

Chief Executive
ANDREW SHELLEY

reports on Squash's bid for inclusion in the 2024 Olympics



The Squash On Fire club in Washington DC is a state-of-the-art facility built on the site of one of DC's oldest fire stations. It specialises in squash community programmes



FIRST STEPS ON THE ROAD TO 2024

We will soon know in which city the 2024 Olympic Games will take place. We will also know which city will be hosting the 2028 edition!

In recent months IOC intentions, first floated and then firmed up, have been to award both the 2024 and 2028 Games at their session in Lima, Peru, in September.

It is very much a case of 'a bird in the hand', with two highly acceptable cities – Los Angeles and Paris – vying for the chance, but not many other contenders besides them.

So, although any cities that were intending to bid for 2028 have now been frozen out to 2032, the next two stagings are assured.

At their July meeting the IOC confirmed that the two Games would be allocated together, then, to the surprise of many, not least the two cities, told them to go ahead and decide the order of hosting between themselves, failing which the IOC membership would vote to decide.

Of course, our interest is in securing a place on the Games programme, irrespective of whether it is in the French capital or on the American west coast in 2024.

The formula that was introduced for 2020 after Tokyo was awarded the hosting in 2013 (and squash lost out to wrestling in the voting for the 'new' sport) will continue. In 2015 Tokyo were permitted to nominate sports that they wished to propose to the IOC be added and Los Angeles or Paris will have the same opportunity.

There is no bidding period set yet, but squash is readying itself to make its case.

The WSF Olympic Games Commission under the leadership of WSF President Jacques Fontaine is a completely integrated unit with the PSA, whose Tour is the shop-window of our sport and brings so much to the table. That is the starting point for squash.



Rebuilding and strengthening still further the relationship with the professional sector of our sport were a key intention of the President, in order to create a strong and wide base for our new bid. The relationship with and support from the PSA are already an evident success.

We recognise that although the sport deserves a chance on its merits, we have to offer something different, a view of squash that can resonate with the host and the IOC. The great squash product needs to be wrapped in new vibrant packaging.

Our youthful appeal has already been recognised with squash's inclusion as a showcase sport at the Youth Olympic Games when it is held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, next October.

Securing the services of a campaign agency to partner us on the bidding road has been sorted, while fund-raising to make our offering as comprehensive and compelling as possible is starting.

Our ammunition is being prepared; we just need to know which city to take aim at!

US DEBUT FOR WORLD MEN'S TEAMS

The WSF World Men's Team Championship is to be held in the USA in 2019 for the first time in the event's 50-year history.

The biennial championship – the 2017 edition of which will take place from November 27 to December 3 in Marseille, France – will be staged under the auspices of US Squash at Squash On Fire in Washington, DC.

Squash On Fire is a state-of-the-art, membership-free facility which opened in May. It boasts eight squash courts, including an all-glass showcourt.

Squash On Fire co-founder Philippe Lanier said: **"Hosting the WSF Men's World Team Championship at Squash On Fire is an honour - and that it is happening in DC is also very exciting. We want to make DC the squash capital of the US and we can't wait to welcome players from around the world to our game-changing facility."**

WSF President Jacques Fontaine also expressed his delight in the initiative: **"The United States is a very strong and growing squash nation, so it is very fitting that they have the opportunity to host this championship. I am sure that the visiting teams will have a great experience at the venues and the American capital generally."**

England, the 2013 champions, are the current holders of the trophy, as the 2015 event, due to take place in Cairo, was cancelled because of security concerns.

• Former Egyptian national coach Amir Wagih is head coach at the Squash On Fire club. *Squash Player* featured his move to Washington in 'Wagih's American Dream'.

This feature can be found on squashplayer.co.uk >features.