
- **Expand the reach of SPIN so National Federations use SPIN numbers as the entry basis for national events i.e. only one worldwide player registration requirement**
- **Ensure long-term Technical services management for the industry and operators**
- **Support court construction and related industry innovation, including lowering the cost of court provision to aid development**
- **Develop the Complete Court Accreditation (CCA) registration programme to ensure benchmarks and income streams**
- **Enlarge the pool and standard of Major Championship Directors and Referees**
- **Consider ball sizes and colours for developmental use**
- **Promote the use of faster balls by club players**



Overall, WSF must not be afraid to review itself and changes as needed



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