

Lothingland Girls Take the Inaugural County Badminton Crown

By Andrew Wilesmith

On 27th January 6 schools and 26 students battled it out at Holywells High School in Ipswich to become the first annual U14 Suffolk Schools Badminton Championships. The winner would go on to Cambridge on the 27th February to represent Suffolk at the Regional finals. The first matches started off at a fast and furious pace with Lothingland Middle School from Lowestoft taking a commanding lead in Group A with a 4-1 victory over Deben High School. Deben took an early lead in the first singles but Lothingland doubles showed excellent team work to take the match. Group 2 was a closer affair with Halesworth Middle School scraping a 3-2 win over County Upper School from Bury. The match scores bounced from one side to the other with County Upper eventually taking the final doubles game and the victory. County Upper continued this excellent run with another 3-2 victory, this time over Beyton Middle School. The County Upper girls showed great determination to keep their heads and win the match after a late rally by Beyton.

This grit was also shown by the Lowestoft girls as they completed a 4-1 victory over Newmarket College. Lothingland's doubles training was obviously paying off as they completed two convincing doubles' wins. With Lothingland topping the group and qualifying for the final it was down to Newmarket College and Deben High School to battle it out for a place in the 3rd/4th playoff. With the scores poised at 1-1 after the two singles matches, Deben pulled away to win their doubles and clinch the match 4-1.

In Group 2, with County Upper already in the final it was down to Halesworth and Beyton to battle it out for a 3rd/4th match against Deben. This was duly completed by Beyton as they won the match 3-2.

The 5th/6th playoff between Halesworth and Newmarket College saw Halesworth complete a thumping 5-0 victory. Meanwhile the 3rd/4th playoff saw Beyton lose their first match only to go on and complete a comprehensive 4-1 victory.

The final was played between two excellent teams play one another. County Upper had the benefit of being U14s, whereas the Lothingland side were all playing up a year as U13s. After two close singles matches the score was tied at 1-1 but Lothingland's excellent doubles play saw them overpower County Upper to take the match and the county championship 4-1. Tournament organiser and Competitions Manager for the county, Andrew Wilesmith said "the tournament was a great success. It was the first time that school badminton has had such a high profile competition and this will no doubt increase the number of youngsters going into our clubs. We've had brilliant coverage all over the county and had over 25 schools take part. It can only get bigger and better."

Many thanks go to Adam Molloson and Holywells High School for hosting the event and for the support of Tony Bristow and the Suffolk Badminton Association.

continued

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Congratulations go to Halesworth Middle School who won the inaugural U14 Suffolk Boys Badminton Championships. They will now represent the county at the Regional Finals in Cambridge on the 27th February. Halesworth demonstrated some fantastic skills against students that were a year older than them. They started really well against Beyton Middle School with a comprehensive 5-0 victory. This was then followed up with a strong 4-1 victory. Meanwhile in the other group it was Elm Tree Middle School from Lowestoft that started well with a 4-1 victory over King Edwards VI School from Bury. Hosts Holywells also started well with a 4-1 victory over Scaltback Middle School. Some aggressive smashes and excellent team work saw Holywells take their second game against King Edwards VI School and with Elm Tree beating Scaltback Middle it was down to the final game between Elm Tree and Holywells. Holywells played some good badminton but Elm Tree were too strong and finished off as 4-1 winners.

The final between Halesworth and Elm Tree was always going to be a closely fought contest and it started well for Elm Tree, however Halesworth were too strong throughout and some excellent rallies ended with points for Halesworth Middle School. The final score finished 4-1 to Halesworth who took the crown and a place at Cambridge. Tournament organiser and Competitions Manager for the county, Andrew Wilesmith said "the tournament was a great success. It was the first time that school badminton has had such a high profile competition and this will no doubt increase the number of youngsters going into our clubs. We've had brilliant coverage all over the county and had over 25 schools take part. It can only get bigger and better."