

THE PROGRESSION FROM C GRADE TO STATE LEAGUE

The journey from entry level Badminton to elite level is a long one. It is a journey that we all take once we begin to play as ultimately we all wish to improve our level of play to some extent. But what are the key elements that we need to improve on or what are the key differentiations between certain levels of players? Well I will try and provide a simple pathway on the most important things we need to address as we move up the ladder of progression.

C Grade is the entry level we offer at Badminton SA. It is a grade where we can have some fun playing a new sport or maybe a grade we retire to as we get a bit older and slower!! As many players in this grade are new to the sport, tactics and technique are not so relevant. Players are still finding their way around the court and discovering different ways of how to hit the shuttle. However the most important thing at this level for success and progression is to develop some consistency. This is very much the same as junior Badminton. The player who is able to develop some level of consistency will beat 90% of opponents at this level! Also if a player is able to develop a basic fitness base this will serve them well.

The transition up to B grade sees a more consistent player who is able to implement some basic tactics well. Players are starting to move a little better and more efficiently and are able to maintain a certain level of consistency. Basic tactics in singles should be to clear and lift shuttles straight rather than cross court, thus taking time away from our opponent and not exposing our open areas on court. In doubles and mixed the focus needs to be on avoiding lifting the shuttle unless absolutely necessary.

Moving up to A grade from B grade will require an improvement in accuracy of shots, the ability to maintain good depth with your shots as well a better knowledge of shot selection. This may also mean an improvement in racket and footwork technique. The same basic tactics should apply and of course consistency is very important. The game is a little faster and rallies are longer so another step up in fitness is required.

State League is a big step up again. Speed becomes essential here. The ability to meet the shuttle early and to be able to recover after hitting the shuttle is vital. An understanding of start speed is essential and advanced racket techniques are also important. At this level tactics are very important. Having the ability to implement various game styles in all three disciplines makes for a better player. Players must be able to be deceptive with their shots and must be able to hit a range of shots from every position on court. Of course fitness and explosive power is also an important factor at this level.

Progression through anything in life takes time and practice. However if you work on just a few basic elements you might be surprised at how quickly you can improve!

Chris Thirlwell