

Markus Gaebel · May 21

Squash "will enter the Olympics" for the first time, and the Chinese team will start from scratch

The following article was published by Xinhua News Agency on May 15, 2025, and received over 1 million views within just a few days.



Xinhua News Agency, Beijing, May 15 (Reporter Yue Dongxing, Yang Boyi) At the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games, squash, a sport referred to as "hitting the wall", will become an Olympic event for the first time. In this regard, Wang Ding, director of the Sports Department of the Small Ball Sports Management Center of the General Administration of Sports of the People's Republic of China, recently introduced in an exclusive interview with reporters that the newly formed Chinese squash team is making every effort to prepare for the competition through various measures such as cross-discipline selection and participation in professional competitions to "chase points".

Wang Ding said that despite the late start and weak foundation at the professional level, the Chinese team is working hard to narrow the gap with strong teams through systematic layout and long-term planning. In the long run, squash, as a favorite fitness project of some office workers, has the characteristics of "half-hour high-intensity exercise", the flexibility of building a stadium in an office building, the accumulation of social clubs for many years, and the participation of Asians, which brings potential for the development of the project in China.

Chinese Squash team formation: cross-discipline selection and professional training

In April, the IOC's Executive Board approved the Los Angeles Olympics programme and athlete quotas. According to reports, as one of the new events, squash will have 16 players in the men's and women's individual competitions to compete for two gold medals.

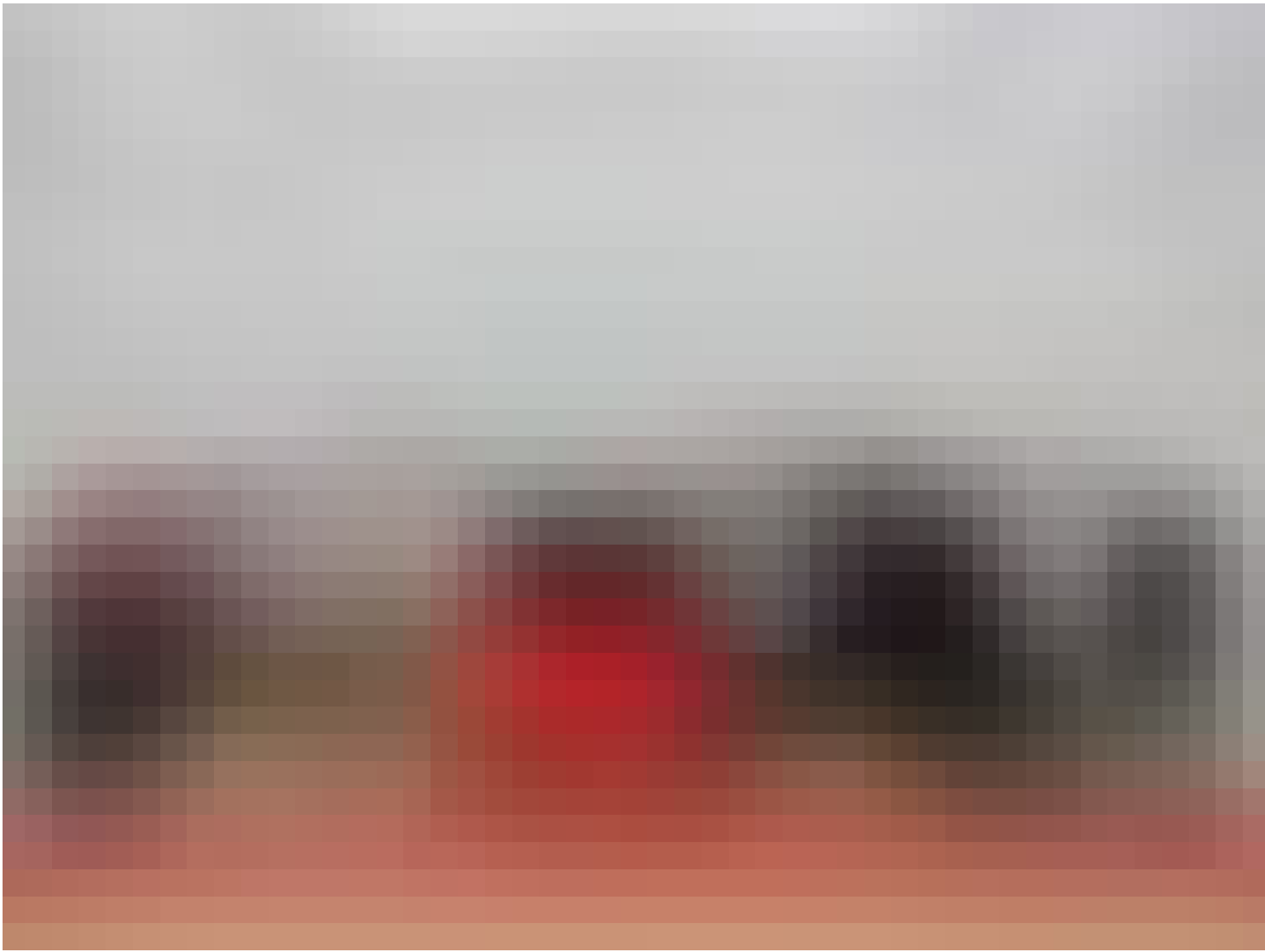
From an international point of view, the Egyptian team, the number one squash team, has the characteristics of a high degree of professionalism, a good mass base, and a leading technical and tactical style of play. Traditional powerhouses such as the United States, Great Britain, and France followed. In Asia, Malaysia, India, Pakistan and other teams have all won good results in the World Series and are highly competitive.

"We're just starting out in professional squash and we don't have professional players yet, so it's really hard to compete with strong teams internationally, but no matter how hard it is, we have to catch up." Wang Ding said.



In order to form a team as soon as possible, from August 2024, the national team has organized several cross-discipline selections, and selected some young athletes aged 15 to 22 from badminton, tennis and other events. At present, the team has nearly 20 cross-discipline team members selected from various levels, a number of domestic student players, and a few overseas players who study abroad and return to China during competitions.

In January this year, the Chinese team hired Eslam Hany, a coach from the Egyptian national team, as the head coach. Under the leadership of the new coaching team, the Chinese team has started a new cycle. In the team competition of the Asian Youth Championships held in Hong Kong in February, although the Chinese team has not yet achieved outstanding results (14th place in men, 9th place in women), "the strength of the naked eye can be seen", which has become the evaluation of some opponents.



At present, the rules for qualifying for the Olympic squash event have not yet been determined, but it is likely that the professional rankings will be taken into account. Since the Chinese players are almost starting from zero in terms of ranking points, it is very difficult to break through in the Los Angeles cycle.

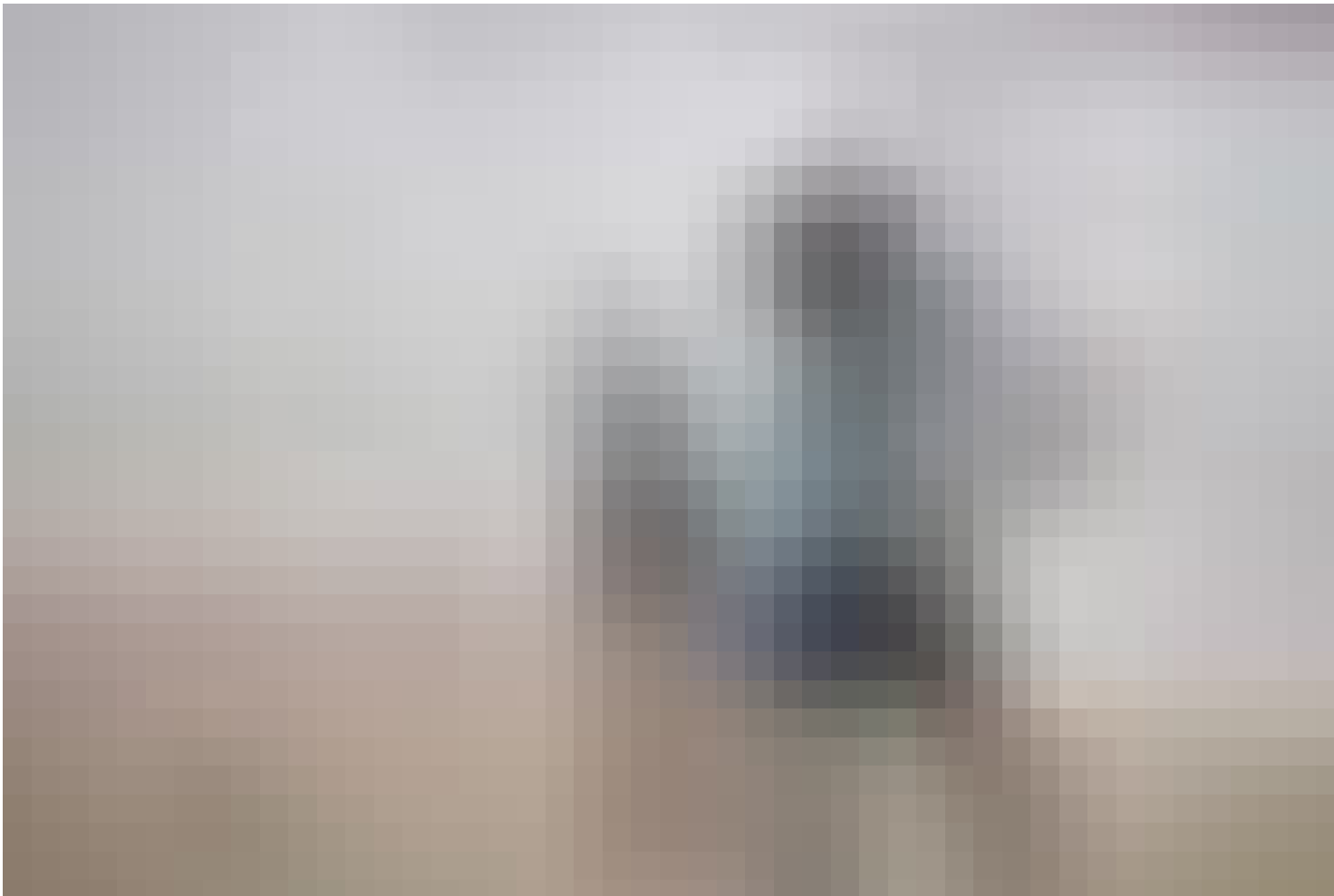
In this regard, the Small Ball Center will communicate with the Professional Squash Association (PSA) in 2024 to incorporate the national championships and youth championships into the international points system, resume the China Open, and add 5 China Squash Tours to create conditions for Chinese players to earn points.

"Although there are not many points in each race, through the accumulation of domestic competitions, we will soon be qualified for the international middle and high level points competition, and the next step is to select top players to participate in some middle and high-level international competitions, and continuously improve our competitive ability through the competition. Starting in 2026, the focus will be on grabbing points and going all out for Olympic qualification. Wang Ding said.

"It's hard to look at now, but the team is training with a lot of energy. These young players have been practicing in tennis, badminton and other sports for 10 years, and some have 5 or 6 years, and their athletes' foundation is very good. The first few months of the project need to be changed, and this stage is a little more difficult. Once they get used to squash, progress is fast. This program will take some time to build up, and I believe that in another year or so, the current way of training continues, and they should have some competitiveness in Asia. "

Talent training: three-line layout and industrial development

From the perspective of the long-term development of squash projects, cross-discipline selection is only a short-term emergency solution. In order to break through the bottleneck of talents, the small ball center has been based on the long-term and is planning the three-line layout of sports school construction, club training and campus promotion.

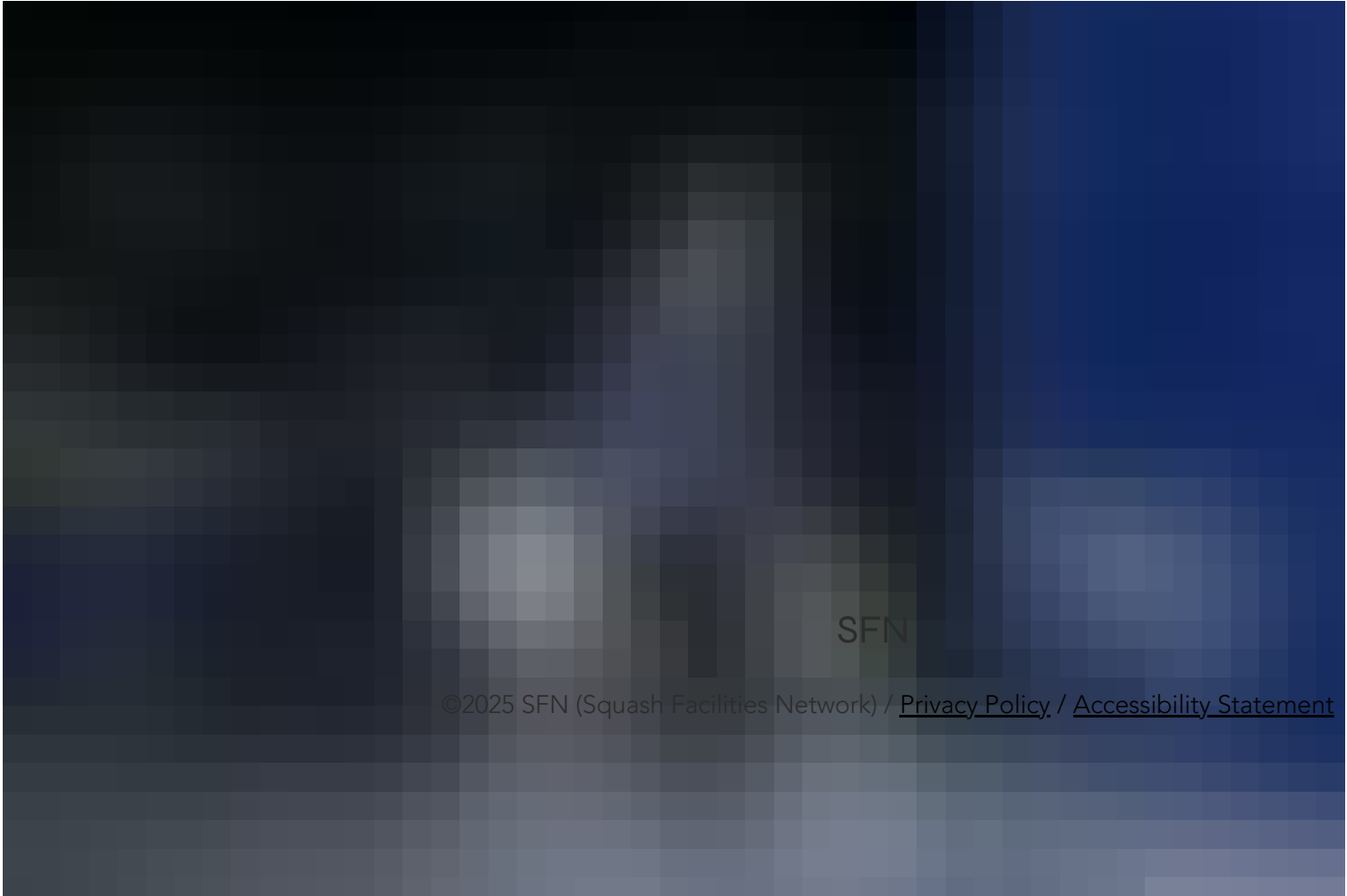


According to reports, in 2023, Jiangsu Yancheng Sports School will set up a squash project, and in 2024, Shanghai Jinshan District and Yangpu District Sports School will also have this project, and this year Fujian Longyan Sports School has begun squash enrollment team. The Small Ball Center plans to open squash programs in 20 sports schools across the country within five years to cultivate high-level competitive talents. At the same time, the establishment of a number of provincial-level professional teams represented by Sichuan and Fujian has made up for the last shortcoming in the construction of the entire squash professional system.

The second is the social club level. After more than 20 years of development, there are more than 200 squash clubs with a certain scale in China, and the small ball center will continue to provide public service guarantee for social clubs, strengthen project publicity, build a platform for event activities, standardize industry governance, and encourage clubs to contribute to the popularization and promotion of the project and the cultivation of elite players. In January this year, two players from Beijing and Shanghai clubs participated in the British Junior Squash Open, and broke into the top eight in both men's and women's events, demonstrating the development potential of China's squash project.

In addition, in view of the advantages of low safety risk and convenient field equipment for squash projects, the Small Ball Center will select some primary and secondary schools as campus squash pilots this year, and actively explore new paths and new positions for project development.

"Since last year, we have invited a number of sports experts and industry experts to evaluate the squash program. They believe that the characteristics of squash are very suitable for promotion in China, whether it is national fitness, Olympic participation, or sports industry economy, it has great development potential. Squash has become a part of professional sports in the world, and we must promote it, which will surely help build a sports power to a certain extent. Wang Ding said.



Wang Ding introduced that squash requires fast movement, frequent swing and high concentration, and the exercise intensity is very large, which is enough for the needs of ordinary people to exercise. Some office workers take a lunch break or half an hour after work to play squash, which is just the right amount of exercise for the fast-paced life of the city. Some clubs can build an indoor squash court in an office building, which is not affected by the weather, and has great privacy and environment. Since squash was confirmed to be a new sport in the Los Angeles Olympics in 2023, according to statistics, the number of domestic squash clubs and the number of people learning squash increased by more than 30% last year.

Squash in China: Riding the Olympic Wave Towards Long-Term Growth

Overall, in the face of the opportunities and challenges brought about by the Los Angeles Olympic Games, Chinese squash is striving to achieve a leap from mass sports to the Olympic stage with a long-term and solid foundation strategy. As Wang Ding said, with the help of the "east wind" of the Olympic Games, to promote the development of the squash industry and consolidate the foundation of talent training, the development prospects of squash in China are worth looking forward to.