



# Season Review 2020-21



## Submissions to vote on

### **Men's Premier Interclub to be increased to 12 teams – Plimmerton**

*The Men's Premier Interclub should increase to 12 teams from the current 10.*

#### **Review Committee Recommendation**

**The number of teams in the Men's Premier Interclub remain at 10.**

#### **Reasoning**

Increasing the number of teams in the Men's Interclub would mean an extension of the playing season and place additional pressure on an already tight schedule. If additional double headers were introduced, this would create more stress on club events on Saturday afternoons as per feedback from last season's review.

There is also potential that the 12 teams would dilute the competitiveness of the division. In the past 2 seasons, the gap between the top of the table teams and those at the bottom has been significant (over 3 x as many points scored when comparing 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> placed teams). The discrepancy between the top tier and lower tier would only be accentuated by increasing the number of clubs in the division. Currently, all clubs have an equal opportunity to play towards and qualify for Premier Interclub under the existing format.

Any change to 12 teams would also have implications on the women's competition as these competitions are aligned and would also have a flow on effect to lower grades. Any changes to Interclub would need to be signalled at least a year in advance to ensure promotion and relegation qualifying was clear.

### **Veterans start time change and Time limits introduced – Tawa**

*The Veterans to start at the earlier time of 9am and introduce a 2-hour time limit.*

#### **Review Committee Recommendation**

**Introduce a time limit to the Veterans Trophy but the start time remain at 10am.**

#### **Reasoning**

By having a time limit on games, all games will start and finish at the same time allowing for the day to run smoother with better flow (ie breaks, food, raffles, presentations can be better organised) and greater opportunity for players to socialise as they will be on and off the green at similar times. This season we saw games finishing at different times, meaning presentations were delayed until the last game was finished. Often the final game has a bearing on the total result meaning potential delays for the majority of players until this game finishes and then scores collated.

The Tournament review committee do, however, recommend to leave the start time at 10am. While a shift to 9am could help mitigate travel issues at the completion of the tournament, this is effectively just shifting the travel issues from the end of the day until the beginning of the day. A 10am start enables most players to be able to reach the venue without being stuck in peak morning traffic.

## **Champion of Champion no longer be a Gold Star event – Rod Leitch**

*Only Open Centre titles rather than Champion of Champion titles should be eligible towards a Gold Star. Instead, a Silver Star should be introduced for Champion of Champion events.*

### **Review Committee Recommendation**

**Champion of Champion titles should remain as a Gold Star eligible title.**

### **Reasoning**

The first Wellington Champion of Champions event dates back to 1910 and over the 100+ years since every winner has received a title that counted towards a Gold Star. The first Gold Star was awarded in 1928 and in the years since has been a great source of pride and recognition.

Although in some cases, an argument that winning an Open Title being more deserving could be made, there are other instances where the opposite can equally be true. Historically, this is definitely so, for example at Johnsonville in 1995, over 100 men competed in the Club Singles making the qualifying prior to the Centre Champion of Champion incredibly rigorous. While Club Champs may not have the entries now as they had in the past, it is likely that to win a Champion of Champion title, a player/team would have had to play and win a greater number of matches overall than what would be required in an Open tournament. If Silver Stars were introduced for Champion of Champion title winners in place of Gold Stars, this would, by default, mean the degrading of the Champion of Champions events to a 2<sup>nd</sup> tier event and the potential need to retroactively remove Gold Stars from those event winners.

While the anomaly exists for some smaller clubs to qualify for the Wellington Champion of Champions event, having played minimal, or in some cases no Club Champs due to a lack of members, this is the exception rather than the rule with most Club Champs remaining highly competitive and considered to be a great honour to win.

It is also worthwhile noting that while Bowls NZ recognise National Champion of Champion titles as a Silver Star award, the Champion of Champions at a national level is a relatively recent concept whereas Wellington has a long history of the event. With Champion of Champions being a pathway to a New Zealand National title, this only adds to the prestige of the event at a regional level.

## **Champ of Champ Day 1 on Saturdays only – Newtown**

*Playing all the Day 1 of Champion of Champions on Saturdays only.*

### **Review Committee Recommendation**

**Day 1 of the Champion of Champion events to remain to be played on Saturdays and Sundays.**

### **Reasoning**

Playing on Saturdays only requires setting aside 5 Saturdays (junior singles, singles, pairs, triples, fours) in the schedule with the need to then schedule an additional to 2-3 postponement Saturdays in case of inclement weather. Currently, by playing Day 1 games on Saturday and Sunday, it only takes 2.5 weekends to complete and we can set aside 1.5 weekends as postponement dates. Currently, the requirement of 4 weekends is less disruptive than it would be for 8 Saturdays.

Additionally, if only Saturdays were used it would mean the Champion of Champion Day 1s would have to start earlier in the season, requiring clubs to have completed their Club Champs earlier and resulting in an even bigger length of time between Day 1 and Finals Weekend.

## **Multiple teams be permitted in the same grade in Pennants – John Sigsworth**

*Multiple club teams to be permitted in the same Men's Pennants Division*

### **Review Committee Recommendation**

Bowls Wellington can see both the merits and pitfalls of this proposal and we would welcome clubs to provide their thoughts and vote accordingly.

We will vote on:

A) Should clubs be permitted to have multiple teams in a Men's Pennants division?

and if so;

B) whether this should be across all divisions or just those below Division 1?

### **Reasoning**

To provide context to this, Plimmerton lost Division 1 Men's Pennants status this year, however they won Division 3. What this meant was that for season 2021-22, under the current conditions of play, Plimmerton will have a Div. 2 and Div. 3 side, as they cannot have two teams in the same grade. Another situation which can occur as a result of this Condition of Play is that if a club's Div. 1 side is relegated, should they have a Div. 2 side, this side would be automatically relegated to Div. 3 regardless of their standing in that grade.

Should a club be permitted multiple teams in a grade, there is potential, particularly for larger clubs to have a number of teams in the same division. This could make the competition less attractive if players are playing people they play with or against regularly at a club level. It also increases potential for collusion or players to be moved around teams to ensure a favourable result. This could be mitigated to some extent by limiting player movement, however this then does become a significant administrative responsibility of clubs to make record of and make available to Bowls Wellington upon request should there be a complaint or challenge lodged. Club teams could be scheduled to play each other early in the season to avoid any potential concerns such as this, however often postponements mean that often games take place 'out of sequence'.

If clubs are permitted to have multiple teams in a grade, it could enable clubs to provide a playing level more appropriately suited to a member's playing ability. For example, if a player has the ability to compete in Division 1, however they are a member of particularly strong club with many strong players, this member may end up playing at a level lower than their general ability. Allowing multiple teams would also mean teams/ players are not 'unfairly' affected by the performance of other teams from their club.

## **Development Pairs change to 1-8 years – Bowls Wellington**

*The Development 2-4-2 Pairs eligibility revert to Junior 1-8 rather than the current 1-8 years.*

### **Review Committee Recommendation**

Bowls Wellington can see both the advantages and disadvantages of such a change and would welcome clubs to provide their thoughts and vote accordingly. A change will only be made in the event of a 'significant' majority being in favour of change (over 60%).

### **Reasoning**

The Development Pairs was originally established in 1995 as a 1-5 tournament, then it changed to a 1-10 tournament as entry numbers had experienced a decline. This tournament is seen as a key tournament for newer and developing players to continue their development and be exposed to Bowls Wellington centre events.

A move to 1-8 from 1-10 would potentially close the gap that currently exists between the more experienced elite players and those new(ish) to the game. It could be argued such a change would create a more supportive and

enjoyable experience for these players, allowing them to continue to develop their game at a level appropriate to them. A change to 1-8 would also align well with the representative Hexagonal tournament, which is a 'development' tournament.

A similar argument could be made against moving to 1-8 in that the experience of those 9-10 year players add a further challenge to new players and can aid their development by playing against more experienced, and in some cases much better players.

A move to 1-8 could result in a smaller field, particularly initially, until the change is embedded. Less entries however, in of itself is not an issue, as the priority is what provides the greatest experience for this group of bowlers. We would also hope, in such cases, clubs would be proactive in encouraging their juniors to take part.

## **Open Tournament draws – Bowls Wellington**

*Open Tournament draws to be 'fully' randomised*

### **Review Committee Recommendation**

**Bowls Wellington would like feedback from clubs about whether there is demand to move away from the current draw process to one that is fully randomised.**

### **Reasoning**

Currently, draws for Open tournaments are as randomised as they can be under the current process. For section play, each entry is allocated a number, then a computerized random number generator creates groups of four numbers, which become the sections for Open Tournaments.

However, as per club's historical wishes, to ensure that collusion is not possible and to add to the enjoyment of playing in these tournaments, the caveat was that players from the same club would not be drawn in the same section. Note: This is not the case with the post-section draw whereby club members can be drawn to play each other.

We would like to know what the current thoughts are on this from clubs and ask them to gauge their members opinions, particularly those who currently participate in Open events.

If we move to a fully randomised draw, it will be just that – fully random. This would appear to be the most equitable way forward but could also affect the player experience as 3-4 players from the same club could quite conceivably be drawn within the same section, and this section to be drawn to take place a significant distance from home. Currently this is likely to happen, and will become increasingly more probable, especially for larger clubs, in the next few years as we see growth in entries from larger clubs. For example, it would not be unusual to see 3 Silverstream players drawn to play each other in the same section at Island Bay. Having to play their club peers and the fact that they have to travel so far to do so could impact their enjoyment of the event and likelihood of future participation.

## **Bowls3Five to be played over a single weekend not Monday nights – Hutt**

*Bowls3Five to be a weekend tournament rather than being played on Monday evenings.*

### **Review Committee Recommendation**

**A separate one day Bowls3Five tournament to decide the NZ Pathway winner be introduced while the Monday night twilight competition for those that wish to play evenings is retained. See Bowls Wellington proposal below and attached for how this would work.**

### **Reasoning**

The Bowls3Five competition this season was hit by poor weather, particularly early in the season, resulting in significant disruption and an extended schedule meaning the competition struggled for any momentum. The Bowls

NZ condition that there be no freedom of movement also meant that the length of the competition had an adverse impact on player eligibility and of clubs to organise players each week.

Having a short sharp pathway event would enable clubs to put in their best team for a shot at a National title and entry into the TV League. A separate evening twilight league would continue to provide playing opportunities for working-aged people who cannot commit to playing weekend bowls and also those who enjoy a shorter format.

Please see below Bowls Wellington's proposal for next season's Bowls3Five tournament and competitions as to how these would work.

## **Bowls3Five 1 day tournament – Bowls Wellington**

*The Bowls3Five pathway qualifying be condensed into a one day tournament played on a Sunday.*

### **Review Committee Recommendation**

**Bowls Wellington propose that the qualifying for the Bowls NZ Bowls3Five pathway be condensed into a one day tournament.**

### **Reasoning**

The twilight Bowls3Five league, while providing a valuable opportunity for those who enjoy the shorter format and for those who cannot commit to weekend play, is not an effective means of finding the Bowls NZ Bowls3Five qualifier.

As the eligibility rule means that players cannot play for more than one team, even as a reserve, the continuity of a team from the beginning to the end of a competition is compromised. The length of this season, also means that the competition struggles for momentum, particularly in instances of adverse weather as there was this season.

Additionally, as the format is still in its infancy, and the number of teams involved each year varies widely from club to club and zone to zone, it is not possible to have a clear indication as to what structure the competition will take until entries are received. This is a challenge, not only administratively as we need to create a competition based on entries received, clubs are also entering a competition in which they do not know categorically what it will look like.

The current calendar is extremely tight, so there are no 'spare' weekends for a large tournament. However, a one day tournament on the Sunday following an Interclub day would work well. This would provide another showcase event in the calendar, while minimising disruption to clubs and players. In time this event, is likely to become showcase event for Bowls in the region and result in a great atmosphere, much as the Champ of Champ finals weekend has. Please see the attached document for how this one day tournament would work.

## **Hutt Valley Tournaments to be run by HV Clubs – Bowls Wellington**

*The Hutt Valley tournaments be administered by Hutt Valley Clubs*

### **Review Committee Recommendation**

**Bowls Wellington propose that the Hutt Valley exclusive tournaments (McArthur-Henry, Gibbons Trophy, Hutt Valley Cup and Bowl and Hutt Valley Banner and Gough) are to be administered by the Hutt Valley club hosting the event.**

### **Reasoning**

Bowls Wellington commits significant resources to the organisation of these events and believes now is a good time to release the administration of these tournaments back to the Hutt Valley. Initially, these tournaments were administered by a Hutt Valley committee and came under the umbrella of Bowls Wellington due to previous Bowls Wellington CEOs having been affiliated with Hutt Valley clubs. Anecdotal feedback over the past 12 months shows there are varying levels of priority given to these tournaments across clubs and it is difficult to continue to justify Bowls Wellington administering these on behalf of, and exclusively for, the Hutt Valley.

Bowls Wellington will support the transition of these events to the host Hutt Valley clubs and help them for the coming 2021-22 season.

If Hutt Valley clubs do not wish to take on the administration of these events, Bowls Wellington will introduce an entry fee of \$20 per team, per tournament to help cover administration costs.

## Other submissions

These submissions do not require clubs to vote but the Tournament Review Committee have passed comment on as they are either already taken into consideration or will be taken into consideration for next season.

### **Champ of Champ Semifinal and Final be played on same day - Newtown**

*The Semi-final and Final of the Champion of Champions should be played on the same day of the Finals Weekend so players and spectators don't have to travel to the venue on both days.*

#### **Review Committee Comments**

Where possible, consideration will be given to the Semi-final and Final of a Champion of Champion event being scheduled for the same day. It is important to note, this is not always possible due to player's qualifying for multiple events (as was the case this season) and that the most important consideration, is providing an opportunity for players to play in all their events. Another factor is that, generally, we are limited to 3 rounds per day (6 per weekend).

### **Health and Safety be taken into consideration when deciding on closing greens – Hutt**

*Health and Safety of players be taken into consideration when deciding green closures*

#### **Review Committee Comments**

The health and safety of players is of paramount importance. Although bowls can and is often played in the rain, we ask clubs to be conscious of slipping hazards and greens becoming dangerous to play on in adverse weather. It is important to note, that rain (or wind) itself does not constitute a 'health and safety risk' but rather the effect of such conditions on a hazardous playing environment.

Clubs need to show good faith and make every attempt to play a game, providing it can be done so safely. For this reason, if a club closes their green, the opposition still retain the right to host, or organise an alternative venue, as per current conditions of play. The team with the closed green is expected to travel to the new venue should the opposition (at that moment in time) decide this green to be playable. If upon arrival, the skips of the teams disagree as to whether the game can proceed, the decision is that of the green superintendent / greenkeeper. This stops any potential for some players to use the weather an excuse for not playing (or leaving home).

Bowls Wellington will include in the 2021-22 Conditions of Play mention of the expectations of clubs to consider player's health and safety when deciding whether a green should be closed. Additionally, we encourage clubs (should they not be doing so already) to make contact with the opposition's coordinator (ie Pennants or Interclub) prior to game day to discuss and plan contingencies. If that person is away or unavailable, the club needs to have a clear delegation process to deal with such instances. Early and open dialogue is key for a smooth and amicable following day.

### **Centre events be played on A/B graded greens only – Johnsonville**

*All Centre events be played on the best (A & B graded) greens.*

#### **Review Committee Comments**

The Wellington Greenkeeper's Association provide a green assessment to Bowls Wellington at the end of each season marking greens as 'suitable for section play only', 'suitable for post section play, 'suitable pending further assessment' and 'not suitable'. This assessment provides the basis for the allocations of tournaments for the following season with

suitable greens given opportunities to host pre-Christmas and those suitable pending further assessment an opportunity post-Christmas providing they carry out the recommended remedial work.

During the season, Bowls Wellington is in regular communication with the Wellington Greenkeeper's Association and clubs are expected to provide self-assessments to Bowls Wellington and work with the Greenkeepers Association to maintain and improve their greens. Clubs are also expected to inform the Centre if they have any reservations about a green or particular rink(s) at any stage of the season. In the lead up to each Centre event, and prior to a draw being released, all venues are contacted to make a final check as to the green condition and any issues. If a green is considered unsuitable, even at this late stage, Bowls Wellington will remove it from the upcoming tournament and seek to find a replacement. This happened a number of times during the 2020-21 season and Bowls Wellington thanks all those clubs who communicated early and those which provided greens as others were withdrawn. This enabled the tournaments to proceed and no teams needed to be removed from the tournament due to insufficient greens.

We encourage clubs to be forthcoming about the state of their greens and any decision to withdraw a green will not adversely harm their chances of hosting events in the future. All it means is that at this point in time, and for this particular tournament, the green is not suitable. The club will continue to have future opportunities once we have confirmation from them and/or the Greenkeeper's Association that the issues have been rectified.

There are occasions when a 'good' green is not being used. This could be for any number of reasons including the greenkeeper/ club requesting it not be used as it needs a break or is due for some maintenance, the greenkeeper being unavailable at that time, the club itself stating they wish not to host an event, a club having a different event on, or if the club has stated they do not have the resources (ie markers/ bar manager/ volunteers) to successfully host.

### **No events scheduled for Anniversary Weekend – Upper Hutt**

*Centre events not be scheduled on Anniversary Weekend*

#### **Review Committee comments**

Wellington Anniversary weekend has historically been used for Centre events. This season the only event scheduled was the McArthur-Henry Shield, (Hutt Valley 1-5s), which is a smaller lower profile tournament in the context of the broader calendar.

There are a number of clubs in Wellington, each with their own schedule and important event/s. While Bowls Wellington does not want to schedule directly against any of these, it is not possible to accommodate requests from all 24 clubs regarding timing of events and so out of necessity, there will be occasions when a Bowls Wellington event will clash with a club event. In such cases, it will be up to the individual to decide which event they participate in.