

Minutes of the Inter County Think Tank

10th November, Kegworth Village Hall

Attendees

Jo Cundy BTBA County Co-Ordinator & Adult ICC Secretary

Emma Ashton Junior ICC Secretary

Apologies

Paul Le Manquais Senior County Secretary

Norfolk Bedfordshire Warwickshire Dorset

Shropshire

Counties Represented

Buckinghamshire	Derbyshire	Essex	Hampshire
Hertfordshire	London	Northamptonshire	Nottinghamshire
Oxfordshire	Surrey	Sussex	Yorkshire

Amendments/word changes to rules

- Paragraph 2 - Management – take out the word annually and change to ‘appointed by the National Council of the BTBA.
- Paragraph 5d addition of photographs ruling
- Paragraph 6d change of word in last line ‘and be’ replaced by ‘or be the’
- Seniors Paragraph 1a change confirmed by the BTBA to ‘approved by the General ICC Secretary’.
- Seniors Paragraph 3c, Adults 2c Junior relevant paragraphs change of wording for showing of BTBA cards ‘Each player must be in possession of a current BTBA or Affiliated Membership card. They MUST be in date for the given event and if not the bowler will not be able to participate in the event’.
- Correction of Seniors Paragraph 4f six games on the Saturday and five on the Sunday
- Change of wording for Buffet/dinner from Head Office to corresponding ICC Secretary.
- Additional rule for head-to-head play – Discussion around the withdrawal of a whole team during County Finals, this has never happened before and the decision that was made at the Adult ICC will stand for future events. This is that any previous matches will stand, will not change retrospectively. Further games will be played with or without players from the injured county and bonuses awarded to the winning team.
- Tie rule change: Will now read, as ‘In the event of a tie for any position the county with the highest pinfall will be determine placings. If still a tie then highest last game and so on.
- DS raised the point of a tie for the Championship position – this will need to be confirmed from BTBA rules.
- Change of wording in the dress code 6e attire must be of the similar colour, changed to attire must be of the same colour.

General questions sent in by different county associations

Can ladies play in men's teams if there is no ladies team to enter for that county. Mixed teams are allowed in the Nationals so is there any valid reason why it cannot be done in the counties?

- Discussion around this point – decided to bring it up under orphan bowlers.

The players would like to return to a round robin format for the qualifying rounds. Now I know myself that there are difficulties getting big enough centres to hold the qualifying rounds but would small, more local, pre-qualifying rounds be possible? You might actually find that you will get more entries if people do not have so far to travel and can avoid an overnight stay. The lineage will be paid on the day, so this should not affect the costings.

- Discussion around this point – this will come up in the Senior section.

Raise the possibility of bowlers playing for different counties in different categories if their home county is unable to field a team in that division (i.e. if Hertfordshire is unable to put out a Junior team, could a bowler play for Bedfordshire at Junior level and Hertfordshire at Adult)?

- Discussed the problems around this – decided that even though there is no team for a particular age group a bowler can only represent one county.

I think that the current ICC should reflect the recent changes in International Teams and Criteria. The current ICC divisions should be re-defined to reflect recent changes. Therefore, divisions should be as follows:

Seniors

Adults

Youth - U18/U15 or (as in TE currently) U16/U19/U22.

- The discussion around Junior age groups will be covered in the Junior section later on.

Team England Seeding - should the ICC adopt age groupings in line with Team England then TE seeding should also be applied to all players equally within each age group.

The remaining selection criteria should stay the same and also the rulings regarding top 2 players etc. I think this will bring equality and transparency across all the age brackets.

- This already is in the rules; the rule defining Team England Seeding was changed at the previous think tank 3 years ago. All Team England bowlers can be seeded for their relevant age groups if the county association has seeding as part of its selection criteria.

County boundaries are to be defined as the latest amended published list which I believe is 2015. This I hope will create more 'counties' which will lead to participation levels increasing. I am keen to see more teams participating (by way of 21st century boundaries and by ensuring we are open for all to compete).

- JC explained that she had replied to this via email explaining how the change of boundaries to more recent lines would have a negative effect on counties.
- NT was concerned that he was not a part of the boundaries meeting that had happened. JC apologised for him not being involved in that meeting. JC to discuss with NT at a future time.

With regard to general and accepted rules of safeguarding the BTBA/ICC need to review the organisation of these events, especially as some of the teams involved may have 3 hours or more to

travel home. In the past, County events have sometimes had a very late finish time, resulting in competitors finally arriving home in the early hours of Monday morning. They then have to arrive at work the same day within a few hours.

Changes:

Would it not be possible to have all the qualifying games played on the Saturday? This would give the unsuccessful teams an option to go home late on Saturday (if they wished) and give an earlier finish on the Sunday, giving people ample time to also get home at a reasonable time.

- Discussed by all, this is not relevant now, as competitions are not finishing so late on a Sunday.

Dress Code – JC proposed an amendment to the dress code for all age groups. Take out the part that says ¾ length trousers are not permitted, they are now permitted. Add in Sports leggings are permitted and a rule on the length of skirt/skort. JC referred to it as the ‘Cundy’ rule. This is when a player stands up straight, arms by their side, the tip of their middle/longest finger must be where the skirt/skort is. It can not be above that mark.

- All agreed that ¾ trousers can now be permitted
- Discussion around the type of sports leggings. They MUST be plain, be a sports legging and not a thin material or inappropriate.
- Discussion then around the wearing of shorts. The room was split on whether they should be allowed. It was decided that the National Council could decide if tailored shorts could be added to the list. With a proviso that an explicit description of what ‘tailored shorts’ actually means. **National Council approval required
- A tailored short is a short that has a belt loop, not turned up, has no external pockets (so not cargo shorts) and must be on or just above the knee. Hot pants are not allowed.

Orphan Bowlers - JC explained what the term orphan bowler was and how it has helped bowlers. *With respect to Orphan Bowlers. If the County that the "said" bowler resides in does not/cannot field a team in the required age group; and if the "said" bowler has been competing within registered or sanctioned leagues within the "requested" orphan county: surely it should only be fair and wise for the BTBA/ICC to allow the "said" bowler to compete at County Level with the requested area, and override an area decision against this request (if all criteria is met) This would allow the "said" bowler to achieve their dream and compete at a higher level leading to enhanced achievements and create a supportive character for the BTBA/ICC regarding their membership.*

- JC not aware of any bowler being refused to bowl – this was brought up as an historical issue and one current bowler having an issue.
- Decided that it would be good for neighbouring counties to work together and share information regarding different county teams etc. The regional officer could also help with sharing relevant information between counties.

This discussion then brought up a side discussion on whether bowlers have to trial every year. Is there a continuation rule?

- DS could not find the continuation rule written down. Many people in the room knew of such a rule but it cannot be found.
- It was discussed that if a bowler had a break from county play and then went back to their last registered county this would be allowed.
- Discussion around eligibility by birth/residence/continuation.
- What if a bowler trialed for another county etc etc.
- It was decided that the continuation rule would be that the bowler could play for the last county they were registered for.

SENIORS

There has been a lot of social media coverage about the seniors recently. Paul is already looking into the finals for next year.

Many counties have asked that the issue around age bonus be discussed today. Alan Wills to share his proposal.

Please see attached from AW.

- Discussion around what this would look like.
- Idea from the floor about a bracket system of age bonus: 50-60 receive 5 pins, 60-70 receive 10 pins, 70-80 receive 15 pins. This could then be reviewed at the next think tank.
- Idea about dropping the age to 45 for Senior counties in line with other senior events.
- Suggestion of a Senior council, just like the women's council. One to be investigated further.
- Proposal of a Super Senior county division. Lots of discussion it was decided that further work needs to be completed with this. JC/PM/DS to put together a more robust proposal on what this would look like etc for future discussion.
- Also a good idea to get county associations to ask their bowlers how they feel about a Super Seniors. Counties could ask at the next county trials if they would be interested in such an event.
- Yorkshire stated that they agreed to the removal of the age bonus as it affects a lot of bowlers within their own county.
- JC completed a straw poll at this point – 10 in favour of no age bonus and 2 against
- Further discussion and then a slight amendment to the original proposal changing the word from abolish to suspend.

Vote completed on following proposal 'To suspend the award of age bonus pins at Senior Inter County Qualifying and Final Tournaments'.

Vote 10 Yes 2 No and no abstentions

- This will then be reviewed at the next think tank, to look at the impact on numbers of bowlers and teams who participate in the Senior event.

Format for the Seniors - This now has to be 4 groups due the problems of finding centres. 3 isn't possible due to the 8 ladies teams making the final. I accept that four will make some groups having more 'top' counties than others but that's unavoidable geographically. Groups would be SE SW M and N.

- This was well received by the delegates. This would allow for smaller centres to be used in the qualifying.

Vote Unanimous in favour

- Discussion around changing the format, but it was agreed that too much change at this point would not be necessary, so will stick with the 6 games qualification.
- The idea of four groups for the adults was mentioned, but due to the number of teams and the geographical placing of teams these four groups would not work in the same way for the adults as for the seniors.
- As part of another discussion around ages for the juniors it was discussed that the age criteria would be amended for the Seniors also. A bowler will be able to compete in the Senior Counties in the year of their 50th birthday and not be a set date.

ADULTS

A request for the finals not to be held at Nottingham but perhaps splitting mens and ladies to two centres close by each other (e.g Mansfield and Chesterfield) which would allow the evening events to still take place?

- Delegates discussed the pros and cons of using Nottingham for future county finals. The issues are more around the state of the bowl, poor amenities and that MFA are just not investing any money into the venue. Causing many breakdowns and a poor service to its customers in terms of cleanliness. Only positive comments about the staff at the bowl who bowlers are now beginning to realise are not the ones solely responsible for the state of the bowling centre.
- Pros and cons for hosting the event over two centres, delegates agreed with JC that we do not want to dilute this great event.

Proposal from Warwickshire. Winning team automatically returns the following year, still need to participate in QR, then top 3 teams from each round make it so that 10 team round robin. Would cut down the number of games, possible earlier finish on Sunday and possible more choice of bowling centres. Would still need min 22 lane centre.

- Discussion around the possible centres that could be used, this proposal was well received by delegates.
- In addition to this London suggested a system that would include a second tier final. So the Championships final and then a second final for the next qualifiers down to have an opportunity to win a County 'Plate' similar to the rugby. JC agreed to look into this idea further as it strengthens the counties abilities to not just go for the main Championships. JC to work with NT on this further.
- After some discussion it was suggested that the format of the event is not the issue but the venue is the problem. JC was tasked to speak to Mansfield, Nottingham and Guildford on prices for the holding the Adult county event next year. JC explained to the delegates that Mansfield had been approached a while ago but would need a large amount of money to have the whole centre. Delegates said that the counties would be more prepared to pay for a better quality venue.
- JC to find out prices etc in the next two weeks and ask the county associations to vote on what they would like to do for the finals next year.
- To compensate for a possibly more expensive final it was discussed that the registration fee be lowered for all counties, the lineage paid for as usual for the qualifying round and then counties that make the final will make a payment towards that. This then answers questions about counties paying for others to reach the final and they pay nothing to play in it. This would also be applied for the Seniors.
- JC and PLM to look into what that cost would be. Then counties can be informed at the point of intent what the year could cost the county. So possible three points of payment: 1. Registration 2. Cost of lineage for qualifying 3. Cost of attending the finals.

- This then brought up discussion around the evening banquet. Does it have to be a sit down dinner? Would a buffet be more cost effective? JC suggested a hog roast a few years ago which was turned down. Could this be a possibility next year? This will all depend on where the venue of the bowl is going to be and then investigate into hotels for the banquet.

JUNIORS

1. Combine age groups U15s and U18s

2. Having mixed teams where the County has to include at least 1 female bowler.

3. Use a points based system along the lines of the Junior Nationals to include Graduate, Intermediate, junior etc. with a maximum points per team.

If having mixed teams you could allow Counties to enter more than 1 team.

- Delegates discussed a number of different age groups and the possibility of using the points system for the Junior Counties. This was discussed and decided that it would not allow all relevant bowlers to be included, also is it prestigious enough for a county event.
- Delegates discussed the importance of encouraging our youngest bowlers to take part in the Junior Counties. Could there be an under 12 division?
- Need to get the ages right. The World Youth ages were looked at and so it was proposed that the age groups will now be as follows: **Under 12, Under 16 and Under 22**
- The Under 22 section would replace the Under 25. So no longer an under 25 division. Yorkshire stated that they found this disappointing as this was a division that they had a lot of players for.

RULES/FORMATS FOR JUNIORS

Bowlers born in the year XXXX or later are eligible for the UXX category.

So for 2019 events;

Bowlers born in the year 1997 or later are eligible to play in the U22 Category

Bowlers born in the year 2003 or later are eligible to play in the U16 Category.

Bowlers born in the year 2007 or later are eligible to play in the U12 Category.

Under 22's

Fours for both male and female teams

8 Games qualifying on Sat and Sun

Matchplay finals on Sun

Under 16's

Fours for both male and female teams

5 Games qualifying & Matchplay finals on same day

Under12's

Trios for both male and female teams

5 Games qualifying & Matchplay finals on same day

All would be top 8 qualifying for matchplay finals unless only 8 teams or less entered, and then this would reduce to 4.

Tie Rules;

In qualifying - same as seniors and adults

in Matchplay - 9/10 roll off

If a tie for 1st – decision to be same as other age groups will be confirmed

With that in mind is it possible to have details/dates of tournaments for 2019 a.s.a.p. as we would like to arrange our trials and are unable to do so without confirmation of events.

- Confirmation of dates as follows:
- Under 12's 27th April
- Under 16's 4th or 5th of May
- Under 22's 6th and 7th of July

Will there still be an U25s or will it change to be in-line with other junior categories of U22?

- See above with the removal of division.

Is it likely that junior County tournaments will be played at the Airport Bowl as this has been raised by juniors as a concern?

- At this time there are no plans to hold a County Championships at the Airport Bowl.

AOB

- Moral sanction – this is to be allowed where a county does not have a sanctioned bowl within their area. Also at the discretion of the ICC Secretary
- Is it possible to look at changing the date of the Senior qualification? Due to the round being on the south coast at the end of half term and so high costs of hotels. Not at present, PLM will investigate.