

Youth Activities Committee

AGM Report 2020-2021

The Youth Activities Committee is a sub-committee of the Leinster Executive Committee, and its main objectives are to increase juvenile participation in Leinster, and to promote & develop badminton at all levels. The committee, with the assistance of Leinster Branch staff, is responsible for running Tournaments, Leinster Intercounty Competitions, Leinster Squads & Development Squads and Leinster Schools Finals.

At the beginning of 2020, we were preparing for our Team competitions. In February, our U13 Leinster Team won Gold at the U13 Celtic Challenge which was hosted in Alpha. Our young players competed with the skill & maturity that we have become so used to seeing in our Leinster Juvenile Players. Our U15 Leinster Team was selected and ready to travel to compete at the U15 Celtic Challenge which was due to be hosted by Lothian. Our U18 squad was busy preparing for the U18 ICC in Nottingham.

Our juvenile Festival of Tournaments, which targets Club Players, continued to go from strength to strength. We saw record numbers of County Teams compete in the U11 Leinster Intercounty Competition and the U13 Leinster Intercounty Competition. We were expecting another record entry for the U15 Leinster Intercounty competition before everything came to a halt.

March 2020 saw Ireland come to a standstill due to the Pandemic and all Badminton activity abruptly stopped.

In September 2020, the Committee decided we needed to get our players back on the courts. At that time, BI had still hoped to run the postponed Inter-Provincial Tournament. So, with a huge amount of administrative work from Liza O'Rourke, Sian

Williams and her coaches, the Team managers, Ian Frost, Dean Dowling, (COVID Officers) we ran Interprovincial Team Practices in Baldoyle Badminton Centre (following our COVID protocols).

There was great excitement and hope on the day from YACs, volunteers, parents and especially our players. It was a huge achievement, taking into consideration the administration overhead, Finances and logistics. Unfortunately, the InterPros was another competition that our young players missed out on in 2020 as this too needed to be cancelled because of COVID.

When Dublin went to Level 3, the committee reacted extremely quickly and held squads in Dublin for our Dublin-based players, and in Kilcullen Community Centre for the Rest of Leinster players. Much appreciation goes to the Management of Kilcullen Community Centre for facilitating this. Of course, we now needed additional Coaches, and COVID supervisors to ensure that all sessions ran smoothly and complied with all COVID requirements. Thanks to all our Coaches, Team Managers & COVID supervisors for facilitating as many squads as possible throughout the Autumn and early Winter despite the many challenges we all have had to overcome.

From 1st January 2021, Badminton Ireland changed the juvenile calendar and age group rulings for sanctioned events. The juvenile season now runs on a calendar year basis i.e. January to December, rather than from September to February. This means that the circuit commences in January each year and concludes with the Nationals in October/November. The new age groups will come into place in January each year. BI deemed this change to be necessary to stay in line with our neighbouring associations and to align our age groups with that of the Badminton Europe Circuit. Additional information can be found at [Juvenile Calendar Change 2021 - Badminton Ireland](#).

A big thank you to all the Youth Activity Committee members for their commitment and enthusiasm and hard work. Thanks also to the Leinster Executive for their continued support and to Badminton Ireland for their Leadership.