

Intercounty Review

England Squash changed the structure last season, following a few issues, to a format that could have been good but did not work. As a result, they then changed the format again after a brief and limited consultation period. Whilst many of the changes were positive, the communication, structure and timing made the new format very challenging.

The new format only allowed players to play in one age category and teams had to qualify from their region to be involved in the second stage (MONRAD) - in the past, there was a league system with the second stage being for promotion / relegation. The biggest and most controversial change regarded the dates of the two stages – January and April or March and June instead of the traditional October / November and March / April. This led to many teams with-drawing from the first stage, particularly when many age categories were reduced to a single day which often starting at 9am.

Hampshire performed well with the Senior Men, Senior Women, O45 and O65 teams qualifying for the finals. The Seniors Men won the finals to move into the Premier League. The Women finished second in their group B box behind SE Wales. The O45 were forced to withdraw along with two other Counties through a drastic shortage of players available for the finals on 22nd June. Having qualified for the finals without playing a match, the O65 team went on to win the whole competition. The other teams tried hard but did not make it through O35 (2nd), O55 (3rd) and O60 (3rd).