



## Senior County Team through to Badminton England's Senior County Championship Play-offs

By Lanarkshire Badminton

At the weekend, the Lanarkshire Senior County Team made the trip down to York, North Yorkshire to play their final set of matches as part of the Badminton England Senior County Championships Division 1 North.

The matches took place at the York Railway Institute which is a place that is steeped with history (the nearby National Railway Museum has world's largest collection of trains) with the first badminton court marked out in 1926 and today hosts a nine court sprung badminton hall – the perfect arena for the occasion! With the success from the previous fixtures the team remained fairly unchanged with an exception of a few including Toni Woods, Danny Robson and the McGuire Brothers (Anthony & Michael) coming back into the fold. Robert Dunn & Kirsten Berry both Team Managers again joined by regulars Sophie Ford, Jennifer Lafferty, Rachel Wedlock and new recruit Pratyush Singh making his second appearance for the county.

The opening fixture on the Saturday morning was against Gloucestershire which saw a battle between 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> place living up to expectations in a thrilling opening tie. The opposition got off to quick start by taking the 3 opening Singles rubbers with Robson coming close but losing in 3 sets to Jamie Percy 21-14, 15-21 & 19-21.

Singh & McGuire fought hard but were unable to overcome their opponents with McGuire pushing his opponent all the way losing 26-24 in final set. The score at 3-0, Lanarkshire relied on the Women's Singles rubbers which Toni Woods (21-12, 21-10) and Sophie Ford (21-8, 21-8) were able to convert into wins bringing the score back to 3-2 – keeping the tie alive! The experience of Robert Dunn & Kirsten Berry helped pull the scores level at 3-3 and 4-4 when they teamed up with Robson & Lafferty respectively in the 1<sup>st</sup> level doubles rubbers which were tight encounters.

Ford & Wedlock and the McGuire brothers were close but unfortunately unable to get the wins in 2<sup>nd</sup> level doubles rubbers, which meant going into the final two mixed doubles matches Gloucestershire had the upper hand – being 5-4 up. However, the Mixed Doubles being the strongest discipline for Lanarkshire with a 92.9% win average proved to be a determining factor in this tie.

The longstanding partnership of Dunn & Berry took the Mixed Doubles 1 in a tense 3 set exchange – 18-21, 21-13 & 21-15. This meant pressure was on young Anthony McGuire and Toni Woods in the deciding match however the pair manage to keep their cool as well as keep everyone on the edge of their seat winning in 3 sets 21-17, 21-23 & 21-18 getting the 6-5 win for Lanarkshire. A solid performance!

In the Saturday afternoon Lanarkshire took on Warwickshire 2. On this occasion Robson was able to get Lanarkshire off to a winning lead taking the Men's Singles 1 21-16, 21-10. Singh worked his opponent hard but was beaten however M.McGuire out Lanarkshire back in front at 2-1.

Once again Woods & Ford's demonstrated their dependability in the women's singles disciplines beating their opponents both in two sets taking the score to 4-1 – putting Lanarkshire in poll position. Despite a valiant effort from the master and apprentice duo of Dunn & A.McGuire they were unable to win the Men's Doubles 1, beaten 21-18, 21-16. Nevertheless, it was a clean sweep then on after for Lanarkshire who took the next 5 rubbers making the overall score 9-2.

On to Sunday, where Lanarkshire would compete against an opposition that were a bit closer to home – Lothian! Both sets of players would of course be more familiar with one another from competing in the domestic circuit together – which likely played to the advantage of both teams. Once more, Robson sprung out the blocks and was able to deliver the goods with an opening win in Men's Singles 1 in 3 sets. The McGuire brothers were then assigned the following singles' rubbers along with Woods & Ford bringing the score 4-1 to Lanarkshire. Dunn & A.McGuire were then able to clinch the tie in the Men's Doubles 1 winning 21-14, 21-17.

In the Womens' Doubles Woods & Lafferty teamed up and managed to nick the 2<sup>nd</sup> set in their clash against Lothian's Zwane & partner 25-23. Captain Berry then partnered up with Ford and Dunn in the next two rubbers, adding wins to the overall score with solid performances. It was then Lafferty and A.McGuire rounded off the weekend with a win in the Mixed Doubles 2 – 21-19, 21-14.

Again a massive thank you to our Team Managers Kirsten Berry & Robert Dunn for organising & arranging on the lead up to the day and managing the team on the day. Also our thanks go to team who once again put in a fantastic performance over the weekend rounding off an excellent season with 100% winning record - 7 out of 7 wins topping the division and now qualify for the playoffs in May – well done!!

To view full results from this event click [here](#)