

Squash Balls Explained

One dot or two, yellow or red, big or small? Choosing the correct squash ball can be confusing! We've tried to simplify the science to help you choose the right ball for your play.

Basics

Squash balls come in different sizes and different colours and for a reason - they're all aimed at helping you choose the right ball to suit your level of play and fitness and ultimately, help you become a better player.

Unlike in other ball sports such as tennis, where there is no discernible difference from the ball used by a beginner or one used by the Pro's playing at Wimbledon, in squash the different coloured balls (whether totally different in colour or just using different coloured dots) are designed to bounce differently and behave differently in certain conditions.

Squash balls stand out as one of the most truly unique components in the worldwide realm of sport. At room temperature a professional-grade squash ball barely bounces, but once warmed, whether through mechanical or physical means, they bounce a lot - over twice as much as in their original state! A trait unheard of in other ball-sports.

Why Choosing the Correct Ball is Important

The 2-Dot Yellow ball is the de-facto ball used by the best players in the world on the PSA World Tour, but it is also the most commonly sold and most commonly used ball in recreational level squash - something which may be hindering instead of improving your squash level.

Many squash beginners (and some experienced enthusiasts) struggle to adequately warm-up a professional-grade squash ball. To do so requires consistently hard-hitting. Squash balls used by professional players are hot to the touch and feel like mini hot-coals if you were to hold one after a particularly hard-hitting rally.

Where professional players can go through a ball (hitting consistently hard enough to cause the rubber to lose its elastic properties) in the course of just a few games, local players can sometimes struggle to get balls warm at all and court conditions also play a major role in determining what ball the average player should use.

For an amateur player, failure to get a ball 'hot' will result in a 'dead' bounce and leave you playing a game that rewards 'poor' play (think framed shot that dies 2 feet from the front wall as a winner) instead of rewarding 'good' play (that perfect length that, well, turned out not to be very perfect at all).

To that end choosing the correct type of ball - professional, intermediate or beginner - for your level of play is an important element to consider before stepping onto court.

While a 2-dot ball is the de-facto go-to for most club players, choosing a ball above your level, i.e. one you cannot heat correctly, removes a degree of skill from the game, making it easier to hit winning shots, requiring less fitness, demanding less tactical astuteness and making it harder to play lengthy rallies - all of which are the essence of the sport.

The Balls, what do the colour dots mean?



Professional / 2-Dot

With good level club players in mind the 2-Dot ball is used in professional competition. It is most suitable for professional, tournament and good club players and requires consistent, sustained hard hitting play to maintain the correct temperature for optimal performance.



Competition / Intermediate / Yellow-Dot

Designed for club players or for use on very cool courts, in place of a 2-Dot ball, with a slightly longer hang time (5-10% of the 2-Dot).



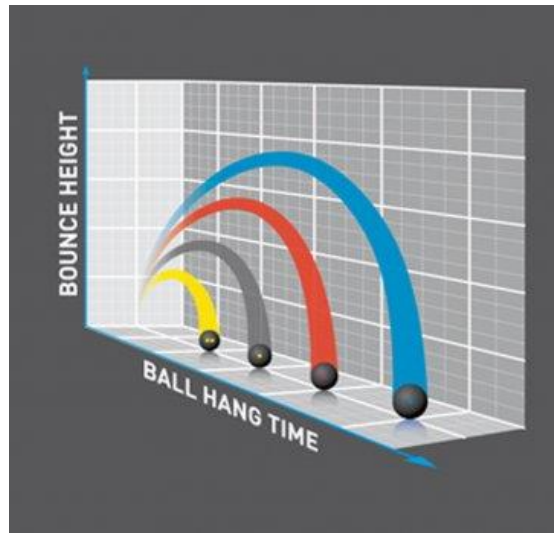
Progress / Improver / Red-Dot

Perfect ball for improvers or recreational players, with a longer hang time (around 10-20% of a 2-Dot) and sometimes larger in diameter (in the case of Dunlop). Good for players looking to develop their technique as it doesn't require the player to hit the ball as hard to retain bounce.



Intro / Beginner / Blue-Dot

Ideal for beginners the blue-dot ball has a hang-time around 15-40% greater than a pro standard 2-Dot ball to help new players get to grips with the sport's dynamics, the characteristic of the ball and to help keep rallies alive.



This graphic helps illustrate the difference between Dunlop's range of balls, from the professional grade 2-Dot to the larger, beginner orientated blue-dot

In summary choose a ball that suits the conditions and your standard of play. Don't be a victim of "squash ball snobbery", there is no shame in playing with a single Yellow or even (god forbid!) a Red or Blue dot ball if the conditions warrant it. You don't improve your Squash by having 2 shot rallies on a cold court hitting something resembling a lump of putty and walking from service box to service box. Playing with a "bouncier" ball will make the game easier to play, more entertaining, make you move around the court more, put less stress on your arm joints and hopefully improve your all round game.

Gary B.

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