



Essex Squash League Captains' Meeting Minutes

Date: 22 July 2026

Location: Zoom

1. Agenda

The **Essex Squash & Racketball Association (ESRA) Secretary** queried the application of the player eligibility rule relating to “playing up”, suggesting that it had been introduced as a mid-season rule change.

The **Essex Squash League (ESL) Secretary** clarified that the rule, which states that a player who represents a higher team for **three consecutive matches without playing for their lower team** is thereafter classified as a player for the higher team, had been introduced ahead of the 2025/26 season and presented at the previous AGM. This was supported by Kingswood, who confirmed that the rule had been discussed and agreed at that meeting.

The agenda was then approved, and the meeting moved on to the Winter League review.

2. Winter League Review

The ESL Secretary opened with a review of the 2025/26 Winter League. The review highlighted another successful season, with **26 teams** participating across the league. A total of **226 of the scheduled 250 fixtures** were completed, representing a **9.6% walkover rate**. Across the season, **294 individual players** took part, each playing an average of **eight matches**, while a total of **4,161 games** were contested, demonstrating the high level of participation throughout the league.

Following the league review, the ESL Secretary congratulated the winners and Player of the Season recipients from each division.

- **Premier Division: Lexden 1** were crowned champions, with **Will Burton (Lexden 1)** named Player of the Season after winning **16 of his 17 matches**.
- **Division One East: Woodford Wells 2** secured the league title, while **Steve Cunnew (David Lloyd 3)** was named Player of the Season with **14 wins from 15 matches**.
- **Division One West: Walthamstow Blue** were crowned champions, with **Ben Fairclough (Walthamstow Blue)** completing a perfect season to be named Player of the Season after winning **all 16 of his matches**.

The ESL Secretary also recognised **Chris Wallis (Kingswood)** for his outstanding commitment throughout the season, having played an impressive **31 league matches**, the highest total of any player during the 2025/26 Winter League.

3. Essex Cup Review

The ESL Secretary presented a summary of the 2025/26 Essex Cup competition. A total of **26 teams** entered the competition, with **54 of the scheduled 65 fixtures** being completed, resulting in **11 walkovers**. Across the competition, **196 individual players** took part, contesting a total of **1,573 games** throughout the season.



Following the competition review, the ESL Secretary thanked **Woodford Wells** for hosting the Essex Cup Finals Night and expressed appreciation for the club's support in delivering another successful showcase event for the county.

The ESL Secretary then congratulated the winners and Player of the Cup recipients for each competition.

- **Sanderson Cup:** **David Lloyd 1** were crowned champions, with **Amber Marshall (David Lloyd 1)** named Player of the Cup after winning **all five of her matches**.
- **Webster Trophy:** **Woodford Wells 2** won the competition, while **Mark Robertson (David Lloyd 3)** was named Player of the Cup with a perfect **6 wins from 6 matches**.
- **Woodhouse Trophy:** **Walthamstow Blue** claimed the title, with **Steve Burnett (David Lloyd 2)** named Player of the Cup after winning **4 of his 5 matches**.

4. 2026/27 Season Update

The ESL Secretary outlined the proposed timeline for the 2026/27 season, confirming that it would follow a similar schedule to the previous year.

The proposed league structure for the new season was then presented:

- **Premier Division:** An eight-team division, with **Walthamstow Blue** promoted to replace the relegated **Old Brentwoods**.
- **Division One East:** A ten-team division. **Woodford Wells 2**, despite winning the division, would not be promoted as the club already has a team competing in the Premier Division.
- **Division One West:** A nine-team division, with **Walthamstow Green** entering the league as a new team.

The meeting then moved on to consider the motions submitted for the 2026/27 season.

5. Motions

A) Reintroduction of Food & Drink Tabs for Away Teams

Proposal: Reintroduce a fixed £50 food and drink tab for visiting teams at each league match (proposed by Woodford Wells).

Discussion:

- Kingswood, Ongar and Redbridge felt the current arrangements worked well and did not require changing.
- Clubs acknowledged that the cost of providing post-match hospitality had increased significantly in recent years.
- While the proposal aimed to encourage post-match socialising, there was limited support for making the contribution mandatory.

Outcome:

The motion **did not pass**.



B) Relaxation of Player Eligibility Rules

Proposal: Relax the rule preventing players from representing more than one club during a league season (proposed by the ESL Secretary).

Discussion:

- The proposal received broad support as a practical measure to reduce walkovers and fulfil more fixtures.
- Thurrock strongly supported the change, emphasising that ensuring matches are played should be the priority.
- Redbridge and Woodford Wells supported the principle but highlighted the importance of maintaining robust membership checks to ensure all players remain eligible.

Outcome:

The motion **passed** with a **75% majority**.

C) Reduction in Team Size for Cup Matches

Proposal: Reduce the number of players required for Essex Cup matches (proposed by the ESL Secretary).

Discussion:

- There was initial agreement that reducing team sizes could help lower the number of walkovers.
- Kingswood and Maldon expressed concern that smaller teams would reduce playing opportunities, particularly when clubs had good player availability.
- Redbridge noted that reducing team sizes would also reduce the number of substitutes available while venue hire and other fixed costs would remain unchanged.

Outcome:

The vote was evenly split and the motion **did not pass**.

D) Essex Cup Scoring System

Proposal: Change the Essex Cup scoring system so that the overall result is determined by total points scored rather than games won.

Discussion:

- Captains agreed the proposal would allow every player to contribute directly to the team's overall result throughout the match.
- Kingswood suggested introducing a maximum points difference or cut-off score to prevent one-sided matches having an excessive impact.
- David Lloyd raised concerns that a significant mismatch in one string could disproportionately influence the overall result.
- Woodford Wells felt the system would be more difficult to calculate and administer during matches.

**Outcome:**

The motion **did not pass**.

E) Introduction of an Essex Racketball League

Proposal: Introduce an Essex Racketball League (proposed by Lexden RFC).

Discussion:

- The ESRA Chair noted that similar initiatives had been attempted previously without long-term success.
- Lexden RFC believed there was now sufficient interest within the county to support a dedicated league.
- The ESRA Secretary suggested working with Patrick Osborn, who is heavily involved in promoting Racketball across Essex, to explore the proposal further.
- Ongar and Kingswood sought clarification on the proposed league format and structure.
- The ESL Secretary confirmed the League Committee's full support for developing a Racketball league and offered the use of LeagueMaster to administer the competition.
- It was also recommended that fixtures avoid existing Essex League nights (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday) wherever possible to minimise scheduling conflicts.

Outcome:

The motion **passed**, with the meeting expressing its support for the development of a county Racketball league.

6. Any Other Business

The ESRA Secretary raised the topic of introducing **three-player teams** for the Summer League. The ESL Secretary advised that he would review the end-of-season statistics, including walkover rates and overall participation, before considering whether a formal proposal was required. If appropriate, a motion would be circulated to captains via the Essex League WhatsApp group for consideration.

In closing, the ESL Secretary thanked all captains for their continued support throughout the season. Captains were also asked to ensure that match results are submitted promptly via *LeagueMaster* to minimise the need for follow-up and allow league tables and statistics to remain up to date.

7. Close of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

The meeting closed at 20:55.