

Racketball



Racketball is played on a court 32 feet long and 21 feet wide (an international Squash Court) was introduced as an alternative game to the American version of Racquetball (court 40 feet by 20 feet).

In 1950, Joe Sobek invented Racquetball at Greenwich YMCA in Connecticut, USA having experimented with games in a court used for Irish Handball. The ball, the size and shape of a Lawn Tennis ball but without the nap on its outside, was used with rackets with short handles. This made it a simple game to play as the eye, hand, ball coordination was easy as it was like hitting the ball with one's hand rather than trying to judge the distance between hand and head of a squash, badminton or tennis racket.

The court walls and ceiling are used for the American version of the game and there is no board or tin on the front wall as in a Squash Court. The ball is very bouncy and does not need warming before normal play. By 1970, some 50,000 players enjoyed the game in America and Canada.

In 1976, Ian D.W. Wright (Kent) introduced the game in England. The game was adapted to utilise existing squash courts using a slower and less bouncy ball as the ceiling was not included in the play area.

On 13th February 1984, the British Racketball Association was founded following a meeting of all players known to be interested in the game. This inaugural meeting was held at Stourbridge Lawn Tennis Club in Worcestershire. A Constitution and Rules of Play, as compiled by Ian Wright, were accepted by the meeting. The rules of play were based on those of Squash Rackets but with Point-a-Rally scoring up to 15 and the ball to be bounced on the floor prior to striking the serve. On 30th October 1984, official recognition of the British Racketball Association, as the Governing Body of the sport, was confirmed by the English Sports Council.

On 1st December 1984, the inaugural British National Racketball Championships were staged at the Metropolitan Club in London.

The first Champions were : Denis Secher (Essex) and Greer Batty (West Midlands) with Ian Wright (Kent) and Dorothy Hanson (Worcestershire) as Veteran winners.

By 1995, over 30,000 players enjoyed playing with in excess of 100 clubs in membership of the British Racketball Association.

The English version of Racketball is now played in Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Bermuda, France, The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and other countries where there are squash courts. It is even played in North American on courts originally constructed for American (Hard Ball) Squash with 18 feet 6 inches wide courts.

On 1st September 1998, the Racketball Association merged with the English Squash Rackets Association

Racketball is now the fastest growing sport in the UK, as the game is played on a squash court its core infrastructure is already in place with over 5000 courts around the UK. The England Squash and Racketball quoted participation figure is 500,000 people who play either squash or racketball regularly in the UK. The sport of racketball is rapidly expanding throughout the world and will continue to do so in the future