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SFN Team · Jan 22

“Learning from other sports. Why not?”

Comment from SFN Expert Vincent Bradley

Surely you know this phenomenon too... You’re at an event, or on a trip, you see something, and suddenly puzzle pieces in your head come together into an image that has been on your mind for a long time. Then the vision in your head becomes reality and certain questions resolve themselves.

That’s exactly what happened to me during a tour of squash clubs in Limerick, in the southwest of Ireland, last year. Nearby was the University of Limerick, a modern sports-oriented university based on the US model, with state-of-the-art facilities and a new Sports Performance Center. In the adjoining sports arena, an event caught my eye because of the high number of participants – over 1000 – and the unusual sport itself:

- The event: World Championships
- The sport: Wallball, a version of the [Irish Handball game \(GAA Handball\)](#).

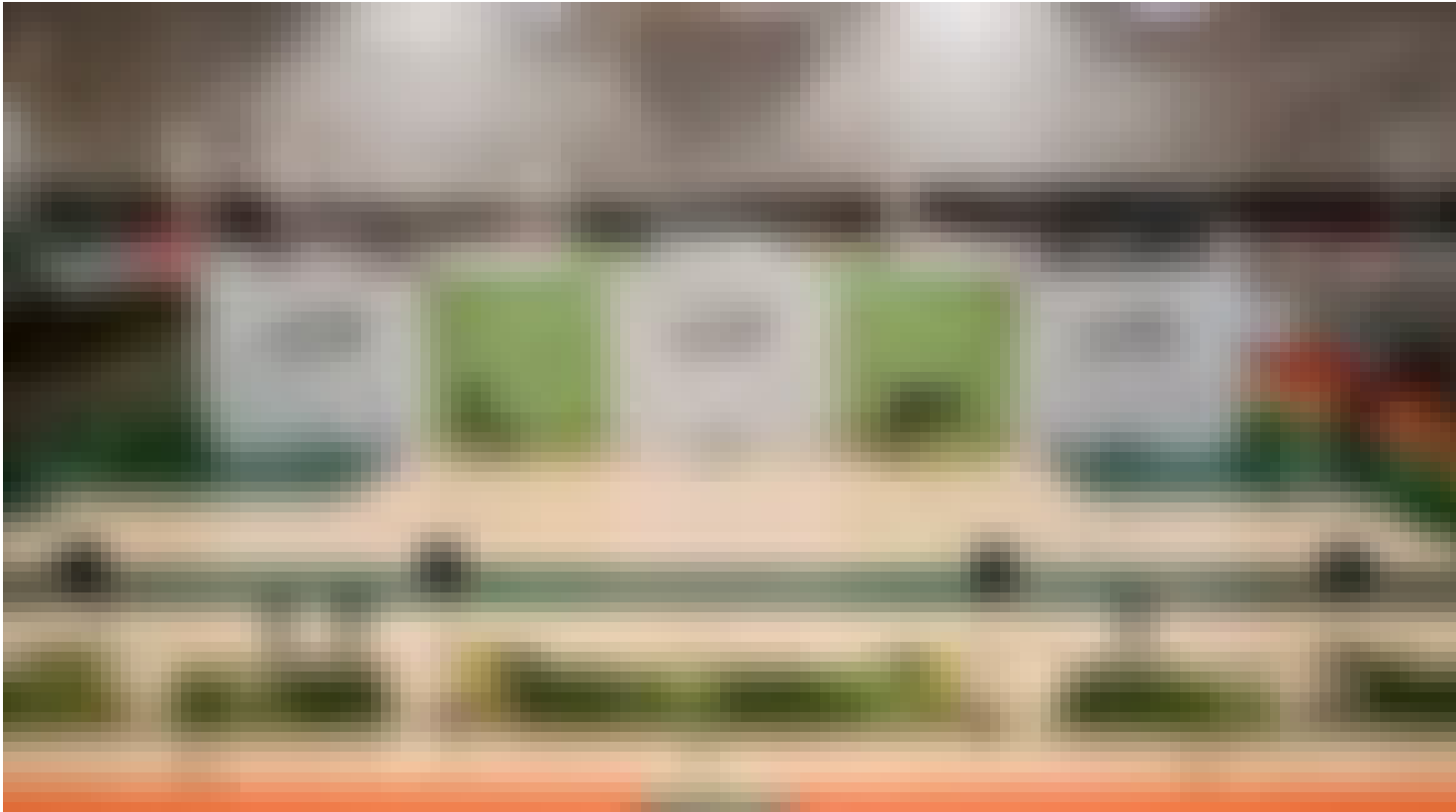


Vincent Bradley in the National Handball Center, Dublin

The traditional GAA Handball game is played inside a 4-wall court like squash. The ball is bouncy like a Racquetball and instead of a racket you use both hands covered by a special glove. Wallball is a simpler, more accessible version designed to be played against one front wall only. In Wallball, you hit a small, bouncy rubber ball (about the size of a tennis ball) against a single front wall using either hand. There are no side walls or back wall, just court lines on the floor.

An Atmosphere That Was Simply Electrifying

What I saw was stunning: nearly 300 mostly Irish youngsters, of all ages, taking part. During breaks, even younger boys and girls rushed to any available wall to keep playing – and they were having a blast!



Venue of the Wallball World Championships, Limerick

A bit of research revealed that the Irish GAA-Handball Organization had approached schools and offered to equip their sports halls with single walls and floor markings. Physical education teachers received basic training so they could integrate Wallball into their curriculum. The development officer at GAA-Handball said this was the best way to reach thousands of young people – marketing and equipment costs were minimal.

In just a few years, the number of single-wall setups in Irish schools soared to 500! Thanks to these projects, over 300 schools, 60,000 students, and 6,000 teachers have been introduced to the game. Local clubs provide short introductory lessons and maintain contact and training. The clubs hope this will translate into a steady flow of new youth members. Meanwhile, traditional handball clubs have started installing both indoor and outdoor Wallball courts to meet demand – and, according to GAA-Handball, they’ve already seen a rise in membership.

One-Wall Squash – The Beginning

I thought, “Why not do something similar with squash?” Without wasting any time, I booked a Wallball court in the National Handball Center and played squash with my son Shaun, who has only six months of squash experience. That day, one-wall squash was born and the vision to see at least one dedicated wall in every school sports hall, so that students of all ages, armed with squash rackets and more lively (beginner-friendly) squash balls, can start learning our sport.

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Vincent playing One-Wall Squash his son Shaun

Building the Bridge

Installing a suitable surface on a wall can cost under €1000, though sometimes a good coat of paint on the existing wall is enough. Floor lines can be painted or taped, and sponsor logos may be added if a company or local club covers the costs. A crucial step is connecting these school sessions to real squash facilities, which calls for creativity and commitment from local coaches, volunteers, and clubs to offer a clear pathway for those who catch the "squash bug."

One-Wall Squash – The Advantages

This simplified approach makes it easy to introduce squash to young people and can boost the sport's appeal for a new generation. It's quick to learn, a lot of fun, and there's no need for a full four-walled court, making indoor or outdoor setups more affordable. Rules are straightforward, and when clubs, coaches, or volunteers train teachers, it creates a solid bridge between schools and squash clubs. A "School – Squash Facility" model can lead students onto the classic squash court, nurturing new talent, encouraging junior competitions, and promoting squash as a healthy, fun sport. With squash making its Olympic debut in 2028, now is the perfect time to ride that wave.

What Squash Can Learn from Other Sports

The Irish Handball story is a great example of how a "simplified" version of a classic sport can resonate far beyond its original community. Handball established Wallball, and that single-wall concept grew rapidly. Why couldn't the squash community do something similar? This is about staying open to fresh ideas, learning from other sports, and daring to do something new. If a simplified version like one-wall squash can encourage more young players, schools, and communities to discover our game, why not give it a shot?

Thinking outside the box – in the truest sense of the word! We can learn from other sports and invest in something new to inspire, motivate, and create a next generation of squash enthusiasts.

For more information, just send an email to info@one-wall-squash.com.