Competition Strategic Review
May 2018
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Definitions

The definitions below are used throughout the document to help identify the group of players being referred to:

- Funded players – players on the England Performance Programme who receive funding at the decision and control of Badminton England.
- Best players – the best players, who are not on the England Performance Programme, which may include self-funded senior international players, ex-squad players, players competing in overseas leagues and/or players on university scholarship programmes.
- Social players – players who play badminton regularly, but who do not compete in leagues or competitions.

The definitions below relate to the project outcomes in terms of ‘reach, engage, revenue’:

- Reach = competitions that enable Badminton England to reach a new audience and grow the number of people who compete.
- Engage = competitions that enable Badminton England to retain and increase the engagement of existing players.
- Revenue = competitions that results in a financial growth for Badminton England.
Executive Summary

Vision
A competition pathway that enhances the customer experience, caters for all and enables players to reach their full potential.

The strategy within Discover Badminton is to increase the number of players competing and by 2025 the goal will be to track 10,000 competition players. This paper sets out a series of recommendations which provide the key principles to develop the competition pathway over the period 2018-2024 and aim to achieve the commitment stated within the Discover Badminton strategy. The long-term aim is that all recommendations must be financially self-sustainable. It is split into nine different themes representing the different parts of the pathway or strategic objectives.

The executive summary provides the key recommendations in each theme representing the different parts of the pathway or strategic objectives.

Themes 1, 2, 4 and 7 are considered to be the highest priorities and have the greatest potential to increase the number of players competing, provide a pathway that enables progression and create revenue streams:

• Theme 1, the player ranking system, underpins the pathway and will add value to all the recommendations
• Theme 2, tournament circuits, is key to ensure we can develop a stronger competition circuit that can grow and meet the needs of all players, including the development of young players
• Themes 4, the national team league will transform the structure of competitive badminton, enabling Badminton England to reach more new and existing players including those who currently play in unaffiliated clubs and leagues. This recommendation also has significant new revenue opportunity
• Themes 7, social competition will introduce a new level of competition that will increase the reach and scope of engagement to a much wider audience. This recommendation also has significant new revenue opportunity

Recommendations, if approved, will be moved into a planning phase whereby each project will be fully scoped including resources, finances and implementation requirements.
Recommendations

**Theme 1: A new player ranking system**
- Develop a new comprehensive ranking system

**Theme 2: Tournament Circuits**
- The provision of an annual calendar that runs from January to December
- A revised top tier senior circuit, providing prize money to attract the best players
- A new tier 4 level senior circuit (below the current Bronze)
- U19 circuit tournaments to be discontinued
- Long-term development of the U13 and U11 circuits

**Theme 3: English National Championships**
- The Senior English National Championships and age group nationals to remain priority tournaments
- The under 11 nationals to be discontinued

**Theme 4: National Team League**
- Develop a progressive national team league

**Theme 5: Senior County Championships**
- A condensed format for the SCC to operate in the month of September
- Secure the financial sustainability of the U18 ICT

**Theme 6: National Schools Competition**
- Introduce a sustainable national schools competition

**Theme 7: Social Competition**
- Launch a new competition for players who play at a more social/recreational level

**Theme 8: Disability & Para-Badminton**
- Continue to support a gold level disability tournament
- Further considerations to be made once Badminton England determines the overall strategy for Para-badminton

**Theme 9: Female Engagement**
- Establish, and promote, competitive opportunities
- Develop a competition offer that attracts 9-16 year-old girls

*Note on definitions:*
- **Reach** = competitions that enable Badminton England to reach a new audience and grow the number of people who compete
- **Engage** = competitions that enable Badminton England to retain and increase the engagement of existing players
- **Revenue** = competitions that result in a financial growth for Badminton England
Introduction

Vision
A competition pathway that enhances the customer experience, caters for all and enables players to reach their full potential.

Background
Competition is a fundamental component of any sport structure, adding value to the membership, volunteers and fans. It is one of the primary reasons why people play and continue to play badminton.

With over 250 sanctioned circuit tournaments each season and more than 5,000 ranked and graded players actively entering tournaments, Badminton England’s competition offer has been relevant and popular, leading to increased demand in recent years for competitive opportunities at all age groups.

Discover Badminton is the blueprint upon which we will grow the national game over 2017-2025. It has set out a commitment to the provision of a high-quality competition pathway that will increase the number of people competing and provides a clear opportunity to progress.

A thorough review of the competition provision and its forward strategy has been undertaken to ensure it is reflective of the demands and needs of those who take part in badminton in England, now and in the future. Our aim is to ensure the competition pathway is far reaching into the club network, county competitions, league structures and to those who currently do not compete, with the aspiration to make English badminton’s competition structure one of Europe’s best.

In consultations with the badminton community, alongside key staff and Board members, the report provides key recommendations to ensure the continued growth and development of the Badminton England competition pathway which:

- Puts players at the heart of competition.
- Caters for all ages and abilities.
- Supports and develops volunteers and officials.
- Helps to identify and nurture talented players.
- Has the right technology to support delivery.
- Works closely with key partners who are positive advocates and are empowered to deliver.
- Attracts players at a younger age.
- Increases the number of women and players with a disability competing.

Methodology
A Strategic Management Group (SMG) was appointed to direct and oversee a comprehensive review of the domestic competition programme, including the appointment of an independent Chair.

The SMG identified four topic areas of the competition pathway. Three of these were based on the different types of player, and the fourth was the grading and ranking system which underpins the competitive structure.
SMG established three sub-groups to review ‘High Performance & Highly Competitive’ player type, ‘Club and Competitive’ player type, and the ‘Grading and Ranking’. These groups consisted of an independent chair, key staff and a range people from the wider badminton community including players, tournament organisers, county and club volunteers.

The ‘Social & Competitive’ player type was reviewed by a working group consisting of staff, leisure operator partners, and other invited parties with specific knowledge and experience with the outputs of this being fed back into the SMG and final paper to the Board of Directors.

A comprehensive series of competition focused surveys and interviews were undertaken to support the groups and ensure that players views remain at the heart of the competition pathway and recommendations are made in line with key findings.

**Review Outcomes**

This paper sets out a series of recommendations which provide the key principles to develop the competition pathway. It is split into nine different themes representing the different parts of the pathway or strategic objectives.

Recommendations, if approved, will be moved into a planning phase which will fully scope each project including resources, finances and implementation requirements. Where necessary individual project plans may be required to be submitted for approval before moving into project implementation.
Commercial Outcomes

There may be some costs associated with the implementation of recommendations, however the long-term aim is that all recommendations must be financially self-sustainable. Where appropriate, working groups will be established with the relevant expertise to support the development and ongoing management of the recommendations.

- Membership – ranking, league tools and national league to drive league, club and member affiliation.
- Social Offer – capturing data, commercialisation, membership.
- Competition income – self sustainable entry fees and event costs.
- Commercial property – sponsors.
Theme 1: Grading & Ranking

Purpose
Measure and track players, in order to signpost players to the right level of competition, target players with relevant communications, motivate and retain players, and support their progression.

Background and Rationale
The current grading and ranking system is considered by 40-50% of players to be inaccurate and there is often confusion from players and parents about why there is a player grading and a player ranking. There are inherent limitations with the current systems and therefore even with changes it is considered that the fundamental mechanics should be revised to be more robust and simplified so that only one system is required.

Grading System – current limitations
- Grading win/loss calculation means that approximately 33% of results are ignored in the calculation of a player’s grade.
- The calculation requires several results to be gathered over a set period, meaning:
  - Only 30% of players achieve four or more results in a period, therefore a lot of players and results are overlooked.
  - Grading period is every four months making it un-exciting for many players and difficult to progress quickly.
  - A single loss can prevent any movement in a period which can be de-motivating.
  - If a player achieves the criteria to be upgraded early in a period it may encourage them to stop competing or withdraw from tournaments.
- There is no recognition of the quality of a grading win/loss based on the difference in grading levels between the players.

Ranking System – current limitations
- Does not allow for ranking points to be meaningfully applied for team tournaments.
- Ranking points are awarded based on the circuit level of the event, but the standard of entry can vary significantly in the same circuit, especially in places difficult to reach geographically. This leads to a more inaccurate ranking of players.
- Ranking points are difficult to apply to tournaments outside of the circuit as the relative standard is unknown, and therefore the number of points to award cannot be determined.
- Ranking is run in the same way as the international ranking system so that international results can be included, however this link restricts the potential to make changes and ensure we have the most appropriate domestic ranking.
- There is no fast-tracking available to quickly elevate players to the ‘right’ ranking because they must have a minimum of six results to generate a reasonably accurate ranking.
- The current system is easily manipulated by players by playing in more tournaments, and selecting tournaments based on strength to generate a higher ranking not necessarily reflective of their level.
Recommendations

Develop a new comprehensive ranking system that has the potential to integrate new types of competition and at more varied levels providing a more robust and deeper ranking system and competition pathway. The new ranking system will:

1. Rank players based on the quality of match wins or losses.
2. Be a dynamic and responsive system that can be updated on a weekly basis.
3. Account for new players by taking into consideration the number of results for a player, called a confidence factor, which will adjust ranking points won or lost accordingly.
4. Allow all players and competitions results to be included.
5. Allow new players to self-assess their level, so that they start with a suitable number of ranking points.

1. Rank players based on the quality of match wins or losses
   1.1. Ranking points would be won or lost based on the results of head to head matches, providing a system in balance with players moving up and down based on all results.
   1.2. The level of ranking points won or lost is dependent on the difference in ranking between the players:
      1.2.1. More points for beating players higher than your ranking (and vice versa).
      1.2.2. More points are provided where player rankings are higher which keeps the best players at the top of the ranking list. For example, where rank 10 position beats rank 11, more points are awarded in comparison to when a rank 500 beats a rank 501 player.
   1.3. Ranking position would then be determined by the number of ranking points of each player.

2. A dynamic and responsive system
   The new system will be more dynamic, with the opportunity for each result to show a change in a player’s position with immediate effect. Updates will be made on a weekly basis to allow tournaments and county results to be submitted in a timely period.

3. ‘Confidence factor’ of a ranking
   There is an inter-dependency in a head to head system on both players having an accurate ranking. In particular, new players with fewer results can have a significant impact, therefore this will be taken into account by having a system that will adjust the ranking points won or lost from a match.
   3.1. Points earned or lost will be weighted based on the confidence of a players ranking, called a ‘confidence factor’, which is based on the number of known results of that player.
   3.2. For example, a player ranked 1,000 with no results beats a player ranked 100 with multiple results - there is a high probability that the player ranked 1,000 is inaccurate as there are no known results and therefore the confidence factor will be low, and the result would be a minimal loss in points for the player ranked 100 instead of a significant loss.
   3.3. Confidence factor will be best measured where there are wins and losses in place to provide a more accurate gauge of a players level.
4. All players and competitions can be a part of the ranking system

All players should have the ability to track their level from competition results in sanctioned tournaments and this supports the engagement and transition of players both across and up or down the pathway.

4.1. Team and individual tournaments at any level can easily count towards ranking points because points won or lost are based on head to head results of players.

4.2. Tournaments driven by technology that integrates results seamlessly into the ranking system. All sanctioned tournaments (by lieu of using the relevant software to be loaded into the system) will be provided ranking points.

4.3. All affiliated players in Badminton England sanctioned competition should be awarded ranking points (by lieu of using the relevant software to be loaded into the system). Ranking points are based on head to head results, so each match is measured in the same way regardless of competition type and no advantage or disadvantage to players where competition has a restricted entry criterion.

4.3.1. League and club sanctioned competition to provide ranking points.

4.3.2. Social competition offers to provide ranking points (reference Theme 5: Social Competition).

4.3.3. Working with external organisations such as British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) to have their competition integrated into a national ranking system.

4.3.4. Ranking points awarded regardless of nationality and/or country of residence. This will allow players to be compared fairly based on their participation in sanctioned tournaments.

4.4. International tournament results will not be included, as many of these players will not compete in sanctioned tournaments and therefore head to head ranking points cannot be measured and attempts to do so could have a detrimental impact.

5. Self-assessment

The ranking system will seek to be as accurate as possible by allowing players to start at a level that will provide more accurate results for both themselves and current players.

5.1. Minimum starting ranking points based on player age.

5.2. Players can self-assess up to a specified capped level. Guidance will be provided for players to accurately self-assess.

5.3. Players can apply for starting points above the capped level, but evidence must be provided to demonstrate that players level.
Theme 2: Tournament Circuits

Purpose
A progressive national tournament structure that:

- Provides high quality competitive opportunities for the best players.
- Supports the improvement and identification of all players, especially aspiring juniors.
- Provides regular competitive opportunities to support retention of players.

Background and Rationale
The national calendar is primarily determined by the needs of organisers who apply for a tournament on a date of their choice (avoiding direct clashes), and not necessarily on the needs of the players. There are good examples where some counties and/or organisers come together to plan their tournaments, however in most cases they operate independently which can result in an unbalanced calendar either in respect of the number of tournaments within a circuit, the geographical or chronological spread. The national calendar needs to ensure that there is good quality regular provision to suit the different types of player.

The junior and senior circuit structures are both relatively flat; the current provision is very similar for Silver and Bronze circuits in terms of both the number of tournaments and the players competing. The overall number of tournaments has increased, whilst the number of players has remained consistent, which has spread entries more thinly resulting in a higher number of poorly subscribed tournaments or sometimes cancelled tournaments.

In 2015 Badminton Europe international age groups were changed, and as a result the domestic age groups were changed to ensure the domestic and international age groups remained aligned. The competition season running from July to June was retained. Whilst the changes have mostly settled, there is still a level of confusion especially in the younger age groups and for new players. The age groups do not match the competition season, and it is exacerbated by players being younger than the age group definition (rather than older before the changes) despite being in the same peer group.

To support a more simplified structure, reduce congestion and remain aligned to the Badminton Europe and Badminton World Federation, it is recommended that the competition season is adjusted to a calendar year, January to December. Player age groups will continue to be determined on 31st December, therefore this will align player age groups with the competition season and the international age groups. This will also allow more effective planning of the domestic calendar against the international calendar.

The current calendar has a very congested period between March and May near the end of the current season with the Age Group English Nationals, SCC, ICT, National Schools Championships and competitions run by other organisations such as Shires League finals (see diagram below). This coincides with an important time of year for players studying for exams.
An annual calendar from January to December will provide the opportunity for a more balanced spread of tournament provision, reducing the congestion between March and May, and the opportunity for more meaningful summer tournaments which will be mid-season.

Badminton England circuits provide an accreditation mark for players, so they know what to expect from a tournament. If players have a bad experience, this can reflect on other tournaments in the circuit and deter players from competing in the circuits.

Key survey findings:

- 41% are not aware of circuit tournaments and don’t receive any information.
- 60% of senior players feel there is a good spread, but in contrast this satisfaction reduces to 46% for junior players.
- 24% expressed an opinion that their tournament experience would be improved through better scheduling; referencing late finishes and long gaps between games resulting in a negative customer experience.
- 72% of local tournaments would be interested in results online providing them with a playing history and 55% having these results used in national grading/rankings.
- 52% of league players and most circuit players would be interested in competition through the summer.

**Recommendations**

1. A national calendar geographically and chronologically balanced to meet players needs.
2. Simplify age groups by introducing an annual calendar that runs from January to December.
3. Review tools and technology to ensure they are as intuitive as possible to support development and engagement of local organisers.
4. Training, development and assessment linked to an accreditation system for tournament organisers and officials through suite of online training courses.
5. The purpose of each tournament circuit reviewed to ensure that an appropriate format and regulations are in place to ensure tournaments can be scheduled effectively.
1. **A planned national calendar**

A structured national calendar, aligned to the new ranking system, to provide players with opportunities throughout the season to support their development and form regular and balanced playing habits.

Badminton England to provide clear direction in the coordination and planning of the national calendar by setting guidelines around the number of tournaments within each circuit, and positioning of those tournaments geographically and chronologically to provide regular and accessible opportunities for players throughout the season. This will also support organisers by creating a structure that minimises tournament clashes and provides a sustainable year on year entry.

2. **Annual tournament calendar**

Simplify age groups by aligning the calendar year and age group criteria, allowing players to compete in competitions at their actual age in that year, and aligning domestic and international age groups.

2.1. Annual tournament calendar to run from 1st January to 31st December, with 31st December being used to determine age groups.

2.2. Re-structure the calendar to reduce the congested competition period in March to May, reducing pressure for those players during study and exam periods.

2.3. Provide an annual circuit offer that runs throughout the calendar year, including the summer period.

3. **Review tools and technology**

Review of existing tools and technology to support the organisation and delivery of tournaments.

3.1. Intuitive and simple software that meets the needs of local tournament organisers and enables players to earn ranking points.

3.2. Provide a means to communicate relevant competition offers to players both locally and nationally; providing a better service to our membership, supporting the transition of players into relevant competition and helping to provide a sustainable entry for tournament organisers.

4. **Development of tournament organisers and officials**

Training, development, and assessment linked to an accreditation system for tournament organisers and officials through a suite of online training courses.

4.1. Online training courses available for tournament organisers and referees, with consideration for new officials to undertake minimum online training to be registered for running tournaments.

4.2. Training to be focused on:

4.2.1. Tournament software and administration;
4.2.2. Safeguarding and welfare including the provision of a safe and secure environment; and
4.2.3. Dealing with difficult situations.

5. **Well scheduled tournaments**

To review each tournament circuit to ensure that an appropriate format and regulations are in place to ensure tournaments can be scheduled effectively. Online training will be provided to give guidance, clarity of expectation and appropriate controls on scheduling to help organisers provide the best tournament experience for players.
Theme 2a: Senior Circuit

Background and Rationale

Following significant changes to the international tournament structure and regulations, players at the highest level of the game will be required to attend a prescribed number of selected tournaments. Players at this level need to commit to the best possible international tournament plan to develop, earn international ranking points and support their current or future chances of winning a World, Olympic or Paralympic medal. There will be fewer rest weekends, and fewer opportunities for players to compete on the domestic circuit at their own choice.

Research has identified that there are an estimated 75 players (including England Squad) who play in overseas leagues, and do not play in county competition. These players are among the best players from around the country which impacts the standard of play in domestic competition and will ultimately have a long-term impact on the quality of emerging junior players. Money was identified as being one of the main drivers for players competing in overseas leagues and a motivating factor for 25% of players surveyed.

The senior circuit structure is currently relatively flat; the provision is very similar for Silver and Bronze circuits in terms of both number of tournaments and the players competing. There has been consistent feedback that the level of players in the Silver and Bronze circuits are very similar, and that the overall standard of play is too high at the Bronze circuit level and not targeted at club players who want to access more competition. The Gold circuit does not attract the best players.

The masters circuit provides a small number of tournaments, including the All England Seniors which is lauded as the best international tournament outside of the World and European Championships. Participation is not as high as in Masters county competition but provides a range of opportunities for the most competitive players. This is maintained by the masters policy group to ensure that the circuit offers meet the needs of the players.

Key survey findings:

- 36% of players are deterred from entering because the level of circuits is or perceived to be too high.
- 26% cited that the senior bronze tournaments were too strong; this applies to both players who have never played or have ceased to play.
- 20% of players would like more local tournaments providing for a wider range of abilities.
- 13% were deterred by costs and 44% would be likely to play more if entry fees were lower.
- 33% would appreciate a different format to provide more games, therefore providing greater value for money.
- 25% would be encouraged to play more if prize money was higher.
- 37% were interested in shorter tournaments compared to 29% interested in longer tournaments.

Recommendations

1. A more defined and progressive circuit providing a pyramid structure aligned to the new ranking system.
2. Replacing the existing Gold circuit, introduce a revised top tier circuit, providing prize money to attract the best players.
3. A new tier 4 level senior circuit (below the current Bronze), with flexibility to allow organisers to determine format based on local need.
1. **A more defined and progressive circuit structure**

Providing a well-structured tiered competition framework that retains players and provides opportunities for aspiring players to progress. There should be a set number of tournaments within each circuit, aligned to the new ranking system, with a clear differential in standard between each circuit level to provide high quality, competitive opportunities for players.

1.1. The tier 2 level (current Silver) circuit should be reduced to 10-15 high quality tournaments and run in a revised format, providing a better player experience overall.

2. **Top tier level 1 circuit**

A tier 1 level circuit that focuses on developing junior players by providing high quality competition for juniors to compete against the best players from around the country.

2.1. A tier 1 level circuit with three tournaments, run over three days with qualification on the first day.

2.2. Prize money (£5,000 per tournament) to attract the best domestic players and improve the standard of entry. Commercial interest or investment into the sport either through Badminton England or host organisations will be required to generate the level of prize money funds.

2.3. Streaming of matches.

2.4. Provide a series of qualifying events for entry into the English National Championships, to encourage participation of the best players in the full circuit, providing regular competitive domestic opportunities, and a target for players at the end of the season.

3. **New tier of circuit**

Provides opportunities at a greater range of levels by introducing a new tier 4 level senior circuit (below the current Bronze). There will be greater level of flexibility and minimal restrictions so that organisers can determine the format based on local need, for example, shorter tournament days, scoring formats, female only tournaments, unisex tournament at young age groups, singles only, doubles only.
Theme 2b: Junior Circuit

Background and Rationale

In contrast to the senior circuit recommendations, there is not considered to be enough players to demand a tier 4 level circuit within each age group at this current time. This will be reviewed at regular intervals and developed in the longer-term as and when numbers within each age group can support it. Local tournaments would be engaged through a better online tournament software solution so that ranking could be provided to wider range of players and support a more integrated structure.

The launch of The Racket Pack, our newly established programme for under 11s has engaged over 550 primary schools with 515 currently delivering the programme. This is being supported by 103 primary age satellite clubs and investment into 114 junior clubs so far, supporting the transition and development of young players. Currently, there are not enough player numbers to support three tiers of circuit at under 11 and 13 age groups, but we need to be prepared to implement a circuit structure when there are high levels of activity and players are ready for competition. Focus at under 11 and 13 age groups will provide a strong player base and underpin the circuit structure in the longer-term at all age groups.

The best under 19 age group players are competitive in senior tier 1 and 2 circuit tournaments. These tournaments are more beneficial for player progression; the playing standard is higher and provides matches against adults. There is a clear drop-off in player numbers at university age, which affects participation numbers on the under 19 circuit. The combination of these factors causes many of the under 19 tournaments to be populated with much younger players looking to gain additional ranking points, and therefore devalues the under 19 circuit. Based on other recommendations, it is considered that this circuit should be withdrawn; players will be 6 months older under the new age group structure when they finish at under 17, and the senior circuit will provide more opportunities and at a wider range of levels with a new tier 4 level senior circuit.

Recommendations

1. A more defined circuit providing a pyramid structure aligned to the new ranking system, including:
   1.1. Reducing the number of tournaments at tier 2 and increasing the number at tier 3. Review the demand for a tier 4 and introduce when appropriate.
   1.2. Focused development on the long-term growth of the U13 and U11 age group circuits. Continuous review of age groups in the longer-term to determine when numbers support and require a tier 4 level circuit.
   1.3. U19 age group circuits removed (note, U19 nationals to be retained).
1. A more defined and progressive circuit structure

Providing a well-structured tiered competition framework that retains players and provides for aspiring players to progress.

1.1 A set number of tournaments within each circuit, aligned to the new ranking system, with a clear differential in standard between each circuit level to provide high quality competitive opportunities for players. Review the demand for a tier 4 and introduce when appropriate.

1.2 Development and growth of U13 and U11 age group circuits to provide a strong player base and underpin the circuit structure in the longer-term at all age groups. This needs to be coordinated when there is a strong base of primary and secondary age programme activity, providing opportunities for players to progress. As the player base strengthens, player numbers require the development of the circuit to introduce a tier 4 level circuit.

1.1. U19 age group circuits to be removed, but the U19 Nationals to be retained. The proposed age group changes will provide players with an additional half year at U17 age group, and with a new tier 4 level senior circuit, this will provide a greater variety and depth of competition and help support the transition of players into senior badminton earlier.
Theme 3: English National Championships

Purpose
Provide a competition to determine the best English player(s) in each discipline and crown them as National Champion.

Background and Rationale
The English National Championships has been the pinnacle of the domestic competition pathway. Its purpose is to showcase the very best international and domestic players in England and crown the winner as National Champion.

However, in recent years, the Championships has increasingly struggled to attract the best and funded players because changes in the international calendar, the removal of prize money and the professionalisation of our sport have made the Nationals less relevant to them.

There has been little commercial interest outside of city funding for the Championships, and it has not been possible to retain this in a challenging financial climate for city councils. The prize fund (previously £10,000) and the professional stream/television broadcast have consequently become unsustainable.

Event delivery is currently sustainable with good ticket levels. However, with the challenges in engaging the best international players, ticket sales will be compromised and the financial risk to Badminton England is increased.

Age group nationals are run at junior age groups (under 19, 17, 15, 13, 11) and masters age groups (35 and above).

The masters nationals is the pinnacle of the domestic pathway for players within their respective age group, supporting the engagement of the strongest players within the sport.

Junior age group nationals are strongly attended, with the best players in contention for the national titles. Qualification is linked to the circuit to encourage participation and for many players, the nationals provides a goal at the end of each season.

Formats vary across the age groups, with the under 15, 13 and 11 age groups providing more games in a group format and larger draws for more opportunities for more players. In comparison, under 19 and 17 age groups are knock-out with smaller draws to provide more game pressure and high-quality games. The formats will continue to be reviewed as business as usual.

‘Theme 2b: Junior circuits’ recommends removing the under 19 age group circuit, however the nationals at this age group provides an incentive for these players to compete domestically and an opportunity to be a national champion where the senior national medals will be out of reach for many of these players.

‘Theme 2b: Junior circuits’ recommends the expansion of the under 11 circuit which would include 2-3 Gold tournaments. The current structure is currently only one level of tournament for the under 11 circuit and it is a significant change in environment and unnecessary pressure for many of these players. There needs to be a more progressive pathway to provide a national championship at this age group and the focus should be on developing more opportunities at the recommended tier 1 level circuit.

Survey / Interview Results:

- The Nationals still hold some importance to funded players.
- Funded players do want to play if the tournament can be accommodated within the requirements of the International calendar.
Recommendations

1. The Senior English National Championships to remain a priority tournament, but with consideration for a qualification requirement to integrate it as the pinnacle of the tournament calendar.

2. Age group nationals at under 19, 17, 15, 13 and masters to continue, however the under 11 nationals to cease and instead focus placed on developing a more progressive circuit.

1. The Senior English National Championships is a priority tournament for BE

1.1 It will take priority in the national calendar to provide the best possible date for funded players with international competition requirements.

1.2 BE will communicate the expectation that funded players will compete.

1.3 Review the format to make it more attractive to funded players so they want to play (e.g. additional seeding, bye positions, entry requirements) and support better engagement of all players as an overall result.

1.4 Qualification for players to provide a stronger link to the domestic competition pathway. The new top tier circuit (see proposal 2a) could provide a series of qualifying events for players and encourage participation to support regular and better domestic competitive opportunities for talented junior players (wild cards or some exemption would be made for funded players with international competition requirements).

2. Age Group English National Championships to continue, except the U11

2.1 Age group nationals at under 19, 17, 15, 13 and masters to continue with regular review of the formats as business as usual.

2.2 The under 11 nationals will be withdrawn and instead the focus will be changed to provide a more progressive and tiered tournament structure for this age group as recommended under ‘Theme 2b: Junior Circuits’. There remains the potential to re-introduce an U11 Nationals if the numbers of players at that level supports a more meaningful national championships.
Theme 4: National Team League

Purpose
A progressive national team league which allows all teams to aspire to be in the ‘Premier League’, providing opportunities across a range of abilities, and supporting the development of younger players to embed them in club/team badminton.

Background and Rationale
Badminton has a longstanding club and league network which is an integral part of both our members offer and player pathway. However, it is the area of competition where Badminton England has the least connection, and our County Badminton Associations are often just as disconnected. Leagues also run independently of one another and usually cover relatively small local areas with different formats and rules. Few leagues offer progression to a higher level based on a wider geographical area.

We consistently hear that league badminton is diminishing quickly. Clubs report an ageing player base and difficulty in attracting junior players meaning year on year, players drop out, clubs drop out, and leagues are struggling to exist.

Whilst many players enjoy local leagues, the offer might not be right for everyone:

- There are often big differences in standards of play in matches affecting enjoyment of the league.
- Not all club players compete – there are players at both lower and higher standards who do not play because the league does not cater sufficiently for them. In particular, research shows the current club and league offer is not right to engage with as many women as possible (see Theme 7: Female Engagement).
- Summer offer – many clubs close over the summer period – feedback and good examples show there is an opportunity to provide a year-round offer to increase resilience across the club market.

The Senior County Championships is considered the pinnacle competition within English badminton, with the funded and best players traditionally representing their county. However, the competition faces challenges with players being attracted to compete in overseas leagues where they can earn payment, and with no eligibility criteria to prevent or deter players from representing a team. Like leagues, it is also a competition that sits very much in isolation with no connectivity to other parts of our competition structure, it has struggled to generate any significant profile or commercial interest and cannot compete with the fees paid in overseas leagues.

In 2014, Badminton England launched the first ever professional badminton league in the UK. The National Badminton League (NBL) helped to raise the profile of the badminton; it attracted new investment into badminton from universities and commercial franchises; it attracted the best players (including funded players) in the UK alongside those from other European and International countries; it achieved profile with prime-time television broadcast and attracted a new audience to the sport. However, there was a significant financial cost to delivery which could not be sustained commercially.

A national framework could deliver a fantastic league structure that provides development for players, keeps players playing for longer and encourages further investment into badminton.
Key survey findings:

- 91% of clubs take part in competitive local leagues.
- 45% of clubs (and 36% of leagues) would be interested in being part of a progressive national league.
- 44% of league players showed an interest in a progressive league structure.
- 61% of league players say big differences in standards of play in matches spoils their enjoyment.
- 61% of league players would be interested in results being available online.
- 51% of league players would be interested in their results being used in the national ranking/grading system.
- 29% of club members don’t play league badminton because they find the current offer too serious.
- 50% of club members have no interest in county badminton because the level is too high.
- 85% of leagues (and 78% clubs) would be interested in online software to support their competition.
- 52% of league players would be interested in competition through the summer.
- 11% do not play because they find the level too low.

Recommendations

Develop a progressive national team league competition, fully scoped with players, clubs, leagues and counties, which will:

1. Provide a structure, with competitive opportunities across a range of abilities for every player to aspire to be in the ‘Premier League’.
2. Increase the reach and scope of engagement.
3. Support the development of younger players and embed them in club and/or team badminton.
4. Fund a small number of local leagues to examine their current offer and look at how they can improve it to encourage more players, especially females.

1. One cohesive progressive pyramid

Develop a national team league that sits at the core of the competition pathway that supports and engages players, clubs and counties.

1.1. Stimulate club development through competition by adding value for the players, clubs and leagues who are members.

1.2. Support the player pathway by allowing players to progress from one level to the next to compete at the level appropriate to their standard.

1.3. Strengthen links between clubs and counties by empowering every county to manage their own leagues within a defined structure.

E.g. (for illustrative purposes only):
1.4. Is devoid of bureaucracy – simple regulations that cause minimum fuss.
1.5. Enters the Premier League Champions into the European Club Championships as England’s representative.
1.6. Uses technology to drive engagement through league management software, linked to the Badminton England membership system and ranking system, providing each member with their own competition profile.
1.7. Identify the best possible venues, most appropriate timings, format and maximum travel distance to enable the competition to meet customer expectations and be flexible enough to accommodate the demands of modern day life.
1.8. Encourages teams to stream their own matches if they wish.

2. Increase the reach and scope of engagement
A compelling offer that will reach players who currently participate in team badminton and inspire those who don’t currently play to start.
2.1. Is not exclusive to clubs, but requires every team to register - enabling engagement of CBAs, clubs, academies, universities, commercial franchises etc.
2.2. Stimulate membership of players, clubs and leagues that are currently unaffiliated to become members of Badminton England.
2.3. Potential for the top divisions to attract investment into badminton through universities and commercial organisations which will help to engage the best players.
2.4. Potential for a national structure competition with a top level to attract commercial interest and investment into badminton.

3. Support the development of younger players
3.1. Senior clubs encouraged to take juniors, and/or connect with junior clubs as a supply line.
3.2. Provide an exit route for young players seeking to continue in a competitive environment in adulthood through a clear national structure integrated into player ranking system for players to engage at all standards.
3.3. Retain the best senior players within the team league structure, supporting the development of junior players.
3.4. A review of the current National Junior League (NJL) will take place to explore opportunities to align it with the national league.

4. Support local leagues to improve their offer
Support local leagues to examine their current offer and look at how they can improve it to encourage more players, especially women, and support the success of a national team league that engages and retains players.
It is recommended to offer funding to a small number of leagues to look at improvements, the results of which will be used to help others.
Theme 5: County Competition

Purpose

The highest level of team competition, attracting the best players in the country to be selected to represent their county and determine the best county team.

Background and Rationale

County competition is underpinned by eligibility criteria. It is at the heart of inter-county competition. However, feedback shows that this can be a barrier to participation for some players:

- They are not eligible for the county they want to represent, often down to where the player trains or plays for a club in another county.
- There are no teams in a division offering the right level for their standard.
- A county may not have teams available in some county competitions or within specific age groups of Shires League or Masters County. Therefore, appropriate opportunities are not always available to players in each competition or age group, meaning some players cannot participate.

However, 14 out of 17 County Associations surveyed in 2015 on their views towards eligibility did not support any change. Proposals continue to be reviewed to allow relevant player mobility.

The Senior County Championships (SCC) has for many years been the flagship team competition in England, attracting funded players and the best players, therefore also providing a performance opportunity for talented junior players to compete.

The SCC was reviewed three seasons ago and the format was changed to reflect the insight. Player survey feedback conducted after the changes showed that most players enjoyed the new format and felt that the changes made were positive for the competition, although it has created a challenge for some counties to field all teams on the same weekend. This should continue to be reviewed to ensure that the competition is as attractive as possible to players.

- 53% prefer the new format over the old format (only 29% disagreed).
- 73% felt the central venue created a more competitive atmosphere (only 10% disagreed).
- 63% felt all divisions playing at the same time heightened the profile of the competition (only 12% disagreed).

Whilst the format meets the players needs, it is not currently attracting funded players and the best players, who are instead choosing to compete in overseas leagues where a playing fee is available and overall there is a better standard of competition which supports their development. This has been exacerbated by the restrictions put on players by overseas leading to a reduction in the standard of the players competing. In 2017-18, 75 players (including funded players) have been recorded playing in overseas leagues.

Money was identified as being one of the main drivers for players competing in overseas leagues and a motivating factor for 25% of players surveyed. There has previously been no desire from counties to pay players to compete and so it is likely the best players will continue to choose to play in the overseas leagues.

The recommendation under Theme 4 for a ‘National Team League’ will also have an impact on SCC, as it will provide a national team league competition for players at all standards and have less restrictions on the competition which would allow investment into players (e.g. universities, employed coaches, private investors, or counties). Players will be able to represent a club of their own choosing.
The U18 Inter Counties Tournament (ICT) continues to be an inspirational competition, with a unique atmosphere and one of the most anticipated and valued events by juniors. However, increasing costs to ensure the competition is self-sustaining are putting the competition at risk. Venue costs have already placed financial pressure on Badminton England to deliver a sustainable event and there is a risk that the event is becoming unaffordable for counties to send a team.

- Development of a new 20 court facility at Nottingham has increased the average court costs significantly. A 15% reduction in costs has been secured with the venue in 2017-18 with the view that in 2019 and following years, there is a phased increase.
- Team costs from 2015-16 to 2017-18; £45 increase in team entry fee (£655 to £700), and £6 increase in accommodation (£141 to £147 for players). This represents a £5 increase per player over the two-year period which is in line with inflation over the last 2 years.

Masters county competition, consisting of the Masters Challenge weekend and the County Championships League, provides inter-county competition for players over 40 years of age. Masters county competition continues to be popular, introducing and retaining participation at a wider range of ability levels. Delivery is sustainable through a dedicated group of volunteer workforce in the Masters Policy Group, and there is an annual review of the competition format to ensure it meets the needs of those involved.

Key Survey findings:
- Of those who do not currently represent their county in county competition:
  - 20% are deterred because they are not selected or have no information.
  - 4% are not eligible for the county they want to represent (higher for juniors with 11%).
  - 9% would be encouraged to play if they felt the selection process was better (references to cliques).
- Of those who currently represent their county in county competition:
  - The two most important reasons given were competitive matches (57%) and pride in representing the county (50%).
  - 27% do not feel it attracts and retains the best players, and three players felt it would be improved by preventing foreign leagues from taking players.
  - 81% would not like to see the number of teams or divisions reduced to make it a more elite competition.
- There is a demand for more competitive opportunities in the summer period; 52% of league players and most circuit players would be interested in competition through the summer.

Recommendations
1. Review the purpose, format and positioning of the SCC in the context of the recommendations to complement the competition pathway and secure its long-term viability.
2. Review and secure the long-term financial sustainability of the U18 ICT for BE and counties.
3. Masters county badminton to remain unchanged subject to financial viability.
1. Senior County Championships
The SCC will not attract funded players and the best players in its current format unless overseas leagues change their rules, but this continues to pose a risk in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, the risk will increase further in the long term should the recommendation to introduce a national team league (see Theme 4: National Team League) be approved.

1.1 Securing the long-term viability of the SCC needs to take the above into consideration; a condensed format in September will eliminate or reduce the conflict with overseas leagues and provide more leverage to remove any restrictions. Feedback from the French Club Commission is they view the SCC as a conflict for some players in choosing who they represent.

1.2 A condensed format in September will eliminate any conflict from a national team league which would be expected to take place throughout the regular club season.

1.3 The format would be reviewed with counties and players to ensure that it remains an important part of the national calendar and player pathway, e.g. current central venue format over a 4-6-week period, a longer and more social event such as ICT, or home/away fixtures over a 1-2 month period, variable formats to suit each division.

2. U18 ICT
Review the secure the future financial sustainability of the event for Badminton England and counties;

2.1 Work with the University of Nottingham to ensure that the costs remain as low as possible, providing a mutually sustainable competition for the next 2 to 3 years.

2.2 Review future costs with counties to establish affordability, alongside potential alternative options including:

2.2.1 Alternative venues with reduced court/accommodation rates.

2.2.2 Reducing the event by a day to decrease costs; a 3-day event will be more affordable for teams but would require a change in format.

2.2.3 Review time of year, to see if this supports any changes in costs, with the potential to reduce the congested period of March to May for players.
Theme 6: National Schools Championships

Purpose
A progressive national competition to engage schools, provide competitive opportunities for pupils within the school environment and support the transition of players into club/more regular play.

Background and Rationale
There are a large number of schools and players (c 1500 schools; c 35-40,000 participants). However, initial stages of the competition are managed by School Games Organisers (SGOs) and data tends to be aggregated. This means we cannot communicate with players until the regional/national stages when Badminton England takes management of the competition thus reducing the ability to transition players to clubs/membership.

The measurement of SGO work has evolved to put more emphasis on providing for new and inactive players. SGOs, working with local partners, select sports they wish to work with, and there is now an increasing number choosing not to deliver badminton within School Games.

There is an increasing pressure on the BE regional team to deliver at Level 3 and now Level 2, and there is not sufficient resource to do this, both in terms of time and cost.

Allocation of Sport England funding will reduce over the current funding cycle 2017-2021, which will place additional financial pressure on the delivery of a sustainable competition that is free for schools.

There is a reputational risk to not delivering a secondary schools competition. It supports the engagement of players at secondary age in a competitive environment who are otherwise not engaged with community-based clubs. It is also important that young people see options particularly on the back of development work at primary level.

Recommendations
1. Design a sustainable offer that supports the transition of players in schools to clubs and Badminton England membership.

1. A sustainable schools competition
A sustainable competition will need to be managed and administered by Badminton England with delivery supported locally by clubs, counties or hubs, within an allocated budget. It is accepted that this will lead to a decrease in competition size.

1.1 Regional and national finals to encourage schools to enter (with a reduced number of regions). The level of local competition would be driven by number of entries in each area.

1.2 Would require an entry fee to cover costs, which would support the full delivery of the competition at local, regional and national level. Sport England investment would be used in first two years to pump-prime whilst re-establishing the competition.

1.3 A named contact in each school should be identified who we can then work with subsequently on development related work and club transition.

1.4 Explore potential to provide players with a national ranking and signpost them to appropriate opportunities.

1.5 Provide a primary festival competition as part of School Games offer.
Theme 7: Social Competition

Purpose
Social competition that provides a welcoming first step into a competitive environment. This level of competition will sit within the local tournament tier as described in Theme 2a.

Background and Rationale
Badminton’s core market includes two groups of players where there is strong demand for competition at the right level and relevant format – players who play regularly and consistently at the same time/place each week (e.g., No Strings Badminton) and players who typically book their own courts on a pay and play basis, but retain a regular twice monthly playing habit.

Competition extends the playing proposition and helps to build a regular playing habit. There are more than 500,000 adults playing at least twice a month so the potential to engage with this market is significant.

Badminton England has established relationships with six national operator partners, across 327 leisure centre sites with badminton provision. This provides an extensive route to market in terms of both players and facility provision, beyond our existing tournament organiser network.

Key survey findings:
- 22% of players who do not currently compete in club leagues are deterred by the seriousness and would be encouraged to compete if there were more friendly and sociable competitions.
- Club players felt the aspect that would improve their local leagues and competition offer the most was that they needed to encourage more players at lower levels and more juniors into the league.
- 20% of players commented that local tournaments could be improved by having more of them and at a wider range of levels available.
- No Strings surveys show an interest and demand for a standard relevant competition offer.

Recommendations
1. Develop a competition offer for players who are not engaged in existing clubs or leagues through provision of a suite of tools for local organisers, leisure providers and social session organisers.
2. Capture of quality data and the long-term potential to transition into paid membership.
3. Develop ranking to engage and encourage social players.

1. Provision of competitive opportunities for social level players

Provide a framework for the delivery of social competition and for results to contribute to a national ranking.

1.1. Develop tools, resources and online training to stimulate provision of competitive opportunities for players in their sessions. Tools and resources will be flexible so that tournaments can be run to match local needs.

1.2. Deliverers will be identified through partner sites, local organisers, No Strings and social session organisers. There is likely to be strong interest from the university sector in such an offer.

1.3. A marketing and communication plan will be developed to support the launch, including promotion on the Badminton England website and direct communication to relevant players, sessions and clubs through growth of player data and digital capability.
2. Capture of quality data

Online entry to support the collection of quality player data so that we can communicate relevant information to keep players engaged and support transition to other offers including long-term transition potential into paid membership.

3. Ranking to engage and encourage social players

A relevant ranking system that supports the engagement and participation of social players, which signposts relevant levels of competition and supports the transition of players into a club environment. Review with social players how they can be incorporated into the national ranking system, which will engage and encourage social players to compete. E.g. Players may not be motivated by being 10,000 on a national ranking list.

3.1. Develop intuitive software that supports organisers to run events, record player data and submit results to a national ranking system.

3.2. Ability for the results of all matches to be captured in a ranking system, supporting the retention and engagement of players.

3.3. Only players with a ranking below an agreed point or without a ranking will be eligible for this level of competition. Once players reach a certain level in the ranking structure, they will be invited to progress to local clubs/leagues and the Badminton England tournament circuit and this will then be the only way they are able to enhance their ranking.
Theme 8: Disability & Para-Badminton

Purpose
Provide competitive opportunities that support the engagement and development of players with a disability.

Background and Rationale
The Badminton World Federation recognises six classification groups; WH1, WH2, SL3, SL4, SU5 and SS6. Badminton England tournaments can also include a seventh category for Learning Disability, which often represents a significant part of the player entry. NB: Classification details: https://www.badmintonengland.co.uk/text.asp?section=4301&sectionTitle=Para-Badminton+Classifications#.Wo7WpEx2umR

Badminton England formed a para-badminton circuit in 2013-14 which brought together existing and new tournaments into a uniformed and consistent offer for players. Approximately 90 players competed across the circuit and many of the tournaments have become unsustainable due to entry size being too low to support the costs. This was also reflected in the Gold sanctioned English leg of the 4-Nations which was cancelled in 2017 due to low entry.

The challenges for players with a disability are similar to those facing non-disabled, such as transport, time and cost. These challenges and the low number of disability players makes it difficult to sustain coaching, playing, or competitive opportunities.

Currently there is insufficient demand from players to justify a dedicated competition circuit; the priority is to develop players and establish a clear player pathway. Where there is local support, tournaments can be encouraged and supported. Once there is a greater base of players, a relevant competition offer needs to be developed, but this will take time.

Badminton will make its debut at the Tokyo Paralympic Games in 2020. In January 2018, UK Sport awarded a grant to support four athletes as part of a GB Para-Badminton Programme in preparation to achieve medal success at the 2020 Olympics.

Key interview points:
- There are not enough players to justify para or disability tournaments at the moment.
- The priority needs to be encouraging more players into disability badminton; once the number of players has increased this will be the appropriate time to consider specific provision.
- The current para-badminton players need international competition to continue their development.
- A large proportion of the current player base take part and benefit from non-disabled competition, e.g. local leagues, tournament circuits.

Recommendations
1. Determine overall strategic direction.
2. Support the delivery of a gold level disability tournament to support classification of players in a competitive environment and supports players with Paralympic aspirations.
1. **Determine overall strategic direction**

Badminton England to determine the overall strategic direction for the development of para-badminton and as part of this determine what competition structure is required to support player progression.

2. **Support the delivery of a gold level disability tournament.**

Support the delivery of a gold level tournament, where players can be classified and compete within official classifications. The format of this tournament should be driven by Paralympic aspirations. This will require financial support to be sustainable. This could be the English leg of the existing 4-Nations Para-badminton tournament.
Theme 9: Female Engagement

Purpose
Provide relevant competitive opportunities to support the engagement and retention of female players.

Background and Rationale
The club and league surveys showed that the biggest issue facing most clubs is lack of females (56% of clubs). The clubs that were interviewed, who were mostly active in recruiting new members, explained that they did not have issues finding new members except for those of a higher standard and females.

- Research from Badminton England’s tracking survey (SMG/YouGov 2017) shows that there is a very low percentage of women engaging in badminton during child rearing age; 7% females aged 25-34, 3% females aged 35-44, 4% females aged 45-54.
- On average, 33% of club members are female. Insight from a Sussex League showed only 25% of members are women and many women play in more than one club.
- Out of approximately 4000 players competing in circuit tournaments, 36% are female.
- Out of Badminton England affiliated coaches, 35% of Level 1, 32% of Level 2, and 32% of Level 3 are female.

Women in Sport has undertaken research to understand what sports clubs need in order to better support women’s relationship with sport: “They are perceived to be intimidating, very few women who are non-club members felt that joining a sports club would deliver them any benefit, and 63% said they wouldn’t have the confidence to approach a club in the first place a sports club”. If clubs want to attract more women, these perceptions need to be addressed and there needs to be shift in club culture to provide a suitable offer. The full report can be viewed here: https://www.womeninsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Ideal-Sports-Clubs-Web-Ready.pdf.

Research by Women in Sport and the Youth Sport Trust shows activity levels are similar for boys and girls at 7-8 years of age, but by 9-10 years, girls are doing significantly less:

- Gender perceptions are already emerging in relation to sport; girls think boys are ‘stupid’ and ‘their’ sports are rough, whilst the boys think girls lack skill and competence.
- While school sports participation is roughly equal, things look very different outside of school, with many more boys than girls involved in out-of-school sports clubs.
- The girls disliked playing games outside in the cold, whereas boys enjoyed the extra space associated with outside games.
- Girls were also noticing the lack of female sporting role models available to them. Girls and boys agreed PE should be different for both sexes. Girls felt that boys can be overly competitive, cheat and play rough and boys perceived girls as ‘less sporty’ and skilled, as well as less interested in ‘rough’ and muddy outdoor sports.
- They observed that this gap grows in the years that follow as we know that after this age, low confidence and body consciousness can combine to deter girls from playing sport. Girls who drop out of sport because they feel self-consciousness are less likely to return.

Badminton England is currently working to develop clubs that women want to join:

- Raising club awareness of the female customer journey and providing clubs advice/education on how to improve their offer to women.
• Grants are available to clubs to support development of club/sessions for girls and women only.
• ‘This Girl Can’ academy sessions are being set up with female coaches/role. The aim of these session is to prepare girls and women ready for club and competitive badminton. The sessions can keep those players who are not so competitive engaged in the sport and provide a stepping stone for those who want to progress into a welcoming club.
• New female coaches are being engaged to support a more welcoming environment and increasing the presence of women at all levels and as player role models.

Key survey findings:
• When asked how more women and girls could be encouraged to compete the following responses were made in order of frequency:
  o Girls need to be targeted at schools by providing more coaching initiatives for schools.
  o Develop more female coaches and role models, and targeted promotions/advertising.
  o More provision of basic coaching for adult women to raise levels.
  o Provide more competition opportunities at a lower level (most tournaments are filled with good county players).

Recommendations
1. Create competitive opportunities that are female friendly and a specific offer to engage 9-16 year-old girls that helps to develop a strong relationship with badminton and competition.
2. Promote female role models through competition and promote female events at competitions.

1. Competitive opportunities, with a focus to retain girls aged 9 to 16.

   Provision of female only competition to provide a more comfortable/familiar environment – other sports have experienced, and this demonstrates best practice. Tier 4 level senior circuits will be encouraged to offer female only tournaments and provision of an offer to engage 9-16 year-old girls to develop a strong relationship with badminton and competition. E. g. doubles can be more attractive than singles because it is more sociable, and flexible clothing regulations so that women and girls can wear and compete in what makes them feel more comfortable.

2. Promotion of female role models and promotion of female events in competitions.

   2.1. Promotion of female role models through competition both locally and through our channels so female players see that competition can be for them. This will be supported by a female ambassador scheme to be the voice for women and girls in badminton and promote the positive values of sport for women and girls.

   2.2. Promotion of female events at competitions so that they are not overlooked, e.g., which courts they are allocated, ordering of finals, same format, equal opportunities, equal prize money. This can be incorporated into training, so tournament organisers and referees consider how they treat female events.

   2.3. Senior County Championships currently offers one more men’s singles than women’s singles in the format because there are not currently enough women’s singles players. Long term aspirations should be set to have equal number of men’s and women’s singles such that teams can prepare and support development of players in advance so that the same opportunities are available for women.
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