

Youth Activities Committee

AGM Report 2023

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.

Leinster Intercounty Finals 2023

Leinster Intercounty Finals were held at U13, U15, U17 and U19 age groups. As normal, Leinster Badminton provided the t-shirts to all the County teams. This year, BI provided shuttles to each of the County Teams. The winner of Division One in each age group goes on to represent Leinster at BI's All-Ireland Intercounty Finals.



Leinster U19 Intercounty Final Results:

Division	Gold	Silver
One	Carlow	Meath
Two	Dublin	Meath
Three	Offaly	Louth

Leinster U17 Intercounty Final Results:

Division	Gold	Silver	Bronze
One	Kildare 1	Dublin 1	Carlow
Two	Dublin 2	Meath	Dublin 3
Three	Kilkenny 1	Kildare 2	Meath 2
Four	Louth	Offaly	Kilkenny 2 Dublin 4

Leinster U15 Intercounty Final Results:

Division	Gold	Silver	Bronze
One	Dublin1	Kildare1	Carlow1
Two	Dublin2	Offaly	Dublin3
Three	Meath	Kilkenny1	Louth
Four	Carlow2	Kilkenny2	Kildare2 Kilkenny3

Leinster U13 Intercounty Final Results:

Division	Gold	Silver	Bronze
One	Dublin1	Carlow	Kildare1
Two	Dublin2	Kilkenny1	Kilkenny3
Three	Kilkenny2	Dublin3	Offaly

The four County Winners competed in the BI All-Ireland Intercounty Finals on the 7th May in Baldoye Badminton Centre, and we are delighted to report that the following teams are All-Ireland Intercounty Champions:

- U19 All-Ireland Intercounty Champions: **Carlow**
- U17 All-Ireland Intercounty Champions: **Kildare**
- U15 All-Ireland Intercounty Champions: **Dublin**
- U13 All-Ireland Intercounty Champions: **Dublin**

Congratulations to all the players, team managers, team coaches and County Associations. Thanks go to the parents who bring their players to training, to matches and are their biggest supporters.

Multi-age Juvenile Intercounty Blitz

Margaret Fallon and Brian Kelly ran a multi-age juvenile intercounty blitz in Baldoyle Badminton Centre on the May Bank Holiday Monday. Four counties entered teams consisting of U13, U15, U17 & U19 players. Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny and Meath brought multi-age teams to the blitz and congratulations to Meath for being overall winners on the day.

Leinster Schools Finals 2023

The YAC continued to run the Senior Schools finals at U14, U16 and U19 ages. We are delighted with the level of participation in this competition and look forward to further growth in the coming years.

- Leinster Senior U14 Schools Finals had 18 teams from 16 schools.
- Leinster Senior U16 Schools Finals had 27 teams from 22 schools.
- Leinster Senior U19 Schools Finals had 32 teams from 26 schools.

In collaboration with BI Activation Officer, Gary Kehoe and Margaret Fallon from the Executive Committee, the YACs also ran the Leinster Primary Schools Finals for the first time in several years and had 31 Primary schools involved.

Leinster Juvenile League Finals

Two Leinster League finals were held between Dublin league winners and Kildare league winners.

- Dublin Juvenile Leagues: 77 teams competed in the league which led to 16 league finals and 6 cup finals.
- Kildare Juvenile Leagues: 37 teams competed in the league culminating in 10 league finals.

Hopefully, next season we will get more league winners involved from more counties in the province. Well done to all involved.

Leinster Juvenile Tournaments

Ranked Tournaments

YACs run the U15/U19 Leinster Open and the U13/U17 Leinster Open. The U15/U19 Leinster Open was held in January and numbers were slightly down to 86 players. This is due to the ongoing impact of COVID on the numbers of players competing in the U15 age group.

The U13/U17 Leinster Open was held in April, and we are delighted to say that a new record has been set with a massive entry of 166 players. The numbers competing in U13 are extremely healthy and have grown significantly since last season.

This set of tournaments continues to grow from strength to strength. The tournaments are for club players and are closed to Leinster and National squad players. YACs are delighted that we have now achieved our target to have half the tournaments held outside Dublin. In addition to the WestsideFest in Kildare, the DecemberFest was held in Navan and the CarlowFest was held in Carlow. Many thanks go to Margaret Fallon, Martin Sheridan and Marton O’Hanlon and their teams of volunteers for running the Fests in their home Counties.

Leinster Squads and Representative Teams

Over the Summer of 2022 a sub-group of the Leinster Executive Committee developed a new selection criteria process, and we are delighted to say that this has been working extremely well for our juvenile team selection process and for our selectors. Since September 2022, Leinster squads for U11, U14, U16 and U18 have been held. Players were invited onto these squads based off previous tournament results. The Leinster Representative teams have been selected from these squads for the U11 Friendly Tournament vs Alpha, the U14 Celtic Challenge, the U16 Celtic Challenge and the U18 ICT. Furthermore, players from these squads as well as the Leinster Development squads were eligible for selection for the Leinster Interprovincial teams.

As part of our Player Pathway strategy, Leinster Development Squads were formed at U13, U15 and U17. The objective for coming seasons is to have Development squads at these ages and hopefully, many of these players will develop and move on to full Leinster squads.

U11 Friendly match vs Alpha

This continues to be a highly valued event for introducing younger players to the enjoyment of team events. Managed by Elizabeth Foley, the players participate in four squads in the Autumn and then get to play a Challenge match against a team from Alpha. Thanks go to Elizabeth, Coach, Sumesh Tharian and to all the parents for their ongoing support.



U11 Leinster Team

U14 Celtic Challenge

The U14 Celtic Challenge was hosted by Lothian in Edinburgh in February and thanks go to Lothian for hosting an excellent competition between Lothian, Wales, Ulster and Leinster. Leinster won Gold at the competition under the management of Kirsty Kelly, and Craig McCourtney as Coach.



Team: Riona Sumesh, Ananya Gopinath, Hannah Shochan, Rasa Norvaisaite, Amira Pender, Elma Luque Sakka, Eoin Evans, Dave Jaison, Theo O'Connell, Lochlann O'Rourke, Charan Deep Rajulapati, Ben Lynch.

The U13 Leinster Team, managed by Kirsty Kelly won Gold.



Team: Carol Joy, Anusri Erukkatil, Meja Undraityte, Aoife O’Sullivan, Ridhi Reddy Vallapureddy, Daire O’Sullivan, Rohan Joseph, Lochlann O’Rourke, Niall Keane, Eoin Evans.

The U15 Leinster Team, managed by Joe Byrne, with Laura Kinnerk standing in on the day also won Gold.



Team: Ananya Gopinath, Liya Prakas, Hannah Shochan, Rasa Norvaisaite, Amira Pender, Dave Jaison, Wyatt Winston, Theo O’Connell, Robert Cowman, Charan Deep Rajalupati

The U17 Leinster team, managed by Gordon Chambers, with Georgina Ward standing in on the day won Silver.



Team: Dylan Keane, Aaryan Mahesh, Andrew Hassett, Darragh Murtagh, Lorcan McGrane, Zarah Pender, Riya Prakas, Yuna Luque Sakka, Laura Keery, Nessa Mooney.

U18 English ICT

For the second time only in the history of competing in the English Intercounty Tournament over the last four decades, Leinster won Gold. The team was managed by Amanda Dunlop and the Coach was David Walsh. Jean Kelly, Chairperson of YACs and Craig Senior also travelled with the team to provide catering and support. This is a remarkable achievement, particularly considering that all 10 players are eligible for selection again next year.



Team: Senan O'Rourke, Pranav Erukkatil, Praneel Reddy Vallapureddy, Fionn Dowling, Aman Kothiyal, Siofra Flynn, Nicole Joy, Chloe McGrane, Orlaith Evans, Michelle Shochan.

U16 Celtic Challenge

The U16 Leinster Team is managed by Laura Kinnerk and the Coach is Georgina Ward. The players selected for the competition are: Yuna Luque Sakka, Amira Pender, Zarah Pender, Liya Prakas, Riya Prakas, Hannah Shochan, Robert Cowman, Adhithyan Gopinath, Dylan Keane, Andrew Hassett, Aaryan Mahesh, Lorcan McGrane. This competition has not been held at date of publication of this report.

Challenges

- The Youth Activities Committee is a voluntary committee and depends upon a small number of highly dedicated and hard-working volunteers. There are many more activities that the Committee would love to embark upon but needs to avoid overloading the already extended volunteers from the committee.
- The cost of the juvenile trips has exceeded our budget this year. Ideally, we need to avail of new funding sources to help address increased costs.
- We are extremely fortunate to have several top coaches working with our squads. However, we still need more coaches to be able to provide more opportunity for more players.

- The new juvenile calendar from January to December is proving to be extremely challenging, particularly as the senior calendar has not changed and continues to run from September to April/May. We have found January to April to be far too heavily loaded with Juvenile events which has made it extremely difficult to fit all of competitions and squads into the season. The new season began on the 1st January and we have had to play all schools competitions, all intercounty competitions, both the U13/U17 Leinster Open and the U15/U19 Leinster Open, the Interpros, the U18 ICT, and the U14 Celtic Challenge by the end of April. With the exception of the U16 Celtic Challenge in May, the Fests in the Autumn and the Christmas Close, there are no further competitions to be held by Leinster until after January 1st 2024. We will be requesting a full review of the Juvenile calendar by the BI Events committee to try and ease the pressure on the first quarter of the calendar year and to correct the imbalance for the rest of the season.

Conclusion

A big thank you to all the Youth Activity Committee members for their commitment, enthusiasm and hard work – Jean Kelly, Liza O’Rourke, Grainne Kinnerk, Brian Kelly, David Hogan, Kirsty Kelly, Amanda Dunlop, Muriel Moles, Simon Keane, Gordon Chambers, Joe Byrne, Laura Kinnerk and Elizabeth Foley.

We would also like to recognise the YAC members who have stepped away in the last year. After many years of dedicated service, Ita Marron and Sian Williams have retired from YACs and we wish them well with their extra free time! And our very special thanks go to Amanda Dunlop who is now retiring from YACs. Amanda has managed the Leinster “Notts” team twelve times, and on her final tour, brought home Gold – what a way to go!

Many thanks go to the Leinster Executive for their continued support.