

Squash Tennis

Richard C. Squires

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SQUASH TENNIS
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dick Squires is certainly qualified to produce this manual on “Instant Squash Tennis.”

Added to an articulateness which equips him to put his experience and knowledge into words, his background in racquet games is broad, longstanding and at a level sufficiently upper echelon to have garnered national championships in three separate bat and ball sports.

Starting early, in Bronxville, N.Y., he was a member of the National Junior Davis Cup Tennis team at 17. Emerging from The Hill School in 1949 and fitted with the National Junior Tennis Doubles crown, he went through Williams College with the class of 1953.

In 1954, he was 50 percent of the title winning team in the National Squash Racquets men's Doubles Championships, and was ranked seventh nationally in singles. Twice a finalist in the National Intercollegiate Squash Racquets Championship, he was elected President of the National Intercollegiate Association in 1952.

Less active in formal competition for some years, he latterly became interested in a newly burgeoning racquet sport, and attained the pinnacle in the 1966 National Platform Paddle Tennis Doubles Championships.

Meanwhile, he had become fascinated with the venerable game of Squash Tennis. Attacking it with his usual enthusiasm and natural aptitudes, in two years he mastered this relatively difficult game sufficiently to be runner-up in the Nationals Singles (1966). Concurrently, he devoted the aforementioned enthusiasm to heading a program to revitalize the game; with significant results. Finally, also in 1967, he was elected President of the 57 year old National Squash Tennis Association.

A word about the various illustrations showing the squash tennis court and various shots: The solid * is you and your position and the O is your opponent's. The direction of flight of the ball is indicated by arrows and the “x” indicates when and where the ball bounces on the floor. “F” indicates forehand, “B” backhand, and the “S” is the service. In all descriptions it is assumed the player is right-handed.

(Illustrated by Richard Kaiser)

[Transcriber's Note: See the HTML version of this e-book for illustrations. Figure captions have been transferred to the text in brackets.]

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WHO CAN PLAY?

Anyone who enjoys playing Tennis, Squash Racquets, Platform Tennis, or any racquet game and has good reflexes will love Squash Tennis.

Where it lacks the endurance and subtlety that Squash Racquets calls for, it offers the exhilaration inherent in powerfully hit strokes, split-second racquet work, and graceful, seemingly unhurried footwork. The ball “comes to you” more often, but the challenge is to figure out the wider angles and exactly where the lightning fast green ball will eventually end up after rebounding off of as many as five walls.

The game of Squash Tennis has something to offer players of all ages. The demands for fast reflexes, agile racquet work and speed of foot are intriguing challenges for the youngsters. On the other hand, placement, guile, patience, and the faster ball that actually provides more time for retrieval make Squash Tennis the ideal sport for the “older” athlete who wants to preserve that straight waistline all of his life. The average age of the ranking players today is around 43!

In addition, the promising, young (10 to 13 year old) Lawn Tennis “comer,” who cannot play Tennis during the winter months and still does not have the strength or coordination to hit the Squash Racquets ball hard and often enough to heat it up and realize some prolonged, interesting rallies, is an excellent prospect for Squash Tennis.

The ball is not affected by temperature change and requires no “warming up.” The youngster will improve his racquet work, hone his reflexes (especially on volleys and half volleys), and keep his legs in shape during the off winter months. Also, the racquet and ball are akin to Lawn Tennis equipment.

Finally, everyone and/or any club that presently possesses Squash courts can introduce the additional indoor bat and ball game of Squash Tennis. All that is required is a 4 feet 6 inches backwall “out” line in addition to the 6 feet 6 inches Squash Racquets line and, ideally, the extension of the service dividing line up to the tell tale (see fig. 1 [Note extension of service line to front wall.]).

Because the ball is not affected by temperature, many people play Squash Tennis all year round, and not only in the cold, winter months. This game could, therefore, be played widely in the South.

So, we invite all racquets men, young and old alike, to accept the challenges of the fastest indoor racquet and ball game in the world. As a matter of fact, because of the speed of the ball and, consequently, the less running involved, Squash Tennis would be an excellent game for the more active distaffers.

If you are looking for a sport that you can “master” in one or two seasons then don't take up Squash Tennis. But if you are looking for an intriguing and invigorating game which you can play practically all your life, we strongly urge you to try Squash Tennis. You, your waistline, legs, lungs and reflexes will never regret it.

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STRATEGY

The strategy in Squash Tennis is basically the same as Squash Racquets; i.e., to control the so-called “T” or the intersection of the service court lines, by keeping your opponent up front, off to the sides, or behind you, the majority of the time (see fig. 2 [Desired court position.]).

The fundamental stratagem can only be carried out by your learning a wide assortment of Squash Tennis shots and perfecting your repertoire with practice and experience against many different types of opponents under competitive situations.

You will have to fight and play hard for this position. Always head for the “T” immediately after hitting the ball, but taking care not to interfere with your opponent's stroke.

All of your shots should be hit with a purpose, which is to keep your opponent off balance, away from the “T,” and of course, eventually to defeat him. Change of pace, therefore, is of utmost importance. Break up your opponent's rhythm, never allow him to get grooved, frequently do the unexpected, so that he loses confidence in his anticipation and, subsequently, goes on the defensive.

At all times be offensive. The game of Squash Tennis has known many so-called “great getters,” but they invariably have succumbed to “purposeful power” and the aggressively angled shots of players with the burning desire to win, “the killer instinct” that spurs the great players to go all out for every point.

Play each point like an individual match. Don't let up or intentionally “throw” a game. Squash Tennis, as with all racquet games, is a sport of momentum. Many a tide has changed, many a match won when seemingly it has been hopelessly lost. Go after every point as though you were down Match Point and had to win it. “Coasting” shatters your concentration, and lost concentration can well mean a lost match. Play to win as quickly as you can.

Finally, assume your opponent will retrieve even your best shots. Don't underestimate his ability or overestimate your shot-making prowess. Remember the speed of the ball actually gives your opponent more time to get to it. Always be ready for anything until the ball is actually ruled dead and the rally has ended.

FUNDAMENTAL STROKES

The Squash Tennis stroke is more closely allied to the Squash Racquets swing than to the Tennis swing.

Ground Strokes: The wrist and grip should be kept loose at all times. The grip will automatically be tightened at the moment of contact with the ball.

The forehand and backhand ground strokes should be hit with a short, snap of the wrist—as though you were cracking a whip. There is no time and no reason to employ a long, high follow-through.

The head of the racquet at the moment of impact with the ball should be slightly “open” and you should feel the gut “biting” the side of the ball. This slight side-spin cut, with the racquet head tilting back and hit like a short, chip shot, will tend to keep the ball low and inexorably “grabbing” for the floor. The spin will produce many “nicks,” which are shots that hit a side wall and floor practically simultaneously and die. (See fig. 3 [Racquet open when contacting ball.] for position of racquet at the moment of contact with ball.)

The follow-through is low and abbreviated. The racquet head should go straight out or up the court rather than be wrapped around your body. The best way to “groove your strokes” and to keep the ball low is to consciously aim your racquet head on your follow-through at the very, top of the “telltale.”

As in all racquet sports, the racquet should do the work. The ball willingly goes where the racquet head directs it. Do not flail or attempt to push your shots. Hit them crisply with the snap of your cocked wrist, and at all times attempt to regiment your swing.

Ideally your body should be out of the way, which means whenever possible on your ground strokes you should turn sideways. Your weight should shift toward the direction in which you are hitting at the moment of impact, and you should have your feet planted firmly. Because of the high velocity of the ball, however, you frequently will not have the time to turn sideways and will be required to stroke in awkward and off-balance positions. Your aim, however, is always to be in the correct position of play before the ball gets there, thus allowing time for adjustment and proper stroking. Move to your position with short, quick steps rather than long, tiring strides. Consciously maintain your weight on your toes, with the knees slightly bent. This will help you to move in any direction necessary as quickly as possible.

In following the ball around the corners, do not stand still and pivot. Go after it, again with a series of short steps with your racquet head up and cocked, and your body in proper position so that you are ready to make a quick and meaningful stroke.

Volleying or cutting off the ball before it hits the floor is similar to the tennis stroke. It calls for lightning-like reflexes and the ability to move the racquet head practically in any given direction in a fraction of a second.

The volley is a short “jab,” with the racquet head traveling forward no more than, say, 24 inches. Once again, your aim should be in the direction of where you want the ball to go, and low.

The main purpose of the volley is to keep your opponent constantly on the run, moving him about, and preferably up and back, by cutting off the flight of the ball. Most players can run all day sideways, but will eventually tire if you make them run up and back. Like body punches in boxing, forcing your opponent up to the front wall with deftly placed volleys will eventually take its toll.

Miscellaneous: Generally all Squash Tennis strokes should be hit as low as possible—within a few inches of the front “telltale.” This will take time and practice, but pays high dividends. A low ball invites the aforementioned nicks and keeps your opponent hurrying and scurrying. The chances are better that, when hit with the proper amount of pace, a low ball will die before it gets to the back wall.

When a ball is hugging the side wall, don't attempt to “pick” it off. It is far easier, and your percentage of success is far greater, to “scrape” the ball off with a very loose wrist. Your other alternative is to hit the ball right into the wall and hope it will angle off and travel to the front wall (see fig. 4 [To retrieve wall hugger, hit ball right into wall.]).

Service: The proper position prior to serving is with the feet as close to the “T” as possible. This location will help you to put your service in the desired place, which is parallel to the side wall. In other words, you reduce the angle. In addition, the “center” of the court is the ideal position from which to cover your

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opponent's return (see fig. 5 [Forehand and backhand service positions.]).

Since the ball must land short of the service line, it is obviously not possible to overpower your opponent for a service ace—as contrasted to the services in Squash Racquets or Lawn Tennis.

The most effective service, therefore, is hit as high as possible on the front wall to a “spot” that will place the ball after bouncing (and your opponent must wait for your service to bounce on the floor—he cannot volley it) as high and also as close to the side wall as possible. Your opponent will have a difficult time hitting the ball well because of its height and its closeness to the side wall. A great deal of practice and experimentation will be required before you discover exactly where that “spot” is, and with what degree of effort you should hit the ball.

The service is hit with a slight cut, which will usually make the ball grab the wall and hug closer. A semi-overhand, side-spin service is best employed from the right court, and a sliced underhand shot is used from the left side (see fig. 6 [Forehand and backhand lob services.]).

For an occasional “surprise” or change of pace, you can vary the service by hitting the ball somewhat harder right at your opponent. This can be done either as a straight shot right down the middle (fig. 7 [Service straight down the middle.]) or at a sharp angle that breaks off the side wall and lands right at his feet (fig. 8 [In and out service angling into opponent.]).

In addition, reversed cuts can also throw your opponent off, since you can make the ball bounce off the floor in the opposite direction than expected.

Finally, the service is practically the only stroke in the game of Squash Tennis which permits you the luxury of time prior to hitting. You should, therefore, take advantage of this time to get settled, anchor your feet comfortably, pause, even take a deep breath, and concentrate on how you are going to hit the ball toward your “spot” in order to make as good a service as possible. Don't aimlessly just put the ball in play. A careless server loses many points by allowing his opponent to make an offensive return. A deliberate, concentrating, purposeful player, on the other hand, will actually win many important points with well placed serves.

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SHOT-MAKING

Most uninitiates, especially Squash Racquets players who are adroit at and/or addicted to that game, believe Squash Tennis offers nothing but prolonged “slam bang” rallies and a boring “sameness.” Because of the tremendous liveliness of the ball and the apparent absence of deftly placed straight “drops” that die in a corner, these potential players scorn and speak disparagingly of the wonderful game of Squash Tennis which, like all racquet games, has its own shots and ways of putting the ball away.

It is very true that overwhelming power is a key to hitting winning shots, but this is also true of Lawn Tennis. Employing the so-called “Big Game of Tennis” is an absolute must if a circuit player today is going to be a winner. No longer do you see any classic baseline duels where the premium is on guile and steadiness. The Big Service, the powerful rapier-like follow-up volley or overhead smash are the standard weapons that pay off in today's Tennis game.

Squash Tennis, although played in a regular Squash court, is indeed “different” from Squash Racquets. It possesses its own distinctive variety of shots, subtleties and ways of defeating your opponent.

One of the most difficult and frustrating tasks we in the National Squash Tennis Association have in our attempts to expose the game to potential players is to somehow get a prospect out on the court more than once. Squash Tennis is a game calling for such speed of racquet and comprehensive understanding of much longer or wider angles (than Squash Racquets) that no one can really feel “comfortable” until he has been out on the court playing at least a half dozen times. It is a rare player, indeed, who does not quickly become discouraged the first few times and decides the game just isn't for him after all. And what a pity it is! For he is missing out on playing a sport that offers him many years of wonderful, exhilarating exercise, good camaraderie, and a beautiful, matchless rhythm displayed in harmonious coordination of racquet and graceful footwork.

The following are some of the fundamental shots you should attempt to include in your repertoire:

Rails: Your “bread and butter” shots, similar to Squash Racquets, are the “rails” or shots hit straight up and down, parallel to the side wall. These rails keep your opponents “scrambling” and allow you to hold that important “T” position.

The rail shot is hit more effectually when you are fairly close, within three feet, of the side wall. The closer your position to the side wall, the easier it is to hit a shot that stays right next to the wall during the entire flight of the shot (see fig. 9 [Straight up and down backhand and forehand rail shots.]).

Many winners are made off of these rail shots in the following manner:

1. Frequently the ball hits straight into a rear corner and dies; or 2. It pops unexpectedly out of the corner and right into your opponent; 3. When hit with the proper pace, and low, the ball will die before it comes off the back wall; 4. When hit with sheer power and relatively high, your opponent will be unable to catch up with it; 5. If the ball is hit in such a manner as to make it cling to the side wall all the way back, your opponent will err in attempting to pick it off the side wall.

Crosscourts: To be mixed in with your straight up and down strokes are the crosscourt forehand and backhand shots. Here again, these are employed to keep the ball out of the middle and keep your opponent defensive and on the move. They can be hit either straight toward the opposite back wall corner (see fig. 10 [Cross court to opponent's backhand.]) frequently for a winner, or more sharply cross court, so that the ball either breaks into or behind your opponent's position (see fig. 11 [Cross court that breaks into or behind opponent.]).

Three-wall Fadeaway: This shot can only be executed when you are a few feet in front of the service line and off to one side of the court or the other, nearer to the side wall than the center. Otherwise it is practically impossible to obtain the necessary angle to pull off the three-wall fadeaway successfully.

The ball is hit as sharply as possible into the opposite corner, at a position approximately midway between the floor and the ceiling, striking the front wall first and then the side wall. This particular stroke is hit higher than most of the other Squash Tennis shots since the ball has so far to travel. It will shoot off the side wall at great velocity and traverse cross court, bounce, and hit the other side wall deep—ideally within two feet of the

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back wall. Then, instead of coming off at the same angle as it hits, the ball rebounds practically parallel to the back wall (see fig. 12 [3-wall fadeaway.]). A well hit three-way fadeaway, which can be made either off the backhand or the forehand, is practically irretrievable since your opponent, even when he comes to realize how the ball is going to skid out straight at him, will still have great difficulty in getting his racquet head behind the ball (and in front of the back wall) to make a return.

Double Boast: This shot, while not as effective as in Squash Racquets, can, nonetheless, result in many winning points or, if not producing a winner, it will force your opponent to the front of the court in order to make his retrieval. The double boast is hit almost straight into the side wall and fairly low (three to four feet above the floor) and can be hit either off the forehand or backhand side. The ball rebounds off the side wall, goes cross court and hits the opposite side wall just inches away from the front wall. It bounces out and practically parallel to the front, barely touching or “kissing” the front wall for a winner, or at least a very difficult “get” for your opponent (see figs. 13 [Forehand boast.] & 14 [Forehand boast.]). The only prerequisite for hitting this shot properly is that you should be fairly far back in the court and close to one of the side walls prior to the execution of your shot.

Four-Wall Boast: This particular shot is much more difficult to master than the double boast or three-wall fadeaway but, at the same time, far more effective and unexpected. It has to be hit with a good deal of power and quite high in order to carry to the front wall. Your chances of success are, therefore, far greater if attempted off the forehand side.

The ball travels off your racquet high into the backhand or left wall, rebounds sharply to the opposite or forehand wall heading toward the front of the court. There should still be enough momentum and height remaining to permit the ball to again go cross court to the left wall where it hits within a few inches of the front wall and drops straight down barely, touching or “kissing” the front wall (see fig. 15 [Fourwall boast.]). The four-wall boast is presently only hit by a handful of the better Squash Tennis players and should be a shot you attempt only after becoming skillful in the other more standard winning shots.

Straight Up and Down and Cross Court Drops: These soft or “touch” shots are employed primarily to move your opponent up and back, although an occasional winner will result when a low ball, hit with the right amount of pace and spin, dies before your opponent can get to it. Too few Squash Tennis players today, including many of the ranking competitors, employ this change of pace shot. Of all the shots, this one must be hit with a short, low follow-through in order to work successfully. Your primary goal to accomplish these shots is to make certain you hit the front wall first and, ideally, not allow the ball to angle into the side walls (see figs. 16 [Straight backhand drop shot.] & 17 [Cross court forehand drop shot.]).

Corner Shots: Again, unlike Squash Racquets, the Squash Tennis corner shots rarely result in an outright winner. The ball is just too lively. These shots are worth employing occasionally, however, to keep your opponent cross-legged, off balance, and on the run.

The most effective corner shots are hit with fairly good pace. Your aim should be low and into the side wall to a point much closer to the front wall than the spot a Squash Racquets player employs. The reason for hitting a corner shot in this “in and out” manner is to keep the livelier ball out of the center of the court (see figs. 18 [How not to hit corner shot.] & 19 [How to hit corner shot.]).

Miscellaneous: Generally it is best when hitting any Squash Tennis shot to “hold” your shot as long as you can, thus reducing the chances that your opponent can anticipate where you are going to put the ball and start moving to position even prior to your actually hitting.

Whenever possible, shield the ball with your body so that your opponent cannot see the direction you have hit until the very last possible instant. There is nothing in the Playing Rules against blocking your opponent's view, as long as you do not interfere with his swing or with his getting into the proper position.

Remember that the key to your shot making is mixing up your strokes and keeping the ball angled away from the middle of the court. A ball that ends up in the center will probably result in your losing the point or, at best, having to leave the “T” and go on the defensive. The exception, of course, is the widely employed “gut ball” that you hit into the front wall with great speed and at such a height that it rebounds right into your opponent's body (see fig. 20 [Ball aimed to rebound off front wall and into opponent.]).

Employ the side walls as much as possible to keep the ball ricocheting and rocketing about the court so your opponent becomes frustrated and almost dizzy from following the flight of your angled shots.

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Turning: A word on “turning” or “coming around” is in order. Unlike Squash Racquets where turning is quite rarely necessary, in Squash Tennis it is both required and desirable to come around as frequently as possible. The Squash Tennis ball is so lively and the angles so wide that trying to back up usually results in the ball chasing you and at best, a defensive, awkward shot will be all you can hit. Turning, however, and moving constantly after or toward the ball will “open up the court” as well as place you in a solid, firm position to stroke the ball freely and comfortably. (See figures 21 [Don't back up and take ball on backhand.] and 22 [Usually best to turn and take ball on forehand.] showing a player backing up versus a player who is properly turning.)

Learning to “come around” is another one of those frustrations you will not find easy to master at first. The ball, being so fast, will seem to run away from you. Just remember two things: 1) hustle after the ball with short, speedy steps, keeping in mind that the angle is much greater than in Squash Racquets (see figs. 23 [Usual Squash Racquets angle and final bounce position.] & 24 [Note wider, longer angle of Squash Tennis ball's final bounce position.]) and 2) your racquet must be back and cocked, ready to swing through when the ball arrives at the proper hitting position, which is preferably out in front of you.

Finally, another aspect of the game of Squash Tennis that a beginner or a converted Squash Racquets player will find “unnatural” is the necessity of immediately moving forward when you see or sense your opponent going for a sharply hit up–and–down shot, either cross court or “rail,” that does not hit any of the side walls. The Squash Racquets black ball is so much “deader” that the player usually has to go back first and then forward somewhat in order to be in the proper position to hit the ball as it rebounds off the back wall.

The tremendous speed of the Squash Tennis ball, however, does not require that you go toward the back wall first. To the contrary, you must charge forward instantly (even when your opponent's shot is heading toward the back wall) or else you will never be able to catch up to it as it comes rebounding off the back wall. Many a shot off the back wall is played from a position closer to the front wall than to the back.

HISTORY OF SQUASH TENNIS

Squash Tennis is one of the few racquet and ball indoor sports that can be termed honestly and strictly “American” in origin, whereas Squash Racquets has its roots in England going as far back as the 1850s. The game spread to America in the 1880s and the first real organized Squash Racquets play was in 1882 at St. Paul's Prep School, in Concord, New Hampshire.

Eventually some of the boys there experimented with a Lawn Tennis ball and liked the fast rallies and liveness of the action. Consequently an exciting offspring was born, Squash Tennis.

Toward the turn of the century, Stephan J. Feron, of New York became fascinated with the possibility of the speeded up version of Squash and has been given the credit for creating the lighter Squash Tennis racquet and the famous (or infamous) inflated ball with the knitted webbing surrounding the regular cover.

The last decade of the 1800s saw, therefore, two Squash games being played. Very quickly, however, Squash Tennis became more popular and widely played than Squash Racquets because of the more exciting pace and action of the play. Private courts were built on estates owned by such millionaires as William C. Whitney and J. P. Morgan. The famous Tuxedo Club, Tuxedo Park, New York, installed the first formal Club court in 1898. By 1905, the Racquet and Tennis Club, Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia Clubs in Manhattan had courts, as did Brooklyn's Crescent A. C. and the Heights Casino.

In 1911 the National Squash Tennis Association was founded and organized by the banker, John W. Prentiss, Harvard Club of New York. The following year inter-club league competition was started in New York City—56 years ago! The sport also gained popularity and some limited play in other cities such as Buffalo, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, but the real nucleus of activity was pretty much confined to “The Big City.”

The halcyon days of Squash Tennis were the 1920s and 1930s. Such names as Fillmore Van S. Hyde, Rowland B. Haines, Thomas R. Coward, William Rand, Jr., and R. Earl Fink dominated the amateur ranks during the Golden Twenties. New York Athletic Club's Harry F. Wolf reigned alone and supreme as the amateur champion during the ensuing decade.

The professionals, however, “owned” the best of the amateurs. Walter Kinsella, Robert L. Cahill, Tommy Iannicelli, Johnny Jacobs, Frank Lafforgue, Rowland Dufton, were the outstanding “play for pay” performers. And, the unquestioned king of the Squash Tennis courts was the legendary Frank Ward, who never lost a match in tournament competition.

Because of the desire by the expert Squash Tennis players for more and more speed and a higher pressurized ball, a novice quickly became discouraged with his initial efforts at playing the game. For many crucial years, therefore, the game was not adopted by new players and there was no broad base of tyros. Plainly and simply the avid duffers, which every sport must have if it is to survive and retain its popularity, took up a less frustrating, easier to master sport for their exercise.

World War II saw the demise of this lightning fast webbed ball because of the shortage of rubber and the game all but died. Simultaneously Squash Racquets thrived during the War. Organized play and competition were established at service bases, colleges, schools and YMCAs. A new breed of young, active Americans became enamored with Squash Racquets and the pendulum swung away from Squash Tennis. After all, what is a racquet game without an appropriate ball? The now aging professionals saw the wave of interest in Squash Racquets and climbed aboard.

After the war Frank Lafforgue, of the Yale Club, attempted to renew interest in Squash Tennis by utilizing a standard Lawn Tennis ball. While it was a far easier game for the novice to learn and a marvelous form of indoor exercise for the otherwise sedentary businessman, the “old timers,” remembering the Golden Age of the 1920s and 1930s, became completely disenchanted with the slow, heavy, “make shift” orb. They left their love and were contented to talk wistfully about the “good old days.”

Competition, though comparatively limited, continued. Some of the outstanding players who competed right after the War in a dwindling number of tourneys were eight times national champion H. Robert Reeve, Barry Ryan, Frank Hanson, Joseph Sullivan, Howard Rose, (still very active in his sixties) J. Lennox Porter,

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and John Powers.

Norman F. Torrance, Harvard Club, Secretary of the Association in 1919–1934 and the NSTA's President up until 1954, despite his love for the game and his efforts to rejuvenate it during the 1950s, was a voice in the wilderness.

(The following was extracted from an article written by Robert H. Lehman, Editor of the 1966–7 edition of the NSTA Yearbook.)

“The present starts its story less than two years ago. For many years, well known, long known figures had tried to revive the game, revamp the ball, attract new players. Still active in administration and competition were Willard Rice, Howard Rose, Larry Pratt, Rodney Fiske, Frank Wadelton, Dave Smith and others.

“Suddenly after protracted doldrums dominated mostly by conversation, a spark was fired. Back to his old Eastern haunts came volatile, enthusiastic Dick Squires, a National Junior Davis Cupper while at school in Bronxville, a nationally ranked Squash Racquets player 10 years ago, now in mid-thirties and still a 'natural.' Exposed to our game at the Rye Squash Barn in early 1965, he went whole hog for his new love, roamed around crying, 'How long has this been going on?' Mr. Torrance must have known something when, way back in 1951, he said the game would come back.

“The ebullient red-head lit a fire under everyone. He talked a 'Rejuvenation Committee' into existence, headed it, and started the ball rocketing. Fund-raising letters to Patrons, membership solicitations to clubs and individuals, colorful posters broadcasting the game's delights on squash bulletin boards all over, letters to pros outlining advantages and opportunities, revision and updating of Official Rules and Association By-Laws, publicity releases to papers and magazines—all were dreamed up and implemented by Squires and his now famous 'NSTA-RC,' a dedicated, hard working bunch.

“One of the most imaginative programs, instigated during the winter of 1965–6, was the running of exhibitions (over 22!), which dramatically exposed the game to the uninitiated, attracted sizable galleries and converts. Dick's buddy, Bill Moncrieff, conducted running commentaries, stopping play to explain fine points, while such as Dick, John Powers, Gavin Murphy, Dave Smith, Jim Prigoff and Henry Stanton roamed the East to such spots as Atlantic City, Philadelphia, Washington and Rochester to spread the word.

“Mindful of the age-old cry, 'What about the ball?' a committee was formed to pursue all possibilities with determination and with primary view to drastic reduction of breakage—a long-time bugaboo. If the action could be improved, so much the better. . . .

“Great strides were made, and recently Norman Forster, after carrying on lengthy, exploratory discussions with the loyal Spalding outfit (which had been keeping the game going with the best they had been able to produce for this specialized and heretofore limited field, developed an excellent ball—one that can withstand the tremendous beating a Squash Tennis ball takes as it rebounds about the walls.”

In 1966 as evidence that Squash Tennis was, indeed, on the “comeback trail” the august governing body of the National Squash Tennis Association elected five-time national champion, Jim Prigoff, as their new President. They pledged their support both verbally and financially. The most active season in over 25 years was instigated and many new faces were seen chasing the fast green covered ball about the court. Innumerable converts came over from Squash Racquets and new life and vitality was breathed into the “grand old game.”

Momentum continues. A “new look” was adopted in 1967 with the complete reorganization of the Association. Functioning committees were formed to create and implement workable plans in the various important areas of activity as Tournament and Ranking, Exhibitions and Clinics, Promotions and Publicity, Finance, National Development, Membership, Referees and Rules, etc. A broad base of energetic lovers of the game, with due respect for tradition, began to think in the present what could be done now to enhance the popularity of the sport, and to plan for the future. The day of the “one man show,” the one athlete-dominated sport was over. Squash Tennis can and should be played and enjoyed by everyone. And we, of the revitalized National Squash Tennis Association plan to do everything necessary to provide you, the present or potential player, the “hacker” or expert, with the kind of organized programs that will encourage you to play Squash Tennis as long as you physically can. Keep in mind that the venerable Mr. Torrance won a tournament match at the age of 82!

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COURT SPECIFICATIONS AND EQUIPMENT

Court—Basically the Squash Tennis court is identical in specifications to Squash Racquets; namely 18 1/2 feet wide, 32 feet long, and 16 feet high at the front wall: The ceiling should be at least 18 feet 6 inches high in order to allow for lights. Running along the front wall, 17 inches in height, is the “telltale” made of sheet metal. Hitting the “telltale” is tantamount to hitting a Lawn Tennis ball into the net. The front wall also has the front service line, which is 6 1/2 feet above the floor. On the floor, 10 feet from the backwall, is the floor service line extending parallel to the backwall and across the entire width of the court. A line drawn from the floor service line to the backwall divides the back court into two equal halves. Ideally (but not an absolute necessity) the service line should also extend all the way up to the front wall in order to divide the forecourt in two for service placement. In other words, the service must land in the opponent's half of the court in front of the floor service line and divided by the extension of the center line to the front wall. The service court in Squash Tennis, therefore, is actually 22 feet long, and bounded by the center line, floor service line, side wall and front wall (rather than back wall).

The backwall “out” line is 4 feet 6 inches above the floor, or 2 feet below the present Squash Racquets' backwall out line.

Otherwise the rules in scoring are identical to Squash Racquets, even though the style of play is, as you have noted, quite different. (For a schematic drawing of a Squash Tennis court, see Figure 25 [Dimensional drawing of a Squash Tennis court].)

Equipment—The green felt covered ball is approximately 2 3/8 inches in diameter, slightly smaller than a standard Lawn Tennis ball but containing higher pressure. It is, therefore, lighter and faster. These Squash Tennis balls are manufactured for the Association by A. G. Spalding & Bros. They can be bought from any Squash Professional or directly from the National Squash Tennis Association for \$1.25 each. Recent manufacturing improvements have extended the length of time you can play with a ball without it wearing out or breaking.

The racquet has the identical size head to a regulation Lawn Tennis frame, but the length, including the handle, should not exceed 26 inches, which is 1 inch shorter and, therefore, somewhat lighter and more wieldable than a standard Tennis racquet. Regular gut or nylon is used for the string. A strong Squash Tennis racquet sells at a competitive price to a Squash Racquet bat.

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OFFICIAL PLAYING RULES

1. COURTS

The court dimensions, lines, telltale, material, construction, and lights shall be in accordance with the specifications approved by the Executive Committee of the National Squash Tennis Association. Existing [American (hardball)] Squash Racquets courts are recognized by the National Squash Tennis Association, but a court boundary line across the back wall, 4'6" [1372mm] from the floor, is essential, and a line from the center of the service line forward to the front wall is highly desirable.

2. RACQUET AND BALL

The racquet or bat shall have a frame similar in shape to that of a lawn tennis racquet, the length including the handle not to exceed 27 inches [686mm]. The stringing shall be of gut, nylon or other kindred substance, but neither the frame nor the stringing may be of metal.

The ball shall be in accordance with the specification approved by the Executive Committee of the National Squash Tennis Association.

3. GAME

A game shall be fifteen points; that is, the player scoring fifteen points will win the game, except in the event both players tie (a) at "thirteen all," the player who has first reached the score of thirteen will elect one of the following before proceeding with the game: 1) "set five"—making the game eighteen points, 2) "set three"—making the game sixteen points, 3) "no set"—making the game fifteen points—or b) at "fourteen all," providing the score has not been "thirteen all," the player who has first reached fourteen points will elect one of the following before proceeding with the game: 1) "set three"—making the game seventeen points, 2) "no set"—making the game fifteen points.

4. MATCH

Matches shall be the best three out of five games.

5. SERVER

Before a match begins, it shall be decided by a spin of a racquet by the players as to which player shall serve first. Thereafter, when the server loses a point, his opponent becomes the server. The winner of a game shall serve first at the beginning of the following game.

6. SERVICE

The server shall stand behind the service line with both feet on the floor and not touching or straddling the line, and serve the ball against the front wall above the front-wall service line and below the 16-ft. [4877mm] line before it touches any other part of the court, so that it shall drop directly, or off the side wall, into his opponent's court in front of the floor service line without either touching the floor service line or the center line.

If the server does not so serve, it is a fault, and if it be the first fault, the server shall serve again from the same side. If the server makes two consecutive faults, he loses that point.

The server has the option of electing the side from which he shall commence serving and thereafter, until he loses the service, he shall alternate between both sides of the court in serving. If the server serves from the wrong side of court, there shall be no penalty and if the receiver makes no attempt to return the ball the point shall be replayed from the proper court.

When one service fault has been called and play for any reason whatsoever has stopped, when play is resumed the first fault does not stand and the server is entitled to two services.

7. RETURN OF SERVICE AND SUBSEQUENT PLAY

(a) To make a valid return of service the ball must be struck after the first bounce and before the second bounce, and reach the front wall on the fly above the telltale and below the 16-ft. line; in so doing it may touch any wall or walls within the court before or after reaching the front

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wall, except as in (e), below. A service fault may not be played. If a fair service is not so returned, it shall count as a point for the server and he shall then serve from the other side of the court.

(b) After a valid return of service, each player alternately thereafter shall strike the ball in the same manner as on the return of service, except that it may be volleyed. The player failing to so return the ball shall lose the point.

(c) A ball striking the ceiling or lights or on or above any court boundary line on the fly shall be ruled out of court; if a ball should strike the back wall on or above the 4'6" line after having bounced, it shall continue to be in play. If a ball having bounced should go into the gallery or strike any construction which alters its course, a let shall be called.

(d) If a ball before the second bounce hits the front wall above the telltale for the second time it is still in play.

(e) In an effort to return the ball to the front wall by first hitting to the back wall, the ball may not be played to the back wall unless it has first struck the back wall, and must be so struck as to hit the back wall below the 4'6" line.

(f) A player may not hit a ball twice during a stroke, but, while the ball is still in play, it may be struck at any number of times.

8. LET

A "let" is the stopping of play and the playing over of the point.

(a) In all cases, a player requesting a let must make his request before or in the act of hitting the ball. If a let is requested after the ball has been hit, it shall not be granted.

(b) If a player endeavoring to make his play in proper turn is interfered with so as to prevent him from making such play as he would without such interference, or if the striker refrains from striking at the ball because of fear of hitting his opponent, there shall be a let whether the ball has been hit by him or not.

(c) A player shall not be entitled to a let because his opponent prevents him from seeing the ball, provided his stroke is not interfered with.

(d) If the ball breaks in the course of a point, there shall be a let. If a player thinks the ball has broken while play is in progress, he must nevertheless complete the point and then request a let. The referee shall grant the let only if the ball proves in fact to be broken.

(e) If in the course of a point either player should be interfered with by elements outside their control, there shall be a let.

(f) It shall be the duty of the referee to call a let if, in his opinion, the play warrants it. If a match be played without a referee, the question of a let shall be left to the sportsmanship of the players.

(g) A player hit by a ball still in play loses the point, except that if he be hit by a ball played by his opponent before the ball strikes the front wall above the telltale, then it is a let. If however, a player is hit by a ball off his opponent's racquet that is clearly not going to reach the front wall above the telltale, a let will not be allowed and the point shall be given to the player who was hit by the ball. However, a player hit by a ball still in play will not lose the point if because of interference a let is called.

9. PLAYER INTERFERENCE

Each player must stay out of his opponent's way after he has struck the ball and (a) give his opponent a fair opportunity to get to and/or strike at the ball and (b) allow his opponent to play the ball from any part of the court to any part of the front wall or to either side wall.

10. LET POINT

(a) A "let point" may be called by the referee if after adequate warning there is no attempt or evidence of intent on the part of a player to avoid unnecessary interference or unnecessary crowding during his opponent's playing of a point. Even though the player is not actually striking at it, the referee may call a let point. The player interfered with wins the point.

(b) If in the opinion of a player he is entitled to a let point, he should at once appeal to the referee whose decision shall be final, except when judges are present, as

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described in Rule 11(b).

(c) A let point decision can only be made when a referee is officiating.

11. REFEREE AND JUDGES

(a) If available a referee shall control the game in any scheduled match. His decision is final, except when there are judges present as described in Rule 11(b).

(b) Two judges may be appointed by the referee or tournament committee to act on any appeal by a player to the referee's decision. When such judges are on hand, a player may appeal any decision of the referee directly to the judges. Only if both judges disagree with the referee will the referee's decision be reversed. The judges shall not make any ruling unless a player makes an appeal. The decision of the judges shall be announced promptly by the referee.

(c) All referees must be familiar with these playing rules when officiating in sanctioned matches.

12. GENERAL

(a) At any time between points, at the discretion of the referee a new ball may be put in play at the request of either player.

(b) Play shall be continuous. Between the third and fourth games there may be, at either player's request, a rest period not to exceed five minutes. Between any other games there may be, at either player's request, a rest period not to exceed one minute.

(c) If play is suspended by the referee due to an injury to one of the players, such player must resume play within one hour or otherwise default the match.

(d) The referee shall be the sole judge of any intentional delay, and after giving due warning he may disqualify the offender.

(e) If play is suspended by the referee for some problem beyond the control of both players, play shall be resumed immediately after such problem has been eliminated. If cause of the delay cannot be corrected within one hour, the tournament committee and/or the referee will determine when play will be resumed. Play shall commence from the point and game score existing at the time the match was halted.

January 1968

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NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

Transcriber's Note: For reference purposes, the reader may appreciate this list of Squash Tennis National Champions. The championship tournament may not have been held every year in the early 1990s. And although (as of early 2004) the most recent tournament was held around 1995, the National Squash Tennis Association considered Gary Squires to be the reigning champion when it reported to the New York Times through 2000 for the paper's annual comprehensive list of national sports champions. Gary Squires happens to be the son of the author of this booklet.

1911–1912 Alfred Stillman
1913 George Whitney
1914 Alfred Stillman
1915–1917 Eric S. Winston
1918 Fillmore Van S. Hyde
1919 John W. Appel, Jr.
1920 Auguste J. Cordier
1921 Fillmore Van S. Hyde
1922 Thomas R. Coward
1923 R. Earl Fink
1924 Fillmore Van S. Hyde
1925 William Rand, Jr.
1926 Fillmore Van S. Hyde
1927–1929 Rowland B. Haines
1930–1940 Harry F. Wolf
1941 T. A. E. Harris
1942–1945 (no tournaments held)
1946 Frank R. Hanson
1947 Frederick B. Ryan, Jr.
1948–1950 H. Robert Reeve
1951 J. T. P. Sullivan
1952 H. Robert Reeve
1953 Howard J. Rose
1954–1956 H. Robert Reeve
1957–1959 J. Lennox Porter
1960–1962 James Prigoff
1963 John Powers
1964 James Prigoff
1965 (no tournament held)
1966–1968 James Prigoff
1969–1980 Pedro A. Bacallao
1981 David Stafford
1982–1983 Gary Squires
1984 Loren Lieberman
1985 Gary Squires
1986 Pedro A. Bacallao
1987–2000 Gary Squires