



SCOTTISH SQUASH COMPETITIONS CASE STUDY



Girls Play Squash – Creating Community, Connection and Confidence Through Squash

Girls Play Squash was created with a simple aim: to strengthen the social side of squash for girls and create an environment where they can meet, connect and develop friendships with other girls who share their passion for the sport.

For some players, particularly those who are one of only a few girls at their home club, tournaments can be one of the few opportunities to meet other girls. Girls Play Squash was designed to create a dedicated space where those connections can develop in a relaxed, positive and supportive environment. Our hope is that by creating a stronger sense of friendship, belonging and community around squash, we can help girls remain involved in the sport for longer.

The Events

The day combines squash development, education, competition and, importantly, fun and social interaction.

Each event begins with a group warm-up before the girls are split into small groups across the courts for training drills and coaching inputs. We then break for lunch before moving into an afternoon of graded matchplay.

We have an all-female team and also bring in female guest coaches and experts to expose the girls to different aspects of performance and to provide positive female role models within the sport. Previous and upcoming guests have included S&C coach **Cara Beattie**, Scottish pathway coach **Kylie Lindsay**, and a guest sports psychologist.

This holistic approach means the girls are not only developing their squash skills, but are also learning about the wider aspects of being an athlete.





Growing Through Demand

Our first event was planned for around **20 players**, but demand was so strong that we quickly had to increase the number of places available. We now operate with a maximum of **30 girls per event**, which allows us to maintain the small-group feel and personal interaction that is central to the concept.

The continued popularity of the events has demonstrated that there is a genuine appetite for opportunities specifically designed around the experience of young female squash players.

Creating a Girls Play Squash Identity

A key part of Girls Play Squash is creating an environment where every player feels equally valued and part of something.

Every girl attending for the first time receives a **Girls Play Squash T-shirt featuring the event logo**. This has become more than simply a piece of kit. At subsequent events, most, if not all, of the girls return wearing their Girls Play Squash T-shirts, creating a visible sense of belonging and identity within the group.



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Our matchplay is graded to ensure that girls have competitive and appropriate matches, but rather than using traditional ability-based grade names, each grade is named after a professional squash player.

This has several purposes: it **avoids creating a hierarchy** where one grade is perceived as more important than another, while also introducing the girls to professional players and giving them positive role models within the sport.

We also provide **custom trophies and medals** in the Girls Play Squash branding, helping to create a sense of occasion and making the girls feel that the event is something special.

Celebrating More Than Results

One of the most popular elements of the event is our **GPS Awards – Grit, Passion and Support**.

Rather than the organisers choosing these awards, the girls themselves nominate and vote for a player in their group who they feel has demonstrated one or more of these qualities during the day.

The awards celebrate the behaviours and attitudes we want to encourage within the group:

- **Grit** – showing determination and resilience.
- **Passion** – demonstrating enthusiasm and love for the sport.
- **Support** – encouraging and supporting other players.

The winners receive fun, branded Squishmallow Lovehearts, which have become highly sought-after prizes! More importantly, the peer-nominated nature of the awards reinforces the message that being a great teammate and supporting others is just as important as winning matches.





The Impact

Feedback from players and parents has been extremely positive, and demand for places remains high.

What has been particularly encouraging is the community that has developed around the events. Girls are able to meet players from other clubs, form new friendships and see familiar faces at future events. For those who may otherwise have limited opportunities to play and socialise with other girls who play squash, this has been especially valuable.

The fact that girls return wearing their Girls Play Squash T-shirts is a small but powerful indication of the identity and community that has developed around the events. The girls are not simply attending an individual competition; they are becoming part of a group and something they identify with.

Girls Play Squash is therefore about more than creating another competition or training opportunity. It is about **creating a community around girls' squash**.

Our aim is to make girls feel that they belong in the sport, that there are other girls who share their experiences, and that squash can provide them with friendships and positive experiences alongside their sporting development.

Ultimately, we hope that this sense of belonging will help girls enjoy squash, stay in squash and continue to see a future for themselves within the sport.



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