



Manchester Area Basketball League AGM Report

2025-26 Season



Chairman's Update – Gareth Keith

The 2025-26 MABL season has been another great season, which included competition from 40 teams across three men's divisions and one women's division. There were 362 league games, 37 cup games and 20 playoff games played between September 2025 and June 2026:

Competition	Number of games
Men's Premiership	72
Women's Premiership	90
Men's Championship	90
Men's Division One	110
Cup (both Men's and Women's)	37
Playoff (both Men's and Women's)	20

All divisions were a good standard and competitive throughout the season which shows a good, equal standard of basketball in each division.

I would like to thank all clubs and secretaries for their organisation, and I hope this continues next season. With so many teams involved, it is essential that club secretary contact details are kept up to date so we can communicate about fixtures and share relevant updates from MABL divisional representatives. My key request to secretaries is that information from MABL committee members is passed on to players where appropriate. Research last season showed that opportunities for referee and table official courses were not always reaching players and members who may benefit from them. Team contact details should therefore be for people directly involved in the day-to-day running of the club, rather than someone expected to forward emails days or weeks later. If you are unsure who the appropriate MABL contact should be, please discuss this with your divisional representative.

The MABL will not tolerate aggressive or insulting behaviour towards officials carrying out their duties during games. Officials are human beings and will always officiate to the best of their ability, calling what they see. However, if an official misses an incident or does not see a foul or infringement, this does not give any player the right to verbally abuse them. We continue to review our disciplinary policy, and players, as well as clubs, should expect strong penalties where the expected code of conduct is breached. We must all remember that



basketball should be played for competitive enjoyment, and clubs and coaches have a responsibility to instil this attitude in their players.

Floor and table officials give up their free time to make games possible for players. Without their commitment, there would be no games to play. I am confident that all clubs and team coaches will work with us to eliminate offensive behaviour from the game.

This season once again culminated in excellent playoff finals at the Manchester Basketball Centre. Thank you to Tom Muldoon, Jay Jackson, Christine Kitchen, other committee members, and the floor and table officials who supported the cup and playoff competitions. Without their dedication, these competitions would not have been as successful.

Financially, the MABL faces increasing pressure after five years without any subsidy or rebate from Basketball England, which previously came from a portion of our members' joining fees. This funding is now allocated to the Basketball England North West regional committee, which was established by BE to deliver its regional strategies. We understand that the North West region is not currently focused on investing in adult local league basketball.

This initially led to an increase in membership fees, but a longer-term strategy is needed to keep the league financially viable. We have contacted Basketball England, who have directed us towards grant opportunities outside of their grant funding and offered support to complete the applications. For clarity, it is important to note that MABL committee members organise and run the league voluntarily, in their own time and at no cost. Each year, delivering league activities requires an increasing amount of time and commitment.

In summary, MABL previously received rebates from members' fees, which helped us support league activities, development opportunities, and the overall quality of each season. These rebates were removed by Basketball England five years ago without consultation. As we no longer receive any portion of members' or clubs' joining fees, or any other financial support from our governing body, it has become increasingly difficult to deliver the best possible season with reduced funding and rising costs.

I would also ask all teams to ensure they have a qualified scorer at the table for every game next season. If you need support, please contact the Table Officials Secretary listed on the website. There is no excuse for not having a competent scorer who can complete a clear, legible scoresheet. Where scoresheets are of poor quality, clubs will be contacted next season. If a scoresheet cannot be read accurately, points may be deducted or the game may be forfeited, as an accurate record of the game cannot be confirmed.

We ask all clubs to ensure they have a firm season-long booking with their home court venue, including clear arrangements if the venue cancels bookings without good reason or fails to repair faulty equipment promptly. Issues such as a caretaker being unwilling to open the venue, a backboard not being repaired, or a team not having enough players will not be treated as 'exceptional circumstances'. While we want all games to be played, the busy fixture schedule does not allow for rearrangements where circumstances are not considered 'exceptional'.



I would like to apologise for the issues with our website during the season. As outlined in the website report, we experienced problems with the new site last season and have made every effort to resolve them before the start of next season. In summary, we had the opportunity to upgrade the website at no cost by joining an existing Basketball England partner that provides basketball software for BE. We agreed the MABL requirements with both Basketball England and the website developers before accepting the offer, including the expected functionality. However, as the season progressed, the website did not update automatically, mobile viewing and menus became unreliable, fixtures were difficult to find, and some functionality available to Basketball England was not available for local leagues as anticipated. As Chairman I would like to apologise for these issues, confirm the committee have learned from the experience and will no longer use Basketball England or its suppliers for the website moving forward unless better integration can be accommodated.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their support, commitment, and the many hours they have given to running the MABL. I would particularly like to recognise Jay Jackson, who was instrumental in ensuring fixtures were played and officials were appointed. Given the website issues, this became a significant task in itself and without Jay's dedication, many more games may not have taken place this season.

As planning begins for the 2026-27 season, I look forward to another successful year and to the continued support of our members, whose commitment underpins the success of the MABL. If you would like to join the committee, please let us know, as we are always keen to welcome like-minded people who can help run and develop your league.



Secretary Report – John Cihlar

Your committee comprised eight members. We met on eight occasions throughout the current season. Attendance was excellent, thorough minutes taken and business conducted efficiently.

The forty teams (over 4 divisions) of MABL were well served and the competitions (men's KO cup , women's KO cup , the four leagues and four sets of playoffs) ran smoothly as a result of the efforts of your committee members. All played a part and I commend their dedication to you.

Special mention must be made of Jay Jackson who under difficult circumstances ensured games were played and officials correctly appointed. The difficult circumstances arose with the new website and mismanaged expectations from BE's representative and it didn't function as anticipated. Appointing and confirming officials became fraught with difficulty and that is when Jay stepped in. Thankfully due to the efforts of our website manager (Simon Carlisle) we have worked really hard to upgrade our legacy website (mabl.co.uk) for next season meaning life should be much easier for us all.

Throughout the season I had a steady stream of requests from individuals and team representatives enquiring about entering MABL. They came from all over the NW and the Midlands. Not all were viable due to distance from Manchester but it is an indication of the excellent reputation of MABL.

I would like to thank all committee members for their integrity at meetings , their reasoned debate , and their good company.....Gareth (our chairman) led the meetings ably and sensibly.



Premier Division Report – Janet Lilley

Premiership Division League Table

#	Team	P	W	L	FORF	%	F	A	PTS
1	Trafford Giants	16	14	2	0	121.66	1292	1062	30
2	Myerscough	16	11	5	0	99.92	1192	1193	27
3	Moss Side Tropics	16	11	5	0	112.73	1204	1068	27
4	St Helens	16	10	5	1	111.33	1199	1077	25
5	YMCA Free City	16	8	8	0	96.68	961	994	24
6	Cardinal Langley 1	16	8	8	0	100.79	1152	1143	24
7	YMCA	16	6	10	0	93.81	1060	1130	22
8	Cheshire Hornets 1	16	2	14	0	82.99	1132	1364	18
9	Manchester Heat	16	2	12	2	84.55	881	1042	16

This season has been another successful year for Trafford Giants who won the league once more. Myerscough, who placed second in the league, managed to win the Playoff final in a closely fought contest, showing excellent skills and teamwork on both sides. Tropics won the Cup with a victory over Myerscough College.

The Premier Division this year was as close as it has ever been with only three points separating top and mid table. It made for an exciting season and shows the strength present in the division. The bottom teams were not far away from mid table and secured some good wins during the season.

I would like to thank Jay for the help with arranging games this season and ensuring the Premier Division ran efficiently.



Championship Report – Jay Jackson

Championship Division League Table

#	Team	P	W	L	FORF	%	F	A	PTS
1	Liverpool Men	18	16	2	0	129.93	1220	939	34
2	Preston 1	18	13	5	0	122.12	1325	1085	31
3	Belle Vue Bears	18	11	7	0	104.07	1124	1080	29
4	SBC White	18	11	7	0	111.69	1156	1035	29
5	8ight5ive2wo	18	9	9	0	96.58	1187	1229	27
6	Manchester Spartans Men	18	9	9	0	101.45	1187	1170	27
7	Canute	17	7	9	1	93.98	1046	1113	23
8	Stockport Atlas	18	6	10	2	79.49	934	1175	22
9	Tameside Vikings 1	18	4	13	1	84.70	1030	1216	21
10	Northwich	17	3	11	3	84.39	903	1070	17

Thank you to all the teams that participated this season. Congratulations to Liverpool for winning the Division, narrowly beating Preston Basketball Club 1 to the honours.

The season a few games went ahead with only one official due to issues early on at the start of the season with the new system/website. There were no games that had to be rescheduled in the division, thankful to those officials who often stepped in last minute to ensure games got played. There were games that were forfeited due to teams wanting to reschedule for non-exceptional reasons.

This season has been highly competitive, with a number of teams having something to play for right up until the last week. With new teams looking to enter the league next year as well as teams promoted from Division One, we hope the level of competition will continue to increase.

The Play-Off weekend was again a great success and Salford Basketball Club faced off against the league winners, Liverpool, while Preston Basketball Club 1 went up against Manchester Spartans.

Both semifinals were extremely competitive, with any of the four teams still within a chance to make the finals going into the last quarter.

Liverpool and Preston Basketball Club 1 made it through to the finals, with Preston Basketball Club 1 emerging as the overall Play-Off winners, showing just how good the standard in the division has been.

To conclude, the season has been a clear success, with only the occasional issue regarding scoresheets, officials' payments and a few disciplinary issues.



We appreciate the continued efforts of all clubs to uphold league standards and ensure the smooth running of fixtures.



Division One Report – John Cihlar

Division One League Table

#	Team	P	W	L	FORF	%	F	A	PTS
1	Horwich Locos	20	19	1	0	173.39	1564	902	39
2	Burnley Blazers	20	15	5	0	125.71	1242	988	35
3	MARS	20	16	3	1	114.88	1482	1290	35
4	Preston 2	20	12	8	0	102.54	1292	1260	32
5	Manchester HongKongers	20	11	9	0	97.93	1230	1256	31
6	Cardinal Langley 2	20	9	11	0	97.48	1279	1312	29
7	Tameside Vikings 2	20	8	12	0	97.37	1334	1370	28
8	Cheshire Hornets 2	20	5	15	0	78.73	1081	1373	25
9	NBN Basketball Club	20	5	14	1	73.93	967	1308	24
10	High Peak Steelers	20	6	12	2	80.35	1104	1374	24
11	SBC Red	20	4	14	2	88.97	1145	1287	22

There were twelve entries to the division.

GTA pulled out before the season got under leaving eleven teams. It was an excellent campaign on many fronts. The enthusiasm was clear, all club secretaries performed efficiently and cooperatively, there were no disputes and the basketball was highly competitive and of a very good standard exemplified by the most thrilling playoff weekend for many seasons.

I would like to congratulate everyone on a most successful and enjoyable season's basketball. I would stress that the success of the division one season can be attributed to the way the players and administration of each club ensured every effort was made to play each game in the correct manner and spirit. Well done everyone.

Out of 110 fixtures only six were defaulted games (all unavoidable) and although this was a tad disappointing it did not detract from the overall success of the season.

Just in case you don't know:

League champions - Horwich Locos. A deserved title. Their campaign was perfect. Congratulations to them.

Playoff winners - Burnley Blazers. What a great, nail biting final against Horwich Locos. Congratulations to Burnley. I do hope all the D1 teams take part in next season's activities as I believe they all enhance our excellent League.



Women's Division Report – Gareth Keith

Women's Division League Table

#	Team	P	W	L	FORF	%	F	A	PTS
1	Greater Manchester Titans	18	18	0	0	215.17	1362	633	36
2	FBA Manchester	18	14	4	0	139.89	1038	742	32
3	Tameside Vikings	18	12	6	0	106.44	827	777	30
4	Manchester Lynx	18	11	7	0	102.61	707	689	29
5	Cheshire Roar	18	10	8	0	94.86	738	778	28
6	Manchester Spartans	18	10	7	1	92.26	715	775	27
7	FBA Rockettes	18	4	14	0	70.83	663	936	22
8	Liverpool	18	6	9	3	85.37	665	779	21
9	Stockport Lapwings Green	18	4	11	3	76.51	632	826	19
10	Lancashire Spinners	18	1	15	2	58.38	578	990	17

Well done to Greater Manchester Titans who won the division, the women's cup competition and also the playoff finals. It's great to see a new team competing for top spot in the MABL and we hope next season will be even more competitive than this season.

Throughout the season there were plenty of competitive games which really shows how similarly matched some of the teams were in this division, with only five points between second and sixth position. Well done to all for making it exciting throughout the season.

Tameside Vikings finished third and only just missed out on an automatic playoff position, I would expect them to be challenging for the top spot next season.

Manchester Lynx had a fantastic season again and it was great to see one of our long standing teams get through to the play off finals again.

Stockport Lapwings Green suffered from player availability (as did Lancashire Spinner's at times during the season) and court bookings after their roof leaked which is unusual, but we hope to see them both back next season.

We appreciate everyone's determination and enthusiasm throughout the season and wish every team them better luck next year.

It was unfortunate that so many requests to rearrange games came throughout the season. As noted above in the chairman's opening statement; not having a venue available because they don't want to open up (or similar)



may result in games being forfeited in future seasons as we expect all teams to have robust season long bookings for their clubs home games.



Cup & Playoff secretary report – Tom Muldoon

Both Cup competitions ran smoothly with very few games forfeited. The venues for the finals did cause some issues. Both games were organised to take place at the same venue on the same night. Two weeks before the date the venue said they could no longer accommodate our booking. Thanks to help from two MABL teams the finals venues and night had to be changed.

I would like to thank the four teams impacted by this and for their understanding of this very unsatisfactory situation.

The Men's Final was between Moss Side Tropics and Myerscough College. The standard of play was excellent, and it was a very close game with the lead changing 5 times during the game. Moss Side Tropics eventually winning the game.

The Women's Final was between Greater Manchester Titans V FBA Manchester. It was great to see so much support for the women's final and for a new entry team to win in their first season.

The Play Off weekend was a huge success. All team's uniforms were immaculate. The playing standards of all the teams produced 11 out of 12 very close games, which displayed the competitiveness of the divisions. All games were refereed to a high standard and the scorekeeping for each game was without errors. All teams contributed to the smooth running of the event by being at the venue early for their games and completed teams lists to help with the completion of the scorebook. The event was also watched by an increase of spectators over previous years.

The Finalists for each League were:

Premiership

Trafford Giants V Myerscough College, Myerscough victorious.

Women's Premiership

Greater Manchester Titans V FBA Manchester, Titan victorious.

Championship

Preston 1 V Liverpool, Preston 1 victorious.

Division 1

Horwich Locos V Burnley, Burnley victorious.



Disciplinary Report – Tom Muldoon

The 2025-26 season the Disciplinary Secretary had to deal with four incidents. Three of these incidents involving player on player situation. These should not happen but in games which are highly competitive emotions often run high. The punishments for three of the incidents was a one match ban. The most serious incident occurred after one of the games in the 2025 Ply Off. A player continued to abuse one of the game officials in the car park after the game. He received a 2-match bad for the first two games of the 2025-26 season.

I would like to have a season in which my report would say nothing to report.



Floor officials Report – Jay Jackson

Thank you to all officials for your commitment this season. Your contribution is essential to the success of the MABL, and the introduction of the Match Evaluation Form has already provided valuable feedback to help us improve game management and the overall experience.

Overall standards of officiating have been extremely high, though there have been occasions where expectations were not met. These moments highlight how important your professionalism, communication and consistency are to the fairness and flow of every game.

A reminder that officials must be paid on the night of the game, upon handing over a completed MABL expense form. There have been several cases where payments were delayed for weeks, requiring the league to intervene. This will not be acceptable moving forward and if payment is not made before the game, the official is within their rights not to officiate the fixture and the result will be recorded as an abandoned game / forfeit against the home team.

The home team will also be responsible for travel expenses, and no further officials will be appointed to further fixtures until all outstanding payments are cleared.

Abuse towards officials will not be accepted. We already face a shortage of officials, and this is made worse when officials refuse to attend venues where they have previously received abuse. If you have any feedback or concerns with an official, it must be reported through the correct process using the Officials Report Form introduced last season, which can be found on the website.

We are also aware that a number of qualified officials currently play in the MABL but do not officiate within it (a big thank you to those who do). At a time when the league is already experiencing a shortage of officials, this places additional pressure on the existing pool. Quite simply, without officials, games cannot go ahead, and increasing participation from within our own playing community would significantly improve coverage across all divisions.

To support recruitment, we will run Level Two Floor Officiating Courses and Level One Table Officiating Courses over the summer. These are open to anyone interested in getting involved, and we encourage you to pass on our details to potential new officials.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the league throughout the season, coaches, players, spectators and, most importantly, the officials whose commitment underpins every fixture. Your support, dedication and involvement are what make the MABL possible, and we look forward to continuing to strengthen and develop our officiating team for the season ahead.



Website & social media Report - Simon Carlisle

The 2025/26 season marked a significant change for the Manchester Area Basketball League as we adopted PlayHQ as our competition management platform in partnership with Basketball England and moved our public-facing website to a third-party provider.

As with any major change, there were challenges and lessons learned throughout the season. The integration between PlayHQ and our website relied on data being transferred via APIs between two separate systems with different underlying structures. While this approach provided a way to display fixtures, results, league tables, and team information on our website, it also introduced technical complexities that occasionally affected the accuracy and availability of information.

As the season progressed, it became clear that some features we had anticipated using within PlayHQ were only available to official Basketball England-affiliated clubs and were not suitable for many of the social and independent teams that make up the MABL. In particular, the inability for teams to submit their own scores and the restrictions around player transfers created additional administrative challenges for both teams and committee members.

We also experienced a number of issues with the league website itself. On several occasions, problems with the mobile navigation prevented users from accessing key areas of the site from mobile devices. There were also periods where data displayed on the website became out of date, and towards the latter stages of the season, the synchronisation of data ceased altogether. This resulted in fixtures, results, and league tables becoming unavailable at a critical point in the season, causing understandable frustration for both committee members and league participants.

To ensure teams continued to have access to the information they needed, the committee made the decision to temporarily revert to our previous website platform while alternative arrangements were put in place.

Following a review of the season, the committee has agreed that the MABL website will be brought back in-house. Development of a new website is already underway and is being designed specifically around the needs of the league (and not just functionality restricted to BE), its teams, officials, and committee members. This will provide greater flexibility, improved responsiveness to issues, and allow us to develop features tailored to the way the MABL operates.

For the 2026/27 season, PlayHQ will continue to be used for player and team registration administration purposes so please do continue to register players and teams through PlayHQ.



While this season presented a number of challenges, it has also provided valuable experience and a clearer understanding of the requirements of our league. The committee is confident that the decisions taken will help deliver a more reliable and flexible platform for MABL members in the seasons ahead.

I would like to thank the committee, team representatives, officials, and members for their patience, feedback, and support throughout the season.

Social Media:

Follow us at: www.facebook.com/mabl.basketball

Sponsorship:

MABL are looking to offer companies the opportunity to sponsor our league for the 2026/2027 Season.

If anyone knows of any potential leads, please let a committee member know.