

---

**Girl's participation – Inter-County Squash  
Competitions Policy Change for Inter-counties  
Season 2016-17**

**Q&A**

A number of questions have been raised about the proposed policy change that permits females to participate in boy's squash teams from U11-U19 (inclusive). This document sets out responses to those questions.

**1. *Will England Squash be actively encouraging girls to play in boys Inter-counties squash competitions up to the age of U19s?***

No, we expect and encourage the majority of girls to stay in girls' squash and if they are talented will be invited to join our ability based Performance Programme. This opportunity is to give the choice for a small number of girls who want to play with the boys to do so.

**2. *Why isn't the same policy change being introduced for Senior Inter-counties, given that they too may have this request?***

England Squash will carry out a further independent risk assessment for seniors, given the slightly higher degree of risk at the senior age range. As such research has not yet been conducted, the policy change is not yet considered appropriate for senior age range. We are committed to undertaking this research in order to have a definitive policy and rule for 17/18. In the meantime we will take requests on a case by case basis.

**3. *Will we need to scrap all boys' and girls' competitions?***

The policy change does not prevent the continuation of competitions which are run as "Girls" or "Boys" competitions, provided that it is acknowledged that if a girl wanted to play in a "Boys" competition they are able, or a boy wanted to play in a "Girls" competition, on request, this would be reviewed.

As set out in the answers above, the number of girls who request to participate in boy's gender squash competitions at these age ranges are relatively low, and in general such girls had a specific and legitimate reason for wanting to be able to play in boys competitions. At no point during the past 3 years, to our current knowledge, have we received any requests for any boys to be allowed to play in a girls' team or competition. We do not consider the potential for boys to be interested in doing so to be great.

**4. *Will we need to change the name of our league or competition?***

We do not consider there to be any need to change the name of the Inter-counties Competition where they have the word "Boys" or "Girls" in their title.

---

## **5. *What about the detriment to the girls' game?***

We do not feel that there is any concern that the policy change would be to the detriment of the girls' game. Based on evidence, it is envisaged that the change in policy will only involve a small number of girls who based on ability would qualify to participate in the boys competition, with the majority of girls preferring to continue to choose to play girls' squash only. We feel that there is no obvious detriment to the girls' game and any opportunity we can give girls to play is beneficial for their development as currently our participation rate is 25-75 in favour of boy's participation so we should try and eliminate any obstacles to increase girl's participation and also giving them the opportunity of enhanced competition if their ability is such that they can compete in the boys competition.

## **6. *Isn't the proposed policy changes unfair on boys?***

The updated Rule applies equally to boys and girls, on request and provided a valid case is presented.

## **7. *Why change the policy now?***

We have received several requests of late for girls to be able to play in the boy's inter-county competition. Rather than ignore these requests we wanted to be pro-active and have clear communication with all involved in this competition. We wanted to clarify our position and our priority: It is paramount that we provide as many opportunities for girls to participate in squash, in-line with our Performance Programme which is now "ability based" we should make it possible for girls to compete at the highest level – if they are good enough, competent, confident enough then they should be encouraged to play. England Squash also consulted with several other Governing Bodies regarding their policy, the results of which showed that many authorised the mixed gender competition, where appropriate.

## **8. *What about facilities?***

Evidence shows that facilities were not perceived as an issue - both male and female changing rooms are available at all venues.