

Markus Gaebel · Apr 9

# The Sportwerk Hamburg: A Traditional Squash Facility with Ambitious Plans for the Future

A report on Germany's largest squash facility



General Manager Bart Wijnhoven

The Sportwerk Hamburg is considered one of the most renowned and traditional squash venues in Germany. Founded in 1980 and expanded in 1985 with six more courts, the Sportwerk now offers a total of 15 squash courts. Among these is a modern four-sided glass court used for major tournaments. “With 15 squash courts, including a four-sided glass court, we’re the largest facility in Germany,” confirms manager Bart Wijnhoven. The last major building work took place back in 1985, which is why the Sportwerk is planning extensive modernization measures for the future.

## Structure: A Squash Facility with Various Clubs Under One Roof

Legally, the Sportwerk is organized as a GmbH (limited liability company). However, the facility is home to several clubs, most notably the squash club Sportwerk e.V. This structure allows for a wide range of sports activities: in addition to squash, the Sportwerk hosts corporate sports groups from different companies as well as a water gymnastics club and a back exercise club. As a result, the Sportwerk has evolved into a multifunctional sports center, catering to people with diverse interests.



## Major Tournaments and Sporting Success

The Sportwerk’s track record of hosting events is impressive. For the past ten years, it has regularly welcomed the German National Squash Championships. It is also the venue for the annual German Junior Open, which attracts around 300 young players from all over the world. The German Masters, aimed at athletes aged 35 and older, have also been a fixture for many years.

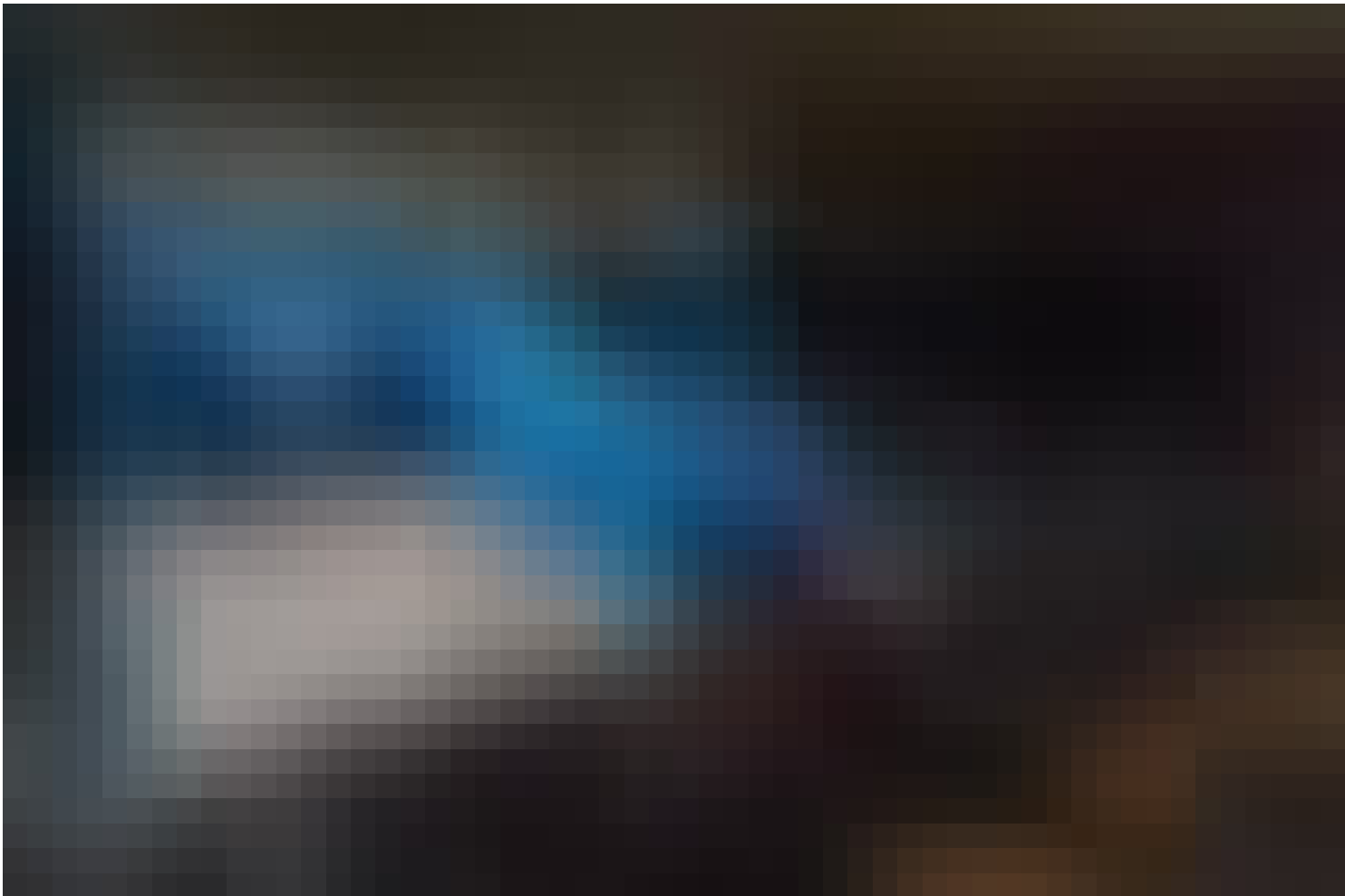


The Winners of the German Championships 2025

Moreover, the Sportwerk has hosted various European Championships, most recently for senior players and previously for professional athletes. Even the Bundesliga playoffs (the playoff stage of the German Squash League) have taken place here. The venue’s own Bundesliga team finished third last season and is currently on track to qualify for the finals in the Bundesliga North again this year. “We’ve hosted almost every major event you can think of—only a World Championship is still missing,” jokes Bart Wijnhoven.

## The German Open: USD 100,000 in Prize Money

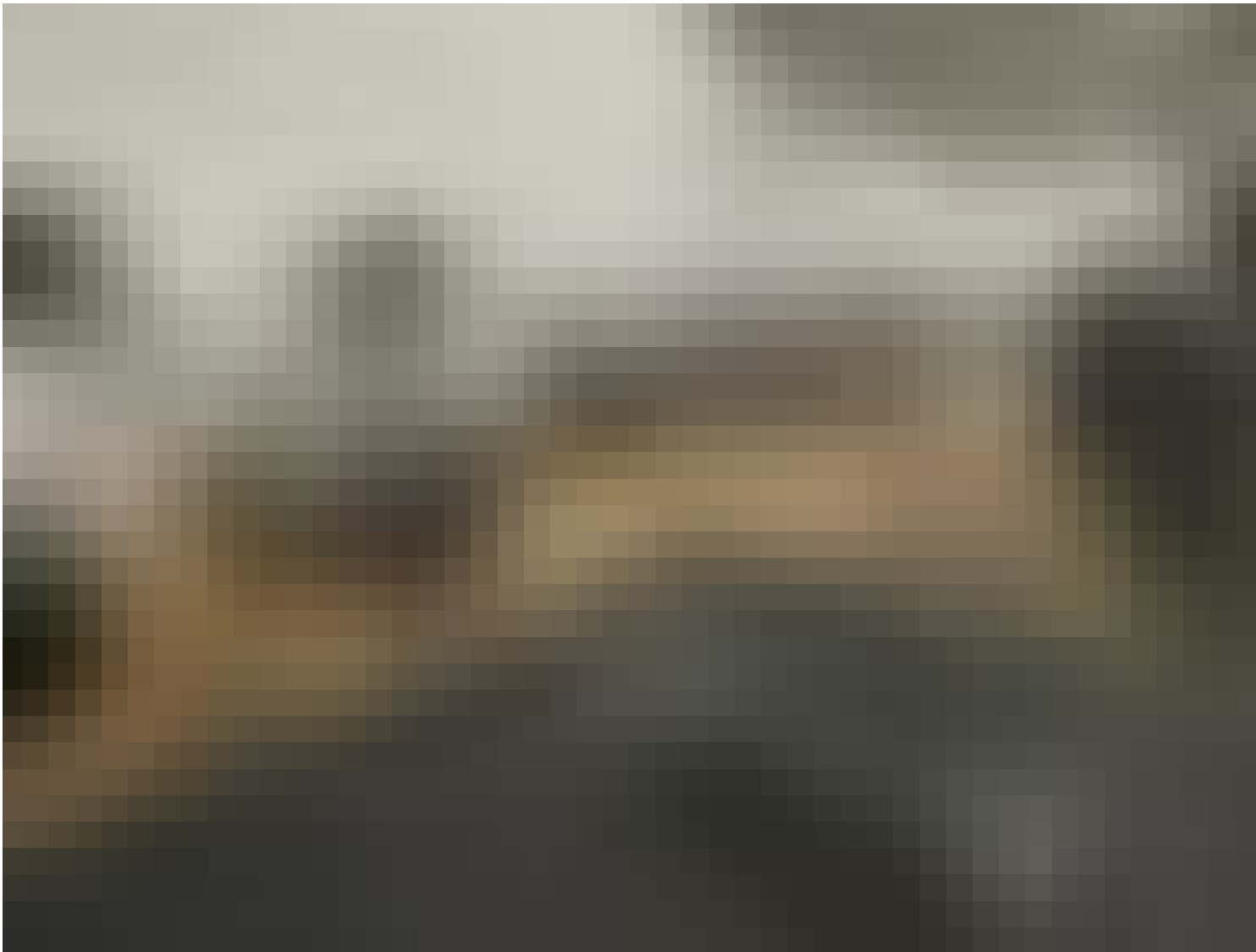
A particular highlight in recent times was hosting the German Open, which offered prize money of over USD 100,000. “We had a total budget of about €140,000,” explains Wijnhoven. “It was almost entirely funded by sponsors—one main sponsor plus support from many smaller partners.” The Sportwerk doesn’t actually profit from the event; it’s more of a prestige project aimed at promoting squash in Hamburg and throughout Germany. Wijnhoven believes the German Open can establish itself in the international tournament calendar. It is expected to take place again next year, provided the planned renovations do not interfere with the dates.



The Glass Court at Sportwerk Hamburg, venue of the German Open 2025

## Renovations and Expansion: A Multifunctional Future

After decades without any major construction work, plans are underway to modernize the Sportwerk’s courts and infrastructure. An aging ventilation system needs replacing, along with outdated locker rooms. New shower facilities and extra fitness spaces will be added, coupled with a possible 30-year extension of the lease on the property. The plan is to build a new structure adjacent to the existing venue to ease pressure on current facilities and to create additional space for an expanded sports offering.



Fitness Area

“If you want to run a solid business, simply offering squash courts isn’t enough anymore,” says Wijnhoven. “We need to become multifunctional, and we’re doing this primarily to maintain and further develop squash.” Located in central Hamburg, the Sportwerk has to deal with high property costs. Because of the large amount of space required, adding a trendy sport like padel is impractical for the near future. Thus, a full-scale expansion into other racket sports is not a feasible plan.

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## Member Recruitment: Memberships, Pay & Play, and Youth Development

The Sportwerk used to rely primarily on a pay-per-play model, with players paying by the hour. It has since introduced memberships (subscriptions), though according to Wijnhoven, uptake has been limited: “Here in Hamburg, many people prefer paying by the hour rather than committing to a subscription. But we want to further develop and improve that model because it offers both consistent income for us and better continuity for our players.”

At the same time, the Sportwerk is deeply involved in youth development through its Sportwerk e.V. club and its Squash Academy. “Youngsters who really want more can book an extra subscription, giving them the chance to train up to five times a week,” Wijnhoven explains. The Sportwerk also hosts a monthly friendly tournament, open to all levels, played without referees. School classes frequently visit as part of their PE lessons.

## Conclusion: Achieving Success by Combining Tradition and Modernization

With its 15 courts, various clubs, and high-profile tournaments, the Sportwerk Hamburg has firmly established itself as a leading hub of German squash. At the same time, upcoming renovations show it is adapting to today’s sports and leisure trends, providing a sustainable framework for squash and other offerings.

“We place great importance on advancing squash and keeping it attractive for people,” says Bart Wijnhoven. The German Open, the German National Championships, and all the other major events underscore the Sportwerk’s role as a central stage for both national and international

squash. Despite its commitment to modernization, the Sportwerk remains focused on its core: delivering an exceptional experience for both professional and recreational squash players, while continuing to grow and nurture the sport in Hamburg and beyond.