

Juniors Update for the 2026 ECBA AGM

Alan Adkins, Juniors Coordinator



Another good season for our juniors, highlighted by all four age groups qualifying for the Shires League Finals – a reflection of the strength and depth of Essex's junior players. We've also had a full and successful programme of over 20 junior tournaments. The 2026-7 season will be my 7th and final season as Juniors Coordinator. While I intend to step down from the role at the end of the season, I'll still support Essex badminton in other ways.

We have a great team of volunteers and coaches in place, and it's been a pleasure working with everyone. Looking forward to the coming season!

Alan Adkins

Shires League. I am happy to report that all 4 age groups qualified for the finals:

- Under-15 Team achieved our best result, finishing 3rd, after a narrow 8-12 to eventual winners Kent.
- Our Under-17 and Under-19 Teams finished 5th; these age groups were both won by Notts.
- Under-13 Team finished 6th; Kent were winners, beating Warks in the final.

Team Managers for 2026-7. Next season our Team Managers (bold) and their assistants are as follows:

- Development Squad - **Rajasri**
- Under-13 (players born 2015 and later) – **Nitin** and Ram
- Under-15 (players born 2013 and later) – **Gurdeep** and TBD
- Under-17 (players born 2011 and later) – **Stuart** and **Ram**
- Under-19 (players born 2009 and later) – **Prabu** and Lesler.

Contact details can be found in Spond. Team Managers (TMs) are responsible for selection in line with [Essex Juniors Selection Criteria](#). Please note that, as gradings look set to be discontinued shortly, we have updated the selection criteria to specifically reference the new rating system (see below).

Before moving onto tournaments, I'd like to thank outgoing Fixtures Secretary Angela, and welcome Debbie as incoming. I'd also like to thank the TMs, most of whom are remaining in post for the coming season, and Under-19 TM Harvinder, who is standing down. Thanks also to Mohammed for managing the shuttles inventory.

Tournaments. Over the last 12 months, we have run 20 junior tournaments, split evenly between Badminton England circuit tournaments and the ever-popular 'Futures' tournaments, some of which are hosted by local clubs. We are grateful to Southend & District JBA, East Thurrock BC, Stanway BC and Barking Junior BC for their continued support of the Essex Futures circuit. Nisha Jacob has been a brilliant Juniors Tournament Coordinator and has brought energy and some great new initiatives to the role, including 2 highly successful circuit tournaments in Southend and some new venues. Many

thanks to her, to Eric Brown for referring our circuit tournaments, and to Simon, Brandon and Penny, who have all contributed to the programme.

Essex is a 'not for profit' organization and we try to price entry fees accordingly, whilst still making a surplus from our tournament programme, which we use to support our other activities, notably the monthly coaching and the Shires League matches and ICT.

Essex Junior Restricted 2026. This [tournament](#) will be held on 19th and 20th Sept 2026, with the Under-12 tournament being on 27th Sept to avoid the Essex 11+ exams. This ever-popular tournament informs selection to Essex's junior teams and provides an opportunity to compete with and against Essex's strongest juniors - last year's event featured 150 players and over 400 matches.

Inter-Counties Tournament. A highlight of the year for the players is the inter-counties tournament. This is an Under-18s residential tournament held annually in Notts over 3 days. Twenty-four teams entered this year and after some super-close games (with two 5-5 'losing draws') we secured a top-half of the table finish at 12th place. Well done to Leicestershire who won the event. I'd like to thank Kelvin Koon and Alan Tu for coaching the team, as well as Debbie and Lesler for being part of the adult support team.

New Rating System. Although details have not been fully announced, you may already have seen tournament organizers start to update tournaments in readiness for the new system. Parents who read my newsletter will already be aware and hopefully taken the chance to familiarise themselves with the new ratings on Badminfo.com.

Coaching. Our monthly coaching sessions at Chelmsford County High School continue to run on the first weekend of each month, and we recruit new players largely from the Futures Circuit. The move to organizing sessions by ability rather than strictly by age has proven successful, and we aim to move players up swiftly where needed so they are in the appropriate group. Thanks to our coaching coordinators Anupama and Rajashri, as well as Nisha, and Jey, who looks after Spond. I'd also like to thank the coaches Sheu, Ian, Steve, Clive and Elissa.

Juniors Finances. I am happy to report that this year, the juniors section finances have significantly improved. This improvement reflects good cost discipline, a successful tournament programme, and the introduction of junior match fees. Support from the Napier fund, which was a legacy to support juniors-related badminton activities in Essex, will likely end in the next couple of years. Whilst this is something we can manage, we will need to demonstrate continued cost discipline. Thanks to Simon for his vigilance in tracking our finances and Nisha for the tournament programme which has helped us get back on track.

We look forward to the coming season with optimism. If you'd like to discuss getting involved in supporting Essex's junior activities, please do get in touch.

Alan Adkins

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