

## **Southern Counties Archery Youth Tour 2023**

**Interim Report prepared for SCAS Council Meeting September 9<sup>th</sup> 2023, written August 21<sup>st</sup>.**

**Malcolm Barr**  
**SCAYT Organiser**

4 key actions points arising from the below:

- A. Council commits provisionally to running the tour again in 2024.
- B. Council nominates an individual to work with Malcolm Barr on running the 2024 tour.
- C. Council to help find a club willing to host the 2024 SCAS Junior Champs/SCAYT Finals.
- D. Malcolm Barr and Marc Tamlyn liaise to generate a proposed format for a County team addition to the 2024 SCAS Junior Champs/SCAYT Finals.

1. At the time of writing 32 of the shoots listed for the tour have been completed, leaving a further 9 to be held before the SCAS Junior Championships and SCAYT Final on September 24<sup>th</sup>. One additional shoot has been included in the Tour at short notice at Parkfield Archers, Cambridgeshire. Approximately 290 archers have taken part in shoots which are part of the tour to date.

2. The extent to which the tour has boosted participation at individual shoots appears to have varied widely. Many shoots continue to report relatively low numbers of junior entrants. For some shoots, however, the tour does appear to have had a positive effect on attendance – most obviously when archers from Sittingbourne CC and Ebbsfleet have been in attendance.

3. Examining the data on participation in the tour to date, the majority of participants (more than 180 of the 290) have taken part in only one shoot on the tour. This suggestive of scope to encourage archers to participate further.

4. At this time of writing the SCAS Junior Champs/SCAYT finals has close to 90 entries - the number of target bosses available has been increased to give a total capacity of up to 120 archers. More than 70 of those archers had entered before advertising of the shoot was sent out by ArcheryGB. The much boosted attendance for this shoot is very gratifying as this was a key objective of the Tour as a whole. We have an opportunity to re-establish this shoot as an important feature of the junior archery calendar in the region.

5. Information on how the tour operates, and the dates of events which form the tour, has been provided on the SCAS website since February. See:

<https://scasarchery.org.uk/tournaments/scayt>

The standings of archers on the tour have been being updated regularly, see

<https://scasarchery.org.uk/tournaments/scayt/scayt-tour-dates>

I am very grateful to Richard, the SCAS webmaster, for his help in both helping set up the SCAYT pages and in updating the SCAS website as the tour has progressed.

6. A full report on the finances for the SCAS Junior Championships/SCAYT Finals shoot will be made available after it has occurred. I would like to record my thanks to Bob Beaney, Steve Ellison and Christopher Fletcher-Campbell for their assistance with logistics/finances for this event.

The Council had envisaged it would subsidise that shoot with an envelope of funding of up to around £1500. The entry fee for the shoot has been held at £15. The extent to which the shoot makes a loss will depend, in part, on how many entrants take up the offer of a £10 refund of that fee

having completed three shoots on the tour. At this early stage I have received and processed only three requests for such a refund, which *may* provide a hint that take up of the refund will be low. Regardless, because the number of entrants to the shoot is quite high, it looks at this stage rather unlikely that the shoot will make a loss of close to £1000, so the financial support that has been required from SCAS for this event will have been well within the sketched envelope.

7. I will be seeking to collect more feedback from Tournament Organisers as the tour concludes. I do not believe that making shoots part of the tour has created much additional work for TOs – it has only required that SCAYT is mentioned on marketing material and that results are made available to me after the event. The feedback I have to date confirms that, and most TOs I have spoken to have been pleased to support the tour.

8. I will also be seeking more feedback from archers who have participated in the Tour as this year concludes. I have personally attended 4 events on the tour thus far. My personal sense is that awareness of the tour has been growing over time, with more archers and their parents having at least some awareness of it as time has passed. However, there are still many who seem unaware of it.

9. Updating the Tour standings has taken up to one hour of my time for each shoot once the results have been made available to me. The points scoring system for the tour has, in my opinion, worked well. It is relatively simple to operate when the results of a shoot are in. The only occasional complication in updating the tour points comes in those cases where archers have chosen to shoot down and this is not clear from the way results have been presented. The down-weighting of scores after 3 tour events was designed to keep the score close in each age-gender-bow type category, and thereby to encourage participation in the tour final (where double points are available). Looking at the tour standings, there are several categories where an individual archer has attended more shoots than others, but their tour-points lead could still be overhauled by at the tour final. It is not possible to clearly verify whether this has acted boosted attendance at the final, but the high numbers of attendees suggests it may have helped. I do not see any reason to consider changing the scoring system at this point.

10. This year's initial running of the tour has been on a trial basis to gather evidence and experience. At this stage it appears likely to be a success in most regards, and **I would recommend to the Council that it provisionally commits to running it again in 2024** with the intention of making it an ongoing feature of the regional junior archery calendar. That raises a number of questions (a) about logistics for 2024, and (b) how the idea could be further developed and promoted.

11. Turning to logistics for 2024:

- I confirm that I am happy to continue to operate as SCAYT organiser for 2024.
- While I am happy to continue to run the tour Rod Brown, who has partnered with me on this, is set retire. I believe it would be useful for someone to assist in running the tour, not least to ensure it can continue to operate should I “fall under a bus” or similar. **Can I ask Council to propose an individual to work with me for this purpose.**
- **Key is to find a club willing to host the 2024 SCAS Junior Champs/SCAYT Finals.** In my view there is a good case for having this event move around the region while favouring locations which are central within it. There may also be a case for offering some financial inducement for the club hosting the event. I was fortunate in 2023 in finding a volunteer to hold the final, and am very grateful to Lewis Brown and Crystal Palace Bowmen for stepping in. For 2024, however, I will need Council to assist in finding a location for this shoot. This needs to be done as early as possible so we can establish the arrangements for the 2024 tour with confidence.

12. Broader development of the Tour idea:

- My strong belief is that the key thing the tour needs to succeed is ongoing publicity so that awareness of it builds among archers and clubs. The SCAS Council itself needs to play an important role in this, with County Chairs actively promoting the tour in their Counties and beyond. I regret to inform Council that requests for Counties to publicize the tour on County websites, via social media, and via emails have typically had no better than a 50% response rate.
- ArcheryGB have run an article on the tour on their website and allowed the use of their infrastructure/distribution list for sending an email to SCAS members advertising the SCAS Junior Champs/ SCAYT Final shoot. I hope to have a retrospective article on the Tour in the ArcheryGB magazine later this year. I also hope to have an email sent advertising the tour as a whole in late Q1 2024.
- I would be very interested to hear from Council members any further ideas/initiatives for promotion of the Tour to junior archers in the region.
- **I propose that a small budget (£200-£300 approx) is allowed for printing of publicity material for the Tour.** This year I have paid personally for stickers of the tour logo to be printed and have sent these to TOs to hand out to junior archers. These have proven popular with the juniors. In addition, I would like to print A4 folded leaflets containing the details of the tour to send to TOs to distribute to junior archers next year. The aim is to ensure that all those attending shoots on the tour are made fully aware of it by handing them a leaflet about it (note point 3 above).
- The tour has not included any County Junior Team aspect in 2023. Indeed, there are no regional Junior County Team events operating at SCAS level currently. **I propose that we add a County Team competition to the SCAS Junior Championships/SCAYT Final in 2024 and that myself and Marc Tamlyn liaise to generate a proposed format for that.**
- I also propose that regional Junior County Team Managers are actively encouraged to add Junior County matches to events on the Tour on an *ad hoc* basis. The archers shooting in such matches will automatically become entrants to the Tour individually, and such events could boost the number of juniors taking part at shoots.
- Given the number of archers involved we should actively be seeking sponsorship for the tour from a leading archery brand or retailer, perhaps in the form of prizes being available to archers in the form of archery equipment or vouchers.
- I will be sharing an update of this report with the Council and ArcheryGB after the 2023 Tour's conclusion. There may be an opportunity for the same idea to be applied in other regions. There may also be a case for dialogue between the operation of this tour and the ArcheryGB sponsored Junior National Tour. The Southern leg of the latter was included as part of SCAYT and there may be more opportunities for collaboration.

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