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Open Squash membership model - for those who can afford to play and those who can't



Action on court at Open Squash

Open Squash's mission is to make squash more affordable, accessible and inclusive. Thanks to the Open Squash innovative membership model, use of customer data and balance of promoting both recreational and competitive play, the New York-based non-profit is achieving stunning success.

Open Squash currently has two venues - a five-court club on the fifth floor of a high-rise office building in Bryant Park, Midtown Manhattan which opened in January 2020, and an eight-court facility on Pearl Street in NYC's financial district. A third club – a renovation of the pre-existing Eastern Athletic Club in Brooklyn – is set to open later this year.

One of the stand-out features of its two clubs is their sliding-scale membership model. Essentially, membership is means-tested, so each person pays as much as they can afford. As their website says: "[We're bringing] squash to more people - at every level and from all walks of life. Young people. Old people. Women. Men. Nonbinary people. People who can afford to pay and people who can't."

At Bryant Park, the membership of 450 includes 25% who benefit from a discount, which range from full scholarships for juniors to income-based reductions on membership fees.



Women laughing during the squash coaching session

There are group, individual and social coaching sessions, camps, practices and tournaments for every standard of player. The choice of activities for children and adults is vast.

There is a strong emphasis on recreational squash, with over 1,800 court slots per week set aside for recreational play (as the 2024 [Global Squash Report](#) identified, recreational players make up 90% of the world's squash-playing population).

Open Squash uses sophisticated tech to track each member's connection points with the club - starting from the moment a potential new member clicks on a social media post, to the moment they enrol in a coaching session, book a court, or step from the elevator into the venue for the first or 500th time.

By knowing who each member plays, at what time of day, what tournaments and coaching programmes they engage with, their level of play and more, the club can interact with each member individually to ensure they get them on court more often and maximise the value of their membership. Player engagement is approached as a science - but without losing the personal touches of greeting them at reception, knowing their name and welcoming them into a community.

The many coaching programmes for juniors and adults are led by Wales' former world no.50 Peter Creed, the director of Squash, and the Egyptian Amr Khalifa, former World Junior Open champion and US college individual champion. Jana Shiha, the current world no.34 from Egypt, is one of a multicultural team of coaches and mentors.



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They also have renowned Harvard head coach Mike Way and current world no.1 Ali Farag as senior advisors, as well as top pros Victor Crouin, Gina Kennedy, Farida Mohamed and Hannah Craig as ambassadors. Gina, the world no.5 and Commonwealth Games women's singles champion, delivered a fabulous presentation on Open Squash during the Squash Facilities Network's breakout session at the recent PSA Foundation Squash Summit in Birmingham.

Open Squash's outreach programmes include the Hudson Guild Junior Squash Programme for low-income families in a local settlement house and the Success Academy for pupils at a network of New York City schools who do not otherwise have access to recreational sports. In addition, a partnership with Gift of Chess opens the club to children from the local migrant community and helps them learn English as well as play squash.



Promoting Open Squash's Pearl Street location with street marketing

Open Squash's Bryant Park club is sold out with a waiting list to join up. Its second venue on Pearl Street has 250 members and is growing. It's clear the organisation is achieving its mission - and changing the perception of squash in the US from a niche, elitist Ivy League pursuit to a wonderful sport that is open to all.

[Click here to find out more about Open Squash](#)