

League Secretary's Report – 2025/26 Season

The 2025/26 season has been another year of strong competition, continued growth, and important learning across all divisions. My thanks go to all clubs, captains, and volunteers whose commitment keeps the league running and ensures a high standard of badminton throughout the region.

1. Season Highlights

Across the divisions, several teams delivered standout performances:

- **Danbury** topped a tightly contested Mixed Doubles Division 1, showing consistency throughout the season.
- **Stanway A** completed an unbeaten run in the Combination Division, finishing well ahead of the field.
- In Open Doubles Division 1, **Wanstead Warriors** were dominant, securing 9/10 wins and finishing with the highest points tally across all divisions.
- **Epping** impressed in Open Doubles Division 2, edging out strong challenges from Leighway and Riverside A.
- **East Royal Amigos** led Open Doubles Division 3 with confident, high-quality performances.
- In Open Doubles Division 4, **Smash Squad** finished top, with both Smash Squad teams showing strong development this season.

2. Operational Reflections

Fixture Scheduling Challenges

This season presented significant challenges around fixture scheduling. A notable number of teams submitted fixture dates late or failed to confirm them within the expected timeframe. This created avoidable pressure on both clubs and the league, and contributed to fixture congestion later in the season.

While we recognise the difficulties many clubs face with venue availability, timely communication remains essential. Ahead of next season, we will be reviewing expectations, guidance, and potential enforcement to ensure smoother planning and a more consistent experience for all teams.

3. Digital Improvements – Results Self-Submission

Work has continued on the new **self-submission results app**, which will allow clubs to upload match results directly. This will reduce administrative overhead, improve accuracy, and speed up the publication of results. Our aim is to launch the system before the start of next season.

4. Future Direction – League Structure & New Format

The committee has begun reviewing the league structure with the aim of addressing long-standing challenges and creating a more engaging competition.

Key areas under development include:

- **Geographic restructure**
 - **‘Metropolitan’ vs. ‘County’**, grouping teams by area to reduce travel and make weeknight fixtures more viable.
 - **A two-level system within each region**, with an upper and lower division to ensure teams play at an appropriate competitive level, whilst still offering opportunity for progression.
- **New league format (NBL style)**
 - **Exciting new league format**, offering more inclusive and dynamic matchplay.
 - **Expanding women’s doubles opportunities**, ensuring more regular and meaningful fixtures for women players.

These changes are designed to address the pain points raised by clubs, particularly around travel and fixture density, while also broadening participation and improving the competitive experience. Further details will be shared with clubs as the proposals develop, with the aim of introducing elements of the new structure next season where feasible.

5. Closing Remarks

Thank you once again to all players, captains, volunteers, and committee members for their commitment throughout the season. Despite the operational challenges, the league continues to grow in strength, competitiveness, and community spirit.

I will also be standing down from my role and want to thank everyone for their participation, cooperation, and support - it has been a privilege to help run the league.

We are inviting anyone who may be interested in taking on the role to come forward. Once a successor is identified, I will work closely with them to ensure a smooth transition. I'll still be around to help out where needed, so this isn't a full goodbye, but I won't be involved as closely.

Thank you all once again for your support and for everything you contribute to making this league what it is!

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