

# IN THE ZONE



Friday 15 May 2026

ISSUE 68

END OF SEASON END OF SEASON END OF SEASON END OF SEASON

# WHERE JOURNEYS COME FULL CIRCLE



Final showdown!

Originally founded as the Youth Basketball League - now proudly rebranded Your Basketball League - the organisation was built on a clear belief: every young person deserves a place to start, grow, and discover their potential through basketball. From the outset, its mission went far beyond organising competitions. It set out to build character, nurture confidence, and create a space where young people could learn, recover from setbacks, and thrive - a true home for potential, where dreams take root.



Kai with Shaun and Dan on a 3PO.

In the league's second season, two newcomers stepped onto the Under 13 court: Kai Fellows (Worcester Wolves Academy) and Issy Potter (Coventry Tornados). Wide-eyed, nervous, brimming with passion, they had no idea how deeply the league would shape their futures. *continued on page 2*



Issy in action!

## Another Success



Another outstanding YBL campaign reached a spectacular conclusion last weekend, as teams from across the league gathered for the highly anticipated Championship Finals - marking a fitting end to eleven seasons of competitive action.

For every side taking to the court, months of training, dedication and hard work had led to this single defining fixture. With silverware the ultimate prize, every team stepped out with one clear mission: to leave nothing in reserve and secure the title.

The action delivered on every promise. Intense, hard-fought contests unfolded across every division, with drama unfolding from first serve to final whistle. Coaches paced the touchlines, fully invested in every play, while spectators packed the venue - with attendances noticeably higher this year than ever before. That surging crowd energy rippled through every match; every cheer, chant and roar spurred players to dig deeper, push their limits and give everything for their team.

As the YBL celebrates its eleventh completed season, these finals once again underscored the league's rapidly rising standards, fierce competition, and enduring community spirit - proving it goes from strength to strength year on year.



Worcester Wolves  
U15's team at YBL Championships  
with Head Coach Kai Fellows

What they found was more than competition - it was a community, a family, a place to belong. Every practice and game became a building block. They learned not just skills like dribbling, defending and shooting, but how to communicate, trust, lead, and believe in themselves when things got tough. As they got older, their development continued, supported by teammates who pushed them to improve, and by a dedicated network of coaches who spotted their potential before they saw it themselves; team managers who stood by them through highs and lows; tutors who taught them to understand the game in depth; volunteers who gave freely of their time. These mentors taught far more than basketball — they instilled resilience, discipline, humility and respect. They showed that success is measured not only by points scored, but by character built.

Over time, Kai and Issy evolved from promising players into natural leaders. They realised basketball was about more than playing - it was about giving back, and passing on the same support and belief they had received.

Their first step was officiating. As table officials, they viewed the game from a new perspective, deepening their knowledge and confidence, and learning to uphold fairness and rhythm. Next came refereeing: standing court-side with a whistle demanded courage, composure and authority - making decisions under pressure, managing emotions, and leading in real time. Those experiences made them better officials, but also better players, teammates and people.

Coaching followed naturally. With qualifications at Level 2 in coaching, refereeing and table officiating, they gained a complete, rounded understanding of the sport. Those credentials represent far more than achievement - they stand for dedication, maturity, and a commitment to serving the game that shaped them, forged through hours of study, moments of doubt, and the drive to keep growing.

The story reached a landmark moment at the YBL Championships 2026, when Kai and Issy met on court - not as players, but as opposing coaches. It was not a clash of rivals, but a meeting of two journeys that began in the same place and rose side by side.

continued on page 3



Kai with local referee  
guru Joe



Issy taking that shot!



Today, they embody exactly what Your Basketball League exists to inspire. No longer just participants, they are role models, leaders, and contributors to the community that lifted them up. Their story proves that with opportunity, guidance and belief, young people can rise beyond all expectation.

Whether in a jersey, at the scorer's table, or with a whistle in hand, they carry the full circle of their journey wherever they go. They strengthen their clubs, lift those around them, and inspire every new generation stepping out for the first time.

Issy and Kai remind us: basketball is more than a game. It is a pathway, a classroom, a community. For those who embrace it fully, it becomes a lifelong source of growth, purpose and pride.



A proud new referee

Coventry Tornadoes U15's team at YBL Championships with Head Coach Issy Potter



# Gratitude from the YBL

The success of this year's Championships would simply not have been possible without the incredible commitment of everyone who gave their time, energy, and expertise over what was a busy but unforgettable weekend. Your hard work ensured every game ran smoothly, and your contribution is truly valued.

We extend our sincere gratitude to: Kevin Henry, Brian Kinch, Kim Accalia, Dan Cox, Shaun Williams, Joe Hodgson, EJ Gardner, Sarah Fellows, Kirsten Reeves, and a special mention to Jon Miller for his outstanding contribution. Our thanks also go to: W. Downing, H. Downing, A. Burton, O. Oldfield, Kai Fellows, Stephanie Dearman, Claire Atkin, Kirsty Russell, Kiran Wiltshire, Owen Phillips, Claire de Vere, I. de Vere, Ocean Faure-Lewis, Denise Kearney, Steve Nye, Martin Lansley, Maxwell Ajayi, Scott Owen, Kirstian Ramsey-Dickson, Dani Wallis, Jade Kinch, Stuart Harvey, and Felicite Umuhoza.

We also recognise our team of officials, whose professionalism, skill, and dedication ensured fair play and high standards across every fixture. To everyone of you - your time, enthusiasm, and passion are the heartbeat of this league. Thank you for helping make the 2026 Championships such a memorable success.

# Divisional Winners Teams 2025/2026

- U9 Group B Northants Storm Gold
- U9 Group C Birmingham Mets 2
- U11 Group A Coventry Tornados
- U11 Group B Kettering Phoenix
- U11 Group C Nuneaton Predators
- U13 All-Girls Northants Lightning
- U13 Group One Leaddonites Basketball
- U13 Group Two Abingdon Eagles Orange
- U13 Group Three Smethwick Sparks
- U13 Group Four Nottingham Heroes
- U15 All-Girls East Nuneaton Predators
- U15 All-Girls West Shrewsbury Storm
- U15 Group One Cheltenham Chargers
- U15 Group Two Oxford Hoops
- U15 Group Three Coventry Tornados
- U15 Group Four Kettering Phoenix
- U17 All-Girls Leicester Dynamite
- U17 Group One Cheltenham Chargers
- U17 Group Two Leicester Dynamite Red
- U17 Group Three Coventry Tornados
- U21 West Mids Walsall Wizards
- M-Division East Kettering PHX
- M-Division West Birmingham Rebels
- Women1 Walsall Queens
- Women2 Shropshire Warriors

# NEXT SEASON

YBL One has been established with a clear goal: to remove obstacles and provide fresh opportunities for players.

This innovative hybrid competition brings together athletes from the YBL, National League, and Senior Local Leagues, creating a dynamic environment designed to accelerate development and help every competitor fulfil their potential.

By blending established experience with emerging young talent, YBL One delivers a unique competitive platform. Here, players test themselves against higher standards, learn from every challenge, and build the skills, confidence, and resilience needed to advance in the sport. It strengthens development pathways, supports long-term growth, and helps shape well-rounded athletes ready to take the next step in their development.

The question remains: **does your team have what it takes to rise to the challenge?**

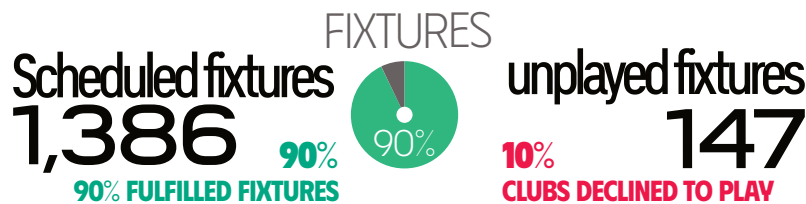


# Championship Title Holders 2026

- U11 CVL Coventry Tornados
- U13 ALL-GIRLS Northants Lightning
- U13 ZONAL Nottingham Heroes
- U15 ALL-GIRLS Shrewsbury Storm
- U15 ZONAL Coventry Tornados
- U17 ALL-GIRLS Leicester Dynamite
- U17 ZONAL Bromsgrove School
- U21 West Mids Walsall Wizards
- Women2 Shropshire Warriors
- Women1 Walsall Queens
- M Division Northampton Titans

## YBL Season Stats 2025/2026

KEY FEMALE % MALE %



### YBL MEMBERS

**2,544**



### NUMBER OF CLUBS & TEAMS

Participating teams **218**

Number of Clubs **42**

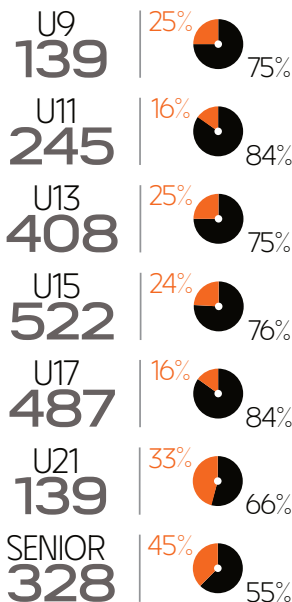
### OFFICIALS

Table Officials **172**



### Registered Players

**2,268**



### NUMBER OF DIVISIONS/COMPETITIONS

**42**



Cup Competitions **17**

Zonal Competitions **25**

Female Competitions **7**

### Referees

**104**



### COACHES

Coaches **195**



## TOP 5 PARTICIPATING YBL CLUBS

1. Abingdon Eagles, Oxfordshire - 151 members
2. Kettering Phoenix, Northamptonshire - 132 members
3. Northants Basketball, Northamptonshire - 117 members
4. Coventry Tornados, Warwickshire - 109 members
5. Worcester Wolves Academy, Worcestershire - 107 members



# IT ALL HAS AN IMPACT

## Basketball England's Regional Awards

It's always uplifting to celebrate the achievements of individuals, clubs, and organisations — but the real story lies with the volunteers who power our sport. Across the country, they continue to innovate, support, teach, and inspire, making a lasting impact on everyone involved. The YBL proudly congratulates the BE Regional Awards recipients and sends good luck to all as we look ahead to the seasons that await.

The final four regions have yet to hold their awards evenings, and we extend our best wishes to all nominees and attendees.

# YBL CONSULTATIONS (Q&A) 2026/2027 SEASON

## SHAPING THE FUTURE OF YOUR BASKETBALL LEAGUE



19:00  
MONDAY 18 MAY



SCAN THIS QR CODE TO JOIN THIS MEETING

Questions from you, the clubs, and potential clubs regarding the upcoming 2026/2027 season in the YBL. Ask away!

Links can also be found on the website.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN LANSLY

[www.ybl.org.uk](http://www.ybl.org.uk)

19:00  
MONDAY 1 JUNE



SCAN THIS QR CODE TO JOIN THIS MEETING



### Basketball England WEST MIDLANDS AWARDS 2025

Children's Coach of the Year	Ezekiel Cameron
Club Coach of the Year	Danny Williams
Club Welfare Officer of the Year	Paula Ottey
Community Basketball Program of the Year	Telford Community Basketball CIC
Community Club of the Year	West Brom Basketball Club
Education Institution of the Year	Alcester Grammar School
Inspiring Female of the Year	Folcite Umuhoza
Local League Provider of the Year	Your Basketball Leagues (YBL) C.I.C.
Media/Photographer of the Year	Martin Lansley
Player Development Coach of the Year	Lester Green
Referee of the Year	Matt Godsall
Slam Jam Delivery Provider of the Year	West Brom Basketball Club
Statistician of the Year	Emma Wickham
Table Official of the Year	Marian Ryan-Rhooms
Volunteer of the Year	James Davies
Services to Basketball	Emma-Jane Gardner

### Basketball England YORKSHIRE AWARDS 2025

Children's Coach of the Year	David Salisbury
Club Coach of the Year	Joe Turner-Chapman
Club Welfare Officer of the Year	Kathryn Hodgson
Community Basketball Program of the Year	Leeds Alligators
Community Club of the Year	Spenn Valley Vipers
Education Institution of the Year	Tapton School
Inspiring Female of the Year	Olga Deumeni-Torres
Local League Provider of the Year	Humber Local League
Media/Photographer of the Year	Ollie Betts
Player Development Coach of the Year	Tyler Paton Pottage
Referee of the Year	Joan Pons La Plana
Slam Jam Delivery Provider of the Year	LDM
Statistician of the Year	Courtney Bennett
Table Official of the Year	Melanie Kelly
Volunteer of the Year	Phil Harris
Services to Basketball	Lorraine Gayle

### Basketball England EAST AWARDS 2025

Children's Coach of the Year	Mia Johannes
Club Coach of the Year	Pete Charlwood
Club Welfare Officer of the Year	Diego Castoldi
Community Basketball Program of the Year	Aspire Basketball
Community Club of the Year	Mildenhall Jets
Education Institution of the Year	Swish Academy
Inspiring Female of the Year	Hayley Rigby
Local League Provider of the Year	Norfolk Basketball
Media/Photographer of the Year	Ainsley Wilkins
Player Development Coach of the Year	Claire Harper-Black
Referee of the Year	Jack Davies
Slam Jam Delivery Provider of the Year	Aspire Basketball
Table Official of the Year	Catherine McLean
Volunteer of the Year	Elsie Martin
Services to Basketball	Doreen McCormick

### Basketball England SOUTH EAST AWARDS 2025

Children's Coach of the Year	David Adewale
Club Coach of the Year	Freddie Winton
Club Welfare Officer of the Year	Chris Fairs
Community Basketball Program of the Year	Storm Basketball School Slam Jam
Community Club of the Year	Woking Blackhawks
Education Institution of the Year	Rainham Mark Grammar SCH
Inspiring Female of the Year	Teagan Holden
Local League Provider of the Year	Surrey Basketball Association
Media/Photographer of the Year	Noel Santos
Player Development Coach of the Year	Harry Earley
Referee of the Year	Kemi Savizon
Slam Jam Delivery Provider of the Year	Worthing Thunder
Statistician of the Year	Matt Walton
Table Official of the Year	Cara Andrews
Volunteer of the Year	David Cross
Services to Basketball	Chris Manley

### Basketball England NORTH WEST AWARDS 2025

Children's Coach of the Year	Alan Bannister
Club Coach of the Year	Jason Royle
Club Welfare Officer of the Year	Darryl Artingstall
Community Basketball Program of the Year	DO Sport
Community Club of the Year	Barrow Thorns Basketball Club
Education Institution of the Year	Clare Mount Specialist Sports College
Inspiring Female of the Year	Irene Oboawodu
Local League Provider of the Year	North West Regional League
Media/Photographer of the Year	Isaac Inglis
Player Development Coach of the Year	Tom Paraskeva
Referee of the Year	Lewis Van Deursen
Slam Jam Delivery Provider of the Year	Pinehurst Primary School - Emmett Cain
Statistician of the Year	Matt and Graeme Roberts
Table Official of the Year	Ellie Whitley
Volunteer of the Year	Charlton Reid
Services to Basketball	Mike Burton

### Basketball England NORTH EAST AWARDS 2025

Children's Coach of the Year	Thomas Robinson
Club Coach of the Year	Mark Elderkin
Club Welfare Officer of the Year	Joanne Kelley
Community Basketball Program of the Year	Newcastle Eagles Foundation
Community Club of the Year	East Cleveland Basketball Club
Education Institution of the Year	Middlesbrough College
Inspiring Female of the Year	Zoe Willis
Local League Provider of the Year	Durham League
Media/Photographer of the Year	Kieran Zhané
Player Development Coach of the Year	Anthony Reed
Referee of the Year	George Kiriakou
Slam Jam Delivery Provider of the Year	Lift Unity City
Table Official of the Year	Pamela Fisher
Volunteer of the Year	Thomas Beall
Services to Basketball	Harry Wood

# LEAGUE ENTRIES OPEN | 2026/2027 SEASON



**PRICES FROZEN - TEAM ENTRIES - £60. | MINI-TEAMS - FREE!**



**Mini-YBL Events/CVL**  
 U9 CVL 4x4  
 U11 CVL 4x4  
 Mini 3x3 Events  
 GROUPED INTO DIVISIONS



**Zonal Divisions**  
 U13 Zonal  
 U15 Zonal  
 U17 Zonal  
 GROUPED INTO DIVISIONS



**Female Divisions**  
 U13 All-Girls  
 U15 All-Girls  
 U18 All-Girls  
 Women Two  
 Women One\*  
 The Beth Matthews Cup\*

**M Divisions**  
 M Division East  
 M Division West  
 YBL One\* **NEW**  
 (Hybrid Competition)



**Under Twenty-One\***



**NEW The Challenge Cup Divisions**

Under 14\*, Under 16\*, & Under 18\*



**\* PERMITS NATIONAL LEAGUE PLAYERS**

**2026/2027 SEASON**

**NEW CLUBS REGISTER HERE**

Get started - scan the QR code



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN LANSLEY

ybl.org.uk

TEAMS CURRENTLY PARTICIPATING WITHIN THE YBL WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY INVITED TO PARTICIPATE FOR 2026/2027. PAYMENT FOR ENTRY WILL BE COLLECTED BY PLAYHQ PAYMENT REQUEST AFTER TEAMS HAVE BEEN CREATED.

**ENTRY DEADLINE – MONDAY 8 JUNE 2026**