### SUSSEX COUNTY BADMINTON ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

#

#  **Affiliation**: *Sara Foster writes:*

*645 active members*

**Chairman Report –** *Mark Russ writes*

A further year out from the pandemic and although the badminton world in general may never revert back to where it was before Covid it does feel as if we have regained some of the ground that we lost to the almost 2 year hiatus.  As can be seen from the reports provided by the Juniors, Seniors and Masters there is a considerable amount of badminton being played.  As a County I would like to thank the small band of volunteers that put in so much effort and are so dedicated to Sussex badminton, year in year out, in order that players can represent their County and can participate in tournament badminton.

One of the big successes this season, I believe, is that we are now getting more and more of the Junior players transitioning into the Senior teams or playing for both the Seniors and the Juniors.  This has always been one of our stated aims, that the Juniors are trained to a standard to play adult badminton and that they have a pathway in which to continue with their badminton and wherever possible to continue playing for Sussex.  There is still a lot of work to be done in this area as we still lose a large number of players once they leave Junior County and it is hoped that we can find more ways to integrate them into the senior set up.

As I hinted in my opening remarks, Sussex County badminton relies on a very small group of individuals to get everything done.  In my last report I asked for someone new to come forward to help write a strategy for County development.  Nobody came forward and so once again I will ask if there were anyone within Sussex who would like to get involved with the organisation and help us go forward in a more structured, goal orientated manner.  If we are to develop, we need new people to get involved and to bring new ideas.  Having new ideas is vital if we are not to stagnate and having additional

**Financial**

***Philip Huggett writes:***

*Detailed in separate PDF*

**Senior Team Report:**

*Sara Foster writes:*

*We have 8 debut recognitions to present*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Harry | Morgan |
| Jermome | Brackley |
| Dan | Goodsell |
| Leon | Crayford |
| Ryan | Chan |
| Mitsuoyo | Kondo |
| Mina | Myall |
| Gretchen | Rowles |

 *at the restricted plus two silver medal for 50 caps.*

*56 players who are current and available (52 last year played for Sussex)*

***First Senior Team***

***David King writes****:*

Overall, this has been a really good year for the Sussex first team. After a difficult year last year coming down from our long stint in Prem A, it was good to see everyone motivated to do well this season. After a hard fought season we finished 6th in a very close league. Notable mentions: Firstly, It was great to see our juniors/young seniors stepping up to the plate. Not only pushing their way into the first team but competing in Prem B which is a high level. So, a big well done to Molly Thompson, Andrew Harrison, Bea Noakes and Katie Bicknell. Secondly, I think we can all agree it was amazing to see Dean back on court and enjoying his Badminton. After an unimaginable 18 months where we were unsure if he would even step back onto court, watching him and Jonty tear apart pairs like the old days was a sight to see

***Second and Third Senior Teams***

***Evan Gill writes:***

The season started off with a fine restricted turnout, and some excellent performances from some of the youth prospects who have gone on to enjoy as excellent season both in the county championship and BE circuit events.

Notable performances include Leon Crayford and Andrew Harrison who are now competing at the highest level and will continue to be valuable assets in the 1st and 2nd teams. Mina Myall and Jerome Brackley also made their senior county debuts in the 3rd team, and I hope we can continue to bring in more youth players into the 2nd and 3rd teams for the 23/24 season.

The 2nd team finished a very creditable 4th in a very competitive Division 2 SE, thanks go to Archie for stepping in to captain the team, and Phil Troke for his help on the county weekends also. As already mentioned, we saw Leon claim several wins in his first season in Senior County, and there were many more fantastic performances and results throughout the season, with the team missing out on promotion by just 5 points which is a remarkable result.

The 3rd team finished 3rd in Division 3 SE, one place off promotion. Again, this is a brilliant season for us, and it was great to see players from East and West Sussex representing the county so well. Thanks go to Jake for helping to captain and keep scores, and the team morale and atmosphere was fantastic so thanks again to all involved.

I think we can look forward to another good year to push for promotion with an improving squad in both 2nds and 3rds. The biggest thanks go to Sara who tirelessly worked to get players out for these weekends. We were up against a fairly challenging timeline due to inconsistencies in comms from Badminton England, so to get the quality of player out for the 2nds and 3rds was miraculous and wouldn’t have been possible without Sara.

We have already received a survey from BE about the season just gone, and I am cautiously optimistic that the 23/24 season will be an improvement on the last 2 years from an organisational point of view.

Thanks to all coaches, parents and supporters, and see you all at the restricted in September.

***Juniors***

***Neil Warwick writes:***

Training for all our junior age groups has concluded for this year and we are now starting to focus on next season. Court bookings are already in place at Lancing Sport Centre, Sussex University and Lewes Sport Centre, ready for the start of September. Our junior trials date this year will be held on Sunday 23rd July at Dolphin Leisure centre, Haywards Heath and all information, including individual age group times have been distributed and also published on our website.

Shires matches for our U15/U17 & U19 teams are all complete with varying results. There has been difficulty fielding full teams this year for some of our matches especially our younger groups due to the number of girls in the squads, however numbers have increased during the year which will hopefully continue next season.

In April our U18’s competed at the annual Inter Counties tournament at Nottingham. A 4 day competition with over 30 counties is a highlight for any young player, and our team finished a very creditable 11th place. Our highest placing for some years.

There have been two junior tournaments arranged by Sussex County this season. Our Sussex Restricted tournament took place in September 2022 and more recently our Rising Stars competition in May this year. The latter receiving 102 entries which was very good. We are already planning our Sussex Restricted for next season in early October and have plans to run two BE sanctioned junior tournaments. Information on all of these will be issued once dates are finalised.

This season there has been little activity in schools’ competition as Badminton England did not run an official event. Sussex has always had a healthy interest in this event both at local qualifying rounds and County finals day, so it was disappointing that neither took place. I am pleased to say that Badminton England will be running an event in 2023-24 and School Games Organisers (SGO’S) have been passed information to distribute to every school with entries for the initial rounds to be in by mid-September.

***Competitions:***

*Mark Russ writes:*

# *Sussex Restricted is planned for September 29th September at Lancing and 30th September/1st October at Portslade*

***Badminton England Update***

***Derek Webb writes:***

The Badminton England (BE) AGM was held in Milton Keynes on24th June.
BE is under new management with a fresh look under Sue Storey as Chief Executive. Like a lot of
organisations it is in post pandemic recovery mode.
The good news is that the All-England last March was a financial success in that it led to a surplus in
BE finances in the last financial year despite overdue expenditure on refurbishment of the lodges.
The grants that BE receives will be static for two years.
BE is developing a Strategy for the next 5 years which is the subject of consultation.
The good news is that the Schools competition is back on for next season and details will be sent out
shortly.
There will only be minor changes to the Membership system for the next year.
Morten Frost, the performance Director, had previously reported that the plan to create two regional
hubs, one in the North and one in the South.

***The Masters:***

***Mike Stoneham and Paul Moss write:***

The practice sessions were well attended with plenty of playing time for all age groups.

We entered 8 league teams, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 and a 75 team for the first time, the final placings were as follows.

40's were 4th 45's were 1st 50's were 5th 55's were 4th

60's were 2nd 65's were 4th 70's were 3rd 75's were 2nd

The high light was the 45's winning the league play off's, then the National Final at Birmingham to become National champions, well done to the team and there captain Chris Spice for doing such a great job.

Sussex had 7 teams for the County Challenge weekend in January 2023, they were 40, 45, 50, 55, 65, 70 and a 2nd 70 team, the final standing at the end of the weekend were as follows.

40's were 5th 45's were 1st 50's were 2nd 55's were 1st

65;s were 1st 70's A were 4th 70's B were 7th

Well done to the 45's 55's and the 65's for winning there divisions.

We would like to thank all the players and especially the captains for all there hard work organising the teams and representing Sussex so well.

*Practices & Trials July 2023*

*2 trials/practices booked for Jul to date .*

*Tournaments 2022/23*

*Sussex players in master’s International/National Champs successes – 22/23****Euros Ljubljana***

*Cathy Bargh Gold Medal Singles 060’s*

 *Silver Medal Ladies DoublesO55’s*

***English Nationals***

*Jane Ashfold Silver Womens Singles O50’s*

*Gretchen Rowles Silver Womens Singles O55’s*

*Cathy Bargh Gold Womens Singles O60’s*

*Karen Thomas Gold Womens Doubles O60’s*

*Cathy Bargh Silver Womens Doubles O60’s*

*Jane Ashfold/Sara Foster Silver Womens Doubles O50’s*

*Sara Foster Silver Mixed Doubles O50’s*

***Development:***

***Julia Alkema writes:***

My focus areas have been:
1.
Trying to establish a junior ‘hub’ in Horsham.
Despite having several successful senior clubs there are very few grass roots
opportunities in Horsham.
I have developed links with several primary schools. I delivered the Racket Pack (BE
primary programme) for a term and I will be returning in September. I am hoping that the
primary schools will eventually feed the junior sessions at The Bridge Leisure Centre.
Short term: young players join a junior session, and some may filter into the county squads.
Long term: players join their local senior badminton club/league team.
I have also established a relationship with the sports development officer in Horsham, he
is very pro active and is very keen to do more badminton related events.
2.
Delivering Racket pack to primary schools in Portslade.
Unfortunately, there is no junior club near enough for them to join. This is something we
need to address. I am in discussion with a L2 coach in Hove.
3.
Working with the GCSE PE students at Longhill High School.
It’s clear that the standard of their technical play, and therefore their assessment marks,
can be improved much more effectively by a coach rather than a PE teacher and as such
they are going to make this part of their curriculum going forwards.
Millais School in Horsham also expressed an interest in doing the same and if we have the
workforce to support it we will try and offer this to other schools across Sussex in due
course.
This would be an ideal opportunity to actively encourage the students to play as seniors
and to signpost them to their local badminton club.
4.
Actively searching out girls for county squads.
We did a trial at Roedean Girls School which resulted in 5 girls joining the U16/18 county
squad their PE department are very keen for this to continue.
5.
Increasing primary participation in Crawley.
I delivered a Racket Pack workshop to 12 primary school teachers who are now teaching
badminton in their PE lessons and/or running after school clubs.
Going forward we will try and link that to a junior session at K2 or at a local high school.
The School Games Organiser in Crawley is very keen to run more badminton events. We
have already supported a Primary Roadshow for him in conjunction with Active Sussex.
This is an event targeted at less active/EAL/Pupil Premium children.

6.
Forging relationships with clubs on the Kent/East Sussex border.
I’m pleased to say that we now have a working relationship with Nigel Perry from AIT
badminton club in Kent which has a very large junior section. He also coaches at ESJCBA
in the East of the county.
A few of our county juniors who live on the border of Kent and Sussex train there. He is
very proactive in promoting Sussex County to any of the Sussex born players.
Going forward having a link to a club in Kent will hopefully mean that we get access to
players from the East of the county who we might otherwise not get to see if they train in
Kent.
Hastings and Eastbourne are so far away from our squad training sessions its a huge
commitment for the families. Having someone who is actively encouraging them to make
that commitment will be incredibly valuable.
7.
Last but not least. Increasing our coaching workforce.
We are in desperate need of L2 coaches, this is our priority at the moment. We are
struggling to start new projects as we currently don’t have the workforce to run the
session.
I delivered a Foundation Coaching Course (formally UKCC L1) in April and we now have 6
new assistant coaches in Sussex (along with some from ESJCBA).
I am in the process of finalising a L2 course in October at Seaford Head Academy, dates
to follow on confirmation.
Please encourage any of your assistant coaches to attend if they are interested and if they
would like more information please get them to email me: julia.alkema1@gmail.com and I
will be happy to help in any way I can.