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Jonas Frick · Oct 29, 2024

Back to the Future - Opportunities of Squash in Sweden

from Jonas Frick, President of the Schwedish Squash Federation



During the weekend of October 26 – 27, representatives of all Swedish squash clubs and facility owners met to discuss the future of the sport with a focus on growth. How do we get more children, more young people, more girls and more people aged 20 – 40 to start playing regularly?

A lot is happening in Sweden right now and many new initiatives such as "King and Queen of the Court" are being arranged. But much remains to be done. This was the background to us meeting and this for the first time in over 10 years.

The program was tight and intense. Our clubs shared good examples and created inspiration, but of course some of our tougher challenges we also discussed. To help us, we had international speakers. From Squash Facilities came Markus Gaebel and from Squash Levels Thomas Goulding.


Markus shared his deep insights into how squash is developing internationally. Sure, there are countries where the sport is stagnant or even declining, but we must repeat over and over again, that in several countries as well as overall is the sport growing. Countries in which the sport is growing are characterized by well-formulated business plans where the revenue per court is well above the Swedish norm. Well-maintained halls/clubs create an atmosphere that matches the needs of the squashers. A need that consists of getting a sport that is both fun and extraordinarily good for your health in combination with the hall/club creating a wonderful atmosphere where you want to spend a lot of time, even after finishing the game. The successful halls/clubs invest a lot in retaining their members year after year.

One of Sweden's unique characteristics is that a large part of the population participates in physical activities outside working hours. In the age group 16 to 65, as many as 75% exercise regularly, compared to France at 43%. Here we should be able to attract more people to our sport!

Even when it comes to the number of courses, there is a great potential for growth. In England, there are 4 times more courses per capita than in Sweden.


What does it take to get more courses that are run profitably.

- That we have a deep insight into how the sports and fitness market in the various local markets works.
- That we always make it easy to start playing, Great coaches/staff who secures fun play with the right ball already at the first time of play is a must.
- That we create inclusive environments where players like to socialise – in short, hang out.




Markus Gaebel - the future and opportunities in squash.pdf


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Thomas Goulding from Squash Levels, our system on which our rankings are based, went through all the possibilities that the system offers. Here it is up to Squash Sweden to spread the system. Redesign your local club ladders to be based on Squash Levels! Short competition sessions of a

few hours are an activity where Squash Levels can be used and create a good community or why not use Squash Levels to appoint the player of the week etc. The possibilities are many, but as with all new activities, both continuity and perseverance are required.

 Thomas Goulding - Elevate your Club with Squash Levels.pdf
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One of the most important items on the agenda of the conference was the introduction of Tomi Niinimäki, our new Senior Advisor. His focus is on how we can ensure good coaching resources at all levels in Sweden. We really want to increase the conditions for all clubs and all player levels to be able to have access to well-educated coaches. Tomi has already started a number of activities but more are coming with in short.

We also had the privilege of receiving information from Jonathan Sandberg about how RF/SISU (our governmental sports organization) works but above all what they can bring to our business. Here we have a resource that really can help us to become even more professional, both at the federation and club level. The key is that we establish a contact with our local RF/SISU representatives and "sell" our sport. Their employees want to get involved in our business, but we must invite them.

Finally, two things:

- We got to take part in information about several fantastic club activities such as Kanin Cup and Spring Cup – Keep sharing all the nice things you do. This creates motivation and it is never wrong to copy things that have worked elsewhere.
- I would like to express a big thank you to Jan Ulf and our entire office for a job well done – this was the first time we ran this together but not the last – this is now an annual event that will be followed by team meetings and monthly updates from the Association's website.

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