

Introduction

Given the large number of students in SEA programs, coaches need to be thoughtful and intentional about how to get students the most number of tournament opportunities while also balancing staff and program resources.

Overview

This document provides guidance on how SEA programs approach tournament eligibility and participation.

- Student Applications
- Determining Squash Readiness
- Earning a Spot
- Ensuring Student/Family Commitment
- Notifying Schools of Absences
- Tournament Fees

Student Applications

Some SEA programs require students to submit applications to participate in tournaments, especially overnight tournaments. Applications help programs see which students are most interested, available, and committed to attending upcoming tournaments.

At Racquet Up Detroit, students apply for tournaments by semester. Tournament applications are distributed the first week of practice in September and the first week of practice in January. Students are given two weeks to fill out applications and return them to squash staff. (See [RUD application template](#)). Staff evaluate the strength of the application based on the following criteria:

- Does the student meet basic criteria (attendance, behavior, grades, squash level)?
- Did the player put in adequate effort when answering the essay questions? Was the essay thoughtful?
- Is the application complete?
- Was the application turned in on time?

Squash Readiness

Programs determine what tournaments students will participate in based on the students' squash level. Below are some ways that programs determine which tournaments students will attend based on their squash level.

- Racquet Up: Students are given a “squash level” at the start of each semester (novice, intermediate, bronze, silver, gold) which determines which tournaments

they are eligible to play. Every player competes in at least one tournaments each semester (fall and spring). On average, students compete in 5 tournaments per year.

- Squash levels are determined by squash staff based on the skills of the player
- Some players may be able to compete one level above their given squash level
- MetroSquash: MetroSquash uses the following criteria to determine what tournaments students compete in.
 - Internal Tournaments
 - Must know basic squash rules
 - Must serve in a minimum 5/10 times on each side
 - Urban Matches
 - Need to pass “US Squash Referee Exam”
 - Must serve in a minimum 7/10 times on each side
 - Bronze Tournaments
 - Need to pass “US Squash Referee Exam”
 - Must serve in a minimum 16/20
 - Must be top ten in your age group
 - Silver Tournaments
 - Need to pass “US Squash Referee Exam”
 - Must have played in a minimum of 2 bronzes
 - Must be top five in your age group
 - Gold Tournaments
 - Need to pass “US Squash Referee Exam”
 - Must be top 200 in country to be eligible
 - Must be Top 3 in age group
 - Urban Teams
 - 3 teams will be selected who meet the above criteria
 - Top 5 players will be selected in each age group
 - Top players in age group will be considered
- SquashBusters has criteria that staff use to ensure that every player gets a minimum number of competitive playing opportunities based on his/her squash level. The more advanced a player is, the more competitive playing opportunities he/she receives. See [SqB Squash Ability](#) in the SEA-Wide Shared Drive.

Earning a spot

When there are not enough resources or tournament spots to enroll all qualified players, many programs require students to earn a spot by demonstrating strong attendance, positive program participation (effort, preparation, respect/teamwork), and/or a minimum grade standards. Below are some of the criteria used by different programs.

Attendance

All programs track student attendance on a daily basis. Below are some of the attendance standards programs use when determining tournament eligibility (updated in the fall of 2017):

- ❑ Racquet Up: Two months prior to tournament selection date, student must have maintained an 85% attendance rate including excused attendance. Some exceptions may apply if student has faced particularly difficult times.
- ❑ SquashBusters: 85% attendance or higher
- ❑ MetroSquash: 80% attendance or higher
- ❑ StreetSquash: 90% attendance or higher for US Squash tournaments, 80% attendance or higher for other tournaments
- ❑ SquashWise: 85% attendance or higher
- ❑ Capitol Squash: 85% attendance or higher

Program Performance

Many programs expect students to demonstrate strong performance during practice in order to earn a tournament spot. Often, program staff track student performance after each practice. Students can earn points for showing a strong work ethic/effort, coming prepared (on time with all equipment and athletic clothes), and being a positive teammate (following directions, helping teammates, showing respect, etc.). Programs post and/or send home reports showing what percentage of possible points students have earned so there is no question who is or is not eligible for tournaments. Below are some of the point systems used by programs.

- ❑ Racquet Up: P3 – performing, punctual, and prepared
 - ❑ Students earn their P3 each practice unless they are not performing (Are they disrupting practice? Are there any behavior issues?), not punctual (Are they on time? If students are picked up from school, do they change in a timely manner?), or not prepared (Does the student have their practice clothes? Racquet? Shoes? Does the student have their homework?).
 - ❑ Two months prior to the tournament selection date, student must have maintained an 85% P3 rate. Some exceptions may apply if student has faced particularly difficult times
- ❑ MetroSquash: Students must demonstrate the METRO Values - Mindfulness, Effort, Teamwork, Respect, Ownership
- ❑ StreetSquash: Student must be highly motivated to improve their squash game (as determined by coaches) and be in good standing within StreetSquash (no behavior concerns).
- ❑ SquashWise: Students earn effort points in practice each day. To be eligible for tournaments, students must have the following point percentages:

- ❑ Academic effort – 80% or higher
- ❑ Squash/Fitness effort – 90% or higher
- SquashBusters: Students earn REP points in practice each day for demonstrating **Respect, Effort, and Preparation**. In order to be eligible for national tournaments, students must maintain 85% or higher REP points. REP points are reset mid-year.
- Capitol Squash: REP points for Respect, Effort, and Preparation. 90% or higher

Grades

All programs track student grades, and some use grades to determine tournament eligibility. There are philosophical divides within SEA about the use of grades in determining tournament eligibility.

- Programs who use grades to determine tournament eligibility cite the following reasons: (1) students sometimes have to miss school to attend tournaments, so they must be in good standing academically to be eligible for tournament travel; (2) students who are serious about squash must also do well in school if they want to attend a college that has a squash team, and; (3) tournament participation can be a motivator for students to keep up their grades.
- Programs who do not use grades to determine eligibility cite the following reasons: (1) students should not be denied the opportunity to compete in an area where they are working hard and excelling, (2) students who are not strong in school but are strong squash players may have a career as a coach even if they do not go to college, and; (3) denying students' squash opportunities based on academic performance has not been shown to have a long-term impact on increasing students' academic performance, resulting in a net loss on the squash side and no gains on the academic side.

For programs who do consider student grades related to tournament eligibility, below are some of the standards used.

- Racquet Up:
 - On last obtained report card, student must have at least a 2.0 GPA in core classes to travel. If a student does not have a 2.0 GPA on most recent report card, he/she can bring in a progress report and/or a note from a teacher demonstrating that he/she now meets the 2.0 GPA criteria
 - Grades do not matter for one day tournaments - this allows for students who struggle in school to play in competitive squash matches
- SquashBusters: C's or above to attend any major tournaments such as UTN and UIN.
- MetroSquash: Must have C's or higher
- StreetSquash: Maintain an 80% academic average or higher with no failing grades
- SquashWise: 75% average with no failing grades
- Impact360: 2.0 or higher

Additional Selection Criteria

Some programs consider additional criteria when selecting students to participate in tournaments. Below is a summary of some of these criteria.

- Racquet Up:
 - We strive to have an equal number of girls and boys and a mix of age groups
 - Think about the group dynamic amongst the students
- StreetSquash:
 - Volunteer in an academic and/or squash session weekly
 - Attend an open study session weekly

Ensuring Student/Family Commitment

Once students are invited to participate in a tournament, programs need to ensure that the students and families are committed to attending the tournaments. Programs address this in two ways.

- **Contracts / Permission Slips:** Students and families sign a contract or permission slip confirming that they will attend the tournament, and receive written information about the tournament.
- **Staff Calls:** Staff members call families two to three weeks in advance to ensure that the student is available for the tournament weekend and that programs have permission to take the student. As the tournament date approaches, staff may call again to confirm participation and provide updates.

Notifying Schools of Student Absences

When tournament play requires students to miss school, programs should be proactive about notifying schools of the student absences and ensuring that students ask for assignments they will be missing in advance. Programs should also have strict policies about requiring students to attend school immediately following the tournament to ensure that students don't use tournament play as an excuse for additional absences. ([Example school notification letter from RUD](#))

Tournament Fees

Some programs require families to pay a tournament fee to help with costs and ensure student/family commitment. Cost should never be a barrier to going to a tournament. Programs should be flexible and work with families. At Racquet Up, families pay \$20 for two night travel tournaments; this fee can be waived or reduced if a family struggles to pay it.

SEA-Shared Drive Resources

- [RUD application template](#): The application Racquet Up Detroit students complete

each September and January to compete in upcoming tournaments.

- [RUD Student Contract and Parent Permission Slip](#): The student code of conduct and parent permission slip signed by students and families for tournament participation.
- [RUD Permission to Leave School](#): A sample note that RUD provides students/families to notify schools of the student's absence.
- [RUD Tournament Processes](#): A document outlining the processes and timeline that RUD follows when taking students to a tournament.
- [SqB Squash Ability and Tournament Opportunities](#): The overview of what tournament opportunities SquashBusters players participate in based on their ability level.
- [MetroSquash Tournament Eligibility](#): A summary of how MetroSquash determines eligibility and requirements for student participation in tournaments.

This guide was written by Rosemary O'Connor at Racquet Up Detroit, with input from the 2017-2018 Squash Leadership Committee.