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University of Birmingham to host British Junior Open in January 2018



The British Junior Open, the most prestigious junior squash event in the world, will be hosted in Birmingham for the next three years. The University, in collaboration with the Edgbaston Priory Club, successfully bid to England Squash for Birmingham to be the next host of the event, following 22 years of the event being held in Sheffield. The first annual event will take place between Wednesday 3 January and Sunday 7 January 2018.

Attracting over 450 players, 250 coaches and representatives from over 30 nations, the British Junior Open is the biggest junior championship in Europe. Due to the sheer size of the event, in addition to the six glass-back squash courts at the University's brand new Sport & Fitness Club which opened in May this year, the University will also erect an additional all-glass show court in the arena in the Sport & Fitness Club, enabling up to 500 spectators to view the games from all sides. The other West Midlands venues that will also host will be the Edgbaston Priory Club (eight courts), Solihull Arden Club (four courts) and the West Warwickshire Club (three courts).

In addition, the University has also secured its first ever world event for the new facilities – and for the city. The 2018 World University Squash Championships will be held in the new Sport & Fitness Club in September 2018, where around 100 male and female competitors will compete for both individual and team titles.

The selection of Birmingham as the host for these prestigious events clearly establishes it as the home of squash, one of the core events in the 2022 Commonwealth Games, for which Birmingham has also bid. If successful, the University would provide the competition venues for squash, and Zena Wooldridge OBE, Director of Sport at the University, says it's such a fantastic time to be involved in the sport.

"Following the success of the World Masters Championships in Birmingham in 2012, we're delighted to be back in partnership with Edgbaston Priory, Solihull Arden and West Warwickshire Clubs to host the British Junior Open. We're very aware of the unique heritage and profile of the BJO, and we're very excited that Birmingham, and the fantastic new facilities we now have will provide a fabulous experience for the best young players from across the world. It's an exciting opportunity, and we can't wait to welcome everyone to Birmingham in the New Year."

Entries to the event open from 11 September until 16 October 2017.

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Notes to the editor:

- University of Birmingham Sport & Fitness Club opened in May 2017, it features Birmingham's first 50m pool, six glass back squash courts, 200+ station gym, five activity studios, an indoor sports arena, 10m climbing wall and more.

- The University of Birmingham has two Squash scholars on the scholarship programme for 2017/18, PhD student Jan Van Den Herrewegen, current Belgian #1, and Stuart MacGregor, first-year Human Biology student starting in September who was recently ranked #2 at England U19.
- The University of Birmingham is currently ranked in the top ten universities for sport in the UK.
- The University have invested in new outdoor sport facilities which are planned to open this year including new pitches and a pavilion.
- The University of Birmingham is ranked amongst the world's top 100 institutions, its work brings people from across the world to Birmingham, including researchers and teachers and more than 5,000 international students from over 150 countries.
- University of Birmingham Squash courts and activities picture credit: Adrian Burrows