

Meeting: England Squash Council	Date: 21 May 2025
Location: Online (Zoom video conference)	Time: 10:30-12:45
Invitees Council Representatives, President, Vice Presidents, Board members <i>England Squash Staff:</i> Neil Edgar (Finance Director), Steve Jones (minutes), Paul Makinen (Head of Digital & Insight), Hannah Ridgard-Mason (People & Education Manager), Jo Rowbottom (Head of Partnerships & Communities, Mark Williams (CEO)	

#	Time	Item	Doc Code	Who
1.	10:30	Chair's Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologies for Absence • Declarations of Interests • Minutes of the Council Meeting of 13 Nov 2024 • Matters Arising • Board Update 	ESC(2501) M	Joy Carter
2.		CEO Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights • Questions 		Mark Williams
3.		England Squash Strategy 2025 and Beyond	ESC(2501)03 For discussion	Mark Williams
	11:30	<i>Break</i>		
4.		Coach Development	ESC(2501)04 For discussion	Hannah Ridgard-Mason
5.		Membership & Affiliation	ESC(2501)05 For discussion	Paul Makinen
6.		Schools Project	ESC(2501)06 For discussion	Jo Rowbottom
7.		Re-election of Non-Executive Directors Richard Cannock and Nick Murrills	Vote by Council Representatives	Joy Carter
8.		Any Other Business		Joy Carter
-	12:45	Close		
-	Update paper	Commercial Progress and Opportunities	ESC(2501)07 For information	Joey Barrington
-	Update paper	Competitions	ESC(2501)08 For information	Laura Mumford
-	Update paper	GB Squash	ESC(2501)09 For information	Mark Williams
-	Update paper	Inclusion & Diversity	ESC(2501)10 For information	Jo Rowbottom
-	Update paper	King's Honours and Roll of Honour	ESC(2501)11 For information	Mark Williams
-	Update paper	Talent & Performance	ESC(2501)12 For information	Chris Robertson



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Council meeting held online via the Zoom video conference application at 09:30 on Wednesday, 13 November 2024.

PRESENT

Council Members

Simon Street (Berkshire)	Andrew Beeston (Merseyside)
Julian Holmes (Buckinghamshire)	Tim Taylor (Middlesex)
Hannah Hodgson (Cheshire)	John Thompson (Northumbria)
Brian Duke (Durham)	Jim Reay (Oxfordshire)
David Neller (Essex)	Patrick Fleming (Surrey)
Geoff Went (Essex)	Simon Tunley (Sussex)
Jonathan Graham (Hampshire)	Nick Carter (Worcestershire)
Bernard Gill (Lancashire)	

IN ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Joy Carter (Chair)
Heidi Leseur
Andrew Light
Wendy Newlove
Mark Williams (CEO)

President

Paul Millman

Vice-Presidents

Jackie Robinson
Barbara Sanderson

England Squash

Neil Edgar (Finance Director)
David Evans (Engagement Officer)
Steve Jones (minutes)
Paul Makinen (Head of Digital & Insight)
Laura Mumford (Competitions Manager)
Jo Rowbottom (Head of Partnerships & Communities)
Kirsten Todd (Partnerships & Communities Manager)

MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESC(2402)	<p>1. Chair’s Welcome</p> <p>Joy Carter (JC), England Squash Chair, welcomed everyone to the Council meeting and covered some housekeeping matters including how to ask questions on Zoom and the need for attendees to have their name and county association on display.</p>	
M02ESC(2402)	<p><i>Apologies for absence</i></p> <p>Apologies were received from Herefordshire county association, as well as from World Squash Federation (WSF) President and England Squash Vice President Zena Wooldridge, who was en route to Los Angeles for squash’s first inspection visit ahead of the 2028 Olympic Games.</p>	
M03ESC(2402)	<p><i>Declarations of interests</i></p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p>	
M04ESC(2402)	<p><i>Minutes of the Council Meeting of 20 Jun 2024</i></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read and were agreed as a true and correct record.</p>	
M05ESC(2402)	<p><i>Matters Arising</i></p> <p>M13ESC(2401) – It was agreed that a one-page document that promotes ‘What England Squash Does’ would be shared with Board and Council once completed. A primary use of the document is expected to be the marketing of England Squash membership.</p>	<p>MW</p>
M06ESC(2402)	<p>M17ESC(2401) – There was consensus that mentoring must play an important role in the coach development pathway.</p>	<p>JR</p>
M07ESC(2402)	<p>M19ESC(2401) – In relation to sanctioned competitions and the talent pathway, there was agreement that county associations would share insight on formats of competition that were working particularly well locally, with a view to them potentially being adopted wider.</p>	<p>County associations</p>
M08ESC(2402)	<p><i>Board Update</i></p> <p>Recent work and topics of discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of the plans for Membership & Affiliation • Starting to look at an England Squash strategy to follow on from the current Strategy, which ends in 2025 • Looking at how we can build on the good progress with our commercial partners portfolio and opportunities for other non-grant income 	

County associations

- Met the new National Coach Stuart Crawford and discussed priorities
- Listening exercise to improve inclusion and diversity

M09ESC(2402)

2. CEO Update

England Squash CEO Mark Williams (MW) updated Council on a wide range of topics.

M10ESC(2402)

Staffing

It was noted that three recent appointments had been Stuart Crawford (National Coach), Sarah Ward (Safeguarding, Culture & Wellbeing Manager) and Hannah Ridgard-Mason (People & Education Manager).

County associations were encouraged to ensure that their welfare officers have the opportunity to be on the mailing list for Sarah's newsletter. Sarah can be contacted at sarah.ward@englandsquash.com

M11ESC(2402)

Board changes

It was noted that three Board members including the Chair would be completing their terms by the middle of 2025. England Squash would be advertising for replacements in the new year.

M12ESC(2402)

Olympic Games

News was expected in the near future about the specific venue that will be used for squash in Los Angeles 2028, as well as about how the qualification process for the event will work.

M13ESC(2402)

Competitions

There was appreciation shown for the key role played by county associations in helping produce 800 new children playing competitive squash.

M14ESC(2402)

Roll of Honour project

Big thanks to England Squash President Paul Millman, who has helped provide the data necessary to recognise every player who has ever represented England.

M15ESC(2402)

3. The 'Right' Ball

It is widely understood that using an inappropriate ball can adversely impact the enjoyment and benefits of playing squash and can in some cases lead to players turning away from the sport.

M16ESC(2402)

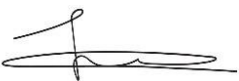
There followed some discussion of Squash 57 and how it is part of the same conversation. It was agreed that Squash 57 is very much a sport for young and old alike. It was felt strongly in some quarters that the

<p>M17ESC(2402)</p>	<p>'Squash 57' name had 'not worked' and that 'racketball' is still the term used by many players, including the growing UK Racketball community and website.</p> <p>Dunlop makes a red-dot ball that is felt to be ideal for recreational players and beginners. It was agreed that education is key because players may feel that it is not 'cool' to be seen using a 'beginner' ball when in fact strong and experienced players can also benefit from using such a ball in some circumstances.</p>	<p>MW</p>
<p>M18ESC(2402)</p>	<p>There was discussion of posters, and it was noted that England Squash is to be adding a balls poster to the Tournament Organiser toolkit.</p>	<p>MW</p>
<p>M19ESC(2402)</p>	<p>There was consensus that England Squash's role should be one of strong guidance in this area rather than mandating particular types of ball.</p>	<p>MW</p>
<p>M20ESC(2402)</p>	<p>4. Competitions</p> <p>Laura Mumford, Competitions Manager, introduced this item, beginning with graded competitions and moving on to the Optasia Squash Super League (SSL) and how the teams will be put together.</p>	
<p>M21ESC(2402)</p>	<p>It was noted that for the current season the SSL consists mostly of clubs from the south of the county. It is the intention to grow the SSL over the coming years and include clubs from the north for a larger geographical spread of teams. Streaming of the matches for the current season will be free of charge.</p>	
<p>M22ESC(2402)</p>	<p>It was felt that the inclusion of the 'local hero' in the SSL was a positive and exciting step.</p>	
<p>M23ESC(2402)</p>	<p>County associations were encouraged to share leads with England Squash in terms of clubs that may be interested in taking part in the SSL for its second year.</p>	<p>County associations</p>
<p>M24ESC(2402)</p>	<p>It was agreed that England Squash would continue to share news with the community, including county associations, about the SSL.</p>	<p>MW</p>
<p>M25ESC(2402)</p>	<p>5. Coach Development</p> <p>The Council paper shared by Hannah Ridgard-Mason, People and Education Manager, ahead of the meeting shared plans for a new flexible coaching course format, the integration of specialist 'badges' and the proposed timeline for implementing these changes to enhance support for all coaches.</p>	
<p>M26ESC(2402)</p>	<p>Jo Rowbottom (JR), Head of Partnerships & Communities, led the discussion as the attendees split into breakout rooms (small groups). JR shared the following question to help guide the conversations.</p>	

	<p>Q: What feedback would county associations like to share on the proposed new coach education pathway, and how can England Squash help county associations boost awareness and engagement?</p> <p>The following are the collated key points and ideas from those discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to do a maturity assessment and target the capabilities gaps once known where they are on a macro scale • What is the succession plan? • Success stories are individual coaches who have owned their own progression through the levels rather than anything programmatic. Clubs and counties need to think of this in terms of their coach succession planning • The coaches list on the England Squash website was said to be out-of-date – updating this would help players accurately find an active coach • There is interest in seeing the plans in due course for identifying potential coaches at all levels. This is felt to be a role for both the county and for England Squash • To attract more coaches, perhaps develop a pathway after the squash leaders/buddy up with next-level coaches • Support coaches in setting up a business model • Provide case studies of successful counties in due course so that others can follow 	<p>JR / HRM</p>
<p>M27ESC(2402)</p>	<p>6. Membership</p> <p>Paul Makinen, Head of Digital and Insight, updated Council on the new scheme, both in relation to individual members and club affiliation. Highlights included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Digital marketing campaign has been effective in raising awareness and driving conversion, generating 14,000 link clicks to date • The digital platform has been updated to support the new membership model. Notably, new club and county dashboards are now live, giving much greater clarity and visibility of user membership statuses to administrators in clubs and county associations • There has been excellent support from county associations, with 30 county associations telling us that they are now mandating England Squash membership and affiliation for their leagues and competitions • A new membership benefit has been agreed which will see members access a 10% discount at Worker Bee Coffee's web shop and will be announced in the next few weeks 	
<p>M28ESC(2402)</p>	<p>Julian Holmes, representing Buckinghamshire, shared his experiences of the new scheme. Notably things didn't start well for the new scheme in his county because the county's summer 2024 AGM showed that a</p>	

<p>M29ESC(2402)</p>	<p>significant number of clubs had negative feelings towards the changes to some degree.</p> <p>It was noted by Julian that discussion at the AGM developed into one of ‘what have you ever done for squash?’, with clubs supportive of the new scheme challenging the less supportive clubs. By the time the summer had ended and the squash season had got underway, the reality was that clubs and players alike had just ‘stepped up and did it’ with their England Squash memberships and club affiliations.</p>	
<p>M30ESC(2402)</p>	<p>7. Schools Project</p> <p>Kirsten Todd (KT) from the Partnerships & Programmes team introduced this item, explaining how England Squash is currently creating a new squash programme for schools, with the aim of raising awareness and participation in squash in primary school children.</p>	
<p>M31ESC(2402)</p>	<p>It was noted that the programme will be delivered in two different ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coach-led – Trained Coaches will be given resources to help them approach schools and deliver the programme 2. Teacher-led – England Squash will provide teachers with resources and training to deliver activities to the pupils during PE lessons 	
<p>M32ESC(2402)</p>	<p>KT then invited discussion in breakout rooms and shared the following questions to help guide the conversations.</p> <p>Q1: Do you know of any successful school programmes in your county, and if so what could England Squash learn from them?</p> <p>Q2: How can you promote the new programme to coaches and schools in your county, and what help do you need from England Squash?</p> <p>The following are the collated key points and ideas from those discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a squash staff taster experience for school teachers • Find players in clubs who are teachers • Financing and coach availability are issues • Use a mixture of squash courts and brick walls, e.g. in the playground • How do we turn squash in schools into a habit? • Teachers and coaches should feel supported by the programme • There needs to be more than just one taster session for school children • Schools transporting kids to squash courts may be a barrier, especially due to finances • Mum and child sessions have had some success, providing regular attendance by school children 	<p>KT</p>

<p>M33ESC(2402)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A county secured funding for collapsible mini squash courts, which may be preferred to rebound nets • England Squash could work with Active Partnerships on school games • That transition from school activity into clubs and then club membership is key • Wednesday afternoon PE sessions are an opportunity. OFSTED are motivated to get children healthier and fitter • Collaborate with the National School Games framework • Increasing the number of coaches generally will play an important role so that demand can be satisfied <p>8. Any Other Business</p> <p>JC highlighted that several information-only papers as follows had also been shared with Council members and thanked the writers of those papers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment and Sustainability • Inclusion & Diversity • County Association Governance Standards • Participation • Safeguarding • Talent & Performance 	
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Signed.....
 Joy Carter (Chair)

England Squash Strategy

Summary

Our current strategy, 'Squash in a Changing World' will be replaced during 2025, with a proposed release date in the Autumn.

Work has commenced on developing the new strategy including internal and external consultation to identify the main challenges and shape the key themes and priorities.

At the May Council meeting, we look forward to a discussion with counties to help shape the future direction of England Squash and squash in England.

During the session we are looking to address the following questions:

- **What are the key challenges for squash to overcome?**
- **What are the top priorities that England Squash should focus on during the next few years?**

Author: Mark Williams, CEO

Date: May 2025

Background

We are working towards launching a new strategy in Autumn 2025, with approval from the Board targeted for the September Board meeting.

Our current strategy, Squash in a Changing World, can be accessed on our website, we encourage Council attendees to review this document before the May meeting:

[England Squash - Download the strategy](#)

Consultation to inform the development of the new strategy has included:

- Internal staff meetings to capture key insights, ideas and views.
- Meetings with Board members.
- Initial discussions with County Associations at Council in November (coaching, competitions and schools' activity).
- Informal conversations with various prominent individuals in squash (ongoing).
- Review of insight and 'what is known' about squash in England.
- Initial desktop review of current strategy, including what 'has gone well' and what 'hasn't worked or needs to change'.
- Publication of a members' survey to gather feedback from across the squash community.
- Invitation to all county associations to have a 1:1 meeting on the strategy.
- Significant Listening Exercise to understand major challenges impacting participation and player experience.

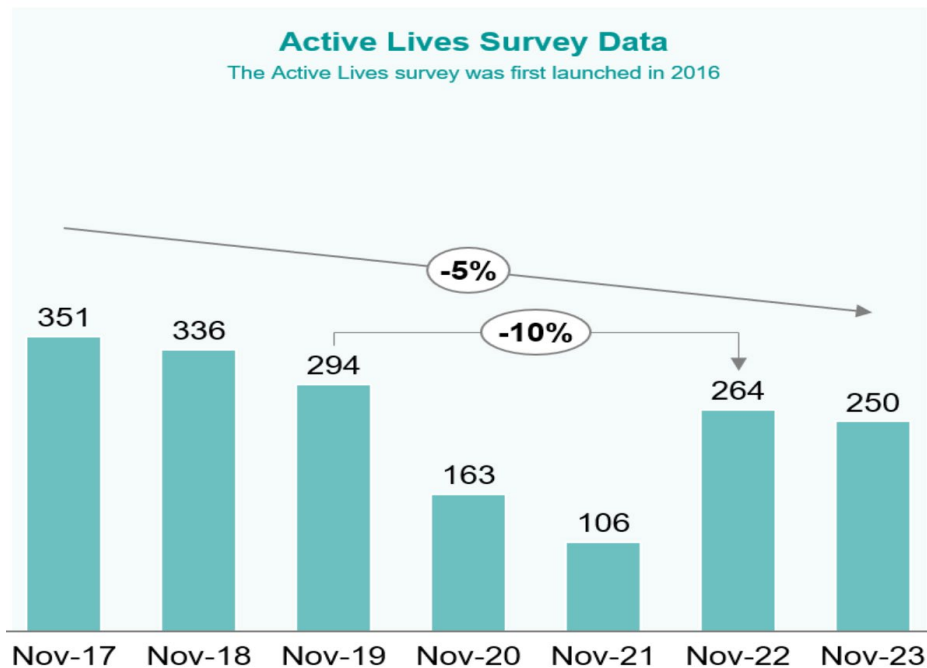
Key emerging themes

- England Squash should be ambitious and have a singular and bold vision for the future that will inspire others to join us.
- **Participation** is by far the predominant theme coming out of the work to date.
- Inclusion remains a crucial route to tackling the participation challenge.
- The demographics of the current squash population must evolve – young people must be attracted into the sport, more women and girls must be introduced to squash.
- Perceptions and profile have to change, squash needs to 'feel' different. The culture, of England Squash and wider sport, are therefore crucial.
- The benefits of squash can be exceptional, more needs to be done to raise awareness of what squash can offer.
- Places to play are vital – clubs and facilities need support. New places to play should be identified, perhaps through partnerships with new and emerging sports (e.g. Padel).
- The Olympic Games are not a 'silver bullet' but the opportunity must be harnessed and maximised.

Supporting information

The following information is designed to help stimulate thought prior to the Council meeting and discussion during it. It is not intended as a comprehensive analysis of the squash landscape across England and it is understood that the situation at local level varies greatly.

The graph below presents data from the Active Lives survey, which shows a year on year decline in 'regular' squash participation.



- It could be considered that squash has bounced back reasonably well after the pandemic however, the downward trend in regular participation has since continued.
- Other ‘traditional’ or ‘established’ sports show a similar pattern, squash’s decline is more pronounced than some. Conversely, some new sports are increasing in playing numbers e.g. Padel.
- Active Lives only considers ‘regular’ adult participants – people aged 16+ that have played at least twice in the past 28 days.
- Data on squash courts is less well understood but previous research has suggested there is a similar % decline in the number of courts as with participation (c.5% pa).
- Viewing trends for England Squash and PSA events are positive, both in terms of online viewers and in-person attendance at events.
- The number of players taking part in England Squash junior competitions and listed on the rankings has increased slightly over the past 2 years.
- League organisers (e.g. County Associations) typically report declining numbers of teams and players.
- Some competition organisers (e.g. UK Racketball and England Squash Masters) report increasing numbers of players in their competitions.

We are interested to discuss the trends that Council members are seeing locally and the specific challenges that are faced within squash communities around the country.

The Council session will be crucial in helping develop a new strategy for England Squash and take the sport forward over the next few years.

- **What are the key challenges for squash to overcome?**
- **What are the top priorities that England Squash should focus on during the next few years?**

Coach Development – Shaping the Future

Summary

This paper outlines the progress we've made in coach development in the last six months, alongside our plans for expanded support for coaches and the wider squash community in the coming year.

At the May Council meeting, we'd welcome a conversation on the types of training, resources, or communication channels that would help strengthen local squash communities and align efforts nationally.

We look forward to discussing the following question on training needs:

Beyond 'coaching', in which other areas is more in-depth training needed for clubs, counties or volunteers (e.g. safeguarding, club development, community engagement)?

Author: Hannah Ridgard-Mason, People and Education Manager

Date: May 2025

Background

Over the past six months, we've made significant progress in evolving the England Squash coaching pathway to be more inclusive, modern, and practical. Our aim is to better equip coaches at every stage and strengthen the wider coaching environment around them.

What we've achieved to date:

- **Expanded delivery capacity:** Recruited and trained 20+ coach developers across the country to enable us to deliver more courses, workshops and improve coach support.
- **Developed new learning:** Created core e-learning and practical courses, alongside CPD including practical workshops, leaders' courses and modular e-learning.
- **Created on-demand coach support content:** Produced videos, articles, and bite-sized learning to support delivery and growth.
- **Improved access to player welfare courses:** We'll offer free safeguarding and first aid awareness training for coaches' club members via our own platform ensuring these essential areas are more accessible than ever.
- **Engaged the squash community:** Held webinars to help counties and clubs understand the new pathway. Based on their feedback, we're now developing clear learner journey guides, FAQs, and example coach profiles.

Next steps

While we're gearing up to launch, we won't be standing still!

- **Launch preparations are underway:** We're currently scheduling course and workshop dates with the launch of the new pathway due in summer 2025.
- **Talent development coach:** From August, we'll be revisiting the current Level 3 qualification to create a new framework for coaches who want to take their next steps into performance.
- **Support for the wider squash network:** We're planning new development options for non-coaches, including volunteers, parents, clubs and county leads – recognising the impact they have on participation and player experience. We'll also keep releasing new e-learning modules, articles, resources and webinars to ensure coaches have fresh, practical support.
- **Building community and connection:** For 2026, we're exploring the idea of a national coaching conference to bring coaches together, share ideas, and address hot topics. We're also launching a new coach newsletter to keep coaches up to date with England Squash and coaching developments and opportunities.
- **Improving diversity in coaching:** We're looking into how we can offer targeted funded places to help under-represented groups access coach development opportunities.

To help develop new and relevant training for roles across the squash community we're looking forward to discussing the following question at the May Council meeting.

Beyond 'coaching', in which other areas is more in-depth training needed for clubs, counties or volunteers (e.g. safeguarding, club development, community engagement)?

Membership and Affiliation

Summary

The new membership scheme is approaching its first anniversary in August. We are grateful for the help of County Associations in helping to support uptake of the scheme and this paper provides an update of progress so far, with key highlights including:

- Total member numbers now stand at 13,031, with 12,376 members joining through the new scheme.
- All affiliated clubs have now been invoiced under the new scheme, with 92% having paid their invoices, representing a total of 463 affiliated clubs.

A membership review will take place over the summer to assess the impact of the first year and to identify how it can be refined, particularly with regard to benefits and promotion.

We are currently moving into 'Phase 2' of the membership marketing plan, which will focus on re-activating previous members who have not renewed their 'via club' memberships.

30 counties are now mandating membership and we are supporting another couple who are considering it for 2025/26. We invite county associations with any feedback on mandating membership to get in touch with us.

County rebates have been calculated for 2024/25 and will be paid in the next few weeks, along with a full breakdown of calculations. Two thirds of county associations will receive the 100% guaranteed rebate from 2023/24, with one third earning more this year.

We look forward to discussing how we can work in collaboration with the squash community, particularly County Associations and clubs, to reach and engage more lapsed members at the May Council meeting.

Author: Paul Makinen, Head of Digital and Insight

Date: May 2025

Background

Individual membership data

Following the launch of the new membership scheme last August, the majority of affiliated clubs and individual members have now transitioned to the new membership scheme.

As of 16 May, there were a total of 13,031 individual members, of which 95% have been purchased through the new direct scheme. This represents a conversion of about 50% of previous individual members and is a small increase on the last forecast presented to the England Squash Board. This represents a solid first year of the new membership scheme, with plenty of progress to build on as we enter year 2.

Retention rates, and the proportion of members by category for the new scheme are broadly the same as those reported at the last update to Council. We have seen significant growth in the number of members since the last Council meeting, mainly due to more previous members having transitioned onto the new scheme as a result of increased marketing activity and visibility of the benefits.

Additional breakdowns of membership figures are available in Appendix 1 (including a breakdown of 'new members by county').

Individual members

Category	Number	Proportion	Renewals
Play Plus	1,208	9%	79%
Just Play	8,174	63%	72%
Support	127	1%	73%
Junior	1,317	14%	72%
Coaches Club (purchased)	851	7%	95%*
Coaches Club (assigned)	192	1%	76%*
New scheme	12,376	95%	74%
Life	25	0%	96%
Legacy Adult	413	3%	100%
Legacy Junior	56	0%	100%
Legacy Adult via club	160	1%	100%
Legacy Junior via club	1	0%	100%
New scheme	655	5%	99%
Total members	13,031	100%	75%

**Renewal of Coaches Club members is calculated based on conversion from any membership type, with around 3/4 Coaches Club members previously holding a Coaches Club membership.*

A 1-year Coaches Club membership is also assigned to candidates completing entry-level coaching courses (currently the Level 1 – Participation Coach Award).

Club affiliation data

All clubs that we are currently invoicing for affiliation have now been invoiced under the new scheme, with the last invoices being raised at the start of May.

Of these, 463 out of the 503 invoiced (92%) have paid their affiliation fees, which is well above our previous forecast of 450 affiliated clubs for the year.

With the support of county associations, particularly those who are mandating membership, we are confident that the number of affiliated clubs will continue to increase under the new scheme with a clearer fee structure and increasing value on offer through the benefits package we are now able to offer clubs.

Membership review

As we approach the end of the first year of the new membership scheme, we will use the summer period to conduct a review of the new scheme. This will include primary research (with members, non-members, clubs, coaches and county associations) and analysis of first-party data to look at all aspects of the membership scheme, in particular assessing the awareness, uptake and perceived value of benefits so that these can be refined as the membership scheme matures.

We ask county associations to look out for any communications about the review, and to share through their networks as proactively as possible.

Marketing plans

With the majority of affiliated clubs and legacy members now having transitioned to the new membership scheme, we have now moved into the second phase of our marketing plan for membership.

Phase 1 focussed on converting previous members when their legacy via-club memberships expired following the launch of the new scheme. Phase 2 will concentrate on re-activating lapsed members who have not renewed their membership, particularly within club communities, alongside the retention of existing members.

The marketing plan, which will utilise a wide range of channels and tactics targeted to the audience, is currently being finalised and will be shared with the Board at the meeting taking place at the end of May. We look forward to discussing how we can work in collaboration with the squash community, particularly county associations and clubs, to reach and engage this audience, at the May Council meeting.

Mandating membership

Previous efforts to support counties to implement mandated membership saw an additional 12 counties implement mandated membership and qualifying for the Enhanced Rebate, taking the total to 30 out of 38 county associations. We are also supporting one more county who are aiming to implement this for the 2025/26 season.

As the new season approaches, we invite any county association with feedback on the process of mandating membership to get in touch at membership@englandsquash.com so that we can provide appropriate support going forward.

Rebates

County rebates for the 2024/25 financial year are currently being finalised, with details and payments expected to be shared with county associations in the coming weeks.

As previously agreed, county associations will receive a guaranteed rebate equal to 100% of the rebate received in 2023/24. The details we will share with each county will include a breakdown of the rebate earned in 2024/25, including whether it is the guaranteed or earned rebate that will be paid.

Given the changes to the membership scheme and how rebates are calculated, the majority of county associations can expect to receive the guaranteed amount, but it is encouraging to note that almost a third of county associations will receive their 'actual' earned rebate, having earned a higher rebate in 2024/25 than in 2023/24.

As a reminder, in years 2 and 3 of the scheme, county associations will receive guaranteed rebates of 75% and 50% respectively, though we expect that fewer county associations will rely on the guarantee as the number of members begins to rise.

Next steps

- Continued analysis of membership transactions/conversion
- Roll out Phase 2 of membership marketing plan across all relevant channels. In partnership with event delivery partners, activate marketing plans at major events including the British Open, National Championships and major PSA events in England.
- Review first year of the membership scheme, including a small primary research project, to take place in early/mid summer
- Finalise and pay county rebates, sharing detailed calculations with county associations
- Support county associations and leagues with implementing and running mandating membership

Appendix 1: Breakdown of new scheme members by county association

County association	Play Plus	Just Play	Support	Junior	Coaches Club	Total
Avon	39	379	1	37	16	472
Bedfordshire	8	38	5	8	16	75
Berkshire	42	196	2	14	15	269
Buckinghamshire	27	204	8	63	40	342
Cambridgeshire	4	19	3	29	25	80
Cheshire	80	577	4	51	31	743
Cornwall	8	32		13	6	59
Cumbria	9	40	2	23	7	81
Derbyshire	6	85		5	18	114
Devon	11	95		33	21	160
Dorset	12	159	1	40	20	232
Durham & Cleveland	16	292	1	25	30	364
Essex	36	192	1	72	44	345
Gloucestershire	13	152	3	53	15	236
Hampshire	62	422	5	96	34	619
Herefordshire	4	24	2	1	4	35
Hertfordshire	53	273	5	58	24	413
Kent	65	320	3	79	54	521
Lancashire	75	672	6	74	51	878
Leicestershire	10	30		10	18	68
Lincolnshire	19	49		42	17	127
Merseyside	18	233	1	25	6	283
Middlesex	75	477	6	119	52	729
Norfolk	6	13	4	18	19	60
Northamptonshire	9	37		13	7	66
Northumbria	28	302		56	35	421
Nottinghamshire	23	124	10	15	16	188
Other	11	106	3	95	16	231
Oxfordshire	23	82	3	26	13	147
Shropshire	10	143	1	30	13	197
Somerset	7	27		2	3	39
Staffordshire	12	61	2	15	13	103
Suffolk	4	20	1	31	14	70
Surrey	156	822	18	153	75	1,224
Sussex	46	479	4	61	31	621
Warwickshire	74	419	3	137	52	685
Wiltshire	19	65	2	5	12	103
Worcestershire	17	107	3	22	7	156
Yorkshire	61	387	13	151	88	700
Unknown	10	20	1	24	65	120
Grand Total	1,208	8,174	127	1824	1,043	12,376

Schools Project

Summary

This paper shares an update on the development of 'Ready Set Squash' a new national schools' programme. The focus of Ready Set Squash is to drive increased awareness of squash among children and young people in a school setting.

We know it isn't easy for new players to find relevant squash activities so we're also developing a new 'session finder' and booking platform making it easier for people to find and sign up to squash activities across the country.

To be successful, the session finder will need to be well populated with a wide range of squash activities and we will therefore need help from County Associations.

We welcome a conversation at Council on the following question:

How can England Squash ensure the session finder is well populated with activities and how can county associations help to populate the session finder?

Author: Jo Rowbottom, Head of Partnerships and Communities

Date: May 2025

Background

The new schools programme, 'Ready Steady Squash' will be fully launched in September 2025 after a soft launch and teaser from June 2025.

Ready Set Squash is a curriculum-aligned programme aimed at primary school children and will be available for teachers and coaches, making it easy for them to deliver squash in a school setting.

The brand and design for Ready Set Squash has now been finalised and we are creating marketing assets and video content that we will share in the near future.

We have been developing training for coaches, teachers and multi-sport coaches with online e-learning available and the option to add face-to-face training, which can be delivered by our new coach developers. The e-learning will also be one of the optional modules for those taking the 'Community Development Coach' course who are looking to coach squash in a school setting.

Alongside the training, we'll provide resources such as session plans with short videos of activities to assist teachers.

Throughout the development of Ready Set Squash, we been consulting with the Youth Sport Trust, School Games Organisers and coaches to inform the design of the programme to ensure it meets the needs of schools. We'll continue to embed a process for feedback and further consultation once the programme has launched to ensure it continues to evolve after launch.

Ahead of the full launch in September we've also been building partnerships with Schools Games Organisers, local authorities and sports coaching organisations to drive engagement in the programme after launch.

Alongside this, the Youth Sports Trust are updating all the School Games sports activities working with National Governing Bodies. England Squash are in wave 4 of this project and are about to start the process of updating the School Games programme with the view that this is in place in February 2026 to align with Schools Games Organisers planning for the 2026/27 academic year.

The focus of Ready Set Squash is to drive the awareness of squash amongst children and young people. Another area of focus for us is to make it easier for people to find squash activities across the country with a new online session finder and booking platform.

We're working with ClubSpark to create a session finder on which England Squash programmes such as Squash Stars, Squash from the Mosque, women's squash, social squash can be added. There will also be the opportunity for clubs and venues to add their own sessions and programmes. The session finder will sit on a new website which will focus on appealing to new or casual players and England Squash will undertake digital marketing campaigns that signpost potential players to find a session locally to them.

To be successful, the session finder will need to be well populated with a wide range of squash activities and we will therefore need help from County Associations.

We welcome a conversation at Council on the following question:

How can England Squash ensure the session finder is well populated with activities and how can county associations help to populate the session finder?

Next steps

- Finalise the marketing assets for Ready Set Squash
- Continue to build networks with School Games Organisers, Youth Sport Trust, Teachers and coaches to embed the programme from September 2025
- Promote Ready Set Squash at the Youth Sports Trust annual conference in June
- Begin the development of the new session finder with a view to having the new platform in place from March 2026.

Commercial Progress and Opportunities

Summary

This paper provides an update on recent commercial progress to date and newly identified opportunities.

Historically, attracting significant commercial income has proven very challenging for England Squash and other similar size NGBs. This is partly due to the limited perceived value of our assets and the relatively low profile of squash. The bulk of existing and previous commercial income has come from within the squash world, particularly from squash brands keen to leverage England Squash's reach into the UK squash market.

There has also been a perception of limited value in working with England Squash due to the flaws in the old membership scheme and our limited knowledge of and direct contact with our members. With the new membership scheme and an ambitious new strategy, it is hoped that this position will improve over time.

Author: Joey Barrington, Membership and Commercial Partnerships Manager

Date: May 2025

Background

Key recent activity includes the following:

New Commercial Partners and Suppliers

- Adidas - new official shoe and clothing supplier and partner. Two-year contract, significant value-in-kind (VIK) on clothing and shoes across the organisation. Significant interest generated upon announcement.
- Adidas - official Squash Super League clothing supplier for two years.
- Dunlop - official ball supplier and partner. Four-year contract for Dunlop to supply free balls.
- Dunlop - official grassroots product development partner. Four-year contract granting VIK credit each year. After VIK credit is exceeded, there is a significant discount off trade prices.
- Optasia – Squash Super League title sponsor for two years.
- Expression Networks – Squash Super League partner for two years.
- Aspect Capital - Squash Super League partner for two years.
- Oliver - new official racket partner and supplier, two-year contract including VIK.
- Ashaway - official string partner and supplier, three-year contract with additional VIK.
- Mercedes-Benz Nottingham - EJC headline sponsor two-year contract.
- Rallyball Wall ('The Wall') - three-year contract with agreed partnership rate. 150 walls purchased, with a further 150 to follow for give-aways to grassroots programmes. Currently working on a company strategy to increase usage of The Wall. Partnership with Dunlop agreed to sell Walls on our behalf at PSA events on their stand with no costs to England Squash.
- Play Innovation Outdoor Courts - 15% discount agreed off RRP.
- PSA Event Ticket Sale Discounts 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Membership Benefits

- World Squash Officiating (WSO) service and certificate referee - 20% discount.
- PDH Sports - 10% discount.
- PSA Squash TV - 50% for current members and 70% for new members.
- Oliver rackets and products - 20% discount on all products for members and up to 40% for coaches and staff.
- WorkerBee Coffee - 15% discount for members and 5% back to England Squash on every sale through our members.
- Squash Player magazine - 25% discount and free digital edition.
- PSA - priority early-bird access and heavily discounted tickets for all PSA UK events.

Next steps

- Secure National Championships title sponsor
- England team sponsor for additional performance funding

- Grip brand to provide official grip
- Solar energy provider for clubs
- Adidas shop to sell England replica kit to squash fans
- Analysis of the usage and popularity of the membership benefits
- Promotion of England squash membership by partners on all channels and outlets for exposure to new people
- Umbrella junior programme sponsor
- Travel and hotel partner for competitions and events

Competitions

Summary

This paper provides a summary of the 2024/25 competitions season, which is currently drawing to a close, with all of our biggest competitions having been completed successfully.

Of particular note are the following:

- New format for the English Junior Championships
- Expanded National Schools Championships
- New Optasia Squash Super League (SSL)

Author: Laura Mumford, Competitions Manager

Date: May 2025

Background

The 2024/25 season has been a season of positive change. The competitions team have worked towards creating a better understanding of the competitions structure, and engaging more with our community: players, parents and Tournament Organisers (TO).

We have had over 100 competitions so far this season across the different levels and are on track to reach our target of 130 for the season, matching last year's total. This breaks down as: 3 Platinum, 3 Gold, 5 Silver, 61 Bronze and 31 Copper competitions.

We now have over 2,000 players on the junior rankings, which is up approximately 200 from April last year. The current figures of boys in all competitions is 3,064, and girls is 944. This is slightly lower than at this stage last year, but approximately the same as the 2022-23 season.

National Schools

The event has grown significantly, to 217 teams in Division 1, and 85 teams in the new Division 2; from a total of 116 schools. This is 40 more schools than in last year's competition. We are running the largest finals week the competition has ever seen with the addition of KS3 and 4 mixed categories. There are over 100 players on each of the 4 days taking part in the finals week at Edgbaston Priory.

For this year, we have introduced a mixed finals day, which spreads out the matches for those players playing in more than 1 category. Below is a geographical split of the schools entered into the championships.

Region	Number of Schools
South East	24
South	24
South West	19
North West	8
North East	17
East Midlands	5
East	10
West Midlands	9

National Clubs

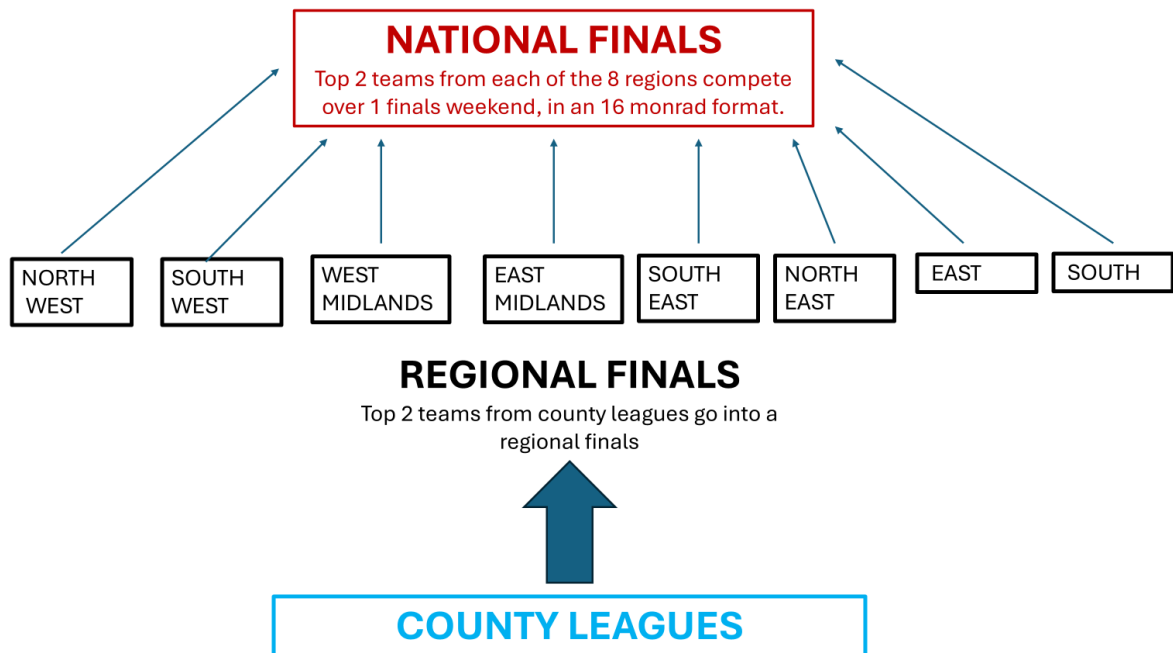
We aim to restructure the National Clubs competition to increase participation from affiliated clubs across the country.

Our goal is to establish a clear progression pathway for clubs competing in local and county leagues to advance towards the national league.

The initial two stages will take place at county and regional level to minimise travel requirements.

The national finals will be held over a single weekend, organised by England Squash.

The winner of the National League will qualify to compete in the European Club Finals.



English Junior Championships (EJC)

The new format of the EJC was a great success. Moving to smaller draw sizes meant a higher level of competition and the feedback from players was that the event felt ‘more special’ than in previous years. The venues were excellent and the location was very well received by players and parents. The changes brought in have elevated the event to the next level, with more TV coverage, referees and prize money than ever before. Three courts were streamed for the two main draw days. The U19s had prize money for the top 3 places and there were 16 referees covering all courts at the main venue and 5 courts at the 2nd venue for the whole weekend.

Optasia Squash Super League (SSL)

The new league has been a great success and has showcased squash at its best. We have seen average viewing figures of nearly 2,500 per fixture, with the highest figure reaching nearly 5,800 views. The junior player clinics have been very successful, and we have already had several new clubs interested in joining the league for next season.

We have currently had 6 event evenings, where tickets have sold out at every venue. There are 3 match nights left to be played before the final in June (Details TBC).

We will be reviewing the structure and impact of the league once all fixtures have been played.

British Junior Open

The BJO ran very smoothly, with over 750 players from all over the world taking part, a record number. The introduction of the 5th venue greatly improved the scheduling. Plans are underway for the competition’s 100th birthday next year. England had one finalist, Ali Khalil in the Boys U15s.

Referee development

We have delivered 36 Markers Awareness courses across the country since September and have recruited 20 new referees.

Adult Graded Competitions

The webpage is gradually growing to include more events, with plans to go wider on the promotion for next season. The page has been welcomed by TOs and clubs. We have had 10 event contacts throughout the season, some of which have multiple offerings in specific areas, which stay up all year. We would like to aim for 20 separate contacts for the 2025-26 season.

Planning

We will review all competitions at the end of the season, taking into consideration the feedback we have received from players, parents, TOs, etc. thus far. We have worked closely with the Performance team to get the 2025-26 calendar out, with some changes being brought in to ranking points, the amount of Gold and Silver events being increased and stronger links to the player pathway.

The aim is to move to 1 ranking system that works for both events and selection. The increase in higher level competitions and changing the divisor and points received for placings will start moving us much closer to this goal.

We plan to review the Junior Inter county and National Clubs competitions format at the end of the season. We will also do a thorough review of all regulations documents for events including county championships.

There is significant growth potential at Bronze and Copper level. We will devise a plan to significantly increase the number of these events taking place next season, with a stretch target of doubling the number of both.

We have been planning a potential new level of competition that would sit below Copper. We have seen a gap in the competition offering at this level and have ideas to create something for this grassroots level, that would be a deviation away from the traditional competition structure and be led by coaches/ TOs and club volunteers. We would aim to select a few key people from the squash community to help us with the first stages of planning and development and aim to run some 'trial' events in specific areas/ clubs.

Next steps

- Using the 'Right Ball' - Currently we use double dot balls in all event categories from Bronze level and up, for ages 11 and over, and single dot ball for under 9s. Copper events can use different balls if they choose. Following the discussion at the November Council meeting and other conversations, it is widely recognised that stronger guidance on the 'right ball' is required to ensure that all players get the best possible playing experience.
 - We recently launched a consultation – anyone with an opinion on this topic is encouraged to fill in the survey:
<https://englandsquash.typeform.com/to/rW2uUSOA>
- Planning for next season. Regulation updates, ranking points changes, possible new grassroots level competitions and Junior ICC format changes.

GB Squash

Summary

In order to receive funding and nominate athletes for the Olympic Games in 2028, England Squash is required to work with colleagues in Wales and Scotland in order to bring the home nations together to represent the whole of the United Kingdom at LA28.

Initial work focussed on taking the required steps to apply for core performance funding from UK Sport. In December 2024 an investment of £500,000 was announced for squash during the LA28 Olympic cycle.

Progress in working with the other home nations has continued and the creation of a light-touch 'federation of federations' model is proposed with a 'designated home-nation' to receive and administer performance grant income.

Under this model, England Squash will be the designated home nation and is the named recipient for any performance grant income.

There are no impacts anticipated to England Squash's governance or Articles of Association and therefore, no impact on county associations or community level squash.

Author: Mark Williams, CEO

Date: May 2025

Background

Background

A UK-wide structure is required to formalise the very positive working partnership that has been established between England Squash, Scottish Squash and Squash Wales in the build up to LA28. As is common in other sports (e.g. hockey, badminton, table tennis), a designated home nation model has emerged as the best fit.

The proposed moniker that this structure will work under will be 'GB Squash'.

The remit of GB Squash will relate only to the organisation of elite performance programmes with its sole focus being on work related to competitions in which we will compete as one UK-wide team. At present, this is only the Olympic Games, although there is potential for squash to be included in the 2027 European Games which could form part of an Olympic qualification route.

As the designated home nation, the bulk of day-to-day administration (reporting, compliance) will sit with England Squash.

Other considerations for GB Squash

- The long-term need for GB Squash is currently unknown. If squash is not selected to feature in Brisbane 2032, GB Squash will not be needed, conversely, it may need to grow in the future if squash becomes a 'core Olympic sport' or significant additional funding is forthcoming.
- UK Sport grant income will come to England Squash, under the designated home nation model.
- Membership to the British Olympic Association (BOA) is required in order to nominate athletes to Team GB. Under the proposed arrangements, England Squash would be the member organisation.

Olympic Update

- Recent announcements have included the reduction in the draw size for the Olympic Games from 32 players to 16. This means that only 16 female and 16 male players will compete at LA28.
- The qualification process is not yet known – confirmation is anticipated to come in Spring 2026.
- The athlete quota per nation has not yet been confirmed.
- The venue has been confirmed – Universal Studios – a potentially iconic setting and a fantastic opportunity to showcase the sport.
- The format for the Olympic competition has not yet been confirmed, the first tickets are due to go on sale in September 2025 so we are expecting confirmation before then.

Inclusion and Diversity

Summary

This paper shares updates on our Inclusion and Diversity work in relation to the aims of the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

Author: Jo Rowbottom, Head of Partnerships and Communities

Date: May 2025

Background

Data and insight

Listening exercise

We're currently undertaking a listening exercise to hear about people's experiences within the sport with a particular focus on women and girls. We have worked with Studio Beyond to hear from players of all types, coaches, and club and county committee members, both male and female, to hear about their experiences within the sport. Using this insight into people's experiences, as well as the difference in experience between genders, we can make changes that ensure that more people of any gender feel like they have a place where they belong in the sport. The final report is due by the end of May 2025.

Recruitment processes

We've made some changes to recruitment processes recruiting in a wider range of places for new roles and ensuring diversity of interview panels. Other areas for consideration include: removing personal details from applications to reduce bias.

Leadership and Governance

The Inclusion Advisory Group continues to provide guidance to support the organisation with the development of policies and projects. A nominated board member sits on that group providing a direct link back to board.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our targeted programmes, Squash from the Mosque and Mixed Ability Squash, continue to drive new players to the sport in clubs across the country. Working with partners to develop the programme and then with clubs and coaches to embed those programmes has begun to produce a community-focused approach in clubs and venues, creating greater diversity and increasing participation. The Squash Stars programme is proving successful in attracting more girls to the sport, with 42% of participants being female.

An area for improvement is to enhance our communication around inclusion and diversity and work more closely with the squash community to drive this area of work. There is a lot of great activity already taking place across the country that we can learn from and collaborate with.

Training and Development

With the coach education refresh, inclusion and diversity will be a core theme. The courses will be more accessible to people working in communities to deliver squash in their setting. There will also be a greater focus on inclusion and diversity in the courses available with specific e-learning and workshops on topics such as engaging teenage girls and disability inclusion to support coaches and volunteers in delivering to different audiences. We will also embed EDI training for the staff team, board members and wider stakeholders.

Next steps

- Review the listening exercise findings and circulate with actions to be taken based on recommendations
- Finalise the learning for employees, board and wider stakeholders
- Further embed the work with partners to create targeted programmes and projects based on need
- Further develop and embed the role of the Inclusion Advisory Group to continue to support the sport

The King's Honours and Roll of Honour projects

Summary

This paper provides a brief update on two projects to boost the profile and formally recognise some of the exceptional individuals who have supported squash in England throughout their life and at different levels of the sport.

The King's Honours system is a great way to recognise individuals at every level of the sport who have made an exceptional contribution to squash at local, national or international level. We believe that the Honours system is a great way to recognise deserving individuals and also for successful nominations to boost awareness of squash, particularly through local media.

We would encourage county associations to share suggestions for suitable nominees with England Squash

We have had a long-term aspiration to recognise the many individuals that have represented England since the first international matches were played. We are planning to launch a roll of honour project in the summer so share the data with the squash community and provide an official record of all those who have represented England at senior international level.

Author: Mark Williams, CEO

Date: May 2025

Background

King's Honours

A relatively small number of squash players, coaches and dedicated community volunteers have received recognition through the Queen's or King's Honours system. Some other sports are very proactive in nominating people regularly and are therefore, better represented than squash when Honours lists are announced.

The King's Honours present a good opportunity to recognise outstanding individuals across our sport and to raise awareness, particularly at local level, of the great work going on across the sport, and of the sport itself.

As a National Governing Body, we are able to make nominations for King's Honours directly through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) which, we hope, could increase the likelihood of acceptance above the usual public nomination process.

England Squash will look to nominate one or two candidates at each nomination window, currently this is twice per year.

The opportunity to make better use of the Honours system has also been recognised by the England Squash Masters' Committee who have supported England Squash and offered to make recommendations for suitable nominees. We invite County Associations to do likewise and consider recommending suitable candidates to England Squash or making additional nominations through the public nomination route.

Please note that it is imperative to the process that nominations are kept confidential and in particular, that nominees themselves are not made aware that they have been put forward.

Roll of Honour

There has been a long-term plan to recognise the individuals who have represented England at senior level. The data has been collated and verified in collaboration with the Squash Library:

[History of Squash | World Squash Library | England](#)

We believe there is value in recognising the outstanding players that have represented us through the years. We will aim to launch a web presence initially, with other options to build on the project remaining open subject to resources.

For reference the current lists include 95 women, dating back to 1933 and 153 men, dating back to 1923. This includes Grace Gear and Jonah Bryant, who both made their England debuts at the European Team Championships in April.

Not specifically related to the project but organised by some of the key drivers, was an ex-internationals reunion in April. Around 50 ex-internationals (mainly from the UK) gathered for a day of celebration at Staverton Golf Club.

Next steps

- Launch web Roll of Honour in summer 2025 and share with fans and players.
- Build on project over time, including articles, stories and player profiles.
- Nominate King's Honours candidates at each opportunity (x2 per year).

Talent and Performance

Summary

This paper outlines the key achievements and activity of the Talent and Performance team over the last five months.

Also presented are the planned steps for the next period.

Author: Chris Robertson, Head of Performance Operations

Date: May 2025

Background

Staffing

Our new National Coach, Stuart Crawford, has continued to settle into his role and has been extremely busy travelling to events and visiting the senior players in their own environments. He has been also noticeably active in the junior space with squad appearances along with tournament visits being a regular theme. His hard work has complimented Lucy Townley as the Talent Pathway Manager as she continues to diligently organise the junior consultant coaches in the right direction, whilst also building those solid relationships with the parents.

Junior Programme: (December 2024 - mid-May 2025)

In this period the junior programme runs the second half of all our age group squads, the remaining selection events as well as England team selections. We have now also competed at all this season's junior European team events. Our selected contracted coaches have worked hard to run professional squads aimed at delivering the key messages from the National Coach applicable to each squad. The players have bought into the messaging with their hard work, commitment and behaviour. The results have been good, with England winning titles at the U15 and U17 Europeans and finishing as runners-up at the U19 Euros. Overall, it has been a satisfying season with the World Juniors in July our only remaining event for this season.

Key Activity held - Junior Programme:

- Six selection events
- Two England Development squads
- Three England Potential squads
- Two Bridging squads
- Two Super regional squads - North and South
- Three Aspire squads in eight regions
- International events - 5 nations, U19, U17, U15 Europeans

Key Achievements – Junior Programme:

- Winner U13 and U15 – 5 Nations
- Winner U15 European Team title
- Winner U17 European Team title
- Runner-up U19 European Team title
- Emily Coulcher-Porter- runner-up, U19 European Individual Championship

Senior Programme: (December 2024- Mid May 2025)

The seniors have continued to travel to their respective PSA events and work on their games locally when at home. Stuart has been busy making targeted visits to events as well as visiting players locally when training. In December Stuart, along with Nick Matthew, took our Men's and Women's teams to Hong Kong for the World Team Championships and last month both attended the Senior European Team Championships. The World Team Championships resulted in a silver medal for the Men, whilst the Women came fifth, which was impressive considering they lost their number one and three players during the event. The senior

European Team Championships was very successful, with both teams winning the title against France (men) and Belgium (women).

Key Activity - Senior Programme:

- World Team Championships – Hong Kong
- TOC / Cleveland / El Gouna / Manchester – coach support
- Performance squads – Bristol / Warwickshire / Pontefract / Sheffield
- European Team Championships
- World Championships – coach /physio support

Key Achievements – Senior Programme:

- Runner-up Men's World Team Championships
- Mo ElShorbagy and Gina Kennedy – quarter-finals World Championships
- Marwan ElShorbagy – winner Cleveland Open
- Mo ElShorbagy – winner Canadian Open
- Jasmine Hutton – career-high PSA ranking - top 18
- Jonah Bryant – PSA ranking 32 in first year on tour

Next steps

Junior programme: (May – August 2025)

- May 2025 – Battle of the Border
- June 2025 – EP / ED squads, Aspire squads, Aspire Teams
- July 2025 – World Junior Championships - Cairo

Senior programme: (May – August 2025)

- June 2025 – British Open
- July 2025 – PSA finals
- August 2025 – Nationals