**NBL Requirements Document 2025 – 2028**

**The Opportunity**

Badminton England is excited to invite applications for teams to join the National Badminton League for the seasons 2025-26 / 26-27 / 27-28.

We are seeking at least 8 teams to be part of this team competition that we expect to grow and develop over time and become ***the pinnacle of domestic club competition***.

Our vision is that this is ***an aspirational, competitive club competition providing a platform for top talent, and inspiration for the next generation***.

We are seeking teams from all areas of the country and we are committed to making the league as accessible as possible to the groups and communities that play badminton – so if you are interested – read on!

**What Success Looks Like**

By becoming a team in the NBL you are doing much more than competing for the crown of champions. You will be working with us and like-minded teams to promote our great sport and take it into the future. In three years, success will be:

* **High quality local events** around the country that attract **fans** to enjoy badminton.
* **Kids** being **inspired** to pick up a racket and wear their team’s **shirt** with pride.
* **Badminton** connecting with communities who can say – “**that’s my team**”.
* **Athletes and teams** with local **profile**.
* A packed out **super-weekend** filled with **noisy** team supporters.
* **Local investment** being attracted by teams and **national partners** getting involved.
* **A strong online presence – showcasing** the sport and **telling the story** of the season**.**

This is a great opportunity for teams to join at the start of the journey and create a **lasting impact**.

**The League**

The format of the league is set out to create great matches that can be delivered in a limited time frame to capture and retain audience interest. The league is structured so as to make it affordable for teams, not to overburden the competition calendar or player schedules whilst offering excellent matchplay and audience engagement opportunities. The basic format is:

* Minimum 8 team league competition​.
* Teams play each other once per season – home or away​.
* A match consists of one match of each event (Open Singles, Open Doubles, Women’s Singles, Women’s Doubles, Mixed Doubles). Matches are best of 5 sets to 11 points. If the deciding set is reached this is played to 5 points. There is also a double-point “powerplay” available to each pair/player once per match.
* Identified match weeks – flexibility within that on when matches take place (final decision rest with home team).​
* Teams host and organise home matches.
* Badminton England host a Super-weekend that will incorporate the final regular-season match and play-offs to determine winners.
* League managed by Badminton England​.
* Promotion / relegation commences 2027/28.
* A league season is expected to take place from November to May.

**The Offer**

Badminton England is offering the following opportunity for teams:

* 3-year guarantee in the National Badminton League​.
* No entry fee in Year One and Year Two, entry fees and prize money from Year Three​.
* Possibility to apply for a one-off starter grant / central support to enable fulfilment of essential criteria – up to £2,000.
* Regular Badminton England promotion of league and teams​.
* Star at the high-profile super-weekend.

Our aim is for teams to be successful and financially sustainable. To that end our approach will be to offer support services and advice where we can and to enable teams to attract revenue through ticket sales, sponsorship, investment and merchandise.

**The Commitment**

Badminton England is seeking Teams that can really add value to the League, helping to shape it to achieve the vision. The commitment is as follows:

* Enter for three seasons​.
* Host up to three matches​ per season and fulfil all fixtures (including joining the fixtures at the high-profile super weekend)
* Promote and enjoy the league.
* Work together with Badminton England and the other teams to promote and evolve the league.
* Meet minimum requirements (see below)

**Minimum Requirements**

The following are the minimum requirements for teams to enter the league. We hope that over time these will be exceeded to deliver the best possible product however we are also mindful of making the competition accessible and affordable for teams to get started.

Badminton England reserves the right to change, flex and/or amend any criteria of entry for all or any teams, and change the structure, format and terms of the competition as appropriate at its own discretion.

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| **Requirement** | **Essential Criteria** | **Evidence** |
| **Governance and Management** | There is an identified Team Director who is the person responsible for ensuring the team meets its commitments. | Team Director named and a signatory to the application document. |
|  | The Team is (or is willing to become) either a Badminton England registered club in its own right OR represents one or more Badminton England registered clubs OR is a Badminton England registered club that represents a wider institution/organisation (e.g. a University).  **If you are interested in entering a Team but don’t meet these criteria, please contact us through the email address below to discuss this further**. | Badminton England membership records. |
|  | If the Team represents a wider organisation then that body must recognise and endorse the Team. | Signed letter of support from a relevant official of the organisation. |
|  | There is a demonstrable commitment to adhering to the Badminton England Code of Ethics and Behaviour ([Code of ethics and conduct 2021 v1](https://www.badmintonengland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Code-of-ethics-and-conduct-2021-1.pdf)) and that all management, players and coaches associated with the Team are in good-standing with Badminton England (and their home governing body if an international manager / player / coach).  There is adherence to all Badminton England policies with particular reference to observing and implementing all Welfare, Safeguarding and Inclusion policies. | Signed declaration as part of the application process. |
| **Finance and Resources** | The Team must demonstrate it has the financial resources to compete in the NBL fulfilling all home and away fixtures to the standards set out by Badminton England. | Evidence of financial position of club could include financial accounts.  For larger organisations this could include a declaration of support from the host organisation.  For teams backed by a sponsor, evidence of the financial commitment made to the team. |
|  | The Team had a business plan to demonstrate how it will afford to compete in the NBL over the three year period and become financially sustainable. | A business plan submitted as part of the application setting out how the team will operate and the planned finances and resourcing to make the team viable. |
| **Playing and Coaching** | The Team demonstrates that it can field a strong team of players who can compete at top domestic level. We recognise that players could come from a range of backgrounds including the following:   * Current senior international players   and/or   * Former senior international players   and/or   * Ranked in the Top 25 in England   and/or   * International junior-level players (U17 / U19) * Players who are demonstrably of a standard competitive with the above   Badminton England will review the proposed team list and use its judgement to assess relative strength of teams. | A proposed team list / squad submitted as part of the application. A declaration of commitment by players will strengthen the application but is not essential. |
| **Presentation** | The host venue is suitable for hosting performance-level badminton (floor surface, height, drift, colour, run-offs, nets, post, ancillary equipment). | Host venue(s) named as part of the application.  Desirable - Evidence of agreement with the venue owner for use of the facility for at least season 1. |
|  | The court is of regulation size and has no other markings on it. | Declaration as part of the application. |
|  | The team has a designated match manager and through its business plan, can demonstrate that it has the workforce to enable it to host home matches to the required standard. | Business Plan |
|  | The floor immediately surrounding the court is of a different colour to the court. | Declaration as part of the application. |
|  | The venue can safely host and seat the planned number of spectators, players and officials. | Declaration of suitability of the hall as part of the application. |
|  | The shuttlecocks utilized are of the brand and quality specified by Badminton England (there may be opportunity to purchase these directly from BE at advantageous prices). | Declaration as part of the application. |
|  | There is space for umpires and line judges around the court. | Declaration as part of the application. |
|  | There is space for A-boards around all four sides of the court. | Declaration as part of the application. |
|  | The team can stream the match live online from a fixed camera at a minimum quality level of 1080p 60fps. (nb we can give guidance to teams on this). | Declaration as part of the application. |
|  | The team can provide commentators and if needed, volunteers to line judge at all home matches. | Declaration as part of the application. |
|  | The team demonstrates that it can organise and pay for travel / related expenses for away fixtures ensuring timely arrival. | Included as part of business plan. |
| **Marketing and Promotion** | There is a credible plan to attract a local audience both in-person and online and sell at least 50 tickets per match in season 1 rising to at least 150 tickets for each match in season 3. Support will be available from Badminton England through a central league ticketing partner.  Commitment to the social media and promotion guidance provided for the promotion of the league (to be provided before league start) | Marketing Plan submitted as part of the application (this can be part of the business plan).  Signed declaration at point of application. |
| **Commitment** | There is a demonstrable commitment to participating in the NBL on a long-term basis and as a minimum fulfilling the first three years of participation. | Signed declaration at point of application. |
| **League Sustainability and Growth** | There is a commitment to working collaboratively with Badminton England in the delivery of obligations to central league sponsors and other partners. | Signed declaration at point of application.  Business plan assessed for any potential conflicts between local and central partners. |
|  | **Desirable Criteria** |  |
| **Development** | It is desirable for the teams to have a clear and demonstrable connection to the local badminton community by:   * Having a direct connection with an adult playing environment that offers regular training and/or matchplay sessions for the local community (e.g. a club night). * Having a connection with a junior playing environment that offers regular coaching and/or training and or matchplay sessions for the local community. * It would be desirable for teams or connected organisations to offer additional badminton development programmes to the local community in order to develop the sport. | Business Plan |
| **Coaching** | The Team has a coach – preferably with a performance-level qualification / background | Team coach named and ideally a signatory to the application (this can be the same person as the Team Director). |

**Assessment**

Applications must be made by midday on Friday 9 May using the Expression of Interest Form.

Badminton England will use the period until Friday 16 May to review applications and speak with applicants as necessary.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to make presentations w/c 19 May.

Final team selection will be made by 30 May.

The League is expected to commence in November 2025.

Please send any enquiries to [nbl@badmintonengland.co.uk](mailto:XXXXXX@badmintonengland.co.uk)

**Appendix – Commercial Terms**

We are keen that there is clarity for teams on how they can drive income whilst also ensuring that Badminton England has the ability to generate income that will support the sustainability and growth of the league and the wider expansion of the sport. We are keen to work with teams to ensure that investment into the sport can be generated both locally and nationally. Where possible, we will also look for opportunities to engage central partners who can offer services and support to all teams – thereby reducing cost and increasing impact.

To that end, the following is offered as guidance on the rights of each party. We will undertake an ongoing dialogue on this matter with teams as the league progresses.

To ensure a clear distinction between rights held by the National Badminton League/Badminton England and league teams:

* Certain rights categories are reserved exclusively for Badminton England to exercise, which include:
  + Financial services, payment systems, insurance, asset management and investment, wealth management, retail and wholesale banking
  + Sports equipment and apparel
  + Ticketing providers, including all resale ticketing outlets
* Certain assets are reserved exclusively for Badminton England to exercise, which include:
  + A minimum of four a-boards at each fixture, to be supplied by Badminton England
    - At least two of these a-boards to be facing the camera for the stream
  + Powerplay podium, to be supplied by Badminton England
  + All assets at the Super Weekend

All other product categories may be exercised by Badminton England and league teams on a ‘first come, first served’ basis. Whereby Badminton England seeks to appoint a centralised partner, this will be communicated to league teams via the agreed league governance structure, and any potential conflicts discussed.

Certain rights categories may not be exploited in any way, including:

* Tobacco, tobacco product, and any products or services associated with smoking, vaping or tobacco
* Betting, either in-person or digital
* Alcohol
* Anything which is illegal, illicit, indecent, obscene, defamatory, infringing of any third party rights