

Essex's junior activities can be divided into three parts; coaching, teams, and tournaments.

Coaching

During the 2024-5 season, we continued to organize monthly coaching for juniors who have the potential to represent Essex. The coaching took place Chelmsford County High School and we use Spond to manage the groups and players. The groups are organized by standard rather than age (Development Squad, Groups 1, 2, 3 & 4), and entry to the squads is by invitation; as a guide, players should be on the stronger end of Essex Futures 2* tournaments and starting to play age group bronzes.

A notable highlight of the year was the recent doubles session coached by Anthony Clark which also provided a valuable coach development opportunity.

I'd like to thank Nisha Jacob for her work as Essex Coaching Coordinator and all of the coaches – Sheu, Clive, Ian, Steve, Elissa. I'd also like to welcome Anupama and Jey who will be helping organize the coaching this season.

We have paused the Group 4 coaching, which was intended to be bridge between the stronger juniors and senior teams, as there was insufficient interest to make it viable. We may revisit if we can find a format that works.

Teams

As usual, Essex entered teams in the Shires League (all 4 age groups), and also in the Under-18 Inter-County Tournament, and Herts Team Challenge. Selection is by merit and follows the published [selection policy](#).

- **Shires League Season Review** - the highlight this season was our Under-15 team who came second in the Shires League Finals in Loughborough in May losing out to Kent in the final. Many thanks to Stuart and Ram who managed the team so well, and well done to all the players.
- Our Under-17 Shires League team also qualified for the Finals and came 5th. Our Under-17 Team Manager Ranjit and Under-19 Team Manager Michael are both standing down next season. I'd like to thank them for all their hard work and commitment. We welcome incoming Under-17 TM Prabu and Under-19 TMs Harvinder and wish them well. I'd also like to thank Nitin for his skilful management of the Under-13 team, and I'd like to thank Angela for her role as Fixtures Secretary.
- **Inter-Counties Tournament (ICT)** - Essex Under-18 team came 10th out of a field of 28 teams at this highly popular annual residential tournament held in Nottingham in April 2025. Many thanks to our Seniors Coordinator Kelvin for coaching the team, and to the adult support team who looked after our players.
- **Herts Team Challenge** - Well done to the Under-16 players for achieving a 5th place finish out of 12 at this popular annual tournament hosted by Hertfordshire. Well done to Prabu for his debut as Team Manager.

Tournaments

Tournaments are an important part of Essex's junior activities; we run both circuit tournaments and 'Essex Futures' tournaments.

- **Essex Futures:** this season we will have had 9 Futures tournaments (aimed at juniors below county level, and divided into 1* tournaments for players with limited competitive experience and 2* tournaments for players with some competitive experience but below county level). Some Futures tournaments are run on a collaborative basis; I'd like to thank Southend & District JBA, East Thurrock, Redbridge Sports & Leisure, and Stanway for hosting Futures tournaments.
- **Circuit tournaments.** We aim to run junior bronze tournaments at all/most age groups; this season we ran Under-11, 13, 15, 17 & 19 events. I'd like to thank our pool of organizers; Penny, Nisha, Brandon and Ying and of course Eric Brown and Simon Gilhooly who have refereed for us. If you are interested in helping/learning how to run circuit tournaments, please drop me a line.
- **Junior Restricted (JR).** We also organize the JR in Sept; this tournament is open to all juniors eligible to represent Essex. This season (Sept 2024), we had another record entry with 140 players.

Other notable achievements

National Schools Badminton Finals: Two Essex Schools were represented in the finals in April, each having won their regional round. King Edward VI Grammar School Chelmsford competed in the Key Stage 3 Boys Event and came second, and Colchester County High School for Girls competed in the Key Stage 4 Girls Event, and won it. A tremendous achievement from both teams

I'd like to thank the Essex Committee for their support and everyone who has helped this season.

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