

Instant Update



OLYMPIC LATEST: SQUASH ON IOC SHORTLIST FOR 2016 GAMES!

The WSF has finally received the news it has been looking forward to since July 2005 - *that Squash has been included on the shortlist of sports under consideration for the **2016 Olympic Games***.

This follows extensive global campaigning by the WSF and its Member Nation Federations since the sport narrowly missed out being added to the London 2012 programme.

In a letter to **Jahangir Khan**, IOC Sports Director **Christophe Dubi** congratulated and thanked the WSF President "most sincerely for the tremendous work you accomplished in order to complete the questionnaire for IOC Recognised International Federations".

Squash has been selected along with Baseball, Golf, Karate, Roller Sports, Rugby and Softball.

Played by around 15 million enthusiasts on all five continents, Squash has been vigorously campaigning to join the Olympic Games programme for many years.

In 2005, Squash was voted into the London 2012 Olympic Games ahead of Karate, Roller Sports, Rugby and Golf - but then failed to achieve the two-thirds majority required to become ratified as an Olympic sport.

"I am confident that the reason why Squash was chosen ahead of other sports in 2005 is down to its image as an intensely athletic, healthy, universal, inclusive and exciting world sport," said the WSF President. "This image is the result of decades of positive development."

Khan was delighted to receive the IOC letter, only days after being the final torchbearer in the **Beijing Olympic Torch Relay** in Islamabad, the capital of his home country Pakistan.

"This is truly excellent news for our sport," said one of the sport's most distinguished players, with six **World Open** titles and record ten **British Open** trophies to his name. "We will be working very hard to convince the IOC that Squash deserves a place on the Olympic Programme."

Following the 2005 IOC meeting in Singapore, the WSF lobbied for a change in the Olympic charter which would reduce from two-thirds to a simple majority the voting policy for ratification as an Olympic sport - thus aligning the threshold with the existing policy for Olympic sports. This decision was duly taken at the IOC session in Guatemala in July 2007.

The IOC letter outlined the process that will lead to the final decision:

- March 2008-March 2009 Observation of major competitions;
- December 2008 Detailed questionnaire sent to selected IFs;
- March 2009 Deadline for submission of completed questionnaire;
- April 2009 Olympic Programme Commission report preparation;
- June 2009 Presentation of the Olympic Programme Commission report to

IOC Executive Board;
Presentation by selected IFs to the IOC Executive Board;
Executive Board proposal submitted to IOC session.

- October 2009

"It is particularly important to note that Federations will have the opportunity to present their detailed proposal to the IOC Executive Board," the letter continued. "Applicable rules and procedures prepared by the IOC Ethics Commission for the selected Recognised IFs during the evaluation process will be sent shortly to your Federation."

Squash was the first of the sports to announce the IOC's latest decision to the world's media. In the press release, the WSF outlined the compelling case which Squash presents for inclusion on the Olympic Programme - after experiencing significant global growth since being voted the number one sport at the 2005 IOC Session in Singapore:

The theme for the 2008 WSF Conference will revolve around Olympic inclusion.

UNIFIED SCORING INITIATIVE

The WSF has initialised a working group to study the feasibility of implementing a uniform scoring system for the sport. The group identified Point-A-Rally scoring as the leading option, given the positive experience in the men's professional game; volleyball's successful transition (also from 'Hand-in-Hand-out scoring); and broad-based feedback.

Over 2,000 recreational players participated in a trial of PAR-11 and a survey. The results are being reviewed to establish the next steps.

SQUASH FIGUREHEADS FEATURE IN OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY



Figureheads from the world of Squash played their part in the **Beijing Olympic Torch Relay** as the iconic flame made its high-profile journey around the globe.

WSF Patron and IOC Member **Tunku Imran** (pictured left), who is also President of the **Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM)**, expressed his excitement at being the first torchbearer on the Kuala Lumpur leg of the global torch relay.

"It is a festive atmosphere here - and shows the good relationship we have with Beijing," said the former Malaysian National Squash champion

"It's good to know that two Squash individuals are carrying the Olympic Torch in KL," added the former WSF President.

Later, **Nicol David** played her part in carrying the torch.

The Asian Sportswoman of the Year, widely regarded as Malaysia's most successful sportsperson of all-time, told reporters that it was as close as one could get to the Olympic Games:

"It's really a good feeling to be an Olympic torchbearer, especially when I don't get the chance to compete in the Olympics. I will not miss it for the world. I really hope squash will get into the Olympics one day," said Nicol, who flew home from her training base in Amsterdam just for the occasion.

WSF President **Jahangir Khan** (right) was the last torchbearer on the final leg of its journey in the Pakistan capital Islamabad, handing it on to delegates from New Delhi, the next city in the worldwide journey.

Khan described it as "one of the most important events in my life".



"Though Squash is not an Olympic sport, I feel extreme pride at carrying the torch in Islamabad, keeping in view Pakistan's exemplary friendship with China," said the Pakistan sports icon.

"It has always been a dream for me to be an Olympian. It's a special way for me to be in the Olympic Games. It seems you passed the final line and won a gold medal in the Olympics. What I am doing today is accomplishing something like that."

Next month, **Rebecca Chiu** and **Christina Mak** will take part in the Torch Relay in Hong Kong.

JUNIOR RANKINGS UPDATE

Last year's WSF AGM in Bermuda backed an initiative to introduce a world junior ranking scheme, thus unifying the current highly successful junior competition programmes at regional and national level.

WSF contacted all member nations and regions asking for feedback and volunteers for a working group. The working group consists of **Dawn Moggach** and **Chris Sinclair** from Oceania Squash Federation; **Martin Wren** from European Squash Federation; **Marcus Smith** from Australia Squash; **Dean Watson** from the Cayman Islands Squash Rackets Association; **Mark Chapman** from the British Virgin Islands Squash Racquets Association; **Conor O'Malley** from the US Squash Racquets Association; and **Jackie Robinson** for England Squash. WSF Vice President **Frank van Loon** will be heading up the international working group.

The working group will be involved in the next three stages of the development - which will include identifying key tournaments from which to obtain the ranking data, Programming, and testing. Once all three stages are complete, the WSF will then release The World Junior Ranking System. This will include a new software package. The deadline for completion is 1st September 2008.

WSF COACHING & DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE CONFIRMED

Following the success of last year's conference in Canada, the **9th WSF Coaching & Development Conference** will take place in Hong Kong in April/May 2009. Hong Kong squash will announce further details soon.

WORLD SQUASH DAY 2009

The date for next year's **World Squash Day** has now been confirmed: The global event will again be linked with **Comic Relief** - and the date of **Saturday March 14th** will follow Comic Relief's high-profile

Red Nose Day, which falls on Friday March 13th. The WSF hopes that, as in the past, all MNFs will coordinate activities to exploit this massive promotional opportunity for the sport.

NETHERLANDS TO HOST BIGGEST EVER EUROPEAN TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

Netherlands will host the biggest ever **European Team Championships** when the 2008 event - featuring a record 28 nations competing in the men's event and 19 in the women's - takes place at the **Frans Otten Stadion** in **Amsterdam** early next month. **Serbia** will make their debut in the 2008 staging of the event which is the ninth time the prestigious Championships have been hosted by Netherlands - more times than any other country.

SQUASH BOASTS PRIME-TIME TV SPOT IN GERMANY

The highly popular German TV show "**Wetten, dass ..?**" - the most successful television show in Europe - recently gave Squash one its biggest promotional boosts ever.

Mark Vocetti bet that he could hit a squash ball which touched all four walls before rolling through the open court door back into the original ball box. Tasked to achieve this three times on an all-glass court erected in the studio especially for the show, the German-based Australian coach managed it just once! (See YouTube link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=1q4IYR87DG8)

"But although I couldn't make it, it was great fun. And one desire came true, as Paris Hilton was my betting godmother," Mark said after his appearance in front of millions of TV spectators (normally more than 10 million).

TOUR NEWS

PSA announced two new **Super Series Platinum** events this month: Tour action will return to the United Arab Emirates at the end of this year with the launch of the \$125,000 **Abu Dhabi Open** from 6-11 December. Later, the men's player association announced that **Ramy Ashour** had inspired the launch of the \$130,000 **SKY Petrosport Open** in Cairo, from 13-20 June. The event was initiated by Ashour's coach **Ahmed Matany**, in conjunction with **Petrosport**, the first Petroleum company in the sports marketing business in Egypt and the Middle East.

Our congratulations to:

- § **Amr Shabana** - who moved into his 25th successive month at the top of the Dunlop PSA Men's World Rankings this month, thereby claiming the longest unbroken run as world number one since legendary Pakistani **Jansher Khan** more than ten years ago. Later, in his 30th PSA Tour final, he beat compatriot **Ramy Ashour** in the final of the \$200,000 **Kuwait Open** - the richest event of the year to date - to win his 21st Tour title

- § **Jack Herrick** - on his appointment as an Honorary Life Member of the PSA to mark the former Chairman's distinguished service as a Board member for the past 14 years.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

24-31 May	Pan American Championships , Cuenca, Ecuador
3-7 June	European Individual Championship , Bratislava, Slovakia
14-18 July	Oceania Masters Championships , Norfolk Island
27 July - 8 August	World Junior Men's Championship , Zurich, Switzerland
22-28 August	World University Squash Championships , Cairo, Egypt
4-7 September	1st European Masters Games , Malmo, Sweden
13-19 October	Hi-Tec Men's & Women's World Opens , Manchester, England
17-25 October	World Masters Championships , Christchurch, New Zealand
30 Nov - 6 December	World Women's Team Championships , Cairo, Egypt