

Kirsty Cox

Full Time Coach
Return to Play

'Dorset Badminton Coach' Kirsty Wilcox's Saturday junior sessions started back on 24th April 2021 at Sir David English Sports Centre, Bournemouth. 3 hours of badminton, comprising of two 90 minute sessions, which are filled with excited coaches and junior players aged between 6 and 18 years old who couldn't wait to get back on court. Utilising all 8 courts, both coaching sessions are structured and allow players to develop their racquet skills, enhance their learning, in a safe, positive environment - whether their goal is fitness, fun or performance.

Badminton England's 'Return to Play' guidance has been very useful and our Relationship Manager for Dorset, Hannah, is always on hand to speak to if there are any queries with restarting sessions. The most important thing is that we are keeping the players safe, so each session is meticulously planned to give all players the maximum time on court whilst ensuring their safety. Each week all players are preassigned a court and to ensure a limit on numbers of players mixing, they only mix with players from one other court.

Volunteers are the heartbeat of clubs and with the help of Level 2 Coaches and Duke of Edinburgh Award helpers on Saturdays, they assist with feeding shuttles during practices and developing the players - their help has been invaluable and as a result, it looks hopeful that in the near future we may be able to upskill them into undertaking their Level 1 Qualifications, thus promoting more badminton coaches in Dorset.

The Saturday morning sessions have seen a total increase of players by 133% from pre-lockdown numbers and an increase of 15 girls playing badminton on Saturdays. The two sessions will now become three sessions after May half term, covering all ages/abilities - a county level session as well as a separate senior and junior school age session.



The growth of players on a Saturday has come from Kirsty's coaching in schools plus sending leaflets

to teachers. As a result of the pandemic, people may have had a break from sport, it's great to see them keen to play again or try badminton as a new sport.

Chris Field, Senior Customer Operations Manager at Sir David English Sports Centre: "We have been really happy to have been able to welcome Kirsty and her groups back to train with us". We have worked with Kirsty to introduce a system that follows all the protocols put forth by Badminton England and UK Active to ensure that everyone that comes through our doors is safe and can focus on their sport. We have seen a big uptake in badminton since we have reopened and we hope to be able to support Kirsty in expanding sessions as this continues.

Junior player Meshva: "Kirsty's badminton sessions are the highlight OF my week". I really enjoy the time I spend there; making new friends and learning new techniques. Meeting and talking to Kirsty about badminton is fun and each week we can learn something new that we can apply to our matches we play."

