

[London County Short Mat Bowling Association](#)

General information for New County Bowlers

London County play matches throughout the Winter (*September - April*) and potentially Summer (*May - August*) seasons.

London County has one squad of players from which the A Team and B Team are selected. (*Many counties have three teams : a Premier team, an A Team and a B Team, with separate squads for each.*) Each player must be registered with the ESMBA via their club and their club must be registered with London County.

During the winter season the A Team takes part in an Inter-County League (*Inter-County Competition aka ICC*) organised by the English Short Mat Bowling Association (*ESMBA*) to which the London County Short Mat Bowling Association is affiliated. In this Competition, counties are divided into groups where each group is made up of four or five county teams who play each other on a home and away basis (*“round robin”*) culminating in two knock-out competitions. London County has taken the decision not to compete in the ICC since the 2021/22 season as the squad has not been considered strong enough either in numbers or ability. This coincided with the ESMBA changing the structure of the ICC such that counties with only one squad must play at Premier level and London would have been placed in Premier League Division 2.

The B Team was formed to give good club players an introduction to a higher level of play and to gain experience of more tactics and strategy needed for Inter-County League activity. During the winter season the B Team plays inter-county friendly matches also on a home and away basis.

Each Team is made up of 20 players; 2 singles; 2 pairs; 2 triples and 2 fours each of which will play two games during the course of a match with lunch being taken in the middle of the day. Matches are played on four mats and normally commence at 10.00 a.m. and finish at approximately 4.30 p.m. This applies to both A and B Team matches. Players cannot play in more than one discipline in the ICC (*double up*) e.g., play in the singles and the triples. More players are therefore required than for a friendly match where doubling up is allowable, as is co-opting players from other counties.

The current Match fee is £10.00 per person which includes the cost of refreshments. Naturally away matches will involve some travelling and for these matches a coach is often provided by the County, departing from Addington. A fee towards the cost is usually made of £20 to include the match fee. Players are encouraged to travel on the coach as this encourages team spirit, as well as saving players the stress of driving long distances which has become a concern particularly on the return journey.

For A & B Team games it is normal practice for each team to have 2 trial ends before the start of each game but this is flexible and could change on the day. Before the start of play it is again normal practice for both teams to form a line alongside a playing mat (opposite each other), known as a “line-up”, at which introductions, welcomes and a coin toss for who plays first are made by the Captains. The result of the coin toss applies to all games during the match.

The dress code for London County (A Team and B Team) is as follows : County shirt, navy blue zip jacket, (*both of which will be supplied free of charge*), grey trousers or skirt and regulation bowls shoes.

During the summer (*usually July/August*), as soon as the match dates have been arranged by the Match Secretary, the County Captain sends out winter availability forms to those players who would form the full squad. At the end of the winter season (*usually April*) the County Captain sends out summer availability forms to those players wishing to take part in friendly matches and other squad activities during the summer season. However, since Covid-19 there haven't been any summer fixtures and these are unlikely to resume in the foreseeable future.

London County Squad days, if necessary, are held prior to the commencement of the winter season and are primarily for players who would initially form the basis of the playing squad for the forthcoming winter season.

Teams are currently selected by the County Captain assisted by the B Team Captain. Where possible selection will be made on a match by match basis. Individuals are informed usually via email if they have been selected to play.

With regard to "Home" matches, players are requested to arrive in plenty of time in order to assist with putting out the mats, fenders, scoreboards, etc, prior to playing the match. At the end of play all players are expected to assist in the putting away of the playing equipment.

There is a London County website <https://londoncsmba.weebly.com> which lists the fixtures for the season as well as other information such as venue addresses and County Competition dates. The County Squad WhatsApp group is also a useful communication tool.

We hope these *Briefing notes* cover the basics, however, should you have any worries or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to either a squad member, the County Captain and/or a member of the London County SMBA Management Committee.

8th January 2024