

The Racket Pack

The Racket Pack is Badminton England's programme to promote the sport to 5-11 year olds through fun, skill based sessions.



Interest was raised from Longhill Sports Centre and badminton coach Julia Alkema who were looking to develop a junior badminton club. Tanya Woodward from Badminton England, who runs the Racket Pack programme across Sussex, spoke with Active Sussex and Nick Chellel suggested contacting Darren Hambrook who manages The Deans Sports Partnership near Longhill.

Through this partnership, 5 primary schools enrolled on to the Racket Pack programme. As part of the programme, each school received their own Racket Pack kit bag and 6 weekly PE lessons delivered by Julia - a L2 badminton coach. The lessons were delivered to a class decided by the school (KS1 or KS2). Class teachers were encouraged to attend the lessons and develop their knowledge of net games.

The lessons culminated in a mixed age and ability festival that attracted a very impressive 70 pupils.

Establishing a Junior Club

From this, a new junior club was developed at Longhill Sports Centre with Julia also becoming the coach for these sessions. The club had over 25 primary school pupils attending from the very beginning!

The programme has now continued into a second year with further coaching sessions and a second festival. In two years, over 300 pupils have been introduced to the sport of badminton in this area. The popularity of the community club has increased so much that a second club is being established to cater for both the extra attendees and mixture of abilities and ages. Amazingly, 5 members of this club are now representing their county.

Further Impact

Longhill is the first junior badminton club in Brighton and its impact has gone beyond primary school pupils. Longhill High school now has its own badminton club and has had representative teams qualify for the Specsavers Sussex School Games Finals for the past two years. Longhill were so impressed with the junior club that a senior club has also now been established by Julia of which parents of the junior players attend.

Feedback

"The Racket Pack equipment and coaching has been invaluable at our school. The coaching has been of the highest level and, being in school time, we have been able to target pupils who don't often get the chance to attend extra-curricular sports clubs."

Primary School Teacher

"The equipment is perfect for pupils at primary school and allows for a range of abilities to start playing badminton. The tournament was a perfect way to end the sessions and all those involved really enjoyed themselves. I expect many to take up badminton in the future thanks to this."

Primary School Teacher



"What a fantastic demonstration of working in partnership - schools, coaches, teachers and most importantly the enthusiasm of the badminton team to ensure EVERY child who took part in this programme enjoyed success and a positive impression of badminton. Not only that but we have put in place a continuing link to nurture and develop children's passion for this sport which for many was the first time they have played and they now have a sport they can play for life - THANK YOU".

Darren Hambrook, The Deans Sports Partnership

Connect

If you are keen to learn more about the Racket Pack and how your school can benefit from the programme then please contact Badminton England Relationship Manager Tanya Woodward
TanyaWoodward@badmintonengland.co.uk