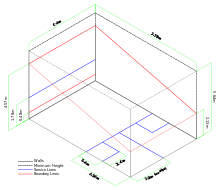
Basic rules and gameplay[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: Basic rules and gameplay)]

**The court**[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: The court)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:US_Open_Squash_Championship_2011_Drexel_University.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.24wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:US_Open_Squash_Championship_2011_Drexel_University.jpg)

The glass show court used at the 2011 US Open Squash Championships hosted by Drexel University at the [Daskalakis Athletic Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daskalakis_Athletic_Center" \o "Daskalakis Athletic Center).  
2 points during the Semi Final between[James Willstrop](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Willstrop) and [Nick Matthew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Matthew) in 2011  :[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)" \l "cite_note-6)[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-7)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Squash_Court_(Singles_WSF).svg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.24wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Squash_Court_(Singles_WSF).svg)

Dimensions for a Singles Court

The squash court is a playing surface surrounded by four walls. The court surface contains a front line separating the front and back of the court and a half court line, separating the left and right hand sides of the back portion of the court, creating three 'boxes' - the front half, the back left quarter and the back right quarter. Both the back two boxes contain smaller service boxes. All of the floor-markings on a squash court are only relevant during serves.

There are four walls to a squash court. The front wall, on which three parallel lines are marked, has the largest playing surface, whilst the back wall, which typically contains the entrance to the court, has the smallest. The out line runs along the top of the front wall, descending along the side walls to the back wall. There are no other markings on the side or back walls. Shots struck above or touching the out line, on any wall, are out. The bottom line of the front wall marks the top of the 'tin', a half metre-high metal area which if struck means that the ball is out. In this way the tin can be seen as analogous to the net in other racquet sports such as [tennis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennis). The middle line of the front wall is the service line and is only relevant during serves.

**Service**[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: Service)]

The players spin a racquet to decide who serves first. This player starts the first rally by electing to serve from either the left or right service box. For a legal serve, one of the server's feet must be touching the service box, not touching any part of the service box lines, as the player strikes the ball. After being struck by the racquet, the ball must strike the front wall above the service line and below the out line and land in the opposite back quarter court. The receiving player can choose to volley a serve after it has hit the front wall. If the server wins the point, the two players switch sides for the following point.

**Play**[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=6" \o "Edit section: Play)]

After the serve, the players take turns hitting the ball against the front wall, above the tin and below the out line. The ball may strike the side or back walls at any time, as long as it hits below the out line. It must not hit the floor after hitting the racquet and before hitting the front wall. A ball landing on either the out line or the line along the top of the tin is considered to be out. After the ball hits the front wall, it is allowed to bounce once on the floor (and any number of times against the side or back walls) before a player must return it. Players may move anywhere around the court but accidental or deliberate obstruction of the other player's movements is forbidden. Players typically return to the centre of the court after making a shot.

**Scoring systems**[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=7" \o "Edit section: Scoring systems)]

Squash scoring systems have evolved over time. The original scoring system is known as English scoring, also called hand-out scoring. Under this system, if the server wins a rally, they receive a point, while if the returner wins the rally, only the service changes (i.e., the ball goes "hand-out") and no point is given. The first player to reach 9 points wins the game. However, if the score reaches 8–8, the player who was first to reach 8 decides whether the game will be played to 9, as before (called "set one"), or to 10 (called "set two"). At one time this scoring system was preferred in Britain, and also among countries with traditional British ties, such as Australia, Canada, Pakistan, South Africa, India and Sri Lanka.

The current official scoring system for all levels of professional and amateur squash is called point-a-rally scoring (PARS). In PARS, the winner of a rally always receives a point, regardless of whether they were the server or returner. Games are played to 11, but in contrast to English scoring, players must win by two clear points. That is, if the score reaches 10–10, play continues until one player wins by two points. PARS to 11 is now used on the men's professional tour, and the tin height has been lowered by two inches for the men's professional tournaments (these changes have been made in a hope to shorten the length of the rallies and therefore the match). The women's professional tour uses the original tin height, but started using the PARS to 11 scoring system as of July 2008.

Competition matches are usually played to "best-of-five" (i.e. the first player to win three games)

Referee[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=8" \o "Edit section: Referee)]

The referee is usually a certified position issued by the club or assigned squash league. The referee has dominant power over the squash players. Any conflict or interference is dealt with by the referee. The referee may also issue to take away points or games due to improper etiquette regarding conduct or rules. Refer to “Interference and Obstruction” for more detail. In addition the referee is usually responsible for the scoring of games. Nowadays, three referees are usually used in professional tournaments. The Central referee has responsibility to call the score and make decisions with the two side referees.

Types of shots played[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=9" \o "Edit section: Types of shots played)]

There are many types of shots played that lead to interesting games and strategy.

* Straight drive: The ball is hit parallel and close to a side wall to travel deep to the back of the court (the 'basic' squash shot). Often referred to as a 'good length' shot.
* Boast: The ball is played off a side wall at an angle, or the back wall, before hitting the front wall.
* Volley: The ball is hit 'on the full' (before it touches the floor), usually directly to the front wall
* Drop shot: The ball is hit gently against the front wall, to fall softly to the floor in the front corner.
* Lob: The ball is hit softly and high on the front wall and with a high arc, so that it falls in a back corner of the court.
* Cross Court: The ball is hit to the front wall from the right side to the left (or vice versa).
* Kill: The ball is hit hard and low on the front wall so that it travels no farther than half court.
* Trickle boast: A 'short' boast where the ball is hit to the side wall at the front of the court (often disguised as a drive or drop shot).
* Squeeze boast: A more difficult shot which is hit from the front of the court when the ball is very close to the side wall. Has the same effect as the trickle boast but is more deceptive because of its difficulty.
* Nick shot: the ball is 'volleyed' or hit off a bounce to strike the front wall then the junction of the side wall and floor (the 'nick') giving the ball little or no bounce.
* Rolling nick shot: When the nick shot is hit extremely well, the ball will roll along the floor (this is a more advanced shot that is a variation of the kill shot).
* Back wall boast: the ball is hit moderately hard and high off the back wall, so that it goes the length of the room and hits (usually low) off the front wall.
* Philadelphia (or corkscrew): A shot played diagonally upwards into the front corner hitting the front wall first and then the side wall. The ball then lobs over the court with significant spin. Ideally it hits the opposite side wall at the back and travels parallel to the rear wall making a return very difficult. This shot is a favourite in exhibition squash but is susceptible to being volleyed.
* Skid boast: A shot played from the back corners of the court where the ball is hit high along the sidewall with a small angle so that it hits the sidewall first, then hits high in the middle of the front wall continuing to cross the court while high in the air ideally hitting the opposite sidewall and landing close to the backwall to go past the opponent. As with the Philadelphia it is susceptible to being volleyed.
* Mizuki: This shot is hit as a volley. Unlike a normal volley, the Mizuki shot is hit with the other side of the racquet by turning the wrist which deceives the direction of the ball.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-8)
* Reverse angle: a boast where the opposite sidewall is hit first.

Strategy and tactics[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=10" \o "Edit section: Strategy and tactics)]

A key strategy in squash is known as "dominating the T" (the intersection of the red lines near the centre of the court where the player is in the best position to retrieve the opponent's next shot). Skilled players will return a shot, and then move back toward the "T" before playing the next shot. From this position, the player can quickly access any part of the court to retrieve the opponent's next shot with a minimum of movement.

A common strategy is to hit the ball straight up the side walls to the back corners; this is the basic squash shot, referred to as a "rail," straight drive, wall, or "length." After hitting this shot, the player will then move to the centre of the court near the "T" to be well placed to retrieve the opponent's return. Attacking with soft or "short" shots to the front corners (referred to as "drop shots") causes the opponent to cover more of the court and may result in an outright winner. Boasts or angle shots are deliberately struck off one of the side walls before the ball reaches the front. They are used for deception and again to cause the opponent to cover more of the court.

Rallies between experienced players may involve 30 or more shots and therefore a very high premium is placed on fitness, both aerobic and anaerobic. As players become more skilled and, in particular, better able to retrieve shots, points often become a [war of attrition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attrition_warfare). At higher levels of the game, the fitter player has a major advantage.

Ability to change the direction of ball at the last instant is also important to unbalance the opponent. Expert players can anticipate the opponent's shot a few tenths of a second before the average player, giving them a chance to react sooner.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-9)

Depending on the style of play, it is common to refer to squash players[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)" \l "cite_note-10)[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-11) as

* Power players: squash players who build up their game based on powerful shots. For example, [John White](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_White_(squash_player)), [Grégory Gaultier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gr%C3%A9gory_Gaultier" \o "Grégory Gaultier).
* Shot makers: squash players who emphasize shot making. For example, [Jonathon Power](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathon_Power), [Ramy Ashour](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramy_Ashour" \o "Ramy Ashour), [Amr Shabana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amr_Shabana).
* Retrievers: squash players who are excellent on court coverage and retrieving shots. For example, [Peter Nicol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Nicol).
* Attritional players: squash players who play tight shots and base their games on physical strength. For example, [David Palmer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Palmer_(squash_player)), [Nick Matthew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Matthew).

Interference and obstruction[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=11" \o "Edit section: Interference and obstruction)]

Interference and obstruction are an inevitable aspect of this sport, since two players are confined within a shared space. Generally, the rules entitle players to a direct straight line access to the ball, room for a reasonable swing and an unobstructed shot to any part of the front wall. When interference occurs, a player may appeal for a "let" and the referee (or the players themselves if there is no official) then interprets the extent of the interference. The referee may elect to allow a let and the players then replay the point, or award a "stroke" to the appealing player (meaning that he is declared the winner of that point) depending on the degree of interference, whether the interfering player made an adequate effort to avoid interfering, and whether the player interfered with was likely to have hit a winning shot had the interference not occurred. An exception to all of this occurs when the interfering player is directly in the path of the other player's swing, effectively preventing the swing, in which case a stroke is always awarded.

When it is deemed that there has been little or no interference, or that it is impossible to say one way or the other, the rules provide that no let is to be allowed, in the interests of continuity of play and the discouraging of spurious appeals for lets. Because of the subjectivity in interpreting the nature and magnitude of interference, the awarding (or withholding) of lets and strokes is often controversial.

When a player's shot hits their opponent prior to hitting the front wall, interference has occurred. If the ball was travelling towards the side wall when it hit the opponent, or if had already hit the side wall and is now travelling directly to the front wall, it is usually a let. However, it is a stroke to the player who hit the ball if the ball was travelling straight to the front wall when the ball hit the opponent, without having first hit the side wall. Generally after a player has been hit by the ball, both players stand still, if the struck player is standing directly in front of the player who hit the ball he loses the stroke, if he is not straight in front, a let is played. If it is deemed that the player who is striking the ball is deliberately trying to hit his opponent, he will lose the stroke. An exception to all of this occurs when the player hitting the ball has "turned", i.e., let the ball pass him on one side, but then hit it on the other side as it came off the back wall. In these cases, the stroke goes to the player who was hit by the ball.

Cultural, social, and health aspects[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=12" \o "Edit section: Cultural, social, and health aspects)]

There are several variations of squash played across the world. In the U.S. [hardball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hardball_squash) singles and doubles are played with a much harder ball and different size courts (as noted above). Hardball singles has lost much of its popularity in North America (in favour of the International version), but the hardball doubles game is still active. There is also a doubles version of squash played with the standard ball, sometimes on a wider court, and a more tennis-like variation known as [squash tennis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_tennis).

The relatively small court and low-bouncing ball makes scoring points harder and rallies usually longer than in its [American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) cousin, [racquetball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racquetball), as the ball may be played to all four corners of the court. Since every ball must strike the front wall above the tin (unlike racquetball), the ball cannot be easily "killed". Another difference between Squash and Racquetball is the service game. Racquetball allows for the entire back [court](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racquetball#Equipment) (from 20-feet to 40-feet) to be used as a service return area, this makes returning serves much more challenging in Racquetball than Squash. Racquetball serves routinely exceed 140 m.p.h (225 k.p.h) and are a crucial component of the game, similar to Tennis.

Squash provides an excellent cardiovascular workout. In one hour of squash, a player may expend approximately 600 to 1000 food [calories](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calorie) (3,000 to 4,000 [kJ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilojoule)).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-santelmann2003-1) The sport also provides a good upper and lower body workout by utilising both the legs to run around the court and the arms and torso to swing the racquet. In 2003, *Forbes* rated squash as the number one healthiest sport to play.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-santelmann2003-1) However, some studies have implicated squash as a cause of possible fatal [cardiac arrhythmia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cardiac_arrhythmia) and argued that squash is an inappropriate form of exercise for older men with [heart disease](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronary_artery_disease).[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-12)

Squash around the world[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=13" \o "Edit section: Squash around the world)]

According to the World Squash Federation, as of June 2009, there were 49,908 squash courts in the world, with 188 countries and territories having at least one court. England had the greatest number at 8,500. The other countries with more than 1,000 courts, in descending order by number were Germany, Egypt, the United States of America, Australia, South Africa, Canada, Malaysia, France, the Netherlands, and Spain. Today, The United States has the fastest growing squash participation. There are an estimated 20 million squash players world-wide. 98 percent of squash players are college graduates.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-13)

As of June 2009, there were players from nineteen countries in the top fifty of the men's world rankings, with England and Egypt leading with eleven each.[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-14) The women's world rankings featured players from sixteen countries, led by England with eleven.

The men's Professional Squash Association [tour](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PSA_World_Tour) and [PSA rankings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official_Men%27s_Squash_World_Ranking) are run by the [Professional Squash Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professional_Squash_Association) (PSA). The equivalent body for women is the [Women's Squash Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_Squash_Association) (WSA).

The Professional Squash Tour is a tour based in the United States.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-15)

Players and records[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=14" \o "Edit section: Players and records)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nicol2009.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.24wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nicol2009.jpg)

[Nicol David](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicol_David); currently ranked the number one female squash player in the world.

The (British) Squash Rackets Association (now known as [England Squash & Racketball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England_Squash_%26_Racketball)) conducted its first [British Open](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Open_Squash_Championships) championship for men in December 1930, using a "challenge" system. [Charles Read](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Read_(squash_player)) was designated champion in 1930, but was beaten in home and away matches by [Don Butcher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Butcher), who was then recorded as the champion for 1931. The championship continues to this day, but has been conducted with a "knockout" format since 1947.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jahangir_Khan-2010-20-09.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.24wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jahangir_Khan-2010-20-09.jpg)

[Jahangir Khan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jahangir_Khan) of [Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan) is widely considered to be the greatest player in the history of the game.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-16)[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-17)[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-18)

The women's championship started in 1921, and has been dominated by relatively few players:[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] [Joyce Cave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joyce_Cave) and [Nancy Cave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nancy_Cave) (England) in the 1920s; [Margot Lumb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margot_Lumb) (USA) 1930s; [Janet Morgan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janet_Morgan) (England) 1950s; [Heather McKay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heather_McKay) (Australia) 1960s and 1970s; [Vicki Cardwell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vicki_Cardwell)(Australia) and [Susan Devoy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_Devoy) (New Zealand) 1980s; [Michelle Martin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelle_Martin) and [Sarah Fitz-Gerald](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Fitz-Gerald)(Australia) 1990s and [Nicol David](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicol_David" \o "Nicol David) (Malaysia) 2000s.

The Men's British Open has similarly been dominated by relatively few players:[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] [F.D. Amr Bey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F.D._Amr_Bey) (Egypt) in the 1930s; [Mahmoud Karim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahmoud_Karim) (Egypt) in the 1940s; brothers [Hashim Khan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hashim_Khan" \o "Hashim Khan) (7 British Open titles) and [Azam Khan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azam_Khan_(squash_player)" \o "Azam Khan (squash player)) (Pakistan) in the 1950s and 1960s; [Jonah Barrington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonah_Barrington_(squash_player)) (Great Britain and Ireland) and [Geoff Hunt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoff_Hunt) (Australia) in the 1960s and 1970s, [Jahangir Khan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jahangir_Khan) (Pakistan) 1980s ; [Jansher Khan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jansher_Khan" \o "Jansher Khan) (Pakistan) in the 1990s, also with eight World Open titles to his name, and recently, Jonathon Power (1998); Peter Nicol (1999), David Palmer (2002, 2006), and Thierry Lincou (2004). Amr Shabana is the most successful player after above have retired (2003, 2005, 2007, 2009), and a younger Egyptian Ramy Ashour (2008), and the first Englishman can the champions after Peter Nicol, who is the double world open champions-Nick Matthew (2010,2011).

[Heather McKay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heather_McKay) remained undefeated for 18 years during the 1960s and 1970s and won sixteen consecutive British Open titles between 1962 and 1977.[*[citation needed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed" \o "Wikipedia:Citation needed)*]

Previous world number one [Peter Nicol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Nicol) stated that he believed squash had a "very realistic chance" of being added to the list of [Olympic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympics) sports for the [2016 Olympic Games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2016_Olympic_Games),[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-19)but it ultimately lost out to [golf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golf) and [rugby sevens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rugby_sevens).

Wider acceptance[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Squash_(sport)&action=edit&section=15)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Logo_Squash_Back_the_Bid_2020.png)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.24wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Logo_Squash_Back_the_Bid_2020.png)

Squash has been featured regularly at the multi-sport events of the [Commonwealth Games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_Games) and [Asian Games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_Games) since 1998. Squash is also a regular sport at the [Pan American Games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan_American_Games) since 1995. Squash players and associations have lobbied for many years for the sport to be accepted into the [Olympic Games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympic_Games), with no success to date. Squash narrowly missed being instated for the 2012 London Games and the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games (missed out again as the IOC assembly decided to add golf and rugby sevens to the Olympic programme).[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-20) An effort is underway to qualify squash as an event in the 2020 Olympic Games.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squash_(sport)#cite_note-21) At the [125th IOC Session](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/125th_IOC_Session) in [Buenos Aires](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buenos_Aires), the [IOC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IOC) voted for [Wrestling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wrestling) instead of Squash or [Baseball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baseball)/[Softball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Softball) for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

A new bid is expected to be launched for the 2024 Olympics, when the time comes.