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Open Squash, New York – a blueprint for mission-driven, financially viable “community squash”



NEW YORK CITY — When Open Squash opened its glass doors to a five-court facility just off Bryant Park in 2020, many dismissed it as a philanthropic novelty: a squash center without equity owners, overseen by a three-person board, and offering sliding-scale membership in the heart of Manhattan.

Five years later, the experiment is not only covering its rent—it’s redefining what a squash club can be in the 21st century. Open Squash has emerged as a real-world case study for how purpose and profitability can reinforce each other, rather than compete.

Open Squash, New York - A Community with a balance sheet

Open Squash is registered as a 501(c)(3) public charity, which means it has **no shareholders and no profit distribution**. Both of its locations—the Midtown flagship near Bryant Park and the larger Financial District facility—were **financed almost entirely by donations**, not investor capital.

Any annual surplus is reinvested: into **scholarships, junior development, and income-based membership subsidies**. “We’re governed by a board of three,” says VP of Operations Seth Frankle, “and every dollar we make goes straight back into widening access.”

Two locations, one community-first strategy

Bryant Park (Midtown)

- 5 courts, a small café, basic fitness zone
- 8.130 square feet net usable



- ~420 adult members

Financial District (FiDi)

- 8 courts, including a glass show court with bleachers
- 13,194 square feet net usable; plus rooftop access for events
- Current adult members: ~360; target: 700

Critically, Open Squash’s model depends on **scale**. Internal metrics suggest that **90–100 adult members per court** is the sweet spot—enough to maintain high usage rates, but without triggering the dreaded “I can’t get a court” churn that plagues urban clubs. Bryant Park is near capacity; FiDi is rapidly catching up.

Just as crucial as size is the **daily, personalised interaction between staff and members**—a key part of Open Squash’s community DNA.

Pricing: Transparent, inclusive, and income-sensitive

Membership is **tiered**—but deliberately not exclusive. At FiDi, members can choose:

Tier	Monthly Fee	Court Fees	Ideal For
Off-Peak	US\$149	Free off-peak; no peak access	Self-scheduling, price-conscious
Pay-to-Play	US\$199	US\$10 (off-peak) / US\$25 (peak)	Flexible, occasional players
Unlimited	US\$299	None; locker + laundry included	Heavy users, daily players
Income-Based	US\$40–150	Mirrors above tiers	Students, low-income members

After accounting for income-based discounts, the **average adult membership fee** settles around **US\$180/month**—a figure that far exceeds typical rates in most global markets.

Where the money comes from



The Midtown club alone generates approximately **US\$2.1–2.2 million annually**, equating to **US\$420–450k per court**—a figure that far exceeds most international benchmarks. The key driver? **Personalised member engagement**.

- Around **50% of adult court usage involves staff-led player support**, such as one-on-one training, skill feedback or structured game sessions
- **100% of juniors** are actively guided through dedicated development programs

“Staffing for member support is our largest controllable cost, but it’s also what sustains engagement, builds loyalty, and creates the most value for our community.” Frankle explains

Additional revenue streams include:

1. **Individually tailored or small-group training formats** for adults and juniors
2. **Corporate group memberships**, positioned as employee wellbeing and community-building tools
3. **Outreach programs in public schools**, funded by philanthropy but increasingly converting to full members

Ancillary sales—racket stringing, food & beverage, rooftop events—further contribute, but **the heart of the operation remains direct, human-level interaction with members**.

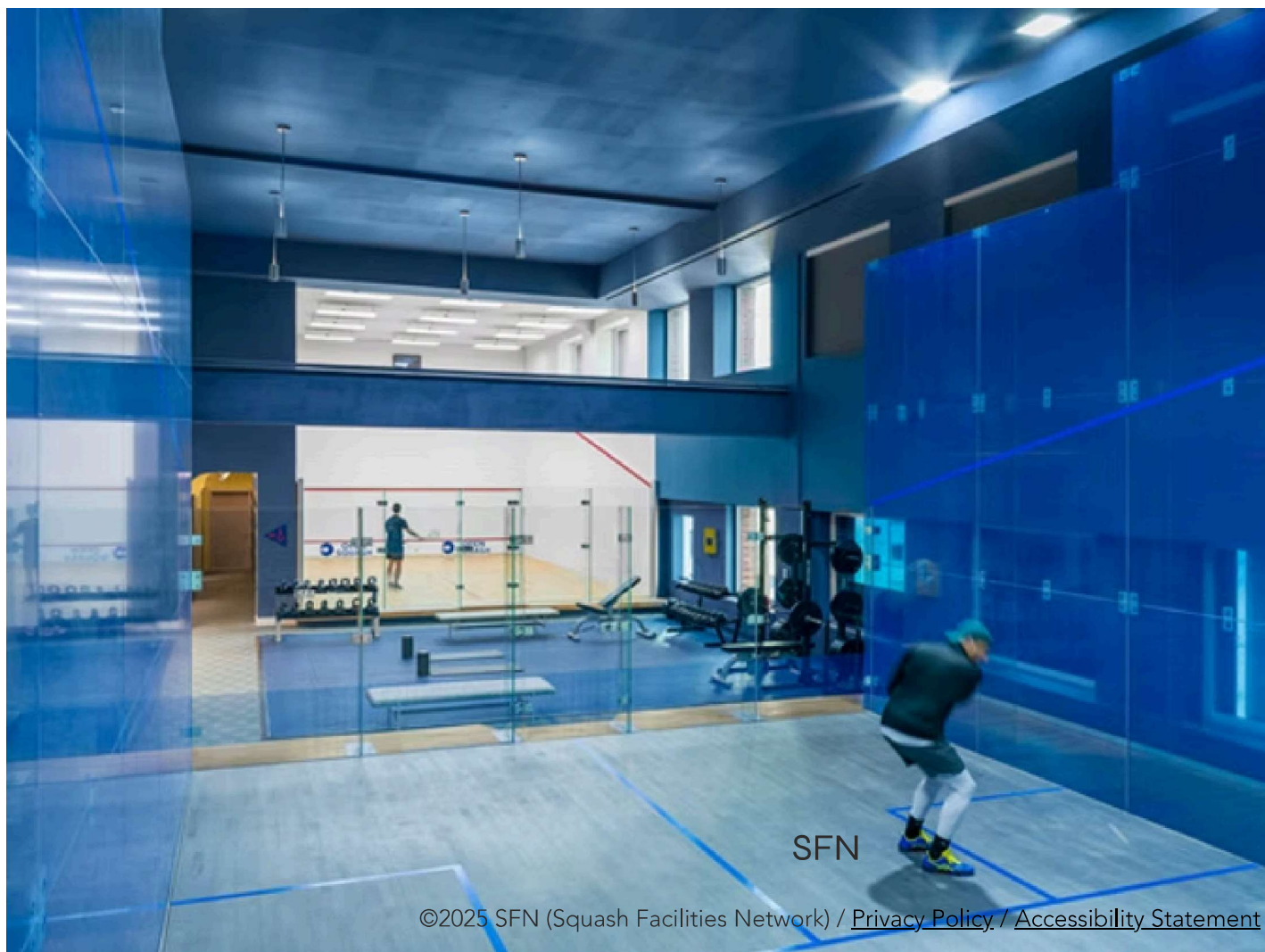
Growth without mission drift

The short-term goal: **grow FiDi to 700 adult members**. After that, the team will consider opening a third site. The criteria are strict: the rent-per-court ratio must work, and there must be space for at least eight courts.

Open Squash is also preparing for the broader exposure squash will receive ahead of **its Olympic debut in LA 2028**—a marketing opportunity that could significantly boost youth and school engagement.

Why this matters far beyond Manhattan

Open Squash’s success challenges the conventional wisdom that squash cannot be financially viable in high-rent, urban settings. Even more importantly, it proves that **a mission-first approach**—non-profit status, open access, income-sensitive pricing—can **coexist with sound financial management and operational excellence**.



For racquet sports developers everywhere, the message is clear:

- **Build at scale** (minimum 8 courts)
- **Put personal interaction—not just court access—at the heart of your offer**
- **Design pricing to reflect the diversity of your community**
- **Act as a social enterprise, not just a sport facility**

Open Squash New York shows that a squash community can thrive—both economically and socially—when we reimagine the member experience as a relationship rather than a transaction.

All financial and operational data sourced from an SFN interview with Seth Frankle, Vice President of Operations at Open Squash, conducted on 19 June 2025.