

Wiltshire Squash Junior Section Report

After Dax Mellor resigned his position in December I became coordinator of junior activity at the beginning of January. This report covers activity since I took over.

In January we held a successful county closed event which had been postponed from the scheduled date in 2018. All boys categories had good entries except the u19s with just one entrant. The girls were not so well represented with an u11/13 group and a u15-19 group. In line with the rest of the country this highlights the need to develop more female participation.

Following on from the Closed events we have held two county training days. These have been very successful and each time it has been easy to identify the key objectives of the session being taken on board by those attending. I have tried to ensure these are spread across the county so whilst the first was at Wessex, the second was in Westbury and our session in June will be at 5 Rivers.

We have additionally held a Grand Prix competition in Chippenham which was well supported by participants from across Wiltshire, Dorset and the old Avon area. We are hoping to hold a second Grand Prix in the summer, this time in Swindon. My thanks here must go to David Wales, Alistair Graham, Brian Brock, Sarah Bailey and the Chippenham senior players who gave up their time to help run the tournament so smoothly.

Those in the u11/13 squads also took part in the 5 Counties development event. This mixes the players up into cross county teams. It was really pleasing to see good results and attitudes from all of those participating.

Future development of the junior setup will rely on the existing coach network at present. There is a very good setup at 5 Rivers, Salisbury with the four or five coaches all working together to support each other and develop juniors in their area. Dax's sessions at Marlborough continue with the support of a number of coaches, Alistair Graham runs sessions in Chippenham and Julian Styles runs sessions at Oasis, Swindon. One big hole I am hoping to plug shortly is the lack of juniors at Wessex. Subject to identifying a source of funding. It is very noticeable that new recruits are coming from both the South and West of the county. We are however very lacking in numbers for the future u11/13s and girls especially. I am also keen to see development at Westbury or Warminster, an area full of seniors from the past but lacking in any integration across all age groups.

Neil Marshman
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