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# Pioneering Squash Development in China: Insights from Lim Chee Ming

*An Interview with Lee Chee Ming, working at the forefront of China's squash development*



China's rapid economic growth has opened countless doors for international sports, and squash is no exception. Although relatively unknown to many outside the country, a surge of enthusiasm for squash is taking hold in major cities like Shanghai, Beijing, and Shenzhen, as well as in smaller regions aiming to catch up. To understand this phenomenon in depth, we spoke with **Lim Chee Ming**, a highly experienced coach who has spent the last year working at the forefront of China's squash development. As a World Squash Federation (WSF) Level 3 Coach and specialist advisor to the China Squash National Team, Lim offers a first-hand account of both the opportunities and the challenges shaping the future of the sport in this vast nation.

## From Malaysia to Shanghai: A Coach's Journey

Lim's story begins over 20 years ago in Malaysia, a country known for producing top squash players. He rose through the coaching ranks, eventually serving as a **State Coach of Malaysia Squash** for a decade before moving on to roles such as **Head Coach of the Macau Squash Association** and **Deputy Director of Coaching for the Asian Squash Federation (ASF)**. More recently, he has taken on the role of **Specialist Advisor to the China Squash National Team**.

When he arrived in Shanghai almost a year ago, he quickly realized that China's approach to squash is both ambitious and fiercely competitive. "Shanghai is a very competitive city," Lim says. "There are many squash clubs and a high demand for coaches. It keeps us on our toes, because you really have to work hard to stand out."

## Government Support and Social Responsibility

Despite the prevalence of private clubs, the **Chinese government** also invests in squash, especially at the local level. In one of Lim's venues, located within a district-owned health and sports center, the rental rates are capped to ensure affordability. "We're not allowed to charge more than the government rate," he explains. "They want to make sports accessible to families, school groups, and the local neighborhood. Sometimes we run squash classes at half price just to encourage participation."

In other parts of China, government-backed projects include building multiple new courts at schools, such as a recent example in Shandong Province where **seven glass courts** were constructed. These investments aim to lay a foundation for developing local talent and popularizing the

sport among children and teenagers.

### The Status of Squash in the China Games

A significant milestone for any sport in China is inclusion in the **China Games**, the country’s premier multi-sport event. Squash is **not yet officially part** of the program, largely due to the some sports newly include in olympic events uneven distribution of facilities and players across different provinces. “Not all regions in China have the infrastructure or coaching staff to field competitive teams,” Lim points out. “It’s a massive country, and you can’t expect overnight results.”

However, the rise of squash in major hubs like **Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen, Shandong, and Nanjing** is fueling optimism. Additionally, **Hong Kong and Macau**—both recognized as Special Administartive Regions—already boast competitive squash programs and could help strengthen China’s chances. “I hope every region in China will eventually have a team,” Lim says, “so we can all come together at the China Games in the future.”



Dream Squash Beijing

### Counting the Courts: 500 or 1,000?

One of the biggest challenges facing the **China Squash Association** is gathering accurate data about the number of courts and clubs nationwide. Some estimate **500 courts** across the country, while others believe the number could be closer to **1,000**. Lim suggests that 500 is a reasonable benchmark for now, given that many clubs are still small and unregistered. Yet expansions and relocations are happening quickly, causing the numbers to shift month by month.

“Just between September and December of last year, clubs in Shanghai added about 10 new courts,” Lim says. “And in other parts of China, similar expansions are underway. There’s a lot of movement—clubs relocating, new facilities opening, older ones closing or merging. It’s a dynamic environment.”

### Coaching Demand and Development

A major area of focus for Lim and the China Squash National Team is building a **pipeline of qualified coaches**. China’s current coach pool includes foreigners from **Malaysia, Pakistan, Egypt**, and other squash-strong nations. “Overseas coaches are in high demand,” Lim explains. “Especially if they speak Chinese. That language skill can be a big advantage when managing local players and junior development programs.”



Elite Squash Shengzhen



To formalize coaching quality, Lim has been heavily involved in running training programs and certification courses for coaches across China, helping create a **structured approach** that mirrors the standards set by the World Squash Federation. “We want to ensure that our coaches don’t just teach basic technique,” he says. “We aim for them to develop long-term programs for players, from beginner to elite levels. This includes fitness, strategy, and tournament preparedness.”

Tournaments and the Road to Professional Events

Beyond local and regional competitions, China has its sights set on **professional tournaments**. Lim mentions plans for **PSA satellite events** and hopes that the **China Open** will continue to grow. These efforts rely heavily on quality venues—particularly those equipped with certified glass courts—as well as the presence of experienced event organizers. “All of that is in the works,” Lim says. “The government and private sector both show interest in hosting larger tournaments, but we still need more skilled people to manage them.”

A glass court manufacturer called CGG has emerged as the main supplier of PSA- and WSF-approved courts in China. The higher cost of importing such courts from Europe has pushed local developers to rely more on domestic companies, fostering a homegrown industry for squash-court design and construction.

A Bright Future with Big Challenges

From Lim Chee Ming’s perspective, squash in China is on the verge of a major leap forward. The country’s vast population and growing middle class offer huge potential for the sport—both in terms of facilities and a player base. Yet challenges remain: linking up the scattered clubs, increasing the number of qualified coaches, securing stable venues, and pushing for official inclusion in national-level events.

“The key is to keep developing talent and building more infrastructure,” Lim says. “That’s how you create a sustainable environment for the sport. It takes time, but the progress is real and steady.”



FSC Shanghai - the latest branch

Already, evidence of growth can be seen in Shanghai’s flourishing clubs, Shandong’s new courts, and an expanding network of coaches from every corner of the globe. As China continues to harness its enormous resources, squash is positioned to become a new powerhouse in the international scene. For coaches, investors, and players worldwide, it’s a historic opportunity—one that is unfolding faster than many might expect.

*“China is a big opportunity. We see new clubs, bigger venues, and more competitions. If we continue to invest in people—both coaches and players—squash here can rise to be among the best in the world.”— Lim Chee Ming*

As more provinces jump into the game, and as national-level support strengthens, squash in China is well on its way to breaking barriers and creating a fresh chapter in the sport’s global story.

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