

ESSEX COUNTY 3rd TEAM REPORT 2015 -16

Having enjoyed success and promotion over the past few seasons the County 3rd team this season found themselves promoted into Div 3, Central Division of the Senior County Championships for the 2015 – 16 season, a great achievement.

However, Badminton England decided to change the format for this season by playing all matches over three set dates instead of the usual home and away fixtures during the season and also by changing the events to 3 men's singles, 2 ladies' singles, 2 men's doubles, 2 ladies' doubles and 2 mixed doubles, a total of 11 events.

At first these changes were considered acceptable as this prevented all 1st and 2nd team players from playing down in lower divisions. Unfortunately, this proved to be the first of many problems as this affected the overall team selection and coupled with injuries and non-availability of key player's selection was going to be a problem

The dates were set with 2 matches to be played on Sat the 7th Nov 2015, 2 matches on Sat the 12th Dec 2015, 2 matches on Sat the 30th Jan 2016 and 1 match on Sun the 31st Jan 2016. Unfortunately for the 3rd team the venues were spread between Luton, Cambridge and Milton Keynes unlike the 1st and 2nd teams who enjoyed the same venue for all their matches.

Our next problem came when trying to obtain courts for a 3rd team training session so that the potential of the new player's could be assessed. This was hurriedly put together but then clashed with other U17 events, injuries and non-availability of players and left us in danger of not being able to field a team. This was further compounded as players had to play in order of grading and then after our very first match we were to lose one of our top singles players to our 2nd team which gave us a few more problems with selection. Fortunately, with many of the existing squad players making themselves available for all the matches plus some new young faces we were able to field a team for the first match.

Results

Our first set of matches on Sat 7th Nov at Luton resulted in a 7 – 4 win over Worcestershire and our second match resulting in a 9 – 2 loss in favour of Northants.

Our second set of matches on Sun 12th Dec against Cambridge resulted in a 10 – 1 loss followed by a 6 - 5 loss to Norfolk.

Our third set of matches on Sat 30th Jan at Milton Keynes resulted in a 6 - 5 loss to Warwickshire followed by a 6 - 5 loss to Bedfordshire

Our final match on Sun 31st Jan at Milton Keynes finished with an 8 – 3 loss to Staffordshire

With some of the match scores being so close we finished bottom of the league but only 5 points short of Norfolk who we had narrowly lost 6 – 5 to earlier. The standard of play for this league was very high, in fact it was very evident that some of the counties in this league should have been playing in higher leagues, however it was a great achievement and experience for all the players who represented the County 3rd team especially the new faces – so well done to you all.

A big thank you must go to the management team of Lee, John and Carl who with some of the parents supported the team all the way.

John Scott