

SFN Team · Jun 10, 2024

# 'Squash on Fire' sets the Benchmark for Urban Squash Facilities



Squash on Fire, on top of a Fire Station, in the heart of Washington DC

In the bustling heart of Washington D.C., Squash on Fire is blazing a trail for modern squash facilities. Established in 2017, this venue stands out in the American squash landscape where membership models are the norm.

Squash on Fire pioneers a unique approach by adopting the "pay to play" model, thereby revolutionizing how urbanites engage with squash. This innovative model has attracted over 14,000 registered players since its inception — a testament to its immense appeal and significant impact on the community.



Kids in action on the centre court of Squash and Fire

### A Visionary Approach to Squash

At Squash on Fire, accessibility and inclusivity are key. By dispensing with mandatory memberships, the facility opens its doors to a diverse crowd, from seasoned players to newcomers, thereby democratizing access to the sport.

This model not only boosts participation rates but also cultivates a dynamic squash community. The center features state-of-the-art facilities including eight courts, with a highlight a spectacular glass court that adds a premium feel to tournaments and casual play alike.

### Leveraging Technology for Enhanced Experience

Technology is at the forefront of Squash on Fire's operations. With its Advantage Booking system, players enjoy a seamless experience that includes easy court booking, lesson scheduling and engaging in group activities, much like ordering a ride on Uber. This smart use of technology serves not only to enhance user experience but also optimizes facility management, contributing to a 70% court occupancy rate during peak seasons.

Advantage Booking (AB) was meticulously designed with the club as the main client, focusing on tailoring its features to manage profitability effectively. This sophisticated system allows to operate on both pay to play and membership models, providing the flexibility to cater to different player preferences.

AB enables the facility to understand and react to daily, monthly and yearly trends, manage staff and customer variability with ease, and schedule courts, coaches, sessions and players efficiently. Moreover, it allows the club to better understand its community by collecting and analyzing sales, usage and other pertinent data. This holistic approach helps the facility to not only meet but exceed operational efficiency and optimize occupancy, ensuring a sustainable and profitable operation.

### Community and Competitive Edge

Squash on Fire has significantly influenced local and national squash activities. It supports extensive training programs, including a Junior Academy that now boasts over 110 young athletes. The facility annually hosts five US Squash national junior events, drawing over 1,000 visitors

each year, alongside managing robust high school programs and housing the Georgetown University Women’s Varsity team. The latter is a top-tier program, consistently ranked among the nation's top 13.



Spectators following action during the PSA World Tour event

The highlight in its event calendar is the PSA World Tour Squash on Fire Open, positioning it as a top tier venue on the global squash scene. Such events not only showcase top-tier squash but also stimulate local tourism and hospitality sectors.

**A Financial Model of Success**

Financially, Squash on Fire sets a benchmark for sustainability in the squash sector. With 14 different revenue streams, including event hosting, academy programs, and café services, it projects an annual revenue of \$2.4 million for 2024. This robust financial health underscores the viability of the pay to play model and demonstrates a scalable approach for future squash facilities.

**Cultivating the Future of Squash**

Beyond its courts, Squash on Fire is committed to nurturing the sport's growth. By providing a platform for community engagement and elite competition, it not only enhances the sport's profile but also enriches the local and national squash communities.

With its successful blend of high-end facilities, community focus and innovative business practices, Squash on Fire is not just a sports facility — it's a catalyst for change in the urban sports landscape, inspiring other cities to adopt this model and enrich their communities through squash.



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The bar is the social meeting point of the Squash on Fire

Squash on Fire exemplifies how innovative thinking and community-focused strategies can transform a sport. Through its pioneering model, excellent use of technology, and commitment to community engagement, it sets a new standard for squash facilities worldwide. As it continues to grow and influence, it serves as a beacon for others aiming to integrate sports seamlessly into the urban fabric, making Squash on Fire a true game-changer.