



Introduction

To make the most out of limited financial resources and staff time, urban squash programs should be organized and intentional about how they get, manage, and distribute equipment to students. While each program takes a slightly different approach to this process based on their size, location, and other factors, this guide shares some general tips, ideas, and resources for programs to consider.

Overview

Below is an overview of the information covered in this guide.

- ❑ **Getting equipment for your program**
 - ❑ Company partnerships
 - ❑ Donations
 - ❑ Online orders
 - ❑ Staff sponsorships
 - ❑ Grants and discounts
- ❑ **Distributing and tracking equipment**
 - ❑ Try-out students
 - ❑ Students who make the team
 - ❑ Returning students, start of year
 - ❑ Throughout the year
- ❑ **Equipment Maintenance and Management**
 - ❑ Storage during practice
 - ❑ Label equipment
 - ❑ Collect used equipment during exchanges
 - ❑ Track t-shirt sizes
 - ❑ Stringing racquets
- ❑ **Gear on the Road**
- ❑ **Uniforms and Practice Clothes**
- ❑ **Earning Gear & Equipment**

Getting Equipment for Your Program

Below are some of the different ways that programs get equipment for their students.

- ❑ **Company partnerships:** Programs should look into forming a partnership with a company that sells racquets, shoes, and goggles. The advantage of these partnerships is that programs can also get good gear for lower prices; the disadvantage is that the company may ask the program to commit to only using their gear.

- ❑ **Donations:** Many programs rely heavily on donations from local squash clubs. Squash Directors reach out to the club pros early in the year and ask for any possible/potential donations of any sort (shoes, rackets, balls, goggles, bags, etc).
- ❑ **Online orders:** Programs also place orders online from websites such as Squashgear.
- ❑ **Staff sponsorships:** Staff who have played at a high level are sometimes sponsored by companies who may be willing to donate some extra gear for special occasions or advanced students.
- ❑ **Grants and discounts:** Some organizations are able to get grants or discounts from companies and nonprofits that support youth sports and urban squash programs. See the Additional Resources section below.

Distributing and Tracking Equipment

Try-out students: Programs usually give try-out students used equipment to borrow throughout the try-out process. This practice both helps the program reduce the amount of equipment needed, since students can share racquets and eyeguards, and helps build excitement for the day that students make the team and get their own equipment. Students pick up a racquet and pair of eye guards before getting on court, and return them when leaving court. Shoes may be the exception to this rule, as they require cleaning between uses by different participants; try-out students may have one pair of used shoes given to them for the try-out period (to avoid having to spray and air out shoes between sessions), or may use their own non-marking shoes on court.

Students who make the team: Many programs give students one racquet, one pair of eye guards, and one pair of shoes when they make the team. Some programs may also give out program t-shirts or uniforms at this time. When you hand out equipment, make it a big deal. Students should feel proud that they have earned this equipment and are now officially on the team. Consider holding a big ceremony to welcome students and their families to the team, or surprising students with home visits. Students' well-deserved feeling of accomplishment will help them feel more confident and excited about their potential as players and will help them value the equipment they receive.

Start-of-year, returning students: At the start of every year, do a tally of what equipment returning students have and what they need. Programs may also hand out new program t-shirts at this time of year.

Throughout the year: Plan for and communicate to students how you will manage lost equipment during the year. Can students buy a new item if they lose one? Can they earn one if they don't have enough money to purchase one, for example through "equipment bucks," completing solo drills, or volunteering? How long will you allow a student to borrow a racquet before he/she has to purchase/earn a replacement or sit out? Is there a specific day of the

week or month when students can get new equipment, or can they get it any day, any practice? Is there a specific person that distributes all equipment, or someone on staff that needs to be informed after a student gets a new item in order to manage the inventory? What's your policy for when students outgrow their shoes?

Below is an example of CitySquash's equipment policy, and at the bottom of this document are links to examples from other programs.

Once becoming a team member, CitySquashers receive one racquet, one pair of shoes and a pair of glasses. If anything happens to your racquet (non-squash related), you can buy a used one for \$20 or volunteer for 10 hours to earn a replacement racquet. CitySquash also has a limited supply of new racquets that may be purchased for \$40. If team members break their racquet from normal use, they may replace the racquet with another used racquet from CitySquash at no cost (team members must present their broken racquet to a Squash Director before getting it replaced). Note that students may only have one racquet from CitySquash. In other words, if you already have a functioning racquet, you may not purchase any other racquets from CitySquash.

If anything happens to your glasses, you must buy a new pair for \$5. Students without glasses will be marked as unprepared for practices until they purchase a new pair.

If students outgrow their current shoes, they may exchange them for new ones at no cost, provided that they bring the old shoes into the office.

Students are expected to have your squash racquet, eyeguards, and court shoes at every practice. If a piece of equipment needs to be replaced, it is their responsibility to come to the office on a designated Equipment Day (at least 1 Thursday and 1 Friday every month as noted in the monthly calendars) and speak to a coach about replacing your equipment.

Equipment Maintenance and Management

- ❑ **Storage during practice:** Be explicit about where students should put their gear when they are not on court. Do they have a designated place to leave gear near the courts, or do they bring their gear with them to academics? If they bring gear to academics, how do they safely store it in the classroom so as not to be a distraction?
- ❑ **Label everything:** Label all program equipment that students borrow with your program name to ensure you get it back from students after they borrow it. You may also consider, every time you give a student a new racquet, eye guard, pair of shoes, or uniform, labeling it with the students' name. When giving a large amount of equipment out at once (after tryouts for example), label everything in advance. This will

significantly decrease the amount of time students spend looking for where they left their racquets and reduce arguments over whose eye guards are whose.

- ❑ **Collect used equipment during exchanges:** Always have kids provide the old version of whatever it is they are exchanging. This helps keep students honest, and in the case of shoes, is also a good way of recycling shoes so you can use them for other students (if they are not too beat down).
- ❑ **Track t-shirt sizes:** You will need to know students' t-shirt sizes throughout the year for various events such as SEA tournaments. Keep a list of all student sizes in your database or an excel spreadsheet, and update it every year.
- ❑ **Stringing racquets:** Many programs rely on students or alumni who have been trained in how to string racquets to do this for them. Students may train other students, passing down this tradition from one generation of students to the next.

Gear on the Road

For programs who lead practice at sites separate from where they store their equipment, or for all programs when they are traveling, coaches should bring a bag of gear stocked with extra supplies including:

- ❑ Raquets
- ❑ Eyeguards and I-Masks
- ❑ Extra clothes / uniforms
- ❑ First aid kits, including pads/tampons for female athletes
- ❑ Student medical info and waivers for medical treatment if needed

Uniforms and Practice Clothes

All SEA programs give and require student to wear uniforms for competitions. All programs should also require students to come to practice dressed in athletic gear (t-shirts with sleeves, squash sneakers, shorts or athletic pants).

Some SEA programs give and require students to wear program t-shirts during practice.

Programs who choose to do this find it beneficial for the following reasons:

- ❑ Builds team unity and pride
- ❑ Provides students with appropriate athletic clothing to wear on court (less stress on families/students to buy athletic clothes, and less conversations with students about what is or is not appropriate athletic clothing)

Earning Gear & Equipment

Various SEA member programs allow students to earn gear by volunteering, doing extra practices, or positively contributing to practice. Below are some ways programs go about this.

- ❑ [StreetSquash](#): Students earn points for attendance, strong GPA, GPA improvement, and number of years in the program. The value of different items are posted and shared with students so they know how many points they need for various items.
- ❑ [Citysquash](#): Students earn “nicks” (points) for exceptional performance. Students earn points for consistently demonstrating a high level of effort in the classroom and on court, for attendance and preparedness, and for positive behavior.

Additional Resources

- ❑ [Squashgear](#) is a website with discounted squash gear. Programs can reach out to Ben Beylin at askthepro@squashgear.com to inquire about potential urban squash discounts.
- ❑ [Squash Galaxy](#) is this another website that sells squash gear and sometimes has good sales.
- ❑ [MORSquash](#) is a company led by Franklin & Marshall coach, Gavin Jones, that offers discounted gear to urban squash programs.
- ❑ [GoodSports](#) is a nonprofit organization that provides athletic equipment and apparel to youth sports programs.

SEA Shared Drive Resources

- ❑ [Streetsquash Equipment Policy](#)
- ❑ [MetroSquash Equipment Policy](#)
- ❑ [CitySquash Nicks Reward System](#)

This guide was written by Chris Fernandez at CitySquash, with input from members of the 2017-2018 Squash Leadership Committee.