

8 Opportunities within the ESBA

The ESBA is organized in the following way. Throughout England each school affiliates directly or indirectly to its County Schools' BA, Metropolitan Schools' BA or to its local federation. The county or area schools' associations affiliated to the ESBA are organized on a regional basis whose essential structure is illustrated on page 147. The regions are almost identical to those created under the BA of E regional coaching scheme. A regional co-ordinator, whose task is to supervise and encourage schools' badminton in the area, is appointed to each functioning region. The co-ordinators work in close liaison with their BA of E counterparts and can bring promising young players to the notice of County BAs or the chief coach.

Events run by, or on behalf of, the ESBA are restricted to pupils under 16 on 1 September of the current season.

Regional representative teams compete annually in the ESBA inter-regional tournament which begins with a young player being put forward by his or her school or club for a schools' county trial. From the schools' county squad, players go forward for selection for the regional team. From the regional teams are selected a number of players from amongst whom the English Schools team is chosen. In addition ESBA selectors attend junior tournaments all over the country, on the look-out for talented players, so that, as far as is possible, no child is deprived of an opportunity to progress.

Two of the aims of the Association are 'to raise the standard of junior badminton throughout the country', and to 'provide further coaching and coaching facilities for school children and to pro-mote county and national associations'. Each school association within the ESBA is therefore committed to promote badminton and to provide the opportunity for you to compete and receive coaching. Any school in the country is entitled to membership of an affiliated schools' association and therefore able to receive the benefits of the Association. To achieve these aims the ESBA each year promotes and organizes many coaching courses and much competitive badminton. There is therefore every opportunity for you to play, learn more and compete up to the schools international level.

To ensure that the children of every school have the opportunity to learn badminton the ESBA has established the Teacher Award Scheme. Its aim is to give a basic qualification to teachers or student teachers, so that badminton may be competently introduced in as many schools and as wide an age range as possible. Ultimately it is hoped that there will be at least one qualified teacher of badminton in each school.

Some idea of the scope of the work performed by the ESBA can be seen in the list of events that follows, in which children have the opportunity to take part.

1 The ESBA award scheme

This is an award scheme which is designed to enable you to improve your own standard and receive recognition for your success. There are the bronze, silver and gold awards.

The bronze award

To attain this you must be able to:

- (a) demonstrate (i) low service, (ii) high service, (iii) clear (iv) smash, (v) drop.
- (b) show knowledge of the basic laws, i.e. height of net, the toss, who serves, service faults, receiving faults, and faults which occur in the course of the game, e.g. striking the shuttle before it has passed the net or hitting the net itself.

Assessment. You are assessed by any teacher who holds the ESBA teachers' award or by a BA of E coach, or by arrangement with the ESBA executive.

The silver award

To obtain this you must:

- (a) hold the bronze award.
- (b) demonstrate ability to play (i) forehand drive, (ii) backhand drive, (iii) returns of low serve, (iv) returns of high serve, (v) sequence of overhead shots (clears, drop and smash).
- (c) play a game of singles to show basic tactics.
- (d) play a game of doubles to show basic tactics.
- (e) show understanding of the laws with regard to: setting, faults in play (slings, double hits, invasion of opponents court, etc.).
- (f) show a practical working knowledge of game ethics.

Assessment. By nominees of the affiliated schools' association who are approved by the ESBA.

The gold award

To obtain this you must:

- (a) hold the silver award.
- (b) have competed in tournaments and submit a record at the time of the assessment.
- (c) have represented an ESBA affiliated association or represented your senior county.
- (d) show competence in scoring a game.
- (e) show a practical working knowledge of game ethics.
- (f) show practical understanding of the laws of badminton.
- (g) display an outline knowledge of the organization of badminton at national and international level.

Assessment. By the ESBA executive. Nominations are made by the County SBA to the Award Secretary, ESBA, by 31 October of each year. You are assessed on and off court throughout the season. You are notified of the result at the end of the season and the awards are pre-sented at the ESBA Inter-County Tournament.

How to apply. The application for the Bronze and Silver Awards is made to your county and area association, or your school should contact the Hon. Secretary of the ESBA.

2 Coaching courses

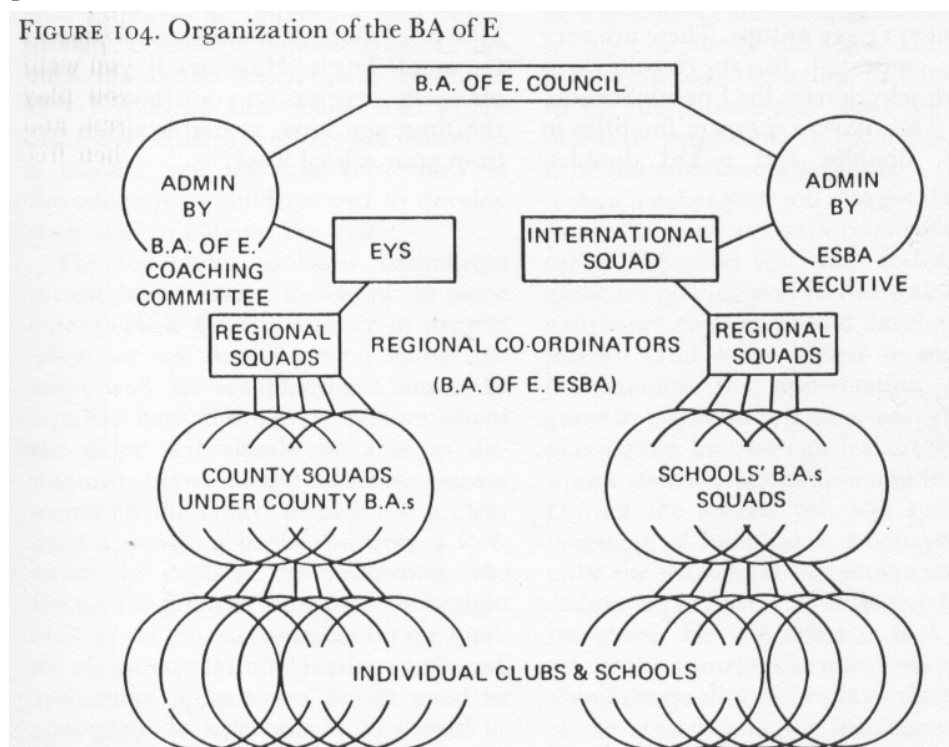
The various schools, area and county associations hold their own coaching courses, but in addition the ESBA hold courses in the summer for members and potential members of the English Schools' Squad.

3 Competition Team competition

(i) *Top schools competition.* This competition is organized in three sections: for boys, girls and mixed teams. The counties hold local competitions to find their three champion schools. These county champion schools then go forward to the regional finals, hoping to win a place in the national finals, where winners from the regional finals compete for the Charles Cumpstead Memorial Trophies.

(ii) *The ESBA inter-counties tournament.* This event is held annually during the Easter holidays. Each county team consists of 5 boys and 5 girls. The tournament is run initially on American lines, with counties playing each other in four groups. The winners and lower placed teams then play off against the winners, etc. of another section in a drawn knock-out semi-final and final, thus giving places to each county team.

FIGURE 104. Organization of the BA of E



(iii) *The inter-regional match.* This event is held annually in November. Teams representing the regions compete in a knock-out tournament. The regions are North, South-West, Home Counties, Midlands and East.

(iv) *Under-16 international matches.* Once a year a school international quadrangular match is held. The English Schools' team competes against teams from Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

Individual competition

Each year National Individual Championships are held for the under-16 and the under 14 age groups. These are very keenly contested, for the results help towards selection for the English Schools' team. The players compete for titles in singles, doubles and mixed doubles. Several winners in previous years, Nora Gardner, Kevin Jolly and Paula Killington for example, have gone on to gain full international honours with the English senior national team.

Further opportunities

Within the schools' system the opportunities are numerous. The ESBA is affiliated to and liaises with the BA of E. Within the parent association there are also numerous leagues, junior county teams and tournaments, regional teams and competitions, the England youth squad, international matches and finally national age-group championships.

You have the opportunity to play as little or as much badminton as you want to, at all levels. How much you play obviously depends on your interest, and the time you have available when free from your school work.