



# Regulations for the Badminton England Masters County Championships 2024/25

## GENERAL

1. The competition shall be called the Masters County Championships. It will be competed for 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 Badminton World Federation.
2. The Competition 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. Entry forms will be circulated to counties in April and these must be returned to the Championship Secretary by the closing date stipulated on the entry form. Entry fees will be invoiced direct by Badminton England. Counties may enter more than one team in each age group. An additional fee shall be payable by those counties qualifying for the National finals.

## THE DIVISIONS AND FINALS

- 4a) The country will be divided into 4 regions where possible, in which a competition for age groups over 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 and 75 will take place (subject to sufficient entries being received). It may be necessary to split age groups within an area based on standard or geography, as determined by the Committee, taking in the views of the counties involved.
- b) Where there are two divisions by standard the team winning Division 1 will proceed to the National finals and the top team in Division 2 will be promoted to Division 1 and the bottom team in Division 1 will be relegated.
- c) Where regions have been split geographically, the winning teams from each section will play off on a pre-determined date to qualify for the National finals.

- d) In the event of there being only 5 teams or less in any region, then normally they will play group matches at home and away, otherwise teams will compete on a home OR away basis, alternating if possible each year.
- e) To qualify for the finals, the region winning team will be the one with the highest number of points based on:

For the Over 40,45, 50,55, and 60 age groups there will be 3 points for a win, 2 points for a winning draw, 1 point for a losing draw and none for a defeat. In the Over 65 and 70's there will be 3 points for a win and none for a defeat.

In the case of a walkover three points will be given to the non-offending team and none to the defaulting team.

In the event of 2 or more teams having the same number of points, the winners will be decided on matches won to lost. If 2 counties are still tied the result of the tie between them or, where home and away fixtures are played, the combined results of the ties between them will decide.

Where a tie that has not been played affects the winner of a league this will be referred to the MPG to make a decision on the outcome of the final positions in the division.

- f) Each year the age group winners will play off over a weekend for the National League title on a knockout basis. A draw will be made before the event with semi- finals on the Saturday, with the winners contesting the final on Sunday and losers competing for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place.
- g) If there are only three regions in any age group, then each team will play each other.
- h) Unless there are time restrictions the same rules apply for the finals as for the area ties.
- i) The Referee's decision on all matters is final.

## **THE FIXTURES**

- 5a) When making fixtures the home team must offer two dates to the away team. If during the season an away team is unable to field a full team and cancels the fixture every effort must be made to rearrange the fixture, but the home side is not obliged to offer two further dates to their opponents.

If travelling distance is too great it is possible for the tie to be played at a mutually agreed venue with shared expenses. Where possible teams should complete half their ties prior to <sup>31st</sup> December and all ties by <sup>31st</sup> March each year, except where a playoff is involved when ties must be completed at least a week before the play off date.

The dates, times and venues of all home fixtures shall be notified to the Masters Coordinator of each opposing county and the Championship Secretary by <sup>31st</sup> August preceding the season of competition. This should be achieved by using the Confirmation of Home Fixtures Form supplied.

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- b) In an area with more than one team from an individual county (i.e., a county first and second team), these two teams **must** play each other before the 31<sup>st</sup> December. Failure to adhere to this requirement will lead to the tie(s) being considered as 'Not Played' and no points will be awarded to either team.
- c) A tie should be played on at least two courts allowing 8 hours playing time per tie. For Over 65 & Over 70 ties 6 court hours should be allowed. For an Over 75 tie 4 court hours should be allowed.
- d) When a tie is cancelled by the away team, and the home team can demonstrate that cancellation charges for hall hire will be incurred, then the away team may be asked to pay (or contribute towards) the cost. If a tie is cancelled because of bad weather, then any costs should be shared by the two counties.
- e) The home team is responsible for all the tie expenses and should provide light refreshments.
- f) If a fixture is postponed or rearranged the home county must advise the Championships Secretary as soon as possible and if appropriate the new date and details if amended.
- g) Feather shuttlecocks must be used.

#### **ELIGIBILITY of PLAYERS**

- 6a) All players must be eligible to play for their county under the current County Competition regulations.
  - (i) If a player is playing in the Masters County Challenge, that player must play for the same county if that county enters a team of the appropriate age group within the Masters County Championships. If such a team is not entered, the player may play for another county provided that the player is otherwise eligible.
  - (ii) No player shall play for more than one county in the Championships during the same season of competition
  - (iii) A player must be a member of Badminton England and hold a current and valid Compete Membership. Players not living in England and members of another association must be registered as a non-resident.
  - (iv) Every player will be required to hold a Compete Membership to be eligible to represent their county within the Master's Championship. To assist counties every match can be played using one "wild card" to cover last minute non-compete players up to 31<sup>st</sup> December each year, AND from January 1<sup>st</sup> may have up to two "wild cards" for any match. The Challenge weekend will count as one "wild card". 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.

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- b) Players must be over the age of 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 and 75 at the start of a tie, except any over 40 team may play up to two players aged over 38 at the start of a tie.
- c) Nominations for squad members in all teams must be made before that county's first tie or by <sup>31st</sup> October, whichever is earlier. Details of subsequent players added to a squad must also be advised as soon possible to the Championship Secretary before they compete.
- d) A player who has been nominated for a particular team may play as a reserve for other teams on three occasions in total. An 'occasion' means a Championship tie; or a play-off; or the semi-final/final weekend (i.e. The semi-final and final is only considered as a single occasion).

If a player is found to have exceeded the three reserve appearances, then the scores in the first three ties will stand but the scores in any subsequent reserve appearances will be conceded to the opponents. The player will be allowed to play for the team for which he/she was originally nominated in any remaining ties. Players will be allowed to play for two teams on the same day providing they qualify age wise and are not exceeding three reserve appearances and that it does not cause undue delay. A player nominated in a lower age group may play as often as they like in the Over 75's without effecting reserve appearances.

- e) Where counties have 2 teams or more in an age group, at least 4 men and 4 women must be nominated prior to the start of that county's fixtures as first team players, except in the over 65 and over 70 age group, for which at least 3 men and 3 women must be nominated. Nominations must be sent to the Championships Secretary 10 days before that County's first match in that age group. Nominated first team players will be allowed to play for the second team once only, and no more than one man and one woman from the first team may play in any single second team tie.

Second team players may play for the first team on two occasions but if they should play a third time they will be deemed to be part of the first team and cannot play for the second team again.

- f) To qualify to play in the finals a player must have competed in at least two league ties or one tie and a play off. In those age groups and areas where a team plays only four ties or less a player must have competed in at least one league tie or a play off to qualify to play in the finals.
- g) If a team is withdrawn after the competition has begun all fixtures played by that team shall be discounted.

## **THE TEAM**

- 7. A team should consist of a minimum of 4 men and 4 women and with a maximum of 6 men and 6 women. An over 65 or over 70 team should consist of a minimum of 3 men and 3 women and with a maximum of 5 men and 5 women. An over 75 team should consist of 2 men and 2 ladies with a maximum of 3 men and 3 ladies.

## THE TIE

- 8a) (i) Over 40, 45, 50, 55, 60 age groups  
A tie will consist of 12 matches. Each team shall provide 2 men's doubles pairs, 2 women's doubles pairs and 4 mixed doubles pairs. In the men's and women's doubles events each pair of a team will play each of the opposing 2 pairs. In the mixed doubles each pair will only play their opposite number and they must play in strength order.
- (ii) Over 65 & 70 age groups  
A tie will consist of 9 matches. Each team shall provide 3 men's doubles pairs (each man shall play twice), 3 women's doubles pairs (each woman shall play twice) and 3 mixed doubles pairs. All pairs must play in strength order, i.e., Man 1 & 2, 1 & 3, 2 & 3, Lady 1 & 2, 1 & 3, 2 & 3 followed by the Mixed again in order of strength of the pairs
- (i) Over 75 age group  
A tie will consist of 6 matches. There will be men's and ladies' doubles followed by 1v 1 mixed, 2 v 2 mixed and reverse. Mixed pairs must be in order of strength.
- b) Completed team sheets should be exchanged before commencement of the tie. A copy must also be given to the Referee or organiser, when requested to do so. Ineligible players must be declared before the tie starts. If a team is fielding an ineligible player(s) in order to give opponents their full quota of matches, they must be considered as the weakest player(s) where matches are to be played in order of strength.
- c) Each match will be 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. This is known as the Rally Point Scoring System as under the revised Laws of Badminton as introduced by the BWF in May 2006.
- d) *Note: there shall be NO intervals when a side reaches 11 points in a game, NOR be between the first and second or second and third games.*
- e) In the event of an injury, illness or emergency in the first round of men's or women's doubles a substitute (if available) may play in the second round. An injury, illness or emergency substitution can be made for the mixed doubles providing it is done before that mixed match has commenced (i.e., once the first service has started).

In the event of an injury, illness or emergency in the level doubles and no reserve is available to play in the mixed, the mixed doubles matches will be played in the same order as decided at the outset of the tie with no changes allowed in the pairings. The mixed match in which the injured player was due to play will be conceded to their opponents 21-0, 21-0.

If an injury, illness or emergency prevents a match being completed any points or games won by the defaulting pair shall stand with their opponents being awarded the necessary points and games to win the match.

A substitution can be made using a player who has played for another team on the same day provided they qualify age wise, are not exceeding three reserve appearances and that it does not cause undue delay. It should be borne in mind that even if the substitute plays only a mixed match it will count as a reserve appearance. Any substitution must not cause undue delay.

**Players may only play in one team at the playoffs. Substitutes cannot be used from players in other participating teams. Also players may play in only one team for the finals weekend. Substitutes cannot be used from players who are playing in another team at the event.**

- f) The winner will be decided on the higher number of matches won. Should the tie finish level on matches, a winning draw will be awarded to the team winning the most games; if equal then the most points and if still equal the result of the <sup>1st</sup> mixed (see regulation 4e regarding the points awarded for draws). In the Over 65 and Over 70 age group the winner of a tie will be the team winning the most matches.
- g) Full results shall be submitted online within 7 days by the TEAM PLAYING AT HOME. A county failing to comply shall be fined £25 on each occasion. On the first occasion the home county does not submit the result within 7 days they will receive a written warning allowing a further 7 days before the fine is imposed. The away county shall have a further 7 days to confirm the result. If this is not done, then it will be assumed to be correct, and the Championship Secretary will confirm the result 14 days after the match.
- Any dispute must be raised with the Championship Secretary within 14 days of the match.

#### **COMMITTEE POWERS**

- 9 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.