

# Squash and Racquetball

- Squash and racquetball is the 13<sup>th</sup> most popular participation sport for women
- Squash has five times as many male players as female

All data are based on those adults (16 and over) who said they had played squash or racquetball at least once in the last four weeks (Active People Survey 2007-08), unless stated otherwise. See Note 1. The term 'squash' includes racquetball throughout.

## Women who play squash – overview

### Trends in women's squash participation

Played at least once a week (moderate intensity)

APS1 (2005-06) 0.24%

APS2 (2007-08) 0.24%

No significant change  
in women's  
squash participation

Played at least once in the last four weeks

APS1 (2005-06) 0.42%

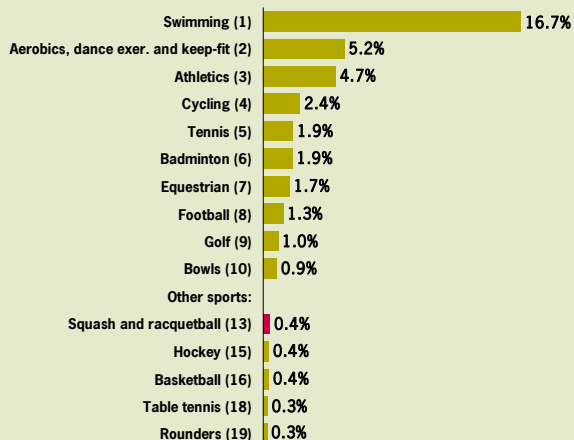
APS2 (2007-08) 0.43%

Base: All female respondents (APS1 = 212,568 , APS2 = 113,056)

### Participation overview

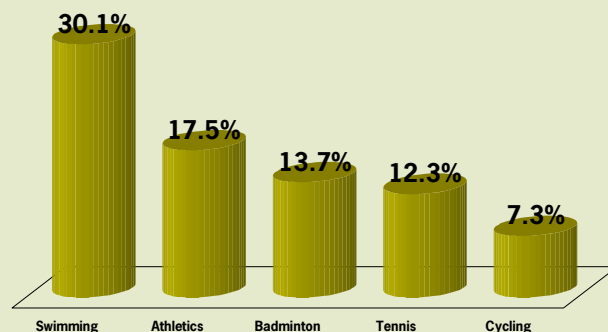
- Squash is played by about 90,000 women at least once in last 4 weeks – making it the 13<sup>th</sup> most played sport
- There has been no significant rise in participation between AP1 and AP2
- Three in ten squash players also swim – 14% and 12% choose to also play tennis and badminton respectively

### How does squash fare? Women's participation in all sports



Base: All female respondents. Figure for cycling is respondents who took part in at least four recreational cycles in the last four weeks at moderate intensity.

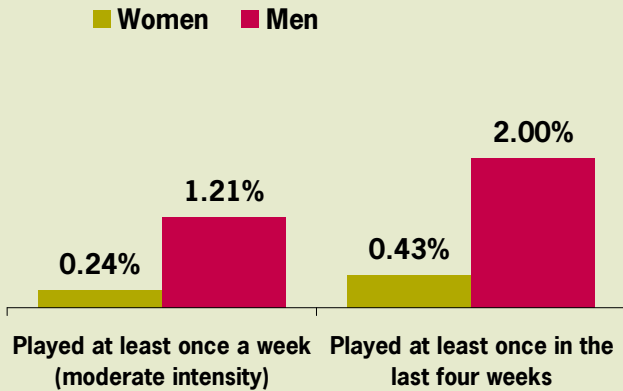
### Other sports popular with female squash players



Base: All female respondents who played squash at least once in the last four weeks (1,871)

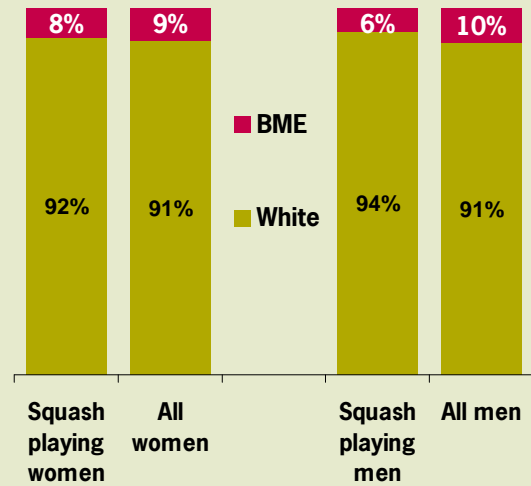
# Demographic profile of squash players

Proportion of people who play squash by gender



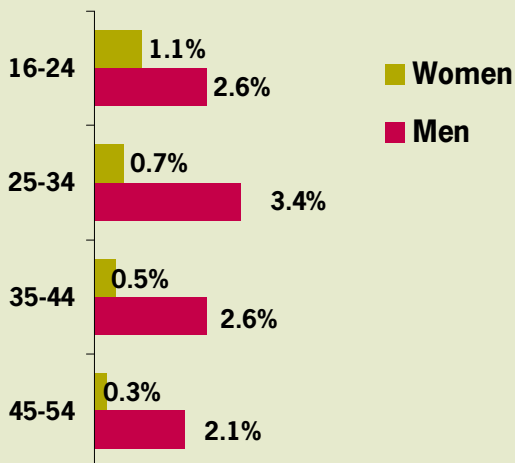
Base: All respondents (women = 113,056, men = 78,269)

Profile of people who play squash by gender and ethnicity



Base: All respondents

Proportion of people who play squash by gender and age group

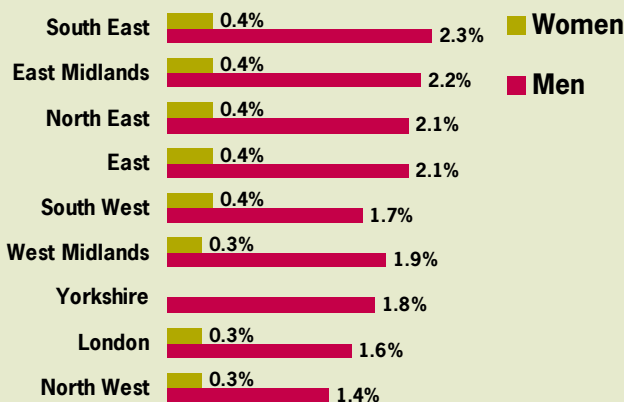


Base: All respondents

## Participation – demographics

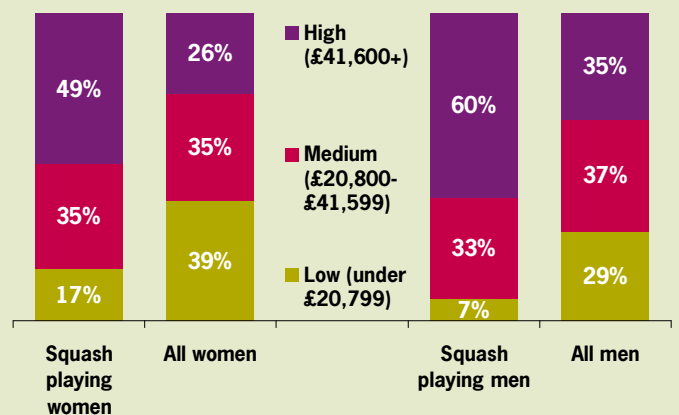
- Unlike tennis and badminton which have relatively even gender splits, squash has five times as many male players as female players
- The sport manages to retain its male players, actually growing their numbers through the middle age groups, but sees a drop off in female players in their 20s and 30s
- Whilst squash playing men tend to have very high household income, women who play squash come from a more varied background

Proportion of people who play squash by gender and Sport England region



Base: All respondents; cell size too small to show Yorkshire women

Profile of the general population v. people who play squash by gender and income



Base: All respondents

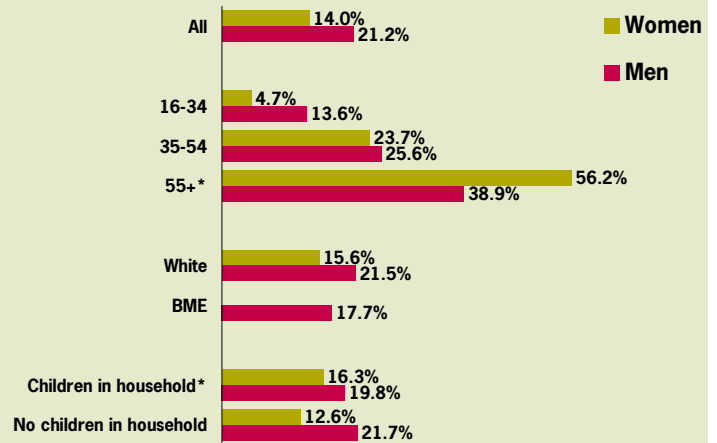
# Organised participation



## Club membership

- Female squash players tend to take part informally and not as a member of a club – just 14% are members
- This is particularly true of younger players – just 5% of 16-34 year old women choose to join a club

### Who plays squash as a member of a sports club?



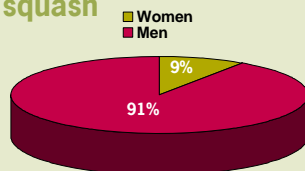
Base: All respondents who played squash at least once in the last four weeks. See Note 2. \* Read figures with caution as cell sizes are small for women



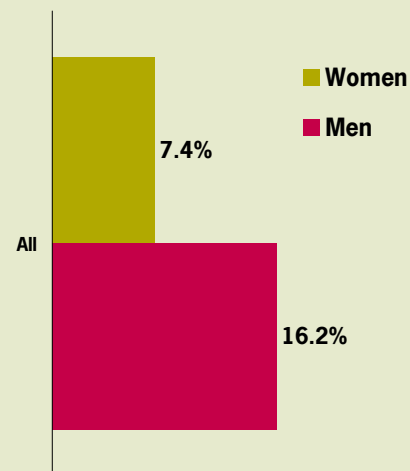
## Taken part in organised competition

- Even fewer women choose to take part in organised competition. A third as many women as men do so.

### Gender profile of those who take part in competition in squash



### Who takes part in organised competition?



Base: All respondents who played squash at least once in the last four weeks. See Note 3



## Received tuition or coaching

- Conversely, we shouldn't underestimate the numbers of women who receive tuition in the sport. Proportionally, four times as many women players receive tuition than men players
- Even as women grow older, they may be discovering squash for the first time and many choose to be coached – 16.2% of 35-54 year olds do so

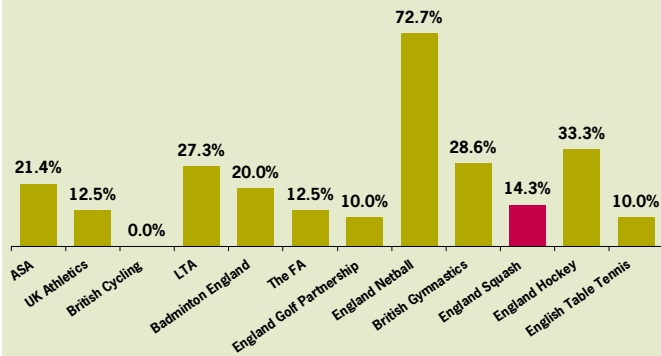
### Who receives tuition in squash?



Base: All respondents who played squash at least once in the last four weeks. See Note 4

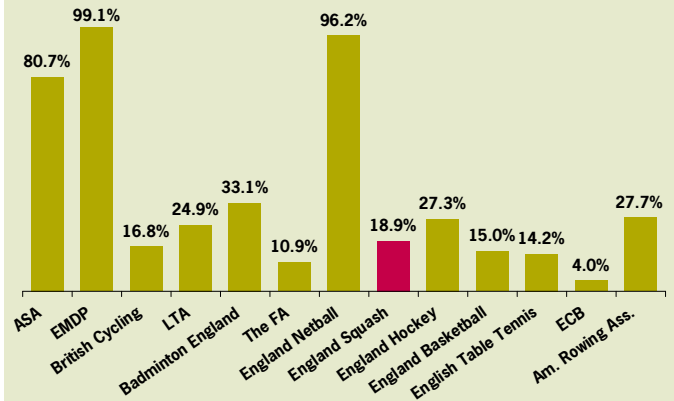
# Women as leaders and volunteers

## Women as leaders: % of NGB Board members who are women



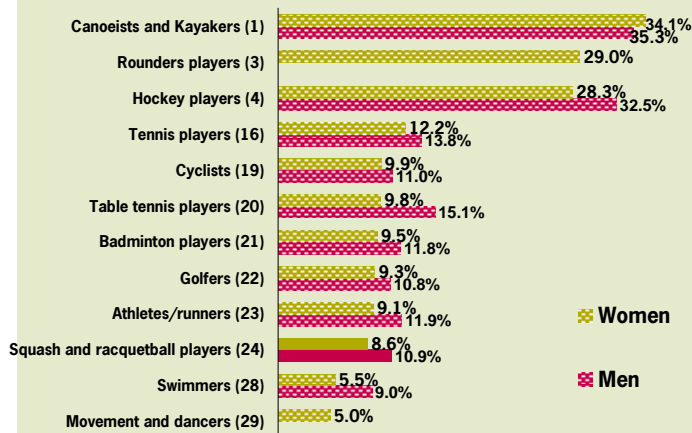
Source: WSFF 2009 NGB audit. See Note 5

## Women as coaches: % of NGB affiliated coaches who are women



Source: WSFF 2009 NGB audit. See Note 5

## Women and men as volunteers



Base: All respondents who play sport at least once a week. Top 10 sports for women + similar sports to squash. Figure in brackets is the sport's ranking out of 29 sports for volunteering. See Note 6

## Women as leaders, coaches and volunteers

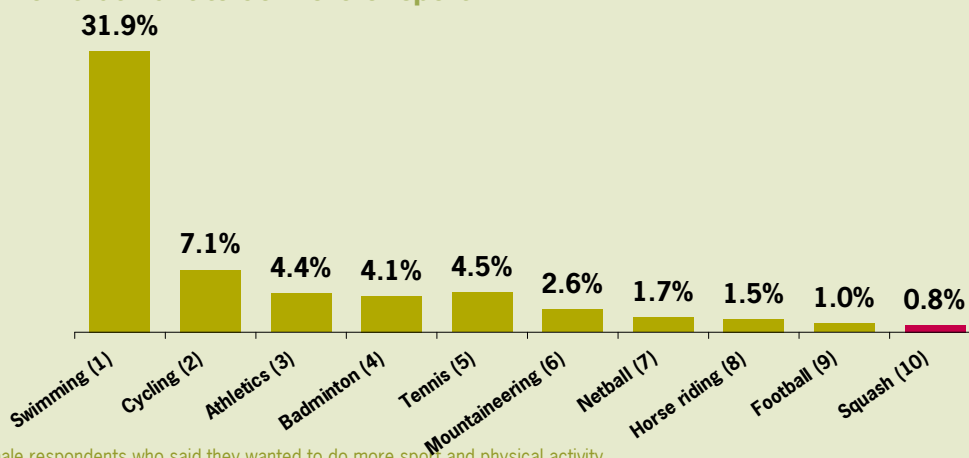
- Female board representation at England Squash is low at just 14.3%
- Also of concern, is the number of female coaches in the sport – especially considering the demand from women players to receive tuition
- Relatively few squash players choose to volunteer in sport, and women less so than men

## Latent demand

- Latent demand for the sport is relatively high – it is the 10<sup>th</sup> most popular sport amongst women

# Women's demand for squash

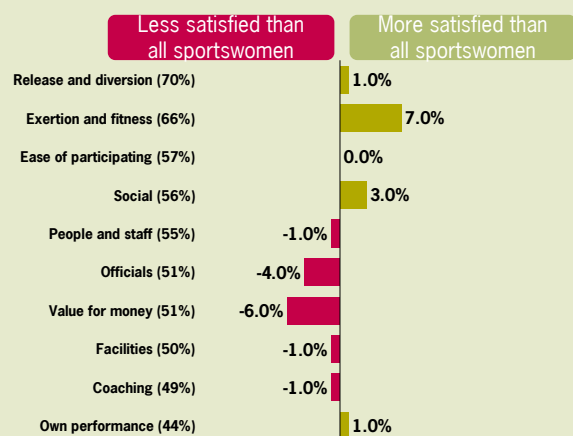
## % of women that want to do more of sport



Base: All female respondents who said they wanted to do more sport and physical activity

# Satisfaction with experience of playing squash

## Satisfaction of female squash players compared with average for all women who do any sport/activity



Source: Sport England's Satisfaction with the quality of the squash experience survey (2009). Base: Female respondents (16+) who rated their satisfaction as 8-10 on a 1 to 10 scale. Figures in brackets are satisfaction percentages for all sportswomen. See Note 7

## Satisfaction

- Squash ranks about average for how satisfied its female participants are
- Women particularly enjoy the exertion and fitness it gives them, but are critical of value for money, officials, facilities and coaching

## To sum up...

Compared to other racquet sports, squash still has a male-dominated participation profile. Key to growing female participation is to replicate the pattern seen in the men's game where participation actually increases in the 20s and 30s age groups.

If squash can convert female players into more formal involvement, either through club membership or taking advantage of the demand for coaching, then the sport can begin to grow the number of female participants and reduce drop off. In order to better understand the female market, the sport should also consider increasing female representation at leadership and coaching levels.

### Notes

1 Source for all data is the Active People Survey 2 (2007-08) unless otherwise stated. 16 year olds and over in England only. For some sports, there are no data as sample sizes are too small. Using a gym is not included in this series of factsheets.

2 Club membership is based on those who have been a member of a sports club to participate in squash in the past four weeks. These figures may not correspond with National Governing Body (NGB) affiliation figures.

3 Organised competition is defined as 'having taken part in any organised competition in squash in the last 12 months'.

4 Received tuition is defined as 'having received tuition from an instructor or coach to improve your performance in squash in the last 12 months'.

5 In 2009 WSFF undertook an audit of all 46 Sport England funded NGBs. NGBs were asked to provide demographic data about board members, affiliated coaches and members. Sports chosen for comparison are the top participation sports for women + sports similar to squash. Data not available for all NGBs.

6 Volunteering is defined as 'volunteering to support sport for at least one hour a week'. Sports chosen for comparison are the top participation sports for women + sports similar to squash.

7 Survey respondents were asked to rate their perceived satisfaction for 75 questions across ten themes. Figures in brackets are aggregate satisfaction percentages of the individual theme questions. Domains ranked in order of satisfaction for all women.

To convert overall percentages to numbers use the following figures:

Survey	Male 16+	Female 16+
APS 1	19,756,900	20,954,000
APS 2	20,170,100	21,266,200

Source: Office for National Statistics England Population Estimates, 2005 and 2007

WATCH THIS SPACE...

To be updated with Squash specific data from Active People Survey 3...

## Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation

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