Northamptonshire County Badminton Association

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 28 May 2026 – 7:30pm
Barn Room, Yeoman of England, Wootton

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 2025 AGM and Matters Arising
3. Chairperson's report — Melissa Gentle
4. Treasurer's Report — Kataryna Zbytek/Melissa Gentle
5. Match/Fixtures Secretary's Report — Katie Applin
6. Head Coach's Report — Stephen Willis
7. Social Media Report — Melissa Gentle
8. League Section — Jermaine Lovelace
   - 8.1. Update and results
   - 8.2. Amendments to the rules
     - 8.2.1. Proposed Discussion Items / Rule Change Requests

i) Towcester Badminton Club Proposal
Review of eligibility period before a new member may represent a club in league matches.

ii) Synthetic Shuttle Trial Discussion
Consideration of whether synthetic shuttles may be introduced as an optional format within county league competitions in future seasons.

iii) Scoring System Review
Discussion regarding potential future movement toward 15-point scoring formats instead of 21-point scoring.

iv) Rushden All Stars Proposal
Review of the current "2 up / 2 down" promotion and relegation system.

iiv) Drawn Match Clarification Proposal
Discussion regarding how tied league positions or drawn fixtures are determined.

a) Proposal to consider:
- awarding 1 league point for a draw
- additional tie-break clarification procedures where required.

9. Governance and Constitutional Matters

9.1. Interim Voting Arrangements for AGM 2026

Proposed Interim Resolution

"For the purposes of the 2026 AGM, voting rights shall temporarily apply to recognised affiliated clubs, recognised junior/school sections and committee members not otherwise represented through an affiliated body. Each recognised body shall hold one vote. This interim arrangement reflects historic governance practice across the former NBA, NSCBA and League structures pending future constitutional clarification."

Reasoning:

To provide a fair and workable interim voting structure reflecting historic county practice whilst acknowledging current constitutional ambiguity regarding affiliation and voting eligibility.

9.2. Proposal to split the Association into Junior and Senior Section as agreed by committee.

"To consider and, if thought fit, approve a proposal to introduce a dual-structure model comprising a Junior Section and a Senior & League Section, with implementation to take place on an interim basis pending formal constitutional amendment. This motion does not alter the voting rights or procedures for this AGM."

10. Election of Officers

10.1. Chairperson
10.2. Hon Secretary
10.3. League Secretary
10.4. Hon Treasurer Jr
10.5. Hon Treasurer Sr
10.6. Head Coach
10.7. Assistant Coach
10.8. Welfare Officer
10.9. Fixtures Secretary (Shires)
10.10. Tournament Officer
10.11. Social Media Officer
10.12. Schools Representative
10.13. Clubs Representative
10.14. Parent / Squad Representatives (up to 2 per section)
10.15. Senior Team Representative

11. Confirmation of Interim Section Leads (if required)

12. Presentation of League Trophies

13. Arrangements for 2026–2027 Season

14. Affiliation Fees

14.1. League Entries
14.2. Junior Development Expansion
14.3. Coaching and Venue Planning

15. Any Other Business

Chairman's Report

Season 2025/26

As we come to the end of the 2025/26 season and approach another AGM, it feels appropriate not only to reflect on the last twelve months, but also on what has been a significant four-year period for Northamptonshire badminton.

Over that time, the county has experienced many highs, many challenges, and significant change across almost every area of the organisation. There have been moments where simply keeping county badminton operational has required an enormous amount of effort from volunteers, coaches, parents and committee members alike. However, despite the difficulties faced along the way, the county continues to provide opportunities for players across junior and senior badminton, and the programme now enters the next season with stronger foundations in several key areas than existed four years ago.

Whatever the outcome of this AGM, I am proud of what has been achieved collectively during that period and grateful to everyone who has contributed to keeping badminton moving forwards within Northamptonshire.

Junior Development & Participation

The 2025/26 season began during a period of significant transition for the county programme. Early in September, the Association experienced several unexpected changes across key volunteer and operational roles, including administration, finance, senior badminton support and coaching personnel. At the same time, the county also faced uncertainty surrounding access to previously used court facilities and training venues.

These circumstances created immediate logistical and organisational pressures at the start of the season and required the committee and coaching team to quickly reorganise responsibilities, secure alternative venues and restructure parts of the training programme to ensure county badminton could continue without interruption.

Despite these challenges, the county programme remained operational throughout and continued to grow steadily across the season.

At the beginning of the year:

- 26 junior players were attending county sessions across the Potential, Development and Elite groups.
- Additional player growth opportunities had already been identified within areas such as Oundle and Brackley.

As the season progressed, the county:

- Stabilised weekly training provision.
- Expanded player recruitment.
- Increased communication and promotional activity.
- Continued developing a clearer pathway between beginner, development and elite badminton.

By January 2026, both Monday and Tuesday county sessions were reported as busy and stable.

Continued growth throughout the season then led to a major expansion in April 2026, with the creation of two additional junior county training groups. This restructuring was introduced to better support the increasing range of player abilities across the programme and provide more individual coaching attention and player development opportunities.

The revised structure has helped:

- Improve player-to-coach ratios.
- Create more targeted sessions for varying ability levels.
- Provide stronger progression opportunities for developing players.
- Better support newer players entering county badminton.

By the end of the season, weekly junior participation had grown to over 55 players attending county sessions — representing significant growth from the start of the year and highlighting the continued demand for badminton opportunities across Northamptonshire.

The county programme also continued expanding its reach across Northamptonshire through ongoing development work in areas including Oundle and Brackley, helping provide broader access to badminton opportunities for young players across the county.

County Teams & Player Pathway

One of the most encouraging developments this season has been the continued strengthening of the pathway between junior and senior badminton.

Several junior players stepped up to represent the senior county teams during the season, showing both the strength of the junior programme and the willingness of younger players to support the wider county structure when needed.

The county continued preparations for:

- Inter County Tournament (ICT)
- Shires League fixtures
- ECC competition
- Restricted tournaments across multiple age groups.

ICT preparations began particularly early this season due to the age profile of the squad and travel logistics surrounding players and families. Additional training sessions were organised to support preparation and team development.

Across the past four years, one of the biggest priorities has been rebuilding a long-term county pathway where younger players can see opportunities to progress through junior badminton into senior county representation, coaching, volunteering and leadership roles.

There is still much work to do, but the foundations for that pathway are now far stronger than they were previously.

Senior County Badminton

The senior section continued to face challenges surrounding player availability and wider participation levels, resulting in the county operating two senior teams during the season.

Despite this, the county successfully fulfilled fixtures and continued rebuilding the senior setup through:

- Wider player engagement.

- Clearer communication processes.
- Greater integration between senior and elite junior training opportunities.
- Exploration of dedicated senior county training sessions.

Senior team match fees operated on a per-event basis throughout the season, with players contributing £10 per event played during match weekends.

The Association would also like to recognise the contribution made by the junior players who stepped up into senior badminton this season. These players already contribute significantly through junior membership fees, Shires League match fees and county training commitments.

As a gesture of appreciation for their support and flexibility, senior match fees were waived for junior players when representing the senior county teams.

ECC Competition

The county was proud to enter a team into the ECC competition for the second consecutive season, continuing to provide valuable higher-level opportunities for young adult players within Northamptonshire.

Representing the county this season were:

- Alfie Rowley
- Cheryl Cheung
- Vivien Li
- Henry Ross-Jones
- Thomas Hains
- Raees Haiy
- Megan Shields

It was especially pleasing to hear the positive feedback regarding the team spirit and atmosphere created throughout the event under the leadership of team manager Megan Shields.

The ECC continues to provide an important bridge between junior and senior county badminton and remains an important part of player retention and development moving forwards.

Restricted Tournaments & Events

Despite the organisational pressures faced during the season, the county successfully organised and delivered a full programme of Restricted tournaments across junior and senior badminton.

Restricted events held during the 2025/26 season included:

- Senior Restricted
- Masters Restricted
- U19 Restricted
- U17 Restricted
- U15 Restricted
- U13 Restricted
- U11 Restricted

These events continue to play an important role in:

- Supporting county team selection.
- Providing accessible local competition.
- Encouraging player development.

- Creating wider engagement with county badminton.

Participation numbers varied across some events this season, however the Association remains committed to rebuilding and strengthening the Restricted structure moving forwards.

For the 2026/27 season, a Northampton venue has already been secured for one full weekend of Restricted tournaments. Work is ongoing to secure a second weekend venue in order to complete the full calendar for next season.

Unfortunately, due to limited volunteer and organisational capacity this season, the county was unable to organise the planned badminton festival events.

However, the intention remains to introduce both:

- A Secondary Schools Badminton Festival
- A Primary Schools Badminton Festival

during the 2026/27 season to further support grassroots badminton development across Northamptonshire.

Coach Development & Volunteer Support

One of the most important long-term investments any county can make is in its coaching and volunteer workforce.

Throughout the season, support was provided towards coaching qualifications for:

- Kyle Patel – Mereway Badminton Club
- Michael Allen – Mereway Badminton Club
- Thomas Hains
- Sana Gautam
- Henry Ridd-Jones
- Dan Wykes

These qualifications ranged from Foundation Awards through to Level 2 coaching qualifications and form part of the county's wider commitment to strengthening badminton opportunities locally for future years.

Additional volunteer coaching support was also provided throughout the season by a number of coaches and committee members across both Monday and Tuesday training sessions.

Young Leaders & Future Development

The Association was also delighted to see Aaradhya Parashar attend the Young Leaders Academy this season.

Developing future leaders, volunteers and coaches within the county remains extremely important for the long-term sustainability of badminton in Northamptonshire, and it is hoped more young players will become involved in these opportunities moving forwards.

Governance & Looking Forward

The season also involved considerable governance and organisational work behind the scenes.

This included:

- Development of onboarding procedures.
- Creation of behavioural expectation documents.
- Work towards clearer selection processes.
- Ongoing constitutional review work ahead of the AGM.

Much of this work is not always visible publicly, but it has been necessary in order to help create a more sustainable and resilient structure for the future.

No county association succeeds because of one individual. It succeeds because volunteers, players, parents, coaches and committee members continue giving their time and energy to support the sport locally.

Over the past four years, there have been difficult moments, but also many achievements:

- Increased junior participation.
- Expanded coaching support.
- Greater county coverage.
- More structured player pathways.
- Continued county representation across all age groups.
- Stronger foundations for future development.

Whatever happens following this AGM, I genuinely hope the next committee can continue building positively on that progress and keep Northamptonshire badminton moving forwards together.

Dates for your diary

Following this season, planning is already well underway for the 2026/27 calendar, with a clear focus on strengthening the county pathway and widening participation opportunities.

The county will host a **Senior Restricted event on 19th September 2026**, followed by a **combined U19 and U13 Restricted event on 20th September 2026**, both taking place in Northampton, forming a key part of the competitive structure for the upcoming season.

In addition, **Junior County Trials for 2026** are being delivered across multiple venues, including **Oundle School (6th June)**, **Northampton High School (7th June)** and **Winchester House School (14th June)**, providing open access for all junior players, with both team and squad places offered to support continued player development.

Alongside this, the county continues to prioritise community engagement, with initiatives such as the **Northants Badminton Family Fun Day at Winchester House School on 14th June**, welcoming junior members and their families to participate in a more informal, inclusive environment.

Further junior restricted events are currently in development, with additional dates and venues to be confirmed as planning progresses, ensuring that increasing participation is matched with appropriate and accessible competitive opportunities.

And finally

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has supported the county during my time within the committee structure. Your patience, resilience and unwavering commitment to the players has been instrumental in ensuring that badminton in Northamptonshire has continued to move forward, even during the most challenging periods. It is this collective support that underpins everything the county has been able to achieve, and for that I am extremely grateful.

Melissa Gentle
Chair

Northamptonshire County Badminton Association

Annual Financial Report (AGM)

Year Ending 31 May 2026

This report summarises the financial position of the Association for the 2025/26 season, covering both Senior (NCB) and Junior (NSCBA) accounts. These accounts are held separately but presented here as a combined overview for transparency.

Combined Financial Summary

Category	Amount (£)
Total Income (external)	32,790.53
Total Expenditure	37,516.27
Net Movement	(4,725.74)
Closing Reserves	49,492.83

Senior Account (NCB)

Income (external): £5,901.08 | Expenditure: £5,784.52 | Surplus: £116.56 Closing Reserves: £19,080.32 (Bank £18,070.32 + Debtors £780.00)

Junior Account (NSCBA)

Income: £27,119.45 | Expenditure: £31,731.75 | Deficit: £4,612.30 Closing Reserves: £30,412.51

Conclusion

The Association remains in a strong financial position with combined reserves of approximately £49.5k. Senior operations are stable, while junior investment reflects continued growth and development.

The Association would also like to note that the Treasurer resigned in September 2025 due to personal reasons and did so without a formal handover period. As a result, the County operated for a significant part of the season without a formally appointed Treasurer while financial responsibilities were managed on an interim basis to ensure continuity of operations.

More recently, Kataryna kindly stepped forward to assist with financial administration and support, for which the Association is extremely grateful. Her assistance during a challenging transitional period has been greatly appreciated.

This financial report has therefore been prepared collaboratively by **Melissa Gentle and Kataryna Zbytek**, based on the records and information available for the 2025/26 financial year

NSCBA - Junior Accounts

INCOME EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/05/2026

		£		
INCOME				
	Squad fees	£ 20,352.27		
	Match fees	£ 595.10		
	ICT Players fees	£ 3,525.00		
	Local Tournaments	£ 1,008.42		
	NSSF Affiliations	£ 540.00		
	Savings account interest	£ 648.66		
	Other - shuttle sale			
	Shirts Income	£ 450.00		
	Printing income			
	Senior County Income less refunds			
		£ 27,119.45		
EXPENDITURE				
	Hire of Hall		£ 10,004.80	
	Coaches expenses		£ 7,639.00	
	Additional coaching resources		£ 630.00	
	Affiliation/Entry Fees		£ 703.98	
	ICT		£ 6,320.88	
	Shires League		£ 150.00	
	Trophies & Engraving		£ 780.62	
	Misc		£ 819.06	
	Entry Fees		£ 1,128.00	
	Shuttlecocks		£ -	
	Summer Fairs & festivals		£ -	
	Subscriptions		£ 16.49	
	Website		£ 79.65	
	Seniors		£ 2,399.27	
	Shirts		£ 1,060.00	
			£ 31,731.75	
NET TO/(FROM) RESERVES				**£ (4,612.30)**
RESERVES				
Opening			**£ 35,024.81**	
Movement			£ (4,612.30)	
adj				
Closing			£ 30,412.51	
Represented by:	At bank		£ 29,012.51	
	Payments awaiting authorisaiton			
	Cash in Hand		£ 1,400.00	
			£ 30,412.51	

Northants County Badminton - Senior accounts

INCOME EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/05/26

Unaudited			£		
INCOME					
	Memberships	£	2,880.50		
	Tournaments	£	525.00		
	Match Fees	£	1,305.00		
	Other	£	806.00		
	Bank Interest	£	384.58		
		£	**5,901.08**		
EXPENDITURE					
Senior	Court Hire				630.00
	Shuttles				500.00
	Shirts				540.00
	Badminton England				2285.25
	Trophies			£	269.27
	NSCBA			£	1,000.00
	Others			£	560.00
				£	**5,784.52**
	Debtors			**£**	**670.00**
NET TO/(FROM) RESERVES					**£ 786.56**
RESERVES					
Opening				**£**	**17,183.76**
Movement				£	786.56
Closing				£	17,970.32
Represented by	At bank		14/05/2026	£	18,300.32
	Paypal			£	-
	Debtors			£	670.00
				£	**18,970.32**

Northamptonshire County Badminton Association

Shires League & Fixtures Secretary Report

Overview

The 2025/26 Shires League season has been both challenging and rewarding, marked by significant development across Northamptonshire's junior county programme.

The county competed in two age groups: U17 (Shires Box 3) and U19 (Shires Box 2).

The season also included a mid-season transition in the Fixtures Secretary role, with a number of fixtures requiring organisation at short notice. With the support of team managers, coaches, parents and players, the outstanding fixtures were arranged efficiently, ensuring the season progressed with minimal disruption.

Squad Performance & Participation

Northamptonshire successfully fielded teams in both U17 and U19 categories. Across both squads, players demonstrated strong commitment, adaptability and pride in representing the county.

U17 Team Performance (Shires Box 3)

Results Summary

1 Derbyshire – 16–4
2 Buckinghamshire – 13–7
3 Warwickshire – 10–10
4 Essex – 4–16
5 Leicestershire – 4–16
6 Bedfordshire – 20–0 (conceded) 7 Oxfordshire – 20–0 (conceded)

Season Highlights & Analysis

The U17 squad delivered a strong and competitive season, finishing 3rd in their group and qualifying for the National Playoffs.

The playoff fixture took place during the ICT tournament period, requiring players to compete under increased physical and scheduling demands. Despite this, the team produced a highly competitive performance, narrowly losing 12–8 to Cheshire.

Throughout the season, the squad demonstrated strong cohesion, competitive performances against established counties, and clear progression in both individual and team development.

While two conceded fixtures impacted the final standings, performances on court demonstrated the squad's true capability when at full strength

U19 Team Performance (Shires Box 2)

Results Summary

1 Surrey 2 – 12–8

2. Sussex – 6–14
3. Oxfordshire – 1–19
4. Hampshire – 5–15
5. Kent – 3–16
6. Surrey 1 – 20–0 (conceded)

Season Highlights & Analysis

The U19 squad was one of the youngest fielded in recent years, with the youngest player aged 11 and an average age of approximately 15.

Despite limited depth—particularly on the girls' side, where only six players competed regularly across both age groups—the squad showed maturity, resilience and a willingness to step up when required.

The highlight of the season was a strong 12–8 victory over Surrey 2, demonstrating the team's capability when fully available.

All fixtures were fulfilled with the exception of Surrey 1, which was conceded due to unavoidable availability constraints.

Player Contribution & Commitment

1. Emily Applin – 10 matches
2. Bethany Applin – 10 matches
3. Natalie Zbytek – 9 matches
4. Aakash Choudhary – 8 matches
5. Jessica Zbytek – 7 matches
6. Aradhya Parashar – 7 matches

These players provided consistency and availability, forming the backbone of the squads across the season.

Overall Reflections

Taking into account the mid-season transition in fixtures coordination, the youthfulness of the U19 squad, limited player depth, and availability challenges, it is a significant achievement that the county completed the majority of its fixture programme and remained competitive throughout. Players consistently represented Northamptonshire with professionalism, adaptability and pride.

Acknowledgements

The success of the 2025/26 season has been underpinned by the collective efforts of a number of key groups.

We extend our sincere thanks to all team managers and coaches, whose organisation, time, and commitment ensured that fixtures and training sessions ran smoothly throughout the year. Their continued support of the players remains invaluable.

We are equally grateful to parents, whose flexibility and ongoing commitment have been essential in enabling players to attend training sessions and fixtures, often at short notice and across varying locations.

Our thanks also go to Rob and Oundle School for their continued support in providing facilities. Access to quality venues has been instrumental in maintaining the standard and consistency of the programme.

Finally, we would like to recognise all players for their dedication, positive attitude, and willingness to represent the county. Their efforts and commitment throughout the season have been a credit to themselves and the programme as a whole.

Recommendations for 2026/27 Season

Looking ahead, there are several areas where further development and refinement could strengthen the programme moving forward.

Establishing fixtures and confirming venues at an earlier stage—ideally by the end of September—would provide greater clarity for players, parents, and staff, and support more effective planning across the season.

Improving communication systems is also a priority, particularly through the introduction of clearer availability tracking and structured reminders. This would help streamline organisation and reduce last-minute changes.

Continued focus on increasing squad depth will be important, with particular attention on strengthening the girls' pathway to ensure balance and long-term sustainability across all teams.

To support operational delivery, the introduction of deputy team manager roles is recommended. This would help distribute responsibilities more effectively and provide continuity where needed.

Consideration should also be given to reviewing travel support options, ensuring that participation remains accessible and manageable for all players and families.

Finally, aligning fixture planning more closely with key competitions, such as the Inter County Tournament, will help optimise player availability and performance across the season.

Conclusion

The 2025/26 season has laid strong foundations for future success. With a large proportion of players remaining eligible next season, and improvements in planning and structure, the county is well positioned to build on this progress.

Katie Applin

Secretary
Fixtures Secretary

Head Coach Report 2025/26 Season

Season Overview

The 2025/26 season began with a number of significant challenges for the junior county programme, including the sudden loss of our training venue just days before the season was due to start, alongside initially low player sign-up numbers. Despite these major early difficulties, the programme has grown considerably throughout the year and has developed into a strong, well-attended county setup.

Behind the scenes, the committee worked extremely hard and acted quickly to secure new venues to ensure that county training could continue without major disruption. Their efforts allowed the squads not only to continue operating, but ultimately to grow and thrive throughout the season.

Participation & Squad Growth

Across the year, squad numbers increased steadily, with consistently high attendance at weekly training sessions. It has also been particularly encouraging to see a very positive balance between girls and boys attending the programme, helping to create a strong and inclusive county environment.

The county programme is also continuing to expand due to the number of new junior players entering the setup. Plans are now underway to introduce additional sessions in Brackley to further extend badminton opportunities and county coverage across Northamptonshire, helping provide more access and development opportunities for junior players within different areas of the county.

School Development & Pathways

The development of badminton within schools across Northamptonshire has also continued to grow strongly this season. Coaching opportunities have now been established within schools including Northampton School for Girls and Abbeyfield School, both of whom have communicated a strong desire to work alongside the county programme to further develop badminton opportunities for their students.

Coaching sessions at Northampton School for Girls have already been running successfully for several weeks, helping introduce more students to the sport and strengthen links between schools badminton and the county pathway. Both schools also have enthusiastic plans to enter teams into local competitions and Badminton England school team events.

This progress has been supported through the work of the county programme and coaching teams, helping to strengthen junior badminton pathways and increase opportunities for players across Northamptonshire.

Player Performance & Achievements

Players representing Northamptonshire have achieved excellent results at sanctioned Badminton England tournaments throughout the season, winning medals across multiple age groups and events.

A further highlight for the county this season was having a player invited onto the England Junior Pathway at U17 level. This player will join two other Northamptonshire players already training within that performance environment.

U17 Shires Programme

The Under 17 Shires programme also enjoyed one of its strongest seasons in recent years, reaching the playoff stages and competing extremely well throughout the campaign. This reflects the growing depth and standard within the county squads.

Inter County Tournament (ICT)

Overview

At the Inter County Tournament (ICT), held at University of Nottingham, Northamptonshire finished 17th overall from 24 counties. The team faced a particularly difficult opening group containing strong counties including Kent and Hertfordshire.

The ICT is the premier annual Under 18 county team event, bringing together many of the strongest junior players from across England. With Northamptonshire fielding a particularly young squad, it was especially encouraging that 9 out of the 10 players remain eligible for next season.

Performance & Results

Although Northamptonshire finished 17th overall, the tournament structure created an uneven split between the upper and lower sections. After being placed in a particularly strong group, the team responded exceptionally well by winning all remaining matches and achieving the strongest possible outcome from that section of the draw.

Following a close 3–7 match against Hertfordshire on day one, the team went on to win all remaining fixtures, including:

- Two victories over Norfolk
- A strong final day win against Lancashire

These results reflected the preparation, belief, resilience, and tactical understanding shown by the squad.

Team Identity & Development

The squad adopted the motto “Stronger Together” throughout the four days of the ICT, and it perfectly captured the spirit of this year’s team. The togetherness shown by players, parents, coaches, and volunteers was one of the biggest strengths of the campaign.

The resilience shown after the opening day demonstrated the character within the squad, with players adapting well under pressure and competing with consistency across all four days.

Coaching & Support

Carsten Jensen was a fantastic addition to the ICT coaching setup, bringing valuable experience from Badminton Denmark and his international coaching background.

I would also like to thank Daniel Wykes, Simon Sturgess, and Jermaine for their continued support throughout the season.

Player Recognition

I would like to place on record a huge congratulations and thank you to Sana on her final ICT representing Northamptonshire. As team captain, she led by example throughout the tournament, stepping in wherever needed and driving the team forward.

Sana possesses great technique, composure, and a very high badminton intelligence, qualities which will undoubtedly serve both her and Northamptonshire badminton extremely well for many years to come.

Sponsorship & Support

Northamptonshire was once again represented in outstanding team kit. Many thanks go to Darren Applin and TPS Tidy Property Solutions for providing the team shirts.

A special thank you also goes to Katie Applin and Winchester House School for providing the team bus and ensuring a smooth journey to ICT.

Parent & Community Support

Finally, I would like to thank all parents who have supported the county programme over the past four years. Their commitment has been vital in rebuilding junior badminton within Northamptonshire after a long period of limited activity.

Summary & Future Outlook

This season represents one of the strongest periods of progress in recent Northamptonshire junior badminton history, across participation, performance, and player development.

From:

- Last place in 2023
- To 24th in 2024
- To 15th in 2025
- To a competitive 17th in 2026

The trajectory is clear and extremely positive.

The overall attitude, effort, and team spirit shown by the players has been excellent, and the foundations for future success are firmly in place.

While the future structure of the coaching setup may evolve, I remain extremely proud of what this group has achieved and hope to continue supporting junior badminton within Northamptonshire in whatever capacity possible.

Stephen Willis
Head Coach
Northamptonshire County Junior Badminton

Northamptonshire County Badminton Association

Northamptonshire Restricted Tournament Report 2025–2026

Overview

The 2025–2026 Northamptonshire Restricted tournament series showcased the continued growth, depth, and quality of badminton across the county. With events spanning U11 through to Masters and Senior levels, the competitions highlighted a strong player pathway and increasing standards across all age groups. A consistent theme throughout the season was players competing across multiple disciplines, demonstrating well-rounded development and strong competitive resilience.

U19 Restricted – 21 September 2025

Women's Singles: 1 Bethany Applin, 2 Emily Applin, 3/4 Natalie Zbytek, Mali Hart

Open Singles: 1, Ethan Feakin, 2 Alfie Rimmer, 3/4 Henry Joseph Ridd-Jones, Rion Ray

Women's Doubles: 1, Bethany Applin / Emily Applin, 2 Rebecca Cross / Avyukta Gautam, 3 Jessica Zbytek / Natalie Zbytek, 4 Mali Hart / Mrugakshi Waghmere

Mixed Doubles: 1 Emily Applin / Harrison Crabb, 2 Bethany Applin / Henry Joseph Ridd-Jones, 3/4 Avyukta Gautam / Thomas Hains, Alex Cross /Rebecca Cross

Open Doubles: 1 Hayden Feakin / Alfie Rimmer, 2 Aakash Choudhary / Harrison Crabb, 3 Aradhya Parashar / Henry Joseph Ridd-Jones, 4 Ethan Feakin / Thomas Hains

U17 Restricted – 22 March 2026

Men's Singles: 1 Aradhya Parashar, 2 Aakash Choudhary, 3 Aayush Bhatnagar, 4 Krishan Bhundia

Women's Singles: 1 Bethany Applin, 2 Emily Applin, 3 Mali Hart Men's Doubles: 1 Oscar Minish /Aradhya Parashar, 2 Krishan Bhundia / Rithvik Vijay Prabu

Women's Doubles: 1 Bethany Applin /Emily Applin, 2 Jessica Zbytek / Natalie Zbytek

Mixed Doubles: 1 Aakash Choudhary / Emily Applin, 2 Aradhya Parashar / Natalie Zbytek, 3 Krishan Bhundia / Bethany Applin

U15 Restricted – 12 October 2025

Women's Singles: 1 Natalie Zbytek, 2 Rebecca Cross, 3 Jessica Zbytek, 4 Jiwon Lee Men's

Singles: 1 Junchen Lin, 2 Aradhya Parashar, 3/4 James Qiu, Harry Yao Women's Doubles: 1

Jessica Zbytek / Natalie Zbytek, 2 Camille Ho / Jiwon Lee Mixed Doubles: 1 Aradhya Parashar /

Rebecca Cross, 2 Junchen Lin / Camille Ho, 3 Harry Yao / Jiwon Lee, 4 Anthony Wu / Natalie

Zbytek Men's Doubles: 1 Junchen Lin / Harry Yao, 2 Aradhya Parashar / Marcus Wong, 3 Oscar Minish / Rithvik Vijay Prabu, 4 Justin Ong / Anthony Wu

U13 Restricted – 22 March 2026

Boys Singles: 1 Rithvik Vijay Prabu, 2 Harshith Velamala, 3/4 Dean Sinha, Johan Jacob

Girls Singles: 1 Jessica Zbytek, 2 Tehara Dissanayaka Mudiyanselage, 3 Aadhya Nagulapalli, 4 Bavati Prakash

Boys Doubles: 1 Subhom Parija / Rithvik Vijay Prabu, 2 Karthikeya Kanikaram / Harshith

Velamala, 3 Johan Jacob / Dean Sinha, 4 Prajit Jeevan / Guanhe Tang

Girls Doubles: 1 Tehara Dissanayaka Mudiyanselage / Jessica Zbytek, 2 Aadhya Nagulapalli / Bavati Prakash

MixedDoubles: 1 Rithvik Vijay Prabu / Jessica Zbytek, 2 Johan Jacob / Aadhya Nagulapalli, 3 Dean Sinha / Bavati Prakash

U11 Restricted – 22 March 2026

Girls Singles: 1 Aadhya Nagulapalli, 2 Bavati Prakash

Senior Restricted

Men's Singles: Winner Robbie Bristow

Women's Singles: Bethany Applin (youngest ever winner for a senior Restricted)

Open Doubles: Matthew Ireland / Zach Sturgess

Mixed Doubles: Zach Sturgess / Lucy Sturgess

Women's Doubles: Behtany and Emily Applin (youngest ever winners for a senior Restricted)

Additional match highlights show strong knockout performances and competitive finals across all senior draws.

Masters Restricted – 25 October 2025 (Northampton)

MS35: 1 Jermaine Lovelace, 2 Stefan Wurwal, 3 Micah Pink, 4 Carl Hollis

MD35: 1 James Bass /Iain Isgar, 2 Carl Hollis / Jermaine Lovelace, 3 Ian Meredith / Simon Sturgess, 4 Pamela White / Mike Willis

Overall Summary

The Restricted tournament series continues to be a key pillar of Northamptonshire badminton, providing competitive opportunities across all age groups and supporting player development from grassroots through to senior level. The 2025–2026 season highlighted strong participation, multiple-discipline success, and a clear pathway into higher levels of competition, reinforcing the county's ongoing commitment to development and performance.

English County Challenge (ECC) Report 2026

York | 11–12 April 2026

The 2026 English County Challenge marked Northamptonshire's second consecutive year of entry into this important national 17–21 competition. Returning to the event this season was particularly pleasing, as it continues to play a key role in bridging the gap between junior county badminton and the senior game.

Northamptonshire was represented by a committed group of players: Alfie Rowley, Cheryl Chung, Vivien Li, Henry Ross-Jones, Thomas Hains, Raees Haiy and Megan Shields. Across the weekend, the squad showed excellent attitude, resilience, and willingness to step up into a higher level of competition.

Competition Overview

Drawn in a strong Group C alongside Avon 2, Kent and Northumberland, the opening day proved challenging. The team faced experienced opposition across all disciplines, with results not going in our favour. However, while the scorelines were tough, they do not fully reflect the competitiveness within matches, nor the valuable experience gained by players stepping into this age group.

Progress Across the Weekend

Moving into the placement rounds on Day 2, there was a noticeable shift in performance. The team settled into the competition well, showing greater composure and confidence. A more competitive showing against Devon and a hard-fought 3–3 draw against Worcestershire better reflected the squad's ability and highlighted the progress made over the course of the weekend.

Reflections

As with many areas this season, the ECC campaign must be viewed within the wider context of development. This is still a relatively young and evolving group, many of whom are gaining their first exposure to this level of county badminton. What was particularly encouraging was the willingness of players to compete across all disciplines, the resilience shown after a difficult opening day, and the clear improvement as the tournament progressed.

Looking Forward

The value of entering the ECC for a second year cannot be overstated. Establishing consistency at this level is an important step for the county, and it is through continued participation that results will naturally improve. With a number of players eligible to return next season, there is a strong foundation to build on. The experience gained this year will be invaluable, both individually and collectively, as the squad continues to develop.

Closing Note

Thank you to all players for their commitment and representation of Northamptonshire across the weekend. Competitions such as the ECC are never easy, but they are essential in preparing players for the next stage of their badminton journey. The progress shown across the two days gives real encouragement for the seasons ahead.

Northamptonshire Senior County Championships Report 2025/26

Overview

Northamptonshire entered two teams into the Senior County Championships (Central Region) during the 2025/26 season: Northamptonshire 1 competing in Division 2 and Northamptonshire 2 in Division 4. The season provided a challenging but valuable competitive platform across both divisions, with a mix of experienced players and developing squad members representing the county. Alongside the on-court competition, this season also marked an important step forward in strengthening the structure, communication and overall culture of the senior county programme.

Division 2 – Northamptonshire 1

Final Position: 8th Played: 7 | Won: 1 | Lost: 6 Rubbers: 17 – 60 | Games: 42 – 124 Competing at a high standard, Northamptonshire 1 faced strong opposition including Staffordshire, Leicestershire and Cambridgeshire. The standout result of the season was a hard-fought 6–5 victory away at Yorkshire 5, demonstrating the team's ability to compete in tight fixtures. Despite the overall results, many matches were more competitive than the scorelines suggest, with a number of rubbers closely contested. This level continues to provide an important benchmark for the county as players transition and develop within the senior environment.

Division 4 – Northamptonshire 2

Final Position: 7th Played: 7 | Won: 1 | Lost: 6 Rubbers: 23 – 54 | Games: 55 – 115

Northamptonshire 2 competed with a developing squad and showed clear potential throughout the season. A highlight was the 7–4 victory against Gloucestershire 4, alongside several competitive performances against higher-placed opposition. The experience gained across the season will play a key role in player development and future progression within the senior structure.

Player Representation

A wide pool of players represented Northamptonshire across both teams, reflecting a strong mix of experience and emerging talent. Men's squad included: Matt Asbrey, Dan Davey, Ethan Feakin, Hayden Feakin, Thomas Hains, Raees Haiy, Levi Hoang, Matthew Ireland, Issac Jose, Milan Joy, Alfie Rimmer, Abdul Shahid and Simon Sturgess. Women's squad included: Michaela Anthony, Bethany Applin, Emily Applin, Lyndsey Blow, Sophie Blow, Evie Burbidge, Rachel Crabb, Emily Fisk, Megan Shields and Caroline Hossack. This depth of representation is an encouraging sign for the continued growth of the senior county programme.

Operational Challenges and Delivery

The season began with some operational challenges. In early September, the Senior Team Representative stepped down and, without a formal handover, responsibility for organisation and team selection transferred to the committee. This created initial pressures around communication, coordination and selection processes. However, the committee worked collaboratively to ensure continuity and stability

across the season. Despite these challenges: - Both teams were successfully fielded across all fixtures - The county avoided financial penalties experienced in the previous season due to unfulfilled fixtures - A broader group of players were engaged to support team availability This reflects a significant collective effort to ensure the county remained active and competitive throughout the SCC programme.

Strengthening the County Structure

This season has also seen the introduction of clearer expectations and structures to support players and the wider county environment. Following committee discussions and formalised agreements, there is now greater clarity around: - Communication and availability expectations Respectful conduct aligned with Badminton England standards - Participation in training and county events - Selection being based on a combination of performance, balance, availability and team contribution These expectations are formalised through the SCC Player Agreement and committee governance updates, helping to create a positive, transparent and consistent environment for all players.

Overall Reflection

The 2025/26 SCC season has been both competitive and developmental. While results across both divisions were challenging, the progress made in strengthening the structure, improving communication and broadening player involvement represents a significant step forward. The experience gained this season provides a strong foundation for future improvement.

Looking Ahead

Priorities moving into the 2026/27 season include: - Improving consistency in player availability and selection - Increasing opportunities for training and squad cohesion - Continuing to develop players progressing into senior badminton - Building on the strengthened structure introduced this season with these foundations in place, the focus now shifts towards growth, stability and improved performance in the seasons ahead.

Social Media Report – 2025/26 Season

The Northamptonshire County Badminton social media platforms have continued to grow strongly throughout the 2025/26 season, helping promote county badminton, player achievements, county matches, restricted tournaments, ICT, ECC and development opportunities across Northamptonshire. Building on last season's foundations, engagement and visibility have increased significantly across both Instagram and Facebook during the past 12 months.

Instagram Growth & Performance

Instagram followers increased from 354 followers reported at the 2025 AGM to 424 followers currently.• The account now contains 189 posts and continues to showcase county activity across juniors, seniors, tournaments and county team events.

Over the last 90 days alone, the account achieved:

32,072 total views

2,693 viewers

54.9% follower views

45.1% non-follower views

Profile activity increased by 46.4%

Profile visits increased by 45.3%

The account achieved approximately 5.4k views in the last 30 days

Top Performing Content

The strongest performing content this season focused on:

ICT 2026 team announcements and updates

County match victories

Team travel and behind-the-scenes content

Restricted tournament medal winners

Team photos and player achievements

Junior county development and pathway promotion

Top performing posts during the ICT period included:

ICT 2026 Team Northants announcement – 3.2k views

Northants victory over Norfolk – 2.9k views

ICT team win post – 2.4k views

Multiple additional posts achieving between 1.5k–2.3k views

Facebook Group Activity

The Northamptonshire Badminton Association Facebook Group also remains active and important for communication within the county community:

- 382 group members
- 375 posts in the last 28 days
- The group continues to be used regularly for:
- League communication
- County updates
- Tournament promotion
- Player achievements
- Badminton opportunities within Northamptonshire
- Content Development During 2025/26

This season saw a broader range of content being introduced including:

- ICT daily updates
- County team graphics
- Match result graphics
- Medal winner recognition posts
- Junior pathway promotion
- Tournament advertising
- Team travel content
- Behind-the-scenes player and coach updates
- Restricted tournament coverage
- Promotional reels and stories

The introduction of more regular event-based posting has helped create significantly higher engagement compared with previous seasons.

Future Development

Moving into the 2026/27 season, there is strong potential to continue expanding the county's digital presence further through:

- Increased use of reels and short-form video
- More regular matchday coverage
- Player spotlight features
- Coach interviews
- Junior development content
- Club promotion across Northamptonshire
- Sponsor integration and event promotion
- Improved coordination between committee members contributing content

Overall, the social media platforms have become an increasingly valuable tool for promoting badminton across Northamptonshire and showcasing the achievements, development and community spirit within the county programme.

Melissa Gentle

Social Media

League Report 2025/26 Season

Firstly, thank you all for your patience when there was a lag in publishing results to the website. We continue to work on the automated system in the background, that will allow teams to upload results during a match. It is taking longer than expected as;

- We are only volunteers,
- We try to contribute to this voluntary position when time allows
- We have jobs that demands more from us
- And, it's our love for the sport that allows us to contribute when we can.

That said, I would like to say a special thanks to all of the clubs who were able to accommodate a late entry from the University of Northampton. I've been keen to try and grow the league, not just with more teams from each club, but into other corners of the county. We still have contributions from the Rushden League (Thanks to Christina), and our distribution list includes clubs in Daventry, Brackley, and as far as the Leicestershire border, should they wish to enter/re-enter a team.

It was very encouraging to also see a game played on a weekend, instead of the usual weeknight. I hope it was not a one-off as this would build on an idea I have been floating around, where multiple games could be played in a single central venue on a weekend (similar to county matches).

This season has seen far less disruptions than the previous but were still inconvenient and sometimes near impossible to rearrange. The DKWAY's close ties to the county saw the biggest disruption with league matches, as their focus shifted towards ensuring that Northamptonshire was represented in the Shires League. Whilst I was still hopeful that things would stabilise in the new year, there was just not enough time left to organise any fixtures. I hope they will submit an entry for the next season but completely understand that the county is a priority.

At the time of this report, fixtures completed:

OD1: 100%
OD2: 90%
OD3: 93%
LD1: 100%
XD1: 90%
DD1: 92%

I'm hoping to collect all trophies to have them engraved before the AGM. As a reminder:

- It's 2-UP/2-DOWN this season.
- All teams should have paid their entry fees
- The missing results should not affect the current standings on the website
- Ties have been resolved on spreadsheet.

Please let us know which teams you are entering for next season so that we can start shaping the divisions.

Winners will be announced on the night.

Jermaine Lovelace

Northamptonshire County Badminton Association

AGM Governance & Constitutional Clarification Statement

May 2026

Purpose of this Statement

During preparations for the 2026 AGM, a number of constitutional and governance questions were identified regarding the Association's current constitution and historic AGM processes.

In the interests of transparency, accountability, and procedural fairness, the Committee undertook an internal governance review process to better understand whether any ambiguities or inconsistencies currently exist within the Association's governance framework.

This statement is intended to:

- provide transparency to members,
- explain the governance review undertaken,
- clarify the Committee's intended approach for the 2026 AGM,
- and outline proposed next steps following the AGM.

Governance Areas Identified

The governance review identified areas where differing interpretations and/or uncertainty currently exist regarding:

- AGM electorate definitions
- Affiliated club and affiliated school recognition
- Committee voting rights
- Quorum requirements
- Constitutional amendment procedures
- Constitutional records relating to the 2023 merger process

The Committee also identified that historic operational practice over recent years may not always align precisely with current constitutional wording or may not be clearly documented within the constitution itself.

Committee Consultation Process

To ensure transparency and collective decision-making, the Committee conducted a governance consultation process involving:

- circulation of a governance summary document,
- circulation of the current constitution,
- and a structured Committee consultation form.

The purpose of this process was:

- to identify whether governance concerns were recognised by Committee members,

- to gather views regarding possible approaches,
- and to ensure an appropriate audit trail existed demonstrating that the issues had been openly considered.

The consultation process confirmed:

- broad recognition that governance ambiguities currently exist,
- support for future constitutional review and regularisation,
- support for transparency and procedural fairness,
- and support for maintaining governance continuity pending future review.

AGM Approach for 2026

Having considered:

- the timing of the AGM,
- historic operational practice,
- Committee feedback,
- and guidance received from Badminton England,

the Association intends to proceed with the 2026 AGM using the established historic AGM process and issued agenda.

The Committee does not intend to introduce substantive constitutional or procedural changes immediately prior to the AGM.

This approach is intended to:

- preserve continuity,
- ensure fairness to members,
- minimise procedural disruption,
- and allow the AGM process to proceed within the published notice period.

Future Constitutional Review

The Committee recognises that further constitutional clarification and governance regularisation work is required following the AGM.

Subject to the outcome of the AGM and future Committee decisions, it is anticipated that a future constitutional review process may include:

- clarification of affiliation definitions,
- clarification of AGM electorate rights,
- clarification of committee voting rights,
- review of quorum provisions,
- review of amendment procedures,
- and consolidation of constitutional records relating to the 2023 merger process.

Any future constitutional amendments would be undertaken through the Association's formal constitutional processes and communicated transparently to members.

Commitment to Transparency & Good Governance

The Committee remains committed to:

- transparency,
- procedural fairness,
- accountability,
- and the continued development of good governance practices within the Association.

The intention throughout this process has been to ensure that the Association proceeds in a fair, open, and constitutionally responsible manner while protecting the integrity of the AGM process and the interests of members.

Issued on behalf of the Committee
Northamptonshire County Badminton Association
May 2026

AGM Proposal – Structural Reorganisation of NCB

Motion Summary

Members are asked to approve the transition of the Northamptonshire County Badminton Association (NCB) into a **dual-structure model**:

- **Junior Section (NJCB)**
- **Senior & League Section (NCBSL)**

Both sections will operate under a shared county identity, with **clear separation of responsibilities, finances, and governance**.

Why This Change is Proposed

The current structure combines junior, senior, and league activity under one committee. This has led to:

- Unclear decision-making
- Confusion over voting rights
- Conflicting priorities between junior and senior activity
- Increased governance challenges

This proposal introduces a structure that is:

- **Clearer** – defined responsibilities
- **Fairer** – decisions made by relevant stakeholders
- **Stronger** – reduced conflict and improved delivery

What Each Section Will Do

Junior Section

- All U11–U19 activity
- County training and squads
- Junior competitions and pathways
- School and development programmes

Senior & League Section

- Senior county teams
- League management and fixtures
- Adult competitions
- Club-based activity

How It Will Work

- Each section will have its own **committee and leadership**
- Each section will control its own **activities and decisions**
- A small **County Alignment Group** will coordinate shared matters

- No individual may hold the same officer role across both sections

Financial Clarity

- Separate accounts for:
    - Junior activity
    - Senior & League activity
- Each section manages its own finances
- Transparent reporting at AGM

Voting (Interim Approach)

- Junior matters → voted on by junior stakeholders
- Senior/League matters → voted on by affiliated clubs
- Whole-county matters → combined voting (to be formalised)

What Happens If Approved

1. **Immediate implementation** of the two sections
2. **Transition period (up to 6 months)** to formalise roles and processes
3. **Updated constitution** to reflect the new structure

Governance Alignment

This proposal aligns with expectations of Badminton England and recognised good governance principles, including:

- Clear accountability
- Transparent decision-making
- Appropriate separation of responsibilities

The Decision

Members are asked to vote:

- **FOR** the proposed reorganisation
- **AGAINST** the proposed reorganisation
- **ABSTAIN**

Northamptonshire County Badminton Association

Election of officers

Nominations received to date

Position	Currently held by	Nominated by	Seconded by	Secondary nomination	Nominated by	Seconded by	Valid Nomination
Chairperson	Melissa Gentle	Stephen Willis	Sally Hains	Karen Sturgess	*	Matt Asbrey	No Nominator
Hon. Secretary	Katie Applin	Melissa Gentle	Stephen Willis	Rachel Maywood	**	Becky Rice	**Late Nomination (received to late)**
League Secretary	Jemima Lovelace	Stephen Willis	Melissa Gentle	Bekcy Rice	**	Rachel Maywood	**Late Nomination (received to late)**
Hon. Treasurer Jr	Kataryna Zbytek	Stephen Willis	Melissa Gentle	Hon Wai Lee	*	Lucy Sturgess	No Nominator
Hon. Treasurer Sr	Kataryna Zbytek	Melissa Gentle	Stephen Willis	Hon Wai Lee	*	Lucy Sturgess	No Nominator
Head Coach	Stephen Willis	Melissa Gentle	Sally Hains	Zach Sturgess	*	Lyndssey Blow	No Nominator
Assitant Coach	Simon Sturges	No		Simon Sturgess	*	Hon Wai Lee	No Nominator
Welfare Officer	Sally Haines	Melissa Gentle	Stephen Willis	Mat Asbrey	*		No Nominator
Fixture Secretary (Shires)	Katie Applin	Melissa Gentle	Stephen Willis	Bekcy Rice	**	Rachel Maywood	**Late Nomination (received to late)**
Tournament Officer	Melissa Gentle	Stephen Willis	Sally Hains	Alfie Rimmer	*	Simon Sturgess	No Nominator
Social Media Officer	Sachin Sharma	Stephen Willis	Melissa Gentle	Lucy Sturgess	*		No Nominator
Schools Representative	Rob Cunniffe	Stephen Willis	Melissa Gentle				
Club representative	***Vacant***			Lyndsey Blow	*	Caroline Hossack	No Nominator
Parent/squad representitve 2 per age group							
Development Squads Representative 1	Sachin Sharma	Wojciech Zbytek	Kataryna Zbytek				
Development Squads Representative 2	***Vacant***			Jonny Bougourd		Matt Asbrey	No Nomiator
Parent/squad representitve 2 per age group							
Futures / Elite Squads Representative 1	Wojciech Zbytek	Katie Applin	Sally Hains				
Futures / Elite Squads Representative 2	***Vacant***						
Parent/squad representitve 2 per age group							
Senior Team Representative 1	***Vacant***			Caroline Hossack		Matt Asbrey	No Nomiator
Senior Team Representative 2	***Vacant***			Matt Asbrey		Zach Sturgess	No Nomiator

* Indicates that no nomination had been received for the position at the time of AGM pack preparation.

** Indicates that the nomination was received after the published 30 April deadline.

Any procedural or eligibility matters relating to nominations will be considered by the AGM prior to the commencement of voting. The AGM retains the ability to determine how nominations received after the published deadline are handled in accordance with the constitution, historic practice, and the wishes of the membership present.