

Markus Gaebel · Apr 18

# It's Time to Develop the Next Generation of Squash Glass Courts for LA 28

by Markus Gaebel

Before founding the Squash Facility Network (SFN), Markus spent over 30 years selling squash courts. During this time, he installed more than 100 glass courts and was deeply involved in developing several innovative solutions. Now, as squash prepares to step into the Olympic spotlight at LA 2028, it's the perfect moment for our sport to innovate and rethink the design of squash glass courts.

## Squash Goes Hollywood at LA 2028



Iconic Courthouse Square on the Universal Studios Lot

Squash will make its Olympic debut at the iconic Courthouse Square on the Universal Studios Lot—famous from Hollywood classics such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Back to the Future*. According to LA28 CEO Reynold Hoover, the venue promises an unforgettable Olympic experience.

Now, it is up to us—PSA, WSF, US Squash, and the broader squash community—to ensure that our sport shines brightly on this global stage.

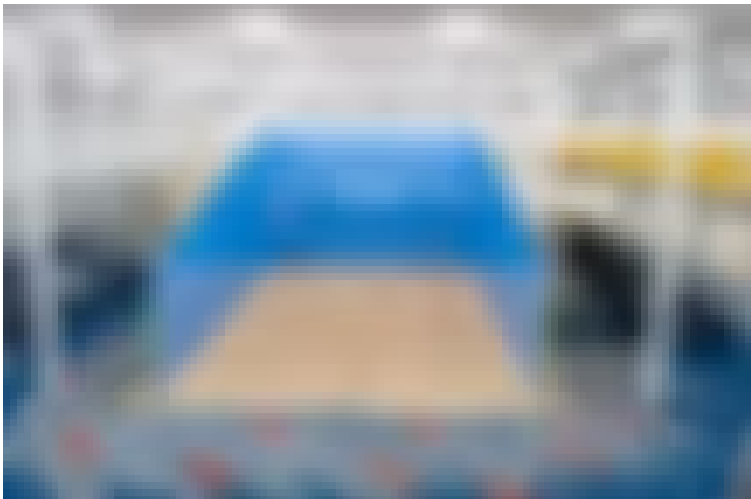
## General Court Design – Enhancing Spectator Experience

Currently, demountable glass courts commonly used at major events prioritize ease of installation, resulting in uniform panel sizes. This uniformity leads to rectangular side walls rather than the more spectator-friendly sloped design, which narrows from the front wall towards the back.



Demountable Glass Court at the World Championships 2024

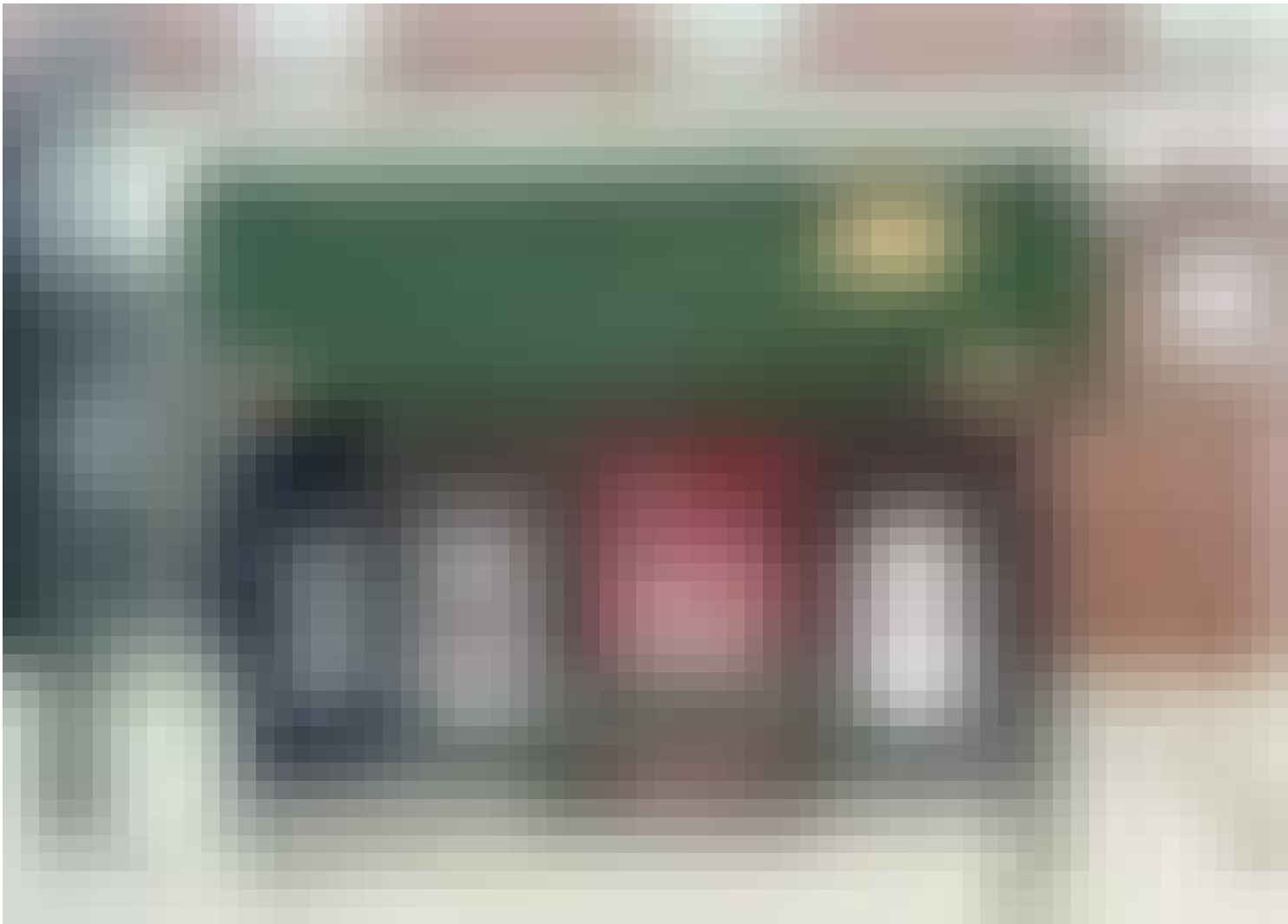
In contrast, permanently installed courts typically feature glass walls extending only up to the out-of-play line, clearly distinguishing playable from non-playable areas. This approach significantly improves spectator viewing, particularly for audiences new to squash, by reducing reflections, visual distractions, and enhancing overall clarity. Adopting sloped side walls and limiting glass height in future designs could further enhance squash’s appeal, making the game more accessible and enjoyable for spectators.



Fixed Glass Court at MAC in Melbourne Australia

## Colour Coating – Beyond One-Way Vision

Another crucial aspect for improvement is the colour coating technology used on glass walls. Originally introduced by ContraVision over 40 years ago, one-way-vision (OWV) technology allows clear visibility from inside the court while displaying vibrant graphics externally. However, while squash has seen gradual improvements, other industries have advanced OWV technologies substantially. Leveraging new precision perforation methods and ceramic screen-printing could enhance visual clarity, player focus, and promotional opportunities—significantly surpassing current standards in squash court design.



Improved One - Way- Vision technology - difficult to look through from inside

# Structural Innovation – Optimizing Front Wall Performance



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Access Court at the Racquet X in Miami with 6 rows of panles

A technical issue largely overlooked is the flexibility of the front glass wall under ball impact. Standard courts use four-panel front walls (each 1.6 meters wide), causing up to 10mm of flex when struck by a ball, leading to inconsistent rebounds and slower play. By adopting a six or even eight-panel design, panel widths could be reduced, significantly limiting flex to just 2-3mm. This improvement would ensure consistent rebounds, fairer gameplay, and more dynamic, spectator-friendly rallies.

## Reducing Noise and Enhancing Safety

Noise levels generated by ball impacts on glass walls can negatively affect both players and audience experiences. The proposed multi-panel design naturally dampens vibrations, reducing noise considerably. Moreover, adopting laminated glass technology—with polymer interlayers widely utilized in automotive and construction industries—would further reduce noise, enhance player safety by minimizing shatter risks, and offer better durability and UV resistance compared to traditional tempered glass.

## A Call to Innovate

Squash's Olympic debut at LA 2028 is an unprecedented chance to showcase the sport at its best. The SFN calls on squash industry leaders, manufacturers, and enthusiasts to engage in discussion and embrace these innovative concepts. Together, let's deliver a new generation of squash glass courts—courts that set new standards for performance, safety, and viewer enjoyment.

**It's time to innovate, because squash deserves nothing less.**