

Jethro Binns · Mar 28

What Can Squash Learn From RacquetX?

by Jethro Binn



RacquetX made one thing crystal clear: racket sports are booming. It’s a great time to be involved. But if squash is going to thrive, not just survive, we’ve got some lessons to take on board – and fast.

First things first – credit where it’s due. Squash had a proper presence this year. US Squash and the PSA Foundation should be commended for the work they put in. Rik Zwikker’s outdoor court – a relatively affordable glass show court – was right up front and got plenty of attention. From little presence last year to playing a meaningful role in the show is progress, and we should celebrate that.

But... it’s also clear how far we’ve got to go. The scale of investment in padel and pickleball was staggering. Booths were costing tens of thousands of dollars, but brands were there in force because they knew it would deliver ROI. Big padel and pickle brands showed up. Big money showed up. And squash? Well, not a single brand there was focused purely on squash without looking to expand into other sports. Kanso, LevelTech / SquashLevels, Black Knight, Club Locker – all with crossover ambitions. Which makes sense, because that’s where the market is

going. Forecasts suggest the US will go from 400 padel courts to 15,000 by 2030. Europe? 51 new padel clubs opening every week. The question for squash is: how do we ride that wave instead of getting left behind?

Follow the courts

One thing's obvious: court building is the engine of growth. Padel and pickleball are flying because new venues are opening with serious investment. We need to get squash courts into these new multi-sport venues. That's what [Nicol Squash](#) are trying to do – building centres that cater to all three: squash, padel and pickle. It's smart. And we need more of it.

The reality is that squash can't afford to look down our noses at pickleball or padel. They're fun. They're social. They bring people into the world of racket sports. Pickleball might not be a workout in the traditional sense, but it's bringing new people into clubs – and that's good for all of us. Padel? It's cool. It's got music, bars, a vibe. It's squash in the '80s. Only shinier.

Squash is the toughest of the three. It's the best workout. It's gladiatorial. It's fast and hard and unforgiving. That's our strength. I played with the CEO of DUPR (who ran an Ironman last year) and he was bent over double on the tee. First time playing squash. He just couldn't believe the intensity.



Doubles exhibition on the court

There's a phrase we should own: "You might be fit... but are you squash fit?" That's the angle. Especially with the Olympics on the horizon.

Make squash fun again

Another big takeaway: four people on a court makes everything more accessible. The doubles exhibition we did – Peter Nicol, Adrian Grant, Vini Rodriguez, and me – was a riot. It was high quality, yes, but it was also just good fun. Laughter, rallies, great energy. That’s what padel and pickle do so well – they’re social. There’s a lesson there for us.

We need to explore ways to make squash more inclusive and welcoming. Doubles. Social box leagues. New formats. It’s not about dumbing the game down – it’s about opening it up.

What about Squash57 at RacquetX?

One thing that was noticeably absent at RacquetX was any presence from [Squash 57](#) – or racketball, as many still know it in the UK. It’s an accessible route into squash for those looking for a slightly gentler alternative, it plays a valuable role. But we need to align on the name and the identity of the sport.

Interestingly, [USA Racquetball](#) was at RacquetX – though there’s no doubt it’s a sport in decline. This is a moment for Squash 57 to step forward with purpose. Rather than sitting in the shadows, it should be part of the conversation. There’s real opportunity for both versions of the game to work more closely, to support each other and create a stronger entry pathway into squash more broadly.

We’ve got to get on the radar

The team from [Pure Pickleball and Padel](#) now want to put squash courts in their Arizona centre. Why? One of them hadn’t played in 20 years and got reminded just how brilliant the game is. But they needed a nudge.

This is where we need to do better – marketing the sport, showing people what it is now, not what they remember from school gyms and dusty back courts.

For club builders and court developers, we’ve got to make squash make commercial sense. The numbers are there. Three squash courts can fit in the space of one padel court. You can get six players on them, versus four on one padel court. Squash courts turn over faster too – players book for 45 minutes vs 90 for padel. The business case exists. We just need to present it better.

A rebrand and a rallying cry

Squash needs a rebrand. A repositioning. It needs to feel fresh again. The Olympics gives us the platform. The growth of racket sports gives us momentum. But we can’t assume we’ll ride the wave just because we’ve been here the longest.

Squash is a brilliant sport. It’s just harder to pick up. Harder to play. Harder to master. And maybe that’s the whole point.

You might be fit. But are you squash fit?

Let’s shout about it. Let’s support the people pushing the sport forward – like Pete and Jess in the US, who are building new models and bringing energy. Let’s make sure squash is in the conversation when these multi-sport venues get built.

RacquetX showed what’s possible. The [PSA Squash Tour](#) is thriving. US Squash is making moves, but we’ve got a long way to go. This is a call to arms: we need to work together to modernise, market and reimagine squash for this new era of racket sports.

If we do that, we won’t just keep up – we’ll stand out.

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