



**SQUASH
FROM THE
MOSQUE**

STARTER GUIDE





WHAT IS SQUASH FROM THE MOSQUE?

Squash from the Mosque is a culturally appropriate squash programme that breaks down barriers to participation, changes mindsets and creates culture shifts within clubs.

It takes the game into the heart of communities, connecting with new audiences and inspiring more people to become active through the game of squash, whilst offering opportunities and access to training, membership and a healthy hobby for life!



HOW DID IT START

It all started in the West Yorkshire town of Halifax, when Aron Harper- Robinson from Calder Community Squash approached his local mosque. After initial conversations with Hassan, an Islamic teacher at the Jamia Mosque Madni, Aron was invited to the mosque for a tour and a discussion on how the sessions might look. It was decided that there should be some taster sessions for the mosque members, delivered in the car park of the mosque using bounce back nets.

After a couple of months trying to get things off the ground, a date was set and Aron, accompanied by his brother and fellow coach, were teaching kids how to play in the car park of the mosque. From here, the interest grew and it was decided that the sessions should move to the local squash club (Old Crossleyans). An initial 12-week pilot, funded by England Squash

brought 15 kids per week to the club, and after applying to the local council, a further six months worth of funding was also awarded. This allowed them to forge strong ties within the local Muslim community and gain the trust of the people which then went on to create a domino effect.

Two years later and the programme continues to flourish, with the addition of a girls only session and a women's session also. Many of the attendees have gone on to acquire membership which has led to families and friends joining and booking courts to play outside of the sessions provided by the club. England Squash and Calder Community Squash are working together on a mission to help other clubs to achieve the same success!





WHY SQUASH FROM THE MOSQUE IS IMPORTANT

People who state they have no religion are more likely to be active compared to those who belong to a faith group. Two in five people from ethnically diverse communities feel they have fewer opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity than someone from a white background.

Squash from the Mosque allows people of Muslim faith the opportunity to get active and engage in squash.

Our goal is that the squash community is more reflective of society and Squash from the Mosque will help bring more people from ethnically diverse communities into the squash community.

HOW THE PROGRAMME COULD BENEFIT YOUR CLUB



Increased participation and membership that is reflective of your local community



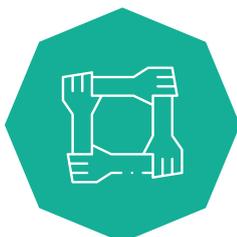
Funding opportunities to support the programme



An increasing and more diverse membership



Local and national recognition



Stronger ties within community increase the awareness of your club

HOW CAN ENGLAND SQUASH AND CALDER COMMUNITY SQUASH HELP?



Support you to identify a mosque to connect with



Access to learning resources



Support on larger funding applications



Webinars and training



Resources to promote your sessions



Tips to achieve the best out of your sessions

ARON'S TOP TIPS



Squash From the Mosque is a participation programme that aims to break down barriers faced by particular communities whilst building strong ties between a club and their local community. The goal is to create an inclusive environment where your participants can thrive and have fun! Here are some things to think about when starting a programme.

- Look at the location of your nearest mosque. Ideally the distance from the squash club should be no more than 3 - 5 miles and not reliant on a lot of transport.
- We've created an email template for you to use or you can edit this to be in your own words - use this to send an introductory email to a contact from the mosque. Before you email them, try calling to get the correct contact details of who to email and to let them know you will be emailing. This could be your one chance to get the buy in from the mosque so make sure you communicate clearly and describe the benefits to them. Attach a Squash from the Mosque video and poster which includes more and allows the recipient to see what it looks like.
- Once you have established a connection/champion from within the mosque, try to arrange a face to face meet up. Preferably at the mosque (this will be appreciated) as this will dismiss any preconceptions for both parties. A face to face meeting is an integral part to the success of any programme as it will help to build trust from within the community.
- Take squash to the community by offering sessions at the mosque. This will help to ease any nerves amongst the new players before anyone commits to sessions at the club. If you can't run some activity at the mosque then offering a free session where people can come and see the club and try it out could help.
- Listen to your contact from the mosque. Find out what barriers there may be for their members when accessing sport, and work together to establish how to overcome them. Discuss with them when best works for them to host your sessions, this needs to be a collaboration between the club and mosque.
- Ask how you or the club could be more involved with the mosque community and vice versa. Can pop-up squash be a part of an upcoming fundraiser and charity events for example? Could members from the mosque be part of anything you have going on at the club? Fun days, BBQ's?

HASSAN'S TOP TIPS



1. Be modest

The Qur'an is the Holy Book for Muslims, it teaches Muslim men and women to dress modestly. For females, this includes the donning of the hijab (a head scarf which covers the hair), covering their arms and legs, and wearing loose clothing. For males, this includes being covered from their naval to their knees. Modesty is of paramount importance to Muslims and being mindful of this will ensure you are being inclusive of everyone wishing to take part in squash.

2. Be inclusive

Islam teaches inclusivity and all young people are encouraged to enjoy their youth and pursue praiseworthy professions and hobbies. Young women ought to have the same opportunities, and this will only be enhanced by having female coaches for girls-only sessions. Many families will seek girls-only sessions, and girls will be empowered more with a female coach.

3. Allow time for prayer

For Muslims, the 5 daily prayers are obligatory. They must stop what they are doing to fulfill their 5 daily prayers, and this includes sport too. Be mindful of not clashing the timings with prayers, and if a prayer time occurs during a session, allow time and space for a quick prayer break. A prayer break may last 5 minutes, but it will reap the confidence and support of the people attending your sessions.

4. Celebrate greatness

People of Muslim faith are some of the most prolific athletes in sports, and non more so than in squash! Inspire young attendees with young Muslim role-models in the world of Squash. Ali Farag, Nour El Sherbinil, Mohamed ElShorbagy - are perhaps three of the best squash players in the world. Shout about them, not many Muslims know who they are. Jahangir Khan is widely considered the greatest squash player the world has ever seen, but the majority of Muslim will never have heard of him. Showcasing these greats will inspire the next generation of world-class Muslim squash players from Squash from the Mosque programmes.

5. Be adventurous

Go out into the heart of your communities, be prepared to have conversations with Imams at local Mosques, influential local Muslims, and be daring in your approach. When we launched Squash from the Mosque in Halifax, we started with a handful of outdoor nets, squash rackets and balls and around 30 super-keen young lads. We set-up in the Mosque car-park and the journey's not stopped since, we're only just starting.

FAQS

Q. How long should my Squash from the Mosque programme last?

A. To ensure your participants are hooked from the start, we recommend delivering sessions for a minimum of six months before encouraging participants to transition onto other sessions. Make sure you speak to your participants to ensure you are still delivering something that is of benefit to them.

Q. What if players don't have the right clothing and footwear?

A. Don't worry too much about clothing and footwear, as long as everyone is safe and comfortable that's all that matters. Most modern footwear is non-marking so should be fine for squash.

Q. How many taster sessions should we deliver?

A. To help the members of the mosque get an interest for squash, you may need to deliver a taster session. This could either be at the club or if you have bounce back nets, you could take them to the mosque. Once the mosque members are happy to, you can then move to session at the local club.

Q. What qualifications does the coach need to deliver the programme?

A. To deliver the programme, you need to be an England Squash level 1 coach, you will also need a valid DBS and safeguarding certificate.

Q. Does the club need anything to deliver the programme?

A. A club should have a welfare officer and first aider. If you are taking part in an England Squash funded programme, you will need to be affiliated to England Squash, have a welfare officer and first aider.

Q. How do I integrate the members from the sessions into the club?

A. Speak to your participants to see if they are interested in joining other sessions. If you already have a junior section find out if any of the young members would like to join in. If you are delivering to female adults, would they like to join a women's only session? Let them know how they can book a court themselves and go and play as a group or family. Don't push membership onto them, if your mosque is situated in an area of deprivation, finances may be an issue, you may want to consider reduced fees for those most in need.

Q. How do I encourage the members of the mosque to attend my sessions?

A. You can download posters and leaflets from the Squash from the Mosque toolkit to promote your sessions, and ask the mosque leaders to distribute these to their members. You could also email across the promotional video to the mosque leader for them to share. Visits to the mosque are often appreciated and can help to sell the programme.

Q. Do I have to deliver the programme to juniors?

A. You can discuss with the mosque leaders and their members who would best benefit from the sessions, you can then work together to put on the sessions. If you only choose one group i.e. female adults you can inform the other members of existing sessions they could join if they still have an interest in joining.

You could also buddy up with another neighbouring squash club - could you take one group and they take another?



