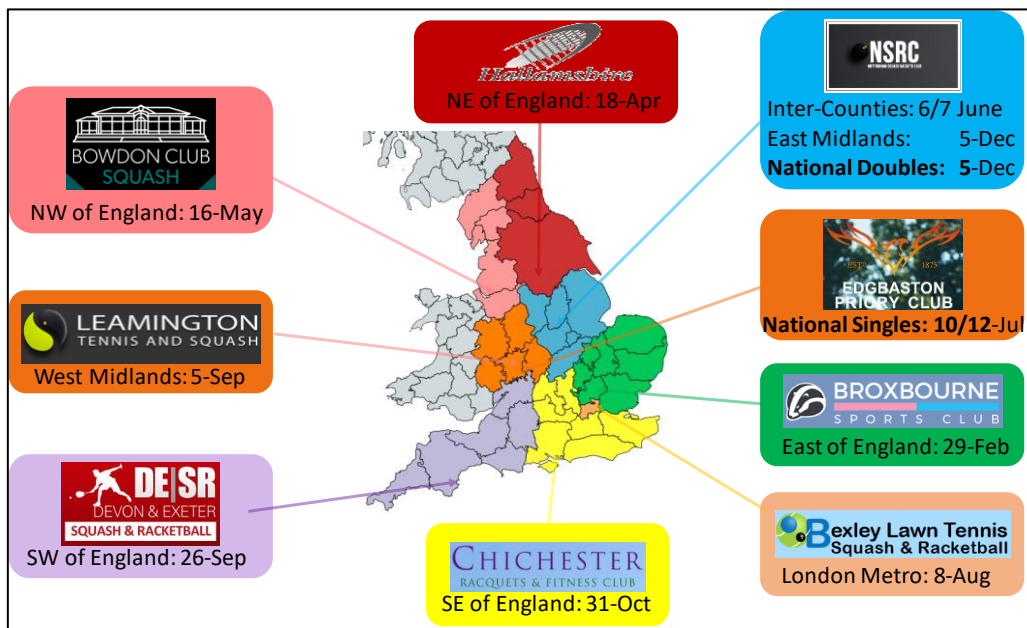


**BACKGROUND**

For many years the Squash57 players in England have been fortunate enough to have the opportunity to participate in regular National (closed), Regional (open) and possibly County (closed) Squash57 Championships. In recent years UK-Racketball (UKRB), working alongside England Squash, has taken official ownership of both the National and the Regional events.

England is broken down into 27 counties and these have been grouped into 8 regions as colour-coded in the picture below. A regional event is run most months, filling in the gaps between the ‘more prestigious’ national and inter-county championships.



To maintain competitive interest throughout the year UKRB maintain two sets of players (singles) rankings:

- National Singles Ranking: a rolling 12-month ranking used to help rank players in the National Singles
- Series Ranking: a year-to-date (YTD) ranking used to rank players in the Regional Singles events with an end of year prize ceremony after which the rankings get reset

In addition to the above it is possible to get other Squash57 singles events, e.g. county championships, sanctioned by UK-Racketball and contributing to the National Rankings. The full details behind how the ranking points are earned can be found here: <https://www.uk-racketball.com/ranking-rules.html>

Equipment: Squash57 balls are known to be inconsistent across manufacturers and even within manufacturer batches. The WSF has been investing significant effort to rectify this situation and it is recommended that tournament organisers use Squash57 balls that have been approved by the WSF for both rebound resilience (bounce) and consistency: <https://www.worldsquash.org/approved-squash-57-balls/>

This ‘paper’ will talk to the current state of the regional events in England in 2019, given that 2020 was pretty much a COVID-19 write-off, so that other countries can hopefully learn from UKRB’s experience in England should they be planning a similar competition structure. It is hoped that the lessons learnt here will be of value to organisers of Squash57 competitions be they club level, international or anything in-between.

### REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Regional CHAMPIONSHIPS in England are 1-day intensive Squash57 events including both Singles and Doubles. Players who have migrated to Squash57 from squash tend to prefer the familiarity of the singles game with others leaning towards doubles but there is a strong following for both and from a spectator standpoint it's doubles that draws the crowds. Given that these regional championships are open (to all), competitors travel across the country to compete, in fact every year there are travellers from elsewhere in Europe flying in. The championships are restricted to 1-day, invariably a Saturday, because they are 'full on' days and should players be travelling long distances it gives them the opportunity to recover as a tourist on the Sunday if they so choose. Players are guaranteed a minimum of 3 best-of-3 matches with early matches likely to be played in 'round robin' pools.

The UKRB regional championships are designed to be inclusive, to attract players of all ages and abilities.

**Events:** 8 event categories are offered, and it is not unusual for 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the competitors to be in the O50 event

Event	Competitors
A Grade	for those wanting the opportunity to play with the best on the day
B Grade	for the club player who is after a full day of competition, this event has an additional emphasis on 'fun' and can attract many club-level players
Women	for all women of all ages and abilities making for a fun and competitive day
Over 40	any player over the age of 40
Over 50	any player over the age of 50
Over 60	any player over the age of 60
Over 70	any player over the age of 70
Doubles	open event limited to 8 pairs (male and/or female)

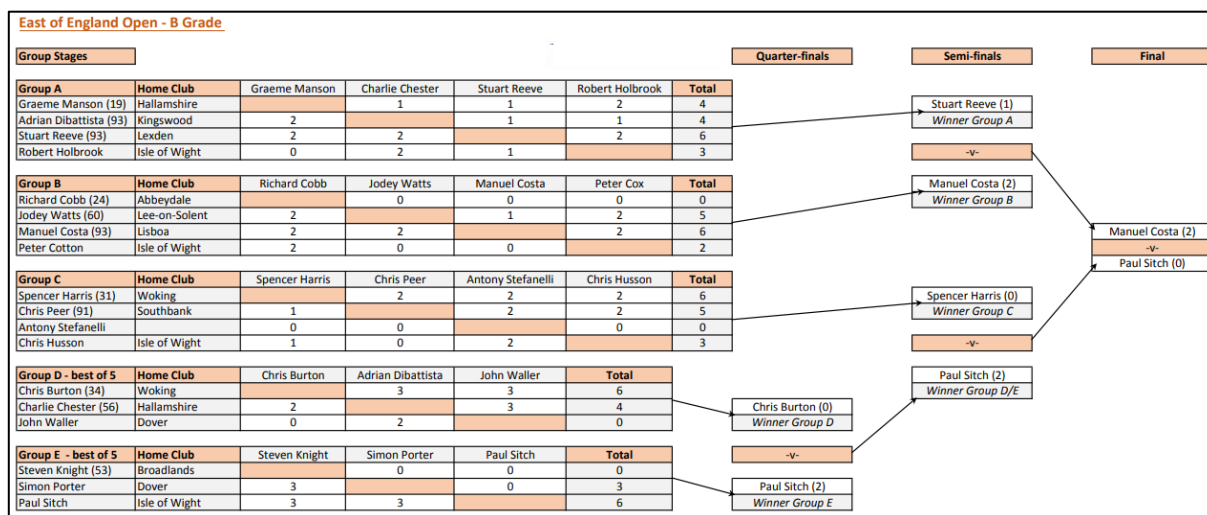
**Capacity:** largely driven by court availability. The best-of-3 matches, with individual games lasting anywhere between 5 to 15 minutes, will last 10 and 45 minutes. The available court times are therefore divided up into 25-minute slots with players encouraged to be flexible with their availability. With a 10-hour day, 9am to 7pm, 24 matches are expected to be played on each available court and UKRB use a rule of thumb competition competitor capacity guide of 15 players/court (e.g. 60 entries for a 4-court facility).

**DRAWS**

The draw format for each event will depend on the number of entries but they should be set up in a way that they can be adjusted at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour should a player not turn up or get injured in the first warmup of the day. As a rule of thumb this is the expected draw format:

Number of Players	Draws
2	merged with another group and/or a straight final
3-5	round robin competition
6-8	2 round robin pools followed by finals
9-11	3 round robin pools followed by finals
12-14	4 round robin pools followed by finals
15-19	5 round robin pools followed by finals
20+	6+ round robin pools followed by finals

Here is an example of a draw taken from the 2020 East of England 'B Grade' event with 18 players resulting in a total of 28 matches, the winner in this case had to play 5 matches and the RU 6 matches on the one day:



### SCHEDULES

There are many factors to consider when working on the schedule, here are some with recommendations:

- **EOD Timing:** do you want all the finals to be on court at the end of the day, around the same time?  
**Recommendation:** aim to have the finals of all events at the end of day but beware people playing in multiple events
- **General:** do you want to schedule all 25-minute slots throughout the day, or would you rather have a single queue of matches that get allocated a court when they get near to the top of the queue?  
**Recommendation:** allocate all slots for the day because this puts a greater level of certainty into the proceedings and ensures that you can allocate the most entertaining matches to the show court(s). That said, you should expect some courts to progress faster than others in which case reserve the flexibility to move matches to under-utilised courts.
- **Events:** attempt to group matches within the same event on the same court, or at the same time across courts, as this will likely increase the level of social interaction
- **Doubles:** If mixing doubles and singles then do you treat all events the same from a scheduling standpoint?  
**Recommendation:** have the doubles pool matches on court first as this will ensure more people get to the club on time. Doubles players are likely playing singles as well so they can warm up for their singles through playing doubles. Then finish the day with doubles finals, or earlier if the players and courts are available.
- **Down Time:** try to avoid having long off-court periods for players, having a first match at 9am and then a second match at 2pm is unlikely to work well  
**Recommendation:** schedule doubles and those events with the most entries to start first
- **Multiple Events:** if a competitor has entered multiple event categories then they will have signed up for a lot of court time day, two categories may result in 6-14 matches  
**Recommendation:** get these players on court early in the day, keep them on the same court as much as possible and for two consecutive matches at a time to avoid 'lost time'
- **Locals:** try to have local players on court first because they are less likely to be late arriving thanks to traffic delays
- **Show Court(s):** schedule the matches that you think will be the most entertaining for the show court(s) where more players will be able to watch and where online media streaming may be easier to achieve
- **Markers:** be clear whether it is the winner or the loser who will be marking the next match on court and if unable to, say because they are required on court again, then the other will mark  
**Recommendation:** have the winners mark the next match because losers have been known to go walkabout rather than mark
- **Expect the unexpected:** there's a good chance that players may turn up late or not at all

## guidelines for running 1-day competitions

Below is an example of a Schedule for a 4-court championship, colours differentiating between events making it easier for the players to find their event(s) across courts. Note that in this example the pool doubles matches were not front loaded into the schedule.

	Court 1		Court 2		Court 3		Court 4	
09:00	John Jones / Ray Rich	v Arc Bland / Nick Dunn	Peter Ellicock	v Paul Barnard	Sarah Jones	v Terry Jeal	Russell Cox	v Paul Buckner
09:25	Andy Ash / Bob Baker	v Simon Hugh / Jon Jay	Arc Bland	v Justin Jardine	John Jones	v Vic White	Andy Ruff	v Sui Lo
09:50	Andy Ash	v Keith Mabey	Phillip Hall	v Paul McLeod	Ray Rich	v Nick Harrington	Simon Hugh	v Simon Porter
10:15	Doug Douglas / Sui Lo	v Keith Mabey / Rob Lewis	Spencer Harris	v Christine Carter	John Jones	v Paul Buckner	David Berwick	v David Browne
10:40	Bob Baker	v Andy Kant	Arc Bland	v Paul Barnard	Doug Douglas	v Nick Dunn	Russell Cox	v Vic White
11:05	Ingrid Smith / Vic White	v Mo Sawar / Jack Jones	Peter Ellicock	v Justin Jardine	Sarah Jones	v Sui Lo	Andy Ruff	v Terry Jeal
11:30	Andy Ash / Bob Baker	v Arc Bland / Nick Dunn	Sarah Jones	v Susan Flipkin	Ray Rich	v Simon Porter	Steve Hock	v Rosie Rig
11:55	Dan Doors	v Keith Mabey	Spencer Harris	v Paul McLeod	Simon Hugh	v Nick Harrington	Doug Douglas	v David Browne
12:20	John Jones / Ray Rich	v Simon Hugh / Jon Jay	Ingrid Smith	v Mary Watson	David Berwick	v Nick Dunn	David Browne	v Mo Sawar
12:45	Elliot night	v Andy Kant	Phillip Hall	v Christine Carter	Paul Buckner	v Vic White	John Jones	v Russell Cox
13:10	Ingrid Smith / Vic White	v Keith Mabey / Rob Lewis	Betty Green	v Amelia Gould	Sarah Jones	v Andy Ruff	Sue Split	v Rosie Rig
13:35	Andy Ash	v Dan Doors	Arc Bland	v Peter Ellicock	Erin House	v Christine Carter	Pete Marsh	v Mo Sawar
14:00	Doug Douglas / Sui Lo	v Mo Sawar / Jack Jones	Sarah Jones	v Mary Watson	Ray Rich	v Simon Hugh	Steve Hock	v Sue Split
14:25	Bob Baker	v Jon Jay	Justin Jardine	v Paul Barnard	Sui Lo	v Terry Jeal	Ingrid Smith	v Susan Flipkin
14:50	Andy Ash / Bob Baker	v John Jones / Ray Rich	Phillip Hall	v Spencer Harris	Simon Hugh	v Nick Harrington	Erin House	v Amelia Gould
15:15	Quarter Final 1		Betty Green	v Christine Carter	Simon Hugh / Jon Jay	v Arc Bland / Nick Dunn	Sarah Jones	v Ingrid Smith
15:40	Quarter Final 2		Paul McLeod	v Christine Carter	Doug Douglas	v David Berwick	David Browne	v Pete Marsh
16:05	Mo Sawar / Jack Jones	v Keith Mabey / Rob Lewis	Susan Flipkin	v Mary Watson	Ingrid Smith / Vic White	v Doug Douglas / Sui Lo	David Browne	v Nick Dunn
16:30	Semi Final 1		Betty Green	v Erin House	Semi Final 1		Semi Final 2	
16:55	Semi Final 2		Amelia Gould	v Christine Carter	1st A	v 1st B	1st C	v 1st D
17:20	FINAL		FINAL		Semi Final 1		Semi Final 2	
17:45	FINAL		FINAL		FINAL		FINAL	
18:10								

KEY:	DOUBLES	Open	Women	O40	O50	Juniors
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**TIMELINES – EVENT PLANNING**

When running a 1-day event for 60 people on 4 courts there are many moving parts. The table below will not be bullet-proof but will give the reader a few ‘event planning’ pointers:

Step	Timeframe	Action	Requirement
1	12 months before	Club negotiations	Should be a win-win: you should get free use of courts, the more the better, and the club will make their money on bar, food and possibly pro shop sales
2	12-9 months before	Host Club (HC)	Market the event including: Competition Date(s); Venue details <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree on date and potential back-up date (in case 'snowed off')</li> <li>• Entry Form: Name; Home Club; Contact Details; Birthdate (if possible); Event(s) entered; shirt size (generally regular competition players have enough shirts, but infrequent players would like a competition shirt so offer as an 'extra'). Include warning that if a competitor enters more than 1 category then they need to be prepared to be on court for most of the day; entry deadline date; the expectation that the event will run all day</li> <li>• If taking entry fees up-front then they need to be refundable if cancel up to 'n' days before the event but may want to refund anyone other than an unexplained 'no-show'.</li> </ul> NOTE: if running multiple events, then consider having a 'series membership'.
3	6 months before	Sponsors	Identify/Contact sponsors: Sports Industry for balls, prizes; shirts; local businesses
4	3-6 months before	identify key contacts at local clubs	Ask the HC, and possibly the local 'county' squash organisation, to identify contacts/influencers at clubs 'close' to the HC and use them to encourage entries
5	1-3 months before	Balls	Order Squash57 match balls
6	5 weeks before	Shopping	Shirts for those that have ordered and a few extras just in case Prizes for the winners of events that you expect to be running
7	2-4 weeks before	Chase entries	If short of competitors then need to chase entries and can choose to target specific categories, for example to round up numbers
8	1 week before	Publish entry names	Publish list of entry names/clubs/category, including the waiting list of people should the competition have hit its capacity limit
9	4 days before	Publish draws	See 'DRAWS' for details
10	3 days before	Re-Publish draws	Expect people to pull out and/or there to be late entries (possibly from waiting list) requiring the draws to be re-published
11	2 days before	Publish Schedule	See 'SCHEDULE' for details
12	1 day before	Adjust Schedule	Competitors may drop so be ready/prepared to adjust the schedule and contact players should their start time move. Confirm who will open the club in the morning (get contact details). Print off: schedule (*2 or more); draws (*2 or more); pre-populated game sheets (court# / event / names / start time etc)
13	On the Day	Set Up	Arrive early and set up desk, put up draws and schedules for all to see. Ensure that the sponsor names are 'visible'
14	On the Day	Media	Multi-Media: Livestream if possible; take plenty of photos including presentations at EOD; try to record the action from the most entertaining matches
15	On the Day	EOD	Thank the club, staff, helpers etc
16	1 day after	Results	Publish the results of the day
17	2 days after	Photos/Videos	Publish photos/videos & start marketing the next event (hopefully 1-3m away)
18	5 days after	Rankings	Update rankings and re-publish