



# Squash Ignite

## Insights and Advice

HOW TO GET YOUNG ADULTS MOVING



# SQUASH IGNITE

## Welcome to Squash Ignite!

Squash Ignite is a programme that uses the SquashStart coaching resources and provides teenage participants with fun activities that they will enjoy doing.



As a coach, you will teach your players how to serve, rally and play from their very first session. You will also help them form connections with others so they have a group of people at the same level with whom to play. Always setup the sessions, demonstrate and explain each activity. Once all the technical and safety cues are done, get people active. Remember, have fun and enjoy!

## Why you should use Squash Ignite

Squash Ignite is the perfect solution for your club and is an easy way for teenagers (13-18 years) to be introduced to the game of squash in a fun and social setting. Group programmes provides your members with enjoyable experiences and social interaction – their two main needs. Through active and fun activities they will receive sufficient learning and practice time to achieve success and receive the many benefit playing squash offers.

Not only is Squash Ignite a great magnet for youth players, but it is also an effective retention tool which will help them connect with other members and your club.

## How to make Squash Ignite work

Squash New Zealand will provide the tools and templates, logos and promotional materials. Your regional District Association will provide the support. But it's the club which actually makes the programme happen.

The club not only needs to implement Squash Ignite, it also needs to provide constructive and regular feedback to Squash New Zealand so that we know what needs improving. In addition, we also need clubs to collect and submit information through Activity Reporting so that we can show progress to our major funders and potential sponsors to continue creating engagement.

## What youth want

Research shows youth consider the following very important when choosing leisure activities:

- Enjoyment of having fun and playing games.
- Learning and improving at something new.
- Being able to play without large time or cost commitments.
- Social experience and being with friends.

## Why youth love Squash Ignite

- Fun comes first for all participants through a range of games and fitness activities.
- Participants form connections with other people with whom to play.
- From the very first lesson participants learn to play and develop physical and mental skills.
- Participants learn the rules, scoring system and leave with a sense of achievement.

It is important that the coach delivering the Squash Ignite programme highlight all of these elements in every session.

## Structuring Squash Ignite

The Squash Ignite programme teaches the basics of squash over a period of 8-weeks (1 hour each session). However, the programme is flexible and the duration can be adjusted based on court availability, number of players, etc.

Some alternatives:

- 1 x 2 hour session and 6 x 1 hour session
- 4 x 2 hour sessions

When organising a Squash Ignite programme, the club should expect that a range of abilities will be participating, including:

- Participants who have never played before.
- Participants who have received some basic coaching but never played outside a coaching environment.
- Participants returning after a long absence.

In the weeks leading up to the launch of your programme we recommend you provide some 'free tasters'. Analyse how many people attend these and ask them what days and times they prefer.

## Post Squash Ignite

At the end of all Squash Ignite programmes it is recommended that the coach provides participants with suitable playing opportunities so they can continue to play the sport (both socially and within a competitive environment) to further develop and enjoy their squash. Example opportunities include:

- Additional Squash Ignite programmes
- Casual play opportunities with other participants and members
- Club nights
- Team-based events
- Interclub competitions
- Individual coaching sessions

# Setting up Squash Ignite

## STEP 1: Establish your programme and membership goals

Setting participation and membership goals for your squash programmes is a must. Giving your club targets motivates and inspires its' members and gives them a sense of what is possible. From a club management perspective, you can plan your expenditure and prioritise your action plan based on the growth you can expect to see within your club.

	Baseline (NOW)	3-5 year target	1 year target	3 month target
Membership (number signed up each year)				
Participation (number attending each week)				

## STEP 2: Schedule your programme

The ultimate benchmark of a timetable is the number of people it draws in. Always measure success by how many people are playing squash every week. Findings show you should offer 4 structured programmes throughout the year to link in with the school terms. Schedule sessions to start after school hours so parents and students can make it in time. Wednesdays are the most popular days of the week.

Questions to consider:

- How many people can you fit onto the available courts?
- Are you limited by the amount of balls and rackets you have?
- Are you planning to upskill enough people to deliver the programme?
- When does it suit people to come to your club?
- How long do people want to commit for?
- How does the event calendar affect your available court space?
- What will you do to promote your programmes?

## STEP 3: Find and train a pool of coaches

One of the most important factors in the success of any programme is the quality of people who deliver it. A team of quality coaches can bring hundreds of people to your facility through retention, new membership sales and opportunities to grow. Use the Coach Recruitment Guide to help you attract and develop superstar coaches.



#### STEP 4: Let your members know

Boosting your participation and membership numbers depends on your club's ability to sell your programme to both existing members and future participants. Give them first-class knowledge so they can effectively communicate this to others.

- Introduce your club goals for the programme and membership.
- Get coaches to provide a taster of the programme so the rest of the membership can experience it and provide any suggestions.
- Give each member a copy of the programme information.

#### STEP 5: Promote the programme

- Tell everyone in your club, their friends and prospective members about your Squash Ignite programme.
- Use the FREE online marketing materials to create promotional documents, website content and newsletters.
  - Send promotional emails to your existing members and guests.
  - Put posters up around your club in common areas.
  - Hand flyers out to coaches, members, friends, networks and prospects to distribute as needed.
- Utilise the FREE community notice boards, your local radio station and newspapers.
- Use your website, social media pages and other online websites to promote each session. Keep adding photos and videos.

#### STEP 6: Report the programme

Collecting activity information can be used to identify the trends of what's working and where there's room for improvement. This enables you to accurately report on player participation, plan effective member retention strategies and make informed decisions about key club activities.

- Record the names of each individual who attends each session.
- Remember who delivers each session and at what location, on what day and at what time.
- Input these details into iSquash Activity Reporting.

A screenshot of the iSquash Activity Reporting web form. The form is titled "Activity Reporting" and includes fields for "District/Club" (a dropdown menu), "Reporting Period" (a date range selector), "Start Date" (dd/mm/yyyy), "End Date" (dd/mm/yyyy), "Coordinator" (a text field), and "Programme / Activity" (a dropdown menu). Below these are fields for "No. of Participants", "No. of Sessions Delivered", "Venue" (a dropdown menu), "Male" (checkbox), "Female" (checkbox), and "Sessions" (a text field). There are also "New Activity" and "Cancel" buttons, and a "Notes" text area at the bottom.

- Give us your best SHOT by completing the post-programme survey.



## TIPS FOR COACHES:

If you're a coach, here's our suggestions for making the most out of Squash Ignite...

- Talk with your club to encourage them to offer Squash Ignite.
- Decide on a suitable day and time for Squash Ignite sessions to be held. Squash Ignite should be open to both members and participants (non-members).
- Squash Ignite should be user pay – perhaps it is offered for free to club members and gold coin donation for non-members.
- Join forces with the club and use all the marketing resources provided to promote Squash Ignite in local secondary schools, supermarkets, etc.
- Get older teenagers / university students to help deliver Squash Ignite. All Squash Ignite volunteers can be trained by local coach facilitators to deliver Squash Ignite to participants.
- On the day / night of Squash Ignite sessions, make sure you and some club representatives are available to mingle with parents and participants and put them at ease whilst providing them with plenty of information on coaching and the club.
- Ideally, you and the club would work out a win-win situation incentivising the coach to convert as many participants to club members as possible.
- Manage the expectations of parents and players by explaining the programme to them. You can use some of the marketing material provided in the programme to help communicate this.

## CLUBS with NO COACH:

Use Squash Ignite to get new adults and families into your club...

- Plan a free promotional event a couple of weeks before of the start of your Squash Ignite programme. Use this event to recruit participants and parent volunteers to coach.
- Advertise at your local secondary schools, libraries, supermarkets, etc. - use the marketing material provided as part of the programme to help you with this!
- Make a day of it! Get a BBQ fired up, invite the local coffee cart to set up in the car park, chat to local businesses to see if they can offer small spot prizes.
- Put on some fun squash challenges and games. Perhaps even a doubles competition!
- On the day have a sign-up sheet for your Squash Ignite programme – perhaps it is free for the first five people that sign up as volunteers.
- Have plenty of information about the club and lots of friendly faces (teenage members come in especially useful here) to chat and support the players on the court.
- Make sure everyone leaves with a leaflet about your upcoming Squash Ignite programme including information on when it starts, what time, how much and who to contact in order to book a place.
- Even a small charge (gold coin) will help place more value on the programme. If people pay for something, they are less likely to take it for granted!
- It's always worth stating 'limited spaces' or 'sign up before X date to reserve your space' to encourage people to commit.

# FAQs

What do participants need for a Squash Ignite class?

All they need is comfortable workout clothes, supportive shoes, a drink bottle and a sweat towel.

How often should new participants play squash?

For the best results we suggest they get on court at least twice a week. Take a look at our videos to help them learn the moves, or have them chat to a fellow club member for some tips.

How experienced do participants need to be?

The great news is that Squash Ignite can be for people who have never played before, those who have received some basic coaching or participants returning after a long absence. It only takes a few sessions before they will start to feel comfortable on the court so encourage them to not give up!

## **What if participants say they can't do the moves?**

The technique for squash is super simple so even the most inexperienced player will pick it up in no time. Remind them that the coach is there to work with them and provide them with challenges that meet their needs. They'll find their skills and fitness will improve over a number of sessions.

## Important Facts

- ✓ Programmes should be open to both members (possibly discounted) and non-members. This will allow your club to cater for both membership retention and participation growth.
- ✓ Coaches should be incentivised to convert as many programme participants to club members as possible. We suggest either paying coaches a baseline plus commission, or paying them based on the number attending minus court hire costs. This means the coach will be motivated to convert new members, because then they can earn more!
- ✓ It is essential that the coach provides all players with opportunities to practice in between sessions in order to reinforce learning, develop confidence and to direct participants to suitable playing opportunities at the conclusion of the programme.

For more go to [www.nzsquash.co.nz/play-squash/ways-to-play/squash-ignite.cfm](http://www.nzsquash.co.nz/play-squash/ways-to-play/squash-ignite.cfm) ->





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