

THE SIGNIFICANCE BEHIND ADDING A DOUBLES SQUASH COURT AT OUR MONCTON SQUASH CLUB

Summary:

There are probably a number of members who have little time to read this entire document and for their benefit I begin with the four key reasons why a doubles court along with a 4th singles court is the right choice in our next phase of growth at our Moncton Squash Club rather than a 5th and possibly a 6th singles court.

In short the key advantages of adding hardball squash doubles at our club are:

- 1. A new enjoyable experience for Club members. It is fun, social and far easier on the body = longer playing life.**
- 2. Higher membership retention & therefore significant \$\$\$ revenue and saving advantages.**
- 3. Your “aging” MSC members are offering to fund most of the \$125,000 cost of a doubles court.**
- 4. The doubles squash game has grown significantly in popularity and is played in over 100 clubs across North America. Why would we be different?**

We asked for and received letters/testimonials from key stakeholders in the game of squash in Canada regarding these options. Nobody that was approached disagreed with our recommendation. Rather they were all emphatic in encouraging our Club to add a doubles court as part of our expansion plans. Many others have offered to write if we wish. Please refer to appendix A for remarks from the following:

- Lolly Gillen - President of Squash Canada
- Dennis Bishop - The 2015 Toronto Pan Am Games Squash technical director
- Jay Nash - Chair of the Nash Cup (PSA Men) & past-president of a similar club in London
- Jon LeHeup – A major sponsor of Squash in Canada over the past 15 years
- Frank Legacy (former MSC member), Jean Michel LeBlanc (MSC member)
- Plus excerpt from a similar review/study at a large Toronto Club that is proceeding with the addition of a 3rd doubles court!



The 1st four-way view hard ball doubles court was opened in 2013 at the National Squash Academy in Toronto (Canada's national training center)

Introduction

As the author of this report, my objective is to provide a detailed illustration for my fellow board and MSC members of the wisdom behind adding a hardball doubles court as part of our expansion plans. This task has its challenge, in that few MSC members have seen or even less played hardball doubles, or have witnessed its recent evolution and impact on Clubs all over North America. I hope to be able to share with you, all of this over the next few pages.

For those who do not know me, I serve as board member and secretary to the Club, am a founding member, have been involved in the game of Squash for 44 years starting as a junior in the early 1970's at the Montreal Badminton & Squash Club ("The Atwater" today), was a national team member (1981), participated in 4 world championships, and since 1983 am a member of the Jesters Club (Canada), a club that unites some 400 of the "alumni's of the game" across Canada in support of Junior and University squash. In my capacity as Chair of the Jesters since 2010, I remain in regular contact with Squash Canada, US Squash, as well as players and club administrators throughout. Over my years of playing I have been in and seen most of the private clubs like ours across Canada and a good number in the US. Some are today extraordinarily successful yet back in my youth were probably not much different than our MSC today. I have also seen many clubs fail. Finally this analysis and recommendation are as always influenced by my investment background. Our expansion must be in the best interest of the Club over the short and long term, both financially and operationally.

Background:

The Moncton Squash Club was built and launched in 2005 following the hard work of a group of about 10 dedicated volunteers led by our Club's first president, Jim Morris. Together we developed and constructed the Moncton Squash Club within the Dudd James arena. The timing was made possible through a generous offer by the City of Moncton for two fifths of the space including a \$200,000 interest free loan to fund capital costs. After arduous planning, our group managed to lower construction costs to about \$230,000. Between the loan, contributions from some 30 founding members and plenty of in-kind donations and sweat equity/volunteer work, the Club was built, pretty well as it stands today. One would easily estimate the total work done at that time at \$350,000.

Our membership grew to around 100-110 players at the outset where it stayed for the next 7 years give or take. Turnover each year was about 10% (members moving, some players not fully integrating into the activities and some attrition). Efforts to grow our membership faster were stalled by our limited financial capability to hire a full time pro/manager. Eventually with the help of a Canada Coaching grant the Board was able to hire its first full-time coach and professional in the fall of 2010 in Chris Hanebury. After his departure, we were very fortunate to have Jan Priedities ("Coach") join us in the fall of 2012 to capably fulfill this role. Under "Coach" our membership has jumped quite dramatically rising to 230+ playing members at the time of writing. This is really a tribute to the know-how (and hard work ethics!) Coach brings to our Club. At the same time the Board created three committees comprising of some 20+ members in total to provide additional help and support. Today the Club and our cost of operations greatly benefit from the involvement and contribution of approximately 40 volunteer members and at times perhaps more.

Comments on Current Status and the Addition of Doubles Squash to the Club:

What is the present capacity at our Club? Due to our Club's ideal location (10-15 minutes away for most of us from either home or work) our facility enjoys a more efficient court demand/use than perhaps most Clubs in North America that tend to be either downtown business or residential clubs, but rarely both. This advantage means that our full capacity is probably nearer to 80 to 85 players per court rather than the 60-80 normally expected (In their study the TCS&C used 75 players per court). With 230 players currently registered at the MSC (note: this includes 50 juniors who are subject to access restrictions) our club membership is probably nearing "full" capacity. Comments from our membership about more difficulty booking court time have increased. Therefore if we are going to continue growing we quite clearly need to add capacity.

The reason for adding a 4th singles court is easy: we have the space and we need more capacity. An expansion will be located in the Morris Goobie wing. This will require us to expand the air and heating systems. We also need to modify our Gym facility so that it matches well with a squash fitness program. Better Proshop and locker room space also need to be planned for. Therefore the more immediate question is whether we should plan for a 5th and 6th singles court or a doubles court.

Adding another enjoyable squash playing experience for Club members. A doubles court will provide our members with a different yet exciting squash playing experience perhaps not unlike tennis where players enjoy singles or doubles or both. One of the key difference between singles and doubles squash is that the courts are quite different; A singles court measures 21 by 32 feet while a doubles court is 25 by 45 feet. The member profile and playing profile statistics from a more mature Club such as the Toronto Cricket, Skating & Curling Club (TCS&C) in Appendix B are telling and show that with the availability of doubles courts (2 currently) two thirds of their members today play doubles squash. Following an extensive review and analysis this club recently decided to add a 3rd doubles court (to their 6 single courts).

It is fun, social and far easier on the body = longer playing life. Again when we look at the age profile at the TSC&C Club we notice an excellent balance of age with over 40% of its members in the 50⁺ age categories. The "easier on the body" doubles game significantly improves lifetime of play and therefore membership retention especially as players pass the 45 to 50 age threshold. At our club we are at risk of losing a number of members due to the physical intensity of the singles game. As the time of writing, we count 29 current members who are either out trying rehabilitate and some who are struggling to play regularly due to an injuries (this review was done with Coach looking at our list of current members). Let me further elaborate on why this is.

Singles squash – "all in moderation!" Without a doubt singles squash provides incredible exuberance and exercise. Explosive actions, rapid decision making, skill and strategic play, side by side competition, combined with a rapid learning curve all make this game ideal for the healthy 15 to 45 year old. The downside is that it is a game that is strenuous to the bone structure and ligaments over time; whether it is a wearing down of knees or hips, back issues, bursitis of the shoulders, torn Achille's heels and even a high frequency of tennis elbows, our body parts eventually reach their day of reckoning playing singles.

To get perfectly technical, it is not the running to the ball that causes damage but rather the twisting turning and lunging that are the main issues. While the soft ball travels rapidly, it does slow down just enough so that our body can get to it with a maximum effort and this is what causes the real damage

over time. Arguably a healthy singles player of any level will have about a 15 to 20 year window to play with “abandon” after which the game will take its toll on their body. By that time though these players will have developed all of the racquet skills and yet will lose the physical ability to sustain singles play. Doubles is the option and in some cases the sooner the better.

Hardball Doubles – “the preferred choice for players over 45 in North America” Doubles in North America is played with a hard ball. The characteristics of this fast moving ball are that players really have only one chance to reach it and hit it. There is therefore much less of the twisting and turning found in softball. Also reducing the impact of doubles is the fact that two players cover a width of 25 feet or only 12.5 feet each versus a full 21 feet in the game of singles. One can see therefore why doubles is less demanding on the body. The longer length of court at 45 feet (versus 32 feet for singles) is compensated by the fact that the harder ball has lot more “travel”.

Long time playing members of those clubs with doubles court(s) will largely have switched to doubles by the age of 40. While the doubles game is far more a game of skill than fitness, it remains an excellent workout for all players. There is also more of a social aspect to the doubles play– perhaps why doubles players seem more easily attracted to extending time together around the bar facility! For the competitive teams looking to improve on their play there remains that same desire to get better at this game as there is in singles. In some ways it is less insular since getting better comes in pairs. As mentioned, most “aging” players who switch to doubles are able to play this game well into their 60’s and some even into their 80’s. A parallel worth noting is there exists the same extended life time of play for players who switch to doubles in the game of tennis.

I should also note that doubles squash could be an option to those individuals who have a sport injury (football, basketball etc..) and cannot consider singles squash as a sport option. Hence doubles squash is an opportunity to a broader segment of the population. I offer that doubles squash would be an excellent off-season game for tennis doubles players.

50+ players, more social, less family and financial obligations: The 50+ group of members tend to be more social and as a result contribute more to other club facilities such as the bar and dining facility if available. Perhaps more importantly it is within this group that Clubs generally find their key volunteers who will support and help run the Club. Also this group normally comprises the largest number of members from whom patron support is generally available. In some cases these members are the main reason for fostering family ties to a club from grandchildren to grandparents. Those clubs around North America who have a doubles court certainly attest to these benefits. Interestingly, even some for-profit clubs are now seen adding hardball doubles courts. Some clubs are also reporting that a portion of their under the age of 45 members (including juniors) are being drawn to the game of doubles over singles.

About softball doubles – “Disliked and not played” - only 1 court in Canada: One possible option that has been identified and dismissed was adding a softball doubles court (25 width by 32 feet) that could have a moveable wall and convert back to a singles court. The response (in Appendix A) from Dennis Bishop, the Squash director for the 2015 Pan American games that includes softball doubles, is quite emphatic; “Don’t do it – go to hardball”. The fact that there is only one soft ball doubles court in all of Canada highlights the disinterest in this game. Many people will say it is as demanding as softball singles, so there is no real advantage in terms of extending the lifetime of play. Meanwhile, those national team players dislike the softball doubles game as, in their case, rallies are endless. It is not by chance that the Pan Am and the Commonwealth Games are the only two competitions where softball doubles is played. Softball doubles was excluded when the bid was made to add the game of squash to the Olympics.

Hardball Doubles is vibrant and growing in North America: Both Squash Canada and US Squash have dedicated resources to manage hardball doubles competition. In Canada there are approximately 40 courts (historically most in private (not for profit) clubs but of late also in for-profit clubs), while in the US there are approximately 130 doubles courts. Between both countries there are about 8,000 doubles players formally registered with their Squash Associations (which mean they play in tournaments). It is estimated that the actual number who play the doubles game is probably four times this number, if not higher according to US Squash.

During the squash season (October to April), one can probably find a doubles tournament every weekend to suit their interest. Equally there are a number of tournaments that have both singles and doubles. One of the most prestigious tournaments is the Lapham Grant Matches that sees some 140 adult players of all ages from the USA and Canada challenge each other at a different city each year. It will be played at the Merion Cricket and Racquet Club in Philadelphia this year and then at the London Racquet and Fitness Club in 2015, a club based in Ontario that is very similar to the MSC, having 4 singles courts and one doubles court. If the Moncton Squash Club were to add a doubles court we would be eligible to host this event in the future.

Joining a network of Clubs: Most private clubs around Canada and the US offer their members reciprocal privileges to each other's clubs. We have found that one of the key common factors to being part of this circle is in having the doubles court. It is what most travelling members play and the one that invites the most social exchanges. Singles-only clubs do not seem to be as successful in being able to enter into these "reciprocal privilege" agreements. We have tried to initiate such relationships in the past, and have only been successful on one occasion. Naturally there are other factors that include the likelihood of utilization, internal bar/dining room payment system plus the quality of the overall facility.

Higher membership retention & therefore significant \$\$\$ revenue and saving advantage. Over the past few years, we have begun to experience the loss of members due to wear and tear injuries and the Club is only 9 years old. The expectation is that without a more gentle game we will lose at least 10% per year of our 50+ group (plus possibly a few more among our younger members). It is therefore estimated we will lose 5 members per year due to wear and tear of singles play (we may be underestimating this number).

We are therefore talking about extending the number of years a member can play the game by probably 15 (on average). As mentioned, our 50+ category consists of members who are generally in a sound financial situation (post children and therefore more disposable income). They can easily pay their membership dues, tend to use the Club's facilities (bar and proshop in our case) a bit more and, do tend to contribute to the Club (as volunteers and/or patronage) when asked.

The following Table illustrates the cost to the club on the loss of five members per year as a result of their inability to continue to play due to injury.

Without a Doubles Court	Per member per year	Lost \$ per year	(Impact of losing 5 members over 15 years)
Premature loss of players*		5	Assume 3% Discount
Lost annual dues (Est. over next 5 yrs)	\$500	\$2,500	\$29,845
Lost Extra Bar - Pro Shop profits	\$50	\$250	\$2,984
Lost sponsorship support	\$50	\$250	\$2,984
Lost volunteer support (Equiv.)	\$100	\$500	\$5,969
Total:		\$3,505	\$41,783
<i>* Players over 45 and with over 15 years of squash are at risk. It equates to 10% on a scale of 50 members being over 45.</i>			
<i>Bottom Line is this equates to a net loss of \$3,505 per year for the Club of cash flow or on a PV discounted at 3% - \$433,691 over 15 years</i>			

The loss of 5 members per year equates to \$3,500 in lost annual cash flow (dues and other benefits to the club that impact the bottom line almost directly) in year one, so double it to \$7,000 by year two, etc.. On a discounted present value basis (3% discount rate is used – 5% less 2% inflation factor) this equates to a rather significant loss of over \$41,500 for only the first 5 members if we assume they would have remained for another 15 years. As we lose another 5 members per year each year afterwards due to the stress of singles play, then this equates to approximately \$434,000 in lost cash flow to the Club if we remain with singles court only. On this basis alone, the \$125,000 cost of a new doubles court certainly seems like a good investment.

It is doubtful that younger members in the middle of raising a family will have the same free time to devote to the running of our club. Therefore, we will have to hire out more staff to make up for this loss of support. This will alter the fabric of what makes a member owned Club work.

It is also noteworthy that very few private (not-for profits) racquets clubs in North America have failed and that is often due to this dedicated membership segment that brings extra resources to sustain operations and help their club grow. At times it has also been this core membership that helped the club get through very difficult periods (recession, competition, loss of key management, etc.).

Most of \$125,000 to finance the cost of a doubles court is expected to be funded by existing members;

A number of members in the 45+ category have committed to prepay the next 10 year of their membership fees to provide financing for the \$125,000 cost of a new doubles court. On a personal level, these older players recognize the need for this court or their playing days will otherwise come to an end.

About our two options: Most of the information so far has been centred on building a case for Doubles Squash. As mentioned, we do need to add another singles court (\$50,000 per court) to address our growing membership. As well, there is the need to improve other parts of our facility such as an enhanced gym with more modern equipment, an expanded pro-shop location, the air and lighting systems in the Morris-Goobie wing where most of the expansion will be, very likely larger locker room facilities as well other club facility improvements. To incorporate all or many of these items, will likely require \$250,000+ of capital spending. Your board is working on an estimate. The City of Moncton has let it be known that they would be receptive to a proposal for additional financing support (perhaps in the form of an interest free loan repayable over 8 years). It is important to stress that the doubles court will be paid for by some 20 to 25 members who, otherwise we will likely lose as members over the next number of years.

Capacity impact review: Adding both courts will add capacity for 180 players to our Club's capacity (80 for the singles and 100 for the doubles court). Our current capacity is 240 players (3 singles x 80). This will bring our total club capacity to 420 players, nearly 200 more players more than we currently have. Filling this additional capacity would take 4 years based on our recent growth rate (50 net new members per year) but in all likelihood we should expect this to take a bit longer just to stay on the conservative side. Some may wonder what would come after that and there are many options which include but are not limited to expanding our clubhouse outwards, adding more services within our existing facility such as lounge and dining room on a second floor, more elaborate locker room facilities etc. One thing is clear; with 420 happy members and control of the annual membership turnover we will be in a great position to control our future.

The other immediate option would be to add a 5th and even a 6th singles courts, but no doubles court. In this instance we would become primarily a club for youth to middle age players and we may have to manage our facility and affairs quite differently. There would certainly be a much higher turnover of members (younger member tend to be more mobile, career advancement, family commitment arising and as mentioned injuries from singles play). We would have to spend considerable more energy attracting new members every year. With fewer volunteers on hand to help, we will need to hire more help to manage the facility and to market it. Arguably our current Club-like-atmosphere where we all get to meet and know one another and become quite attached to our Club would be difficult to maintain. In my experience of clubs, I will venture to say that we will become more of a "Squash Factory". There is nothing wrong with that concept other than it is very intense, has less Club atmosphere, and offers far less security if anything goes wrong.

This would of course result in the loss of the opportunity to play doubles squash. As the author, I am not going to spend too much more time discussing the pros and cons of the Squash Factory concept as I have little interest in it, and will leave this task for others to carry out if they see greater merits in going that direction. The key question is what kind of club do we want? Do we want people to build a rich set of relations, contribute to the club and then disappear when they are 40 or 50 or 60? That process might be invisible to some but lack of a doubles court will definitely contribute to this kind of club.

I would venture one last comment regarding our recent growth at our Club and this has been our very good fortune of having Jan Prieditis ("Coach") join us in Moncton two and a half years ago. His abilities to organize programs, teach squash, make the club welcoming to everyone and seek out new members in ways few have the audacity to do, are rare skillsets. Furthermore ensuring our Club has the staff with such skillsets when we climb to 350+ members will be equally critical. Just maintaining this number of members will require lots of skills and attention.

Bigger singles tournaments? One aspect I would like to address is the question "can we host more tournaments with a 5-6 singles court facility?" I believe that as far as singles is concerned, this prospect is really marginal, ie perhaps one additional National scope tournament every two years. Anyone who knows the costs of air flights to the Maritimes will know that for players from outside of the Maritimes this will be a very difficult hurdle to overcome. On the other hand, a Doubles court may well prove to be an attraction to players from both here and away and that could equally mean opportunities for additional and/or larger events at our club.

This said there is a singles squash court at the military base sport complex that is presently up for sale, and which we understand the City of Moncton is looking to acquire. We have put in an informal request to the City that this squash court be maintained so our Club could host any championship that might

benefit from having 5 singles courts. So perhaps we have a way to have both, ie doubles squash and access to five singles courts when needed.

Next Step: It remains a decision of the Board to decide on what will be the plan going forward. This document was produced to help both board members and interested club members to better understand the options before us.

There is little doubt that if we build a doubles court we will need the involvement of those MSC members who are engaged in the game of doubles to help their colleagues discover and enjoy this new game and the faster the better. There are well developed doubles court use programs readily available that will help us in this regard. If the recent experience at clubs similar to ours is any indication it will not take long for our doubles court to become the court most in-demand.

Still to come is a cost analysis of our club's expansion plans. Any expansion plan requires cost estimates for the other aspects of the facility, which at the time of releasing this document, were just becoming available.

I thank all of those who have taken the time to read through this report. Other than the founding of our Club our upcoming expansion plans and decision on including doubles or not will, in my view, be a determining factor in shaping our club's future. It is therefore important that everyone understands the issues, opportunities and benefits.

In closing I wish to express a special thanks to a number of Club members who took the time to review this document and perfect it so that it best answers everyone's questions.

Sincerely,

Marc Lalonde

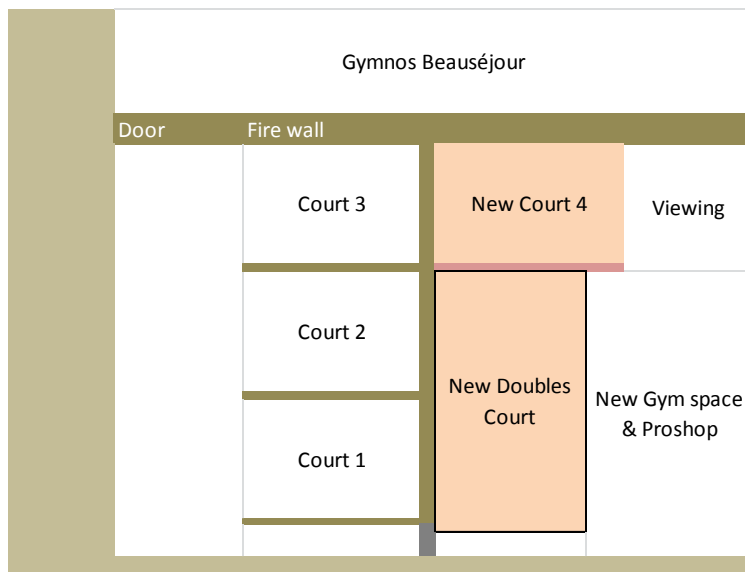
Marc Lalonde – MSC Board Member



Once a men 45+ only sport, doubles squash is increasingly popular among women and juniors who are actively taking to the court.

OTHER PICTURES:

The following pictures perhaps best illustrate what our court will look like with its glass back wall. As shown in the graph, the plan if a doubles is approve, would be to have it in the Morris/Goobie wing on the other side of the Hub City and Stewart Financial Courts front wall.



An upstairs gallery could be added to improve viewing capacity if need be.



APPENDIX A – TESTIMONIALS

Date: Fri, 14 Mar 2014 08:36:23 -0700
From: "president@squash.ca" <president@squash.ca>
Subject: Moncton Squash Club's next steps
To: "Marc Lalonde" <lalonmar@nb.sympatico.ca>

Dear Marc,

Thank you for the update on the great success the Moncton Squash Club has experienced in their recent membership growth; please pass on my congratulations to their board and management. I understand you are now assessing the next expansion phase of the club. May I suggest you strongly encourage your board to consider the addition of a doubles court together with the 4th singles court. Research has demonstrated offering membership both singles and doubles has reaped significant benefits including a higher membership retention, an enhanced social environment and more importantly an excellent vehicle to attract new members of all ages and skill sets.

Today's ageing population has embraced the "fit for life" lifestyle and to ensure membership sustainability clubs should be including the doubles games in their long term planning. With the tremendous success of both the Men SDA and Women's WDSA pro hardball doubles tours, the game of doubles has gained tremendous traction internationally. It is interesting to note the number the top ranked PSA players who have converted to the SDA tour to extend their competitive lifespan and earn higher prize money. Many clubs throughout Canada and the USA have added or increased their doubles capacity to keep up with exploding demand at both the junior and veteran level.

My home club, the Toronto Cricket, Curling and Skating Club has just recently approved the addition of a 3rd doubles court in order to meet the growing demand of its very successful Junior program. I will forward you the Cricket Club doubles court review information which may be of interest to your Moncton Squash Club board.

Best regards,

Lolly Gillen, President Squash Canada
E. president@squash.ca
<http://www.squash.ca>

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<http://www.facebook.com/squashcanada>

From: Dennis Bishop [mailto:dbishop@aei.ca]
Sent: November-19-13 11:59 AM
To: Marc Lalonde
Subject: Re: Status of softball and hardball doubles Squash

Hi Marc,

Softball doubles is and will remain part of the Pan Am & Commonwealth Games. The rationale was to pump up the number of medals awarded, I think. It was NOT part of the Olympic bid; that was men's and women's singles only. It is also part of the Pan Am Squash Championships and the Junior Pan Am Championships. For the Pan Am Jr & Sr Championships doubles is usually played on a singles court as there are very few softball doubles courts in the region. For the Pan Am Games, I am not sure if there will be a softball doubles court available, I don't think there was one in Guadalajara. There is only one softball doubles court in Canada, in Ottawa at Heather Wallace's club. Other than at these championships the game of softball doubles is not played in North America. A lot of us believe hardball doubles is by far the better of the two games. Arguably even the players don't truly enjoy the doubles softball competition as they are confined to too close a quarter for their level and the rallies are endless.

While hardball doubles courts are found at most private clubs around North America (and increasingly the for profit clubs such as Mayfair chain of clubs), there are only a few Hardball Doubles courts outside of Canada, US and Mexico. There is one in Edinburgh, a new one in a private home in Barbados, and a few around the orient. It is fair to say that the sport is vibrant and growing in Canada and the US, though at this juncture not much elsewhere (costs and critical mass of play are certainly a hurdle).

I hope this answers your questions. You should build a hardball doubles court in Moncton, though. Hardball doubles appeals to players of all ages. For example, at the Atwater Invitational (formerly "The Smitty") in Montreal, we had 140 players for the weekend, and one of the semi-final teams had Canada's top junior player, David Baillargeon, and we also had 16 players over 70 in the draws. At your old club we have about 8 guys 80 or older who play 3 or more times a week, two of them 85 years old. We have 3 doubles leagues, men, women and mixed, and doubles has the highest court use for people 30 and over. As the human body ages it is only freaks of nature like you and Vince Taylor who can withstand the physical demands of being competitive on a singles court! The rest of us mortals need the hardball doubles game, with its emphasis on strategy and shot making. Doubles is also a much more social game - doubles players hang around and drink beer and eat in the restaurant a lot more than the singles players.

Another very important factor is that the doubles demographic tends to be people who have established themselves financially, love the game of squash and contribute hours and dollars to promotion of the club and the sport. A look at the list of patrons for junior tournaments, PSA and WSA tournaments as well as National and Provincial tournaments shows how much doubles players support all aspects of the game. It is a game for life that should be played in Moncton!

Good luck,

Dennis Bishop
Former Squash Canada Board member
VP North America & Chair of the Technical Committee Pan Am Squash Federation

The following is from the always modest Jon LeHeup who some of you might have been introduced to over the past few years at our Club which he had visited from time to time. Jon(69) is from Toronto where very successfully founded and built up Ridley Windows & Doors. Either Jon personally or his company have been the lead sponsors at most junior and senior events across Canada over the past 10 to 15 years. He is a member of the Toronto Racquet Club and of the Toronto Cricket, Skating & Curling Club. He is the past president of the Ontario Jesters, Chairs the Squash Canada's marketing committee and is the incoming Vice-chair of the Canadian Jesters. Jon is a very active doubles player and participates in vet's doubles play all over North America. He is semi-retired with his permanent home in Rothesay NB (or just as often at his fishing camp on the Miramichi!) and as you can see below is on the record to become a new member of the MSC if we build a doubles court.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jon LeHeup [mailto:jleheup@ridley-windows.com]

Sent: March-04-14 9:43 AM

To: Marc Lalonde

Subject: RE: Favour - re Doubles court

Hi Marc

Thanks for approaching me regarding my thoughts on the attributes of any squash club including one or more doubles courts in their facilities.

The Social Aspect

Many sports have their social aspect but I would suggest none more so than doubles squash. It is rare to see four players come off the court with an excuse that they have to get back to work or home for dinner. They always seem to find time to sit and enjoy a refreshment with their partner and opponents. I can't think of any club that doesn't welcome revenue for their food and beverage operations.

Longevity

I am confident that if you were to canvass club managers across North America you would find that the demographics of those with doubles courts is significantly older than those without. The game of doubles is much less demanding than singles on your back and knees. (I speak from experience with my own aches and pains after returning to singles at age 69 because it's the only squash available in Rothesay) I am suggesting that a doubles court will lead to lower membership attrition due to aging, AND, older doubles players are more inclined to play in off peak hours thereby freeing up the court for younger players who will learn to love the game.

Utilisation

Doubles isn't just a game for singles players gone to pasture. The Toronto Cricket Club (+/-450 senior and intermediate members) is adding its third doubles court because of the demand for court time by younger players. I would wager that within two years your doubles court utilisation will exceed that of your singles courts, on average.

Financing

As many of the players initially be attracted to the games of doubles might be advanced in age there is a likelihood that they are somewhat affluent. This group might well be prepared to underwrite the cost of your new court. (Count me in if you go this route).

Offer

Should you build a court I would be glad to arrange for Tony Swift (former squash pro at the Toronto Lawn Tennis Club and champion doubles player) to visit Moncton to run a doubles clinic.

Cheers

Jon

The following was forwarded by Jay Nash who served as president of the London Squash & Fitness Club, remains an active member of the squash community in Ontario and equally has been the Chair of the Nash Cup a 10 year old PSA sanctioned tournament that attracts Canada's best men along with international players to the London Squash Club every September. Jay will also be the host Chair of the Lapham Grant Matches in April of 2015.

From: Nash, Jay <jay.nash@nbc.ca>

Date: Thursday, March 6, 2014 9:21:40 PM AST

To: Marc Lalonde <lalonmar@nb.sympatico.ca>

Subject: RE: Favour - re Doubles court

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Hi Marc,

I was a House Committee member of the London Squash & Fitness Club (London Squash) from 2001-2003; Chair of this committee from 2003-2006; Board of Directors from 2006-2011 (president 2010); and I have chaired the NASH Cup since its inception as an amateur event in 2003.

Over that time London Squash completed a review of membership trends; We considered moving to a new facility (had blueprints completed); and eventually proceeded with a \$500K renovation. London Squash currently boasts 345 members and is in a strong financial position. At the beginning of the process our club had 3 international softball courts; 1 doubles court and 2 North American courts. We now have 4 international softball courts and 1 doubles court.

Members have tried every way possible to find a way to build a second doubles court....but we don't have the land. Our current doubles court is used 8-10 hours a day; It has certainly extended the life of our membership and does great things for our bar. Doubles player also tend to enhance the social atmosphere of a club. They arrive early and stay late. Our court is used for ladder matches on Tuesday nights and TGIF mixed doubles each Friday (not to mention many weekend tournaments). During these events member hang out all evening.

On paper doubles courts don't make sense. The player use for the square footage available is incredibly inefficient and court times tend to be longer (we were 60 minutes in 2001, but have since cut this to 50 minutes – added 2 court times per day). The ultimate benefit really is the age factor. Very few squash players start as doubles players...but one is able to play much later in life. Keeping members active is one of the best ways to attract new members. I still play regularly with my father (73) as my partner.

The inclusion of a doubles court in your pending renovation should expand your ability to attract and retain members far better than additional singles courts. I understand that your current size is similar to ours. With 4 singles courts members at LSFC have no issues booking the time of their choice a week in advance...while more courts would be nice they would not add to the bottom line without more members.

On a final note I would point out that Ontario clubs have added 2 doubles courts in the last 2 years (Northfield in Kitchener and the NSA), and will be adding another this year with The Cricket Club building a 3rd court. The sport is expanding.

I'm happy to provide any additional information regarding our experience with doubles squash if you wish.

Jay Nash

London Ontario

From one of our former top players Frank Legacy who moved to Calgary in 2011:

From: Frank Legacy <frank@primexpainting.com>

Date: Saturday, March 22, 2014 7:26:28 PM ADT

To: Marc Lalonde <lalonmar@nb.sympatico.ca>

Subject: Re: Doubles Court

Absolutely!

Essentially it should be a no-brainer for the club. I would think it would be a grave mistake to stay the course of singles only. So many of our older members here (and not even old, just 50+ really) don't even play singles anymore.

It's a fun, easier and less taxing version of squash and more social for sure.

Would rekindle the love of squash for many I would think. We call it the great equalizer of squash skills here. Guys who normally wouldn't be able to hold their own against others on a singles court suddenly become worthy foes. Building new rivalries!

I've been playing for over 2 years now and the biggest thing I've realized is that it IS NOT Singles squash. So much about it is different, from the ball to the strategy and positioning. It really made it fun again to work on the game.

Being the only court out in the Maritimes, you'll easily draw 15-25 extra people out for tournaments. People will flock to this. It's so much fun!!

Anyway, I hope this helps add a little insight. Keep me posted on the end ruling. I'd love to see you guys make that step. I miss that club. And I promise to be there when that court opens.

Hi to all the folks

Regards,
Frank Legacy
PrimeX Painting Ltd

From: Marc Lalonde

Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2014 8:24 AM

To: frank@primexpainting.com

Subject: FW: Doubles Court

Hi Frank,

I wonder if you would not send me an email essentially sharing your personal experience since arriving in Calgary about also playing doubles. The objective is to add your comments to those who have already provided their feedback regarding the addition of one singles court (#4) plus a doubles court or plus a 5th and 6th singles court. Which option would you say will better serve our members and the long term interest of the club?

Thank you kindly. Marc

From Jean-Michel LeBlanc our #1 player at our MSC:

From: Jean-Michel LeBlanc <jleblanc_09@hotmail.com>

Date: Monday, March 24, 2014 1:37:57 AM ADT

To: Marc Lalonde <lalonmar@nb.sympatico.ca>

Hi Marc,

I'm extremely happy to have the opportunity to express my opinion on the expansion of the playing surfaces at the Moncton Squash Club.

I am evidently in a very particular situation to be giving my opinion on this matter. I have and continue to be a very involved member of the squash community in the Maritime Provinces, always looking for ways to bring light and popularity to the sport of squash. I am also part of the younger group of members of our club (The Moncton Squash Club), I am one of the more competitive squash players in Atlantic Canada and I have had the chance over the past few years to experience different squash establishments from across the country and the world. In other words, I have a very strong interest to see our club enjoy success through the growth of the sport for both competitive and social reasons.

I have surprised a lot of fellow members in the past with the direction I would take on the planned expansion of courts at our club and for good reasons. From an outsider's point of view, all signs would point that it would benefit me as a young competitive athlete to have more singles courts! I would have more opportunities to have court times to do my training, which I would certainly not mind; Ha hah! However, the only problem I have with that line of thinking is that the advantages for me would also stop there. I fell in love with this sport because I enjoyed the social aspect of it. It started out that I would come out with my dad and play for an hour or so, enjoying the time I was sharing with him and all the laughs we had from being silly while we were on the court. It then became something more for us. When we joined the club in Moncton, it was like we had gotten received with open arms by a group of people we had never met before. We were feeling like if this was a home away from home, filled with people that were friendly and were always wanting for us to spend more time enjoying ourselves around the courts. The social environment of the club was truly incredible and was what made it impossible for us to turn our backs to this sport and do other activities instead. This is where I also start my rational over why, without any doubt, I know that the club should be looking to expand to having a hard ball doubles court instead of having a 5th and 6th singles court.

When I look at ways to grow the sport and when I'm having discussions with different individuals on creative ways to make this happen, one factor is always in the discussion... making sure the participants enjoy themselves. Looking at this project from a pure enjoy-ability perspective, the hard ball doubles court would be perfect; having seen and also heard from other squash players, young and old, that had the opportunity to participate in the hard ball doubles experience, one thing is clear, they all loved it and want more of it. It's simple to understand why, it's re-enforcing what has made the squash club experience so enjoyable! A hard ball doubles court would be clearing the way for a stronger social connection in between participants! More individuals enjoying this activity together, sharing laughs during and after they played. Systematically having a larger group of people together at the same time in our lounge like environment after they play, assuring them that they will likely have some friends to chat with afterwards. The game itself would be putting a lot less stress on individuals for performance due to the fact that it is a team effort, therefore putting more emphasis on the "fun" aspect of the activity and it does come with the added bonus of not being as hard on the body as well. For me, it allows more of what really gets people involved and attached to this sport and frankly, I would love the chance to pair up with my dad and spend time again on court as a team sharing laughs through our ups and downs in play.

A doubles court would bring a very unique spin to tournaments we could be hosting. Being the only club in the Maritime Provinces that would have one, there would be a strong interest by a lot of individuals to register in a more fun oriented or new doubles category. It would be very much an unknown to a lot of players but would also pique the interest of most. Not everyone that participates in tournaments are playing because they have competitive objectives they want to achieve, a lot of squash players end up

playing tournaments because they are supporting someone else that is playing the event. Some do enjoy that competitive environment and unfortunately can't physically endure the beating of playing a full weekend of singles squash! Unfortunately, a lot of these individuals only have the choice of either beating up their body in a singles event or end up not participating in the tournament at all. The hard ball doubles court accommodates this dilemma. It opens up new opportunities for the sport to grow, for our club to generate extra revenue through stronger participation and it would be strengthening the positive image the squash community has of our club.. an enjoyable club that everyone wished they had where they are from, a place where they always have a good time and leave with pleasant memories.

On a more competitive side, having a hard ball doubles court opens up the opportunity to host world class doubles tournaments! It would put the club in a very great position to associate itself with other well-known and reputable clubs in the country and would bring some always welcomed attention from the media. It would also give players like Matt Bishop and Mike Buchanan more incentives to come to play events at our clubs. They might be elite players on the singles courts but on the doubles side, they would certainly not be favored to win! It brings them back to a place where they are discovering the sport they love again and gives the chance for other players to beat these guys. I can already see how much fun and laughs everyone would get out of these types of events!

In other words, even without an aging membership at our club, from what I know from places that do have hard ball doubles courts, adding this playing surface instead of a 5th and 6th singles court would be the appropriate decision. I would certainly be looking forward to having a hard ball doubles court instead of extra singles courts for both personal reasons and for the better growth of our club.

All of the best,

Jean-Michel LeBlanc

APPENDIX B – Excerpts from a report written by board member Ed Rosenblat and submitted to the Board regarding a recommendation to add a 3rd doubles court at the Toronto Cricket, Skating and Curling Club - June 2013)

To assist with trying to demonstrate how the doubles squash game is growing, I have contacted Sherry Funston, the Executive Director of Squash Ontario, Danny Da Costa, the President of Squash Canada, Preston Quick, the Director of the US Doubles Association, and Ed Bracht and John Harvey of the OSDL. Although there is very little hard statistical data available from any of these associations/leagues, the general consensus is that the sport is absolutely growing, especially at the participant level. Obviously, the most important driver is our own member's usage which clearly is growing at both the participant, and at the competitive level.

Danny Da Costa, of Squash Canada has also confirmed that the historic industry standard for capacity for an individual doubles squash court ranged from 75 – 100 members, with 75 being the realistic target threshold. However, he cautions that this is a very old standard, and was likely created before member usage of extensive house leagues, T and D activity, and tournament play, and that it is really "our own membership usage" which is the key metric to consider. Preston Quick from the US Doubles Association has confirmed the same experience south of the border.

In fact, Preston has advised that he is receiving several calls from US clubs looking to expand from 1 doubles court to 2 courts, or from 2 doubles courts to 3 courts with a Baltimore, Maryland club also seriously contemplating adding a 3rd doubles court to accommodate their respective club's strong demand.

To date, there is only one club in North America with 3 doubles courts, being Cedar Springs Health, Racket & Sports Club. Cedar Springs is a public club, located in the far west end of the city, in Burlington, and hence, not conducive for tournaments where all of the city clubs typically offer up their doubles courts to host these large events. In the GTA, there are currently 4 clubs with 2 courts (Cricket, Granite, Mayfair Lakeshore and Pickering), and 16 clubs with one doubles court.

Based on this historic standard, at 7 courts (5 singles and 2 doubles) and say 75 members per court, 525 should be our maximum squash activity capacity. We are currently operating with a total of 609 Activity Members (539 Activity members, plus approximately 70 non-Activity member junior singles players in junior programs). We are therefore at least one court below our current requirement. However, I stress that our member's usage is the key metric, and we are clearly beyond our capacity in regards to the usage for our existing 2 doubles courts.

Another way of looking at this requires a breakdown of singles vs. doubles court usage. We have shown this below, **using the data from the 2010 - 2011 season** (which we believe roughly approximates court usage this year). During the period of October 2010 to October 2011 there were 153 doubles-only players, 216 singles-only players (plus the 50 non-Activity juniors as singles-only players), and 111 who play both.

Active Singles and Doubles Members	
Total Number of Singles-Only Booking Members	216
Total Number of Doubles-Only Booking Members	153
Number of Singles-And-Doubles Booking Members	111
Combined Total of Singles-Booking Members (216+111+ 50 non-Activity Juniors)	377
Combined Total of Doubles-Booking Members (153+111)	264

The TCS&C Club has the following membership demographics;

The below tables and information were taken from a study of court usage from October 2010 to April 2011. Although the table is about 2 years out of date this information is still considered very representative of the current state in 2012/2013. It should be noted that most, if not all, of the court usage information is no longer available now that the Club has moved away from the "Game Time" booking system, and hence, we will not have some of this information available to us in the future.

Ages	Totals
Juniors	
20's	
30's	
40's	
50's	
60's	
70+'s	
Total	

11%

7%

14%

25%

28%

11%

3%

Note the trend to playing doubles earlier than ever before. In the past this migration would have occurred in late 40's / early 50's, and would have been largely confined to men only. There is a significant trend towards playing doubles earlier (across all age categories), to both male and female participation.

