

Dear

Rally Points Scoring

It has been just short of a year now since the new Rally Points system was introduced to the game by the International Badminton Federation (now Badminton World Federation) and I have been asked by several County Associations and Leagues in recent weeks for Badminton England's view on the system that should be adopted by all in this country from next season.

I think it is important to firstly provide a brief background to the situation as it evolved and now currently stands.

The Council of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) agreed to adopt the new Laws in May 2006. They also agreed to allow the old system to continue to be played and this ruling can be found under Appendix 3 of the New Laws of Badminton.

Following this change to the Laws, Badminton England immediately reported to its own Council meeting on 25th May 2006 and after considerable debate, the following was agreed:

Rally Point scoring must be used at all Badminton England sanctioned events.

Due to the fact that we were aware, that many leagues and clubs had already held their AGM's at this stage and therefore were not able to discuss the issue, we were unable to do anything other than recommend a following of suit and that the decision would rest with each respective club/league. The upshot has been that some clubs and leagues have continued to play to the old system during this current season, others decided to opt for Rally Points immediately.

Just over halfway through the season, I am able to report back to you the consensus of those that have sent me letters and emails and also those that I have spoken to personally. To be honest the views of those against Rally Points has been fairly minimal but of course there remains concern – no changes to the Laws of a sport has the ability to cause such debate as that of its scoring system and I fully understand the views that have been expressed against the change.

But I have to say the vast majority of those that have adopted Rally Points have been more than happy with the system, even many from those who were very anti at the very beginning. My understanding is that as a result, the majority of leagues and clubs will be switching to Rally Points next season and will be communicating this to their players at forthcoming AGM's.

Along with many other nations around the world, Badminton England has lobbied the BWF to removed Appendix 3 from the New Laws of Badminton to avoid any further confusion and conflict among its affiliated bodies and members and I understand a proposal is to be made to remove Appendix 3 at the BWF AGM in June 2007. Having joined Badminton England from a sport that has several variances to its scoring system, I am only too aware how potentially damaging this is for our game.

However, I do believe that we still find ourselves in a period of transition even if Appendix 3 is removed in June. Due to the timing of the introduction of Rally Points last year, we are aware that some clubs and leagues have still not been able to fully discuss the change of system and have not had the opportunity to try it.

The Board of Directors are unable to issue a "requirement" to play the new system at this stage until we know the outcome of the BWF meeting in June. And even then, for some, any direction we provide may come too late to affect league rulings for the 2007/08 season. As soon as we know the outcome, we will update you on the situation that is likely to be effective for the following season.

But I can confirm that Badminton England supports Rally Points and will continue to be used at all our sanctioned events next season. We therefore strongly recommend that all badminton played in this country is done so to the new system.

I do have great sympathy with those who prefer the old system. I am a great believer in upholding the traditions and values within sport and feel these must be protected as far as possible. However, I am also someone who believes we must seize any opportunity to promote and grow our game and there is evidence that Rally Points helps towards this.

There is great progress being made within our sport at the moment. One element of our core business is increasing participation and we are doing this very successfully at grass roots level with an average of 1600 new players every month coming into our sport. More schools are playing badminton than ever before. The feedback is that players new to badminton understand the principle that when a rally is played, a point is scored at the end of it.

We have greater media coverage and interest from TV than we have experienced for many years. Both the BBC and Sky TV are broadcasting major events and international fixtures this year and I am in discussions with two further broadcasters regarding covering our sport as well. If we are to compete against other sports who are all fighting for the same air time, we have to understand that the new scoring system works better for TV.

This is a major change to our sport and I am fully aware of the sensitivity surrounding the decision. It is essential that everyone has the chance to fully consult their players and I hope you get the opportunity to do that in the near future.

Whether your club/league is pro Rally Points or against, it would appear the system is here to stay. As I mentioned earlier, I speak from experience when I say that a dual scoring system is damaging to the game and they should not operate alongside each other for any longer than is necessary.

I therefore very much hope that we can move forward together for the good of badminton in this country.

Kind regards

Adrian Christy
Chief Executive