

Badmintonathon – Guinness World Record attempt and charity fundraiser – Firth Park Community Arts College, Shiregreen – 22nd/23rd October 2011



Twelve players prepare to tackle the Guinness World Record, currently set by a Dutch team, the record stands at 28 hours 37 seconds



Court 1 – Kate, Allan, Alastair, Nisha



Court 2 – Jon, Rich, Vicki, Andrew



Court 3 – Gareth, Simon, Jarek, Ben



Allan makes a speech prior to the 9am start on Saturday morning. Announcing the team had broken the £5,000 target before we'd even hit a shuttle! Thanks were made to all the players taking part, the volunteers and Shiregreen Community Homes. This included a tribute for Kate, who raised over £1,000 alone, and was rewarded with a special treat, a well done and good luck message by musician Frank Turner!



Marketing, PR and financial investment from Shiregreen Community Homes was invaluable to the event, funding coming from NESTA funded Neighbourhood Challenge, little did we know how much impact this would soon have on the local community...



Playing for 29 hours didn't deter Court 3 from having a competitive match!



Despite a fall in only the third hour, gasps of breath from the early crowd and the other players, Vicki and Andrew, carried on their match with Rich and Jon. With thanks to St John Ambulance!



Allan's last words in his speech before the match began were to enjoy it. This picture was clearly before the pain was about to kick in!



Court 1 going for it early on – quite easily the best photograph of the weekend



We wanted to attract more people to try badminton. We opened a court especially for local residents to come and play – for free – and coaching was on offer from Badminton England. The court was busy all weekend, players included a local Police Community Support Officer!



Fantastic shot of all the courts in action here



Rackets down, not only did you play with the same partner against the same opponents all the way through, players were only allowed 5 minutes break per hour!



Our training prior to the event included playing through the night without sleep, on top of a normal working day. Aiming to try and train your mind and body to be prepared to stay not only awake, but active, for up to 36 hours!



As the hours went on, a 5 minute break was over in no time, feeling more like 30 seconds.



4:10am, Sunday morning, still 10 hours to go!



One for the future; Badminton England starlet Alex Langley joined us on Sunday and challenged some of the locals to a match, posed for pictures and signed autographs. What a star!



Agony! Despite a very brave effort, which saw the pain barrier smashed through plenty of times, Court 1 retired 24 hours 55 minutes in. An unofficial record for a mixed doubles badminton match!



Sunday afternoon, Courts 2 & 3 still going and have now officially broken the Guinness World Record! Massive thanks to Eagle Controls for the donation of the timer. It was one of the highlights of the event.



Over 100 people from the community came out in force to cheer on and witness history as the longest match of doubles badminton now stands at 29 hours. Courts 2 & 3 finished at the same time, only one court can have the record...



The Lord Mayor of Sheffield was among the first to offer his congratulations!



The unsung heroes of the event were the volunteers, including St John Ambulance, who without them could have meant an early finish for Court 2!



The players motivation for taking part was about competing for a record, when the event finished that was the last of our thoughts, we soon began to realise what we'd been a part of, and what the event had done for charity and the local community. Another shout for our volunteers, Naomi, Ed, Amita and Roy committed over 120 hours between them(!) to ensure the smooth running of the event and the paperwork was well managed. How inspiring, especially as they weren't playing!



Over £5,000 raised!



With the emotional, action packed, record breaking event now over, this was actually only the beginning of a badminton legacy in Shiregreen...