



IRISH SQUASH

CONNECTING THE DOTS



STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 TO 2027

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PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

We are proud to launch our Strategic Plan 2022-2027 after 2 years of Covid pandemic restrictions with optimism that the worst is over. The first priority is to get people at every level of the game back on court. We want to then provide a strong, stable platform for sustainable expansion of squash in Ireland, guided by a professional and fit-for-purpose organisation to deliver the goals of our Plan.

A working group was assembled in early 2021 comprising Anne Costello, Mark McGugan, Christine Lowry, Peter O'Halloran, Eoin Ryan, Paul Nugent and myself. We engaged the outside services of Derek McGrath and John Feehan of Sport2Sport to draw upon their extensive experience and are very grateful for their professional guidance. In mid-2021, our group expanded to include Sinead Day, John Dineen, Kevin Povall, Gar Holohan and Eugene Walker.

Extensive research was carried out to get valuable perspectives from our whole community through an anonymous email survey to our thousands of members. Sport2Sport then conducted independent meetings with many stakeholders including Sport Ireland, the Professional Squash Association, World Squash Federation, other national squash federations, our provincial associations, clubs, board members, sponsors and patrons. Data obtained from this research was analysed by our group and directed Plan development.

We agreed as a group that squash retains its potential to attract, engage and create a lifelong relationship with anyone who steps onto the court.

The new Irish Squash Plan for 2022-2027 is ambitious yet realistic and places our clubs at the centre of the strategy. We have identified our Vision, Values and 6 Strategic Pillars that will form the bedrock of the organisation, provide inspiration for new initiatives and underpin day to day operations. The board of Irish Squash will appoint a group to ensure the successful implementation of this plan and progress will be reported to our members at the AGM.

Heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to the development of our Strategic Plan. I invite you to read each section and hope it gives a sense of the ambition we have to make the game in Ireland thrive over the next 5 years. We hope it will encourage and inspire existing and new clubs and their members to work with us and drive the growth of our sport so as to provide a rewarding squash experience for all, from grassroots to the highest level.

Rosie Barry
President Irish Squash



ABOUT

IRISH SQUASH

Irish Squash is the National Governing Body (NGB) for Squash on the island of Ireland. As a governing body, Irish Squash joins over 100 other affiliated national federations that are constituent members of the World Squash Federation (WSF), through which Irish Squash volunteer-nominees contribute to the international promotion and development of our game.

Irish Squash receives funding from the affiliation of players, sponsorship, and grants from Sport Ireland, the government authority tasked with the development of sport in Ireland. We are also an active member of the Federation of Irish Sport which is the representative organisation for sporting NGB and Local Sports Partnerships (LSP).

Irish Squash is governed by a volunteer board and sub-committees drawn from all the provinces and clubs across the island of Ireland. Working in partnership with the provincial bodies of Connacht, Ulster, Munster, and Leinster the role of Irish Squash is to lead, promote and develop the sport in Ireland for players and their associated Clubs.

SQUASH IN IRELAND

Squash emerged as a national sport in the 1970's and is now played in every county with circa 94 active clubs of which 52 are affiliated to Irish Squash. It is played by approximately 5,000 players of every standard, from Junior to Senior to Masters, culminating in National teams representing Ireland in various Home Internationals and European events in all age categories.

Squash in Ireland is part of a global playing community of over 20 million in 185 countries that enjoy a sociable and healthy pastime all year round and for all ages.

The local club is the cornerstone of the sport and is sustained by a network of volunteers and professionals that form the beating heart of squash and contributes to its open and committed culture. Through this dedicated volunteer framework Irish Squash delivers support to the players and clubs with various coaching programs, Insurance schemes, integrated technology platforms, grant applications assistance, child protection and Garda vetting to ensure a safe environment for all to participate, enjoy and excel in the sport.

For the competitive player Irish Squash offers an annual calendar of events running from September to May with approximately 50 events covering all age groups. The recent introduction of a PSA circuit with six ranking events offers our top players a high-performance platform and allows Irish Squash to showcase the best emerging squash talent.

STRATEGIC AMBITION

The strategic intent of this plan over the five-year period 2022-2027 is as follows:

- Modernise, professionalise and suitably resource Irish Squash (NGB) to drive and grow the sport to be relevant in a diverse and inclusive island of Ireland.
- Understand the business of squash and strengthen our clubs to become vibrant, well-utilised facilities catering for all ages to secure the future of our game.
- Position and market squash as a healthy choice for all genders and all age groups which seamlessly fits into a modern Irish lifestyle
- Establish a national centre of excellence which can host major international squash events which includes a full glass court



VISION, MISSION & VALUES

VISION

“To be a world class squash nation working through our clubs to provide a rewarding squash experience for all, from grassroots to the highest level”

MISSION

“We exist to lead, promote and develop; instilling passion to drive growth and excellence for squash in Ireland”

VALUES

EXCELLENCE - Operating to the highest standard

COLLABORATION - Working together

INTEGRITY - Doing the right thing

AMBITION - Being motivated to achieve

PASSION - Driving life-long healthy participation

INCLUSION - Providing access, opportunity and fun



STRATEGIC PILLARS

Six strategic pillars have been selected to represent the key areas for attention under the plan



1 STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE

To Drive and Deliver

WE WILL:

- Operate to the best sports governance standards and practice
- Modernise & professionalise to operate as a high performing NGB
- Oversee the sporting direction of Squash on the island of Ireland
- Develop and support a thriving community of volunteers
- Be a leader in the adoption of technology to support our strategic goals
- Support the improvements of infrastructure necessary to drive Squash in Ireland

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Reviewing our governance and policies in line with Sport Ireland Code of Practice
- Benchmarking against similar NGBs
- Embracing inclusivity and diversity principles
- Establishing a Performance Development Group to oversee direction
- Developing a volunteer strategy that is based on connecting community
- Examining innovative ways to deliver and play Squash
- Examining the feasibility of a National Centre of Excellence and strategically located regional squash centres

2 VISIBILITY

Recognised and Connected

WE WILL:

- Promote a strong Irish Squash identity which reflects our vision and values
- Place our clubs at the centre of a connected and supportive network
- Be a proactive and reliable partner within our community at home and internationally
- Develop an inclusive communications platform which supports our organisation and community
- Promote Irish Squash as a preferred event hosting partner

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Conducting a review of our Brand profile and Awareness
- Developing a Marketing & Communications strategy
- Promote the physical and mental benefits of participating in squash
- Offering communications skills training for clubs and volunteers
- Connecting our community through a Technology platform (SportyHQ)
- Developing a hosting strategy to attract national and international events

3 PARTICIPATION & GROWTH

Driving Growth through our Clubs

WE WILL:

- Develop a Club-Centric support framework driven by the needs and interests of the club membership
- Focus on membership retention and growth
- Promote a lifetime of Squash as an exciting and fun experience for all members
- Position Squash as an open and welcoming sport that embraces Inclusivity and Diversity

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Understand differing club structures and needs through interaction, surveys, and audits
- Building Individualised Participation Pathways for all members
- Appointing Development Officers to build relationships with Clubs, Schools, Colleges and the LSP networks
- Accelerating the roll-out of the SportyHQ project nationally to connect members
- Developing structured programmes for social inclusion, Women in Sport and Disability
- Creating a development programme for schools in each province
- Connecting with 3rd level educational facilities and promoting squash as an exciting sport option
- Hosting an annual members conference & Awards dinner to acknowledge outstanding contribution

4 REVENUE GROWTH & PARTNERSHIPS

Instilling Standards and Fuelling Passion

WE WILL:

- Design a financial growth plan for squash and professional coaches
- Increase our overall club membership numbers and that of affiliated clubs
- Work to attract commercial partners in line with our core values
- Investigate additional revenue streams through LSP partnerships and diversity programmes
- Seek strategic alliances with other sports

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Supporting clubs with funding applications and identifying grant support opportunities
- Working with partners at community level to fund club programmes and development
- Creating a Squash Patrons programme to encourage support for specific projects and programmes
- Developing our event structures and operations to create income
- Developing a sponsorship programme to support Irish Squash-run events and Leagues

5 COACHING & COMPETITION

Life-long Squash for All

WE WILL:

- Further our Coach Development & Education programme
- Support the needs of players at all stages of development
- Develop strong and sustainable performance coaching groups at club and regional levels
- Design and support a financial plan for full time professional coaches
- Promote squash coaching as a career choice
- Develop clear and recognisable pathways from club to provincial and national levels
- Develop meaningful competition structures and formats for players at all levels
- Complete our Referee Development & Education programme
- Ensure a sufficient panel of qualified referees exist to support our competition structures

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Designing performance Pathways that are integrated with coaching, competition performance and ranking
- Developing Junior, Senior and Master's squads at provincial level
- Reviewing our Competition Structures and Formats, including innovative developments
- Establishing an annual coaching conference
- Create a panel to oversee recruitment, education, development & training of officials

6 HIGH PERFORMANCE

In Pursuit of Excellence

WE WILL:

- Develop a world class programme of High-Performance Strategy & Direction
- Develop a vibrant PSA circuit in Ireland to allow our top players compete at the highest level
- Increase HP coach numbers and HP regional hubs
- Develop national teams at all levels to be fully competitive, aiming for the podium

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Establishing individualised training programmes and benchmarks for all elite players
- Establishing a Scholarship programme for talented Junior and Senior players
- Developing relationships with other National HP units to benchmark best practice
- Connecting Squad development with pathway development



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This plan sets out a stretching, ambitious future for Irish Squash and deserves success to reward the tireless effort and generous input from the squash community.

Responsibility for the successful delivery of this strategic plan rests with the Board of Irish Squash for the duration of the plan and will rely on the support of the wider community to achieve the stated goals.

It is envisaged that a group will be identified to oversee the implementation of the plan on behalf of the Board – leadership and delivery being key criteria.

It is expected that the plan will be reviewed regularly to assess progress and an annual plan produced to assist planning and regular communication of the actions taken.

THANKS

Irish Squash expresses its heartfelt thanks to the many contributors to the development of this Strategic Plan:

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Sport2Sport

Finally, to all the members who took the time and contributed to our initial survey, a special thank you and a pledge that this Plan is your Strategic Plan.





COURTCARE

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Irish Squash is the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport of squash in Ireland and is officially recognised as such by Sport Ireland & Sport NI.

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