

# Melbourne Bowling Club

## Feedback on BV proposed changes to pennant for 2018-19

The following views are the result of the board of the MBC seeking input from members and discussion of the issues at board level.

The views presented take into account the parameters given to the Competitive Participation sub-committee (CPSC) and their subsequent report as presented to the delegates at the Sandbelt region meeting.

The guidelines given to the CPSC were:

- Monitor social, economic & sporting changes to ensure BV's competitions are appealing & relevant.
- Introduce more flexibility into BV's competitions to attract new bowlers, as well as retain current bowlers [2016 DHHS paper titled 'Adapt or Die' – New thinking, less rigor, inclusiveness]
- Grow competitor numbers to retain current Federal Govt Tier status [like Netball]
- Review past Pennant surveys & suggest improvements to BV's competitions based on feedback.
- Find ways to convert the 100,000+ bowlers currently playing 'socially' 4+ times per year into Pennant players. (BA Census 2015/16)

The proposed changes for next season as a result of the deliberations are:

- New 7 week Two Bowl Triples Pennant competition (preceding the 14 week Fours competition)
- New 14 week Two Bowl Fours Pennant competition. (commencing later & ending later excl. Premier League)
- All Sections reduced to 8 Sides (excl. Premier League increasing competitiveness & reducing travel )

## 14 week two bowl fours pennant competition

### Summary

- Agree with the later start and finish
- The potential benefit for less travel relates to the number of trips not necessarily the distance of the longest trip a side must travel.
  - 8 instead of 10 sides in a section will mean a side travels 7 rather than 9 times. Therefore overall there is less travel.
  - Maintaining 8 sections will still mean individual travel trips may still be as long as now. Melbourne 4 could still go to Dandenong Club 3, Armadale 5 to Cranbourne RSL 3.
- Moving to 8 sides per section while maintaining 8 sections per division has the primary outcome of a shorter season of 14 weeks. In the current proposal it has negative side effects

- Moving to 8 sides per section will result in wholesale moving of sides down in the lower divisions. This will result in a one off significant negative impact on many clubs divisional status. This was not articulated in the slide presentation.(refer to attachment 1).
- Less sides in a division provides less opportunity for clubs to be at a given divisional level.
- MBC is not sure how less sides in a division or section necessarily means greater competition.
- The 12-a-side (4 sections) and 6-a-side (4 sections) competitions currently work against the goals of improved travel especially for older bowlers given the limited number of sections in these competitions.
  - A significantly greater number of sides need to be attracted to these competitions for them to neutralise the current negative impacts of travel
  - Clubs currently use these competitions to provide bowlers who would otherwise be bankers with a competition game.

**Given there will be change MBC suggests:**

- A later start and finish as currently proposed
- Division 1 keep the current level of 40 sides with 5 sections of 8 teams (not 6 sections of 8 being suggested)
- From division 2 down increasing to 10 sections of 8 sides. (maintaining 80 sides not reducing sections to 64 sides)
- Maintaining 80 sides in division 2 down eliminates the negative effect of an otherwise wholesale re-alignment of individual clubs divisional status. (refer to attachment 1).
- Breaking the metropolitan region into 10 (instead of 8) areas means each region/section would cover a smaller geographical area so provide a greater chance for shorter individual travel distances.
- Maintaining the 2 up and 2 down promotion relegation system results in each section having half the section change each season.
- In divisions 3 down, with 10 sections, 40 sides move between divisions each season. (20 up 20 down), This creates more incentive/competition for the clubs to improve (currently only 32 move between divisions 16 up 16 down)
- The main change resulting from the above suggestion would be a structural change of finals – still played over 2 weekends.
  - Sides on top of home and away season are awarded the sectional pennant
  - Divisional pennant is out of the 10 sectional winners and the 6 best second placed sides from the sections.
  - These sides to be graded on the basis of overall wins then shots up with the first 10 places going to the section winners and the remaining 6 going to the second placed sides.
  - First round of finals is 1 vs 16, 2 vs 15 etc
- 12 and 6-a-side competitions needs revision.

- The reality of lower numbers suggests that having multiple competition structures at this level is not practical
  - On 2017-18 numbers having one competition of 9 a side made up of 3 teams of 3 bowlers would provide enough sides to have 1 division of 10 sections of 8 teams in each section with a total of 9 byes imbedded across the sections.
  - This would reduce travel significantly for participants in this competition as compared to the current 12 and 6-a-side competitions
  - Going forward this competition structure could be finalised once all clubs have lodged their sides based on the presumption that this competition would be structured based on the premise that clubs would be expected to provide 8 or 9 players. Alternatively take the middle ground of 9 player competition.

## 7 Week 2BT competition

Given this is a proposal for a new competition and the detail provided is limited MBC's comments could be regarded as speculative.

- A business case for this new competition needs to be developed
  - With no explanation of the vision for this competition and the lack of detail on how it is to be implemented the MBC feels that until a clear business case for it is presented it should be shelved. A half cocked implementation is more damaging than good.

### **General comments that have been discussed however are:**

- Given the brief of the sub committee was to increase bowls participation MBC assumes this competition is to be primarily aimed at new bowlers. Otherwise BV is just creating churn by creating another competition for the existing bowler pool.
- If the concept is to target barefoot/social bowls brigade MBC thinks not enough thought has gone into it.
  - Clubs would need to keep enthusiasm up of this group from the previous summer as the winter months are not conducive to high volumes through the clubs.
  - The weather is highly variable at this time of year so not the ideal time to show case bowls.
  - February and March have excellent weather and comes at the end of an extended social bowls season which gets seriously going from November through to the end of March and would be a more suitable time to market this expansion competition.
- How many ends are being considered per game? Is it 15 ends and so approximately a 1.5 hour competition or 21 ends and be just over 2 hours?
- When is it to start 1pm , 3pm or 5pm.
- Is the competition to be broken into regions?
- Is it to follow the existing division sectional structure of the 2 bowl fours?

- Has thought been given to a completely innovative form scoring the competition. Cricket now has three competitions with differing rules affecting the scoring.
  - For example a different scoring system to bring more participants into contributing each end and therefore to the final result.
  - In 2BT base the scoring on the 100 up principle. With the 6 closest bowls scoring each end.
    - 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
    - or 4, 3, 2, 1, 1, 1
  - Such a system would mean at least 3 of the players would contribute to the overall score each end and most likely more.
- The first half of the suggested season clashes with other sports finals. for example AFL finals. Do we know the profile of the target market?
- For clubs with bent greens it is an early start for competition. Those with tiff or synthetic would have no issue. With time there will be less and less clubs with bent. Some green keepers predict that within 10 years all greens in Melbourne will either be Tiff or synthetic. But we are not at this stage yet.
- There are too many un-answered questions to feel any confidence in implementing this triples competition would tick the required boxes what ever those boxes might be.