



Regulations for the Badminton England Masters County Challenge 2024/25

GENERAL

- 1 The competitions shall be called the Masters County Challenge. They shall be competed annually in accordance with the following regulations, or such other regulations as Badminton England, or the Masters Policy Group (hereinafter called the Committee) may from time to time determine, and the Laws of Badminton as adopted by the International Badminton Federation.
- 2 The Challenge shall be open to every English county, if governed by a county association affiliated to Badminton England, the different Channel Islands and the Isle of Man if governed by an association recognised as a county association and affiliated to Badminton England, provided that the full affiliation fees are paid. Entries from associations affiliated to other National Associations may be accepted at the discretion of the Committee.
- 3 Separate challenge teams shall be run for Over 40s, Over 45s, Over 50s, Over 55s, Over 60s, Over 65s, and Over 70's.
- 4 Entry forms will be circulated to counties in April, and these must be returned to the Challenge or Championship Secretary by the stipulated closing date. Counties may enter more than one team in each age group. Entry fees will be invoiced directly by Badminton England.
- 5 The Challenge will be held over the second Saturday/Sunday in January annually at various venues, to be arranged by the Challenge Organiser. Feather shuttlecocks will be used.

DIVISIONS

- 6 Teams will be placed in strength order as determined by the Committee, with a Premier Division, followed by Divisions 1A and 1B based on strength and geographical location and then 2A and 2B likewise. This is subject to entries received by Badminton England.
- 7 At the end of the season, the two lowest teams from each age group in the Premier Division will be relegated to Division 1. The top team from 1A and from 1B in each age group will be promoted to the Premier Division. The lowest team in each age group from Division 1A and from 1B will be relegated to Division 2 provided there is a relevant age group. The top team from 2A and from 2B in each group will be promoted to Division 1. However, there may be circumstances which need to be considered in respect of promotion and relegation. The Committee's decisions on these circumstances will be final.

ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

- 8 All players must be eligible to play for their county under the current County Competition regulations.

If a player is playing in the Masters County Championships, that player must play for the same county if that county enters a team of the appropriate age group within Masters County Challenge. If such a team is not entered the player may play for another county provided, he/she is eligible.

- (a) A player must possess a Compete membership with Badminton England through either Club or Direct membership. Players not living in England and members of another association must be registered as a non-resident.
- (b) Every player will be required to hold a Compete Membership to be eligible to represent their county within the Masters' Challenge. To assist counties every team can use up to two "wild cards" for the whole weekend to cover last minute non-compete players. A player may only have two wild cards in a season which may be two Championship matches or one Championship match and the Challenge weekend. If that player plays again without a compete licence their games will be voided.
- 9 Players must have reached, or be over, the appropriate age category on the day they are due to play. As a concession a team Over 40 may use up to two players who are Over 38 at the time of the first event.

TERMINOLOGY

- 10 Tie – competition between one county and another.
Event – a Women's Doubles, a Men's Doubles or a Mixed Doubles.
Match – an event consisting of the best of three games of 21 points, except that if the score reaches 20-all, the winner is the pair with 2 clear points or whose score reaches 30 first.

Note: there shall be NO intervals when a side reaches 11 points in a game, NOR between the first and second games, and the second and third games.

TEAMS

- 11 Each squad, except the Over 65s, Over 70s and Over 75's should consist of not less than 4 women and 4 men and not more than 6 women and 6 men. Over 65s and Over 70s squads should consist of not less than 3 women and 3 men and not more than 5 women and 5 men. Before the competition starts each team must submit the names of all its squad members to the Referee, or if one is not appointed, the appropriate Organising Committee.

Provided it does not contravene the maximum number of nominations for a squad and that they are eligible for the age groups, a player may be nominated in more than one age group. The player(s) would have to be included on both team sheets and once he/she has played he/she is committed to that team for the whole weekend.

Teams may be changed for each tie within the parameters of the squad that has been nominated, as set out above.

No player may play in more than one event in any one tie.

No substitution shall be permitted in a match at any stage once play in that match has commenced (i.e., once the first service has started).

If a team is unable to field a full team in a tie they must try and arrange for an ineligible player to play (either a player who has not reached the qualifying age, a player playing in more than one event in that tie, or a player from another county team). They must inform the referee 30 minutes before the tie which event they will be forfeiting and at that time whether they are able to field an ineligible player or not. The referee will notify the opposition who shall be allowed to rightfully alter their pairings before the tie starts and the 2 games of the forfeited event will be awarded to them 21-0, 21-0. The ineligible player would not be able to play the 1st mixed doubles where pairs must play in order of strength. Failure of a team to declare an ineligible player would mean a 4-0 or 3-0 defeat depending on the age group.

FORMAT OF A TIE

- 12 The competition will be played as ties between the county teams with each team playing each of the other teams in the group.

In the Over 40s, 45s, 50s, 55s and 60s age groups a tie shall consist of four events:

A Women's Doubles, a Men's Doubles, a 1st Mixed Doubles and a 2nd Mixed Doubles. The Mixed pairs must be ranked in order of strength.

In the Over 65s and Over 70s a tie shall consist of three events: A Women's Doubles, a Men's Doubles and a Mixed Doubles.

- 13 The order of play shall be as above, unless otherwise agreed by the Referee, or if one is not appointed, the Organising Committee.

Pairs shall play at such time and on such court as may be specified by the Referee, or if one is not appointed, the appropriate Organising Committee.

- 14 Before commencement of each tie, teams will exchange team sheets giving the eight names (or six for Over 65s and Over 70s) and their pairings to play that tie with the mixed doubles pairs, where appropriate, ranked in order of strength.

- 15 If a match shall not be completed the existing score (if any) of the defaulting pair shall stand and their opponents shall be credited with the number of points and games required to win as appropriate.

- 16 The decision of a tie shall be determined by the number of matches won. In the event of both teams being unable to field a pair for a match it will be deemed "not played" and neither team will be awarded the match or part thereof. Teams will be awarded 2 points for a win, 1 point for a draw and 0 points for a loss. For the O65's and Over 70s team 2 points for a win and 0 points for a loss.

GROUP POSITIONS

- 17 The position of each team in each age group shall be determined as follows:
- a) The number of points awarded.
 - b) If two teams are equal, the winner of the tie between them. If drawn, then count back from that tie of games won to lost and if still equal then count back from that tie on points won to lost and if still equal then the result of the first mixed.
 - c) If three or more teams are equal, then the team(s) with the most wins. If there are two teams left with the same number of wins then 17b applies.
 - d) If two teams are still equal the winner of the tie between them as in (b).
 - e) If three or more teams are still equal the team from among them for whom, overall, matches won minus matches lost is greatest.
 - f) If two teams are still equal the winner of the tie between them as in 17b applies.
 - g) If three or more teams are still equal the team from among them for whom, overall, games won minus games lost is greatest.
 - h) If two teams are still equal the winner of the tie between them as in 17b applies.
 - i) If three or more teams are still equal the team from among them for whom overall points won minus points lost is greatest.
 - j) If two teams are still equal the winner of the tie between them as in 17b applies.

TROPHIES

- 18 A perpetual trophy will be awarded to the champion county in each age group of the Premier Division. The trophies will remain the property of Badminton England, which shall be responsible for insurance, but the holders shall be responsible for their care and maintenance.

GENERAL

- 19 Badminton England's current Tournament Regulations shall apply.
- 20 The Masters Policy Group shall have full powers to decide on matters not covered in the foregoing regulations and shall rule in the event of any disputes.