

Extraordinary General Meeting
Lancaster and Morecambe District Badminton League
Held Wednesday 27th April 2022
At The George Torrisholme, Morecambe.

Attended:

David Greer (DG)- Lancashire Badminton Association - Chair
Brian and Hilary Greenwood

League Committee members:

Nick Haigh - Chair
Linda Simms - Treasurer
Adrian Greenwood - Fixtures Secretary
Shirley Hodgson - President
David McGonnigal - Cup Secretary, Baddersweb Administrator and rep Ingleton BC
John Finnegan - rep Sunnyside BC
Sue Ward - rep Hest Bank BC
Glenys Knowles - rep Brookhouse BC
Duncan Carr - rep Storeys BC
Mike Whittaker - rep Kirkby Lonsdale BC

Additional Club reps

Dianne Williams - Hest Bank BC
Gill Gardner - Sunnyside BC
Sarah Miles and Andy Carruthers - Bolton-Le-Sands BC
Rachel Platt, Linda Franks and Anthony Forrest - Ascension BC
Sue Whitaker - Kirkby Lonsdale BC

1. Welcome by League Secretary and asked permission to record the meeting. Nobody objected so the meeting was recorded.
2. Nick Haigh- Explained why he called the EGM. This meeting is to be positive and look forward so we can improve the running of the League for next season.

After this meeting the committee will meet and send information to clubs for discussion and then to be voted on at the AGM.

Issues from last season causing friction and to be discussed this evening:

- *The 50% rule
- *Late season registrations
- *Fixtures
- *The abilities and spread between the top and bottom of Division 2.
- *Communications between committee and the League members. How do we get the message out better so everyone knows decisions made and why they are made.
- *Ascension BC are clearly upset - why are they feeling bad and don't want them out of the League.

Nick asked if there was anything additional from the people at the meeting. Nothing came forward.

Nick thanked David Greer for Chairing the meeting and Nick handed over to DG.

3. David Greer - Introduced himself and explained that he came into the meeting cold so he did not have a tarnished view. If he is asked for his opinion he will give his personal opinion.
If issues are not addressed they niggle and fester and become a huge problem.
He is not here to influence the meeting.

When speaking please introduce yourself for the tape and so that DG knows who you are.

4. Issue 1- Communications: Committee and League

DG noted that the League Handbook does not mention communication strategy - how often committee meets and how communicate information out.

DG feels the least favourable mode is using social media.

The main point is that there is clarity and everyone knows where to look for the information. That all League members have access to information including when things are changed and why.

Facebook and Baddersweb are used to share some information.

Suggestion - Baddersweb can have documents uploaded onto it but we need to ensure that people external to the League do not have access to this information for security reasons. Can this be password protected for Committee notes? Different levels of access to Baddersweb. Use the website as the first point of contact.

Members need to know when the committee meetings are taking place to know when to look for notes.

Suggestion- When email goes to Committee members to call a meeting an email is also sent to the Club Secretaries to advise club members to look out for notes. Try this and review it at Christmas and if it doesn't work change the process.

Suggestion - Whatever we use must be user friendly and it may be appropriate to use club name as attendee in the notes and not the individuals name.

Suggestion (DG) - If we make minutes too available it may mean sensitive issues are not discussed. There needs to be a degree of confidentiality. Could put 'XXXXXX was discussed and access is restricted to the League Committee.'

Suggestion- Discuss having a central independent email address. Secretary@Lancaster..... or set up Committee@... so all committee can access.

This saves 1 person from getting all the emails. How do we ensure we know who has accessed and responded to emails?

5. Issue 2 - Spread of abilities across the Divisions.

Division 2 last season had a huge variation between teams at the top and the bottom of the Division. Bottom teams not enjoying being beaten every week but neither do the higher teams enjoy it as don't get good games.

This was also the feeling in Division 1 and Division 3.

We need to balance regular competition and getting good games in all Divisions.

This was probably made worse due to post COVID and uncertainty on the number of teams to be fielded and who team members would be so when Clubs were asked how many teams they were fielding for the season and which of the 3 Divisions they felt each team most comfortably fitted into it was a difficult call.

Last season there were 26 Teams in the League:

9 in Division 1

10 in Division 2

7 in Division 3

DG informed the meeting that you do not have to have the same number of teams in each Division. We need to balance this against the quality of game for participants and more competitive play in the top Divisions.

It was suggested that the bottom Divisions should have more teams in so that if a team withdraws they will still have a reasonable number in the lowest Division.

The League wishes to provide badminton every week whether this is League or Cup which could be a round robin. We need to keep the momentum in the Lancaster League, this is our major concern and if people to choose in other Leagues that is their choice.

Suggestions - to discuss various options at League Committee meeting.

Include Cup run as a round robin and starting later in January rather than the first week of January.

Various options:

*Keep 3 Divisions

*Have 4 Divisions

*3 Divisions of 4/5 and 2 Divisions of 6.

*Other options

Each team could play opposition 3 or even 4 times.

6. Juniors

Encourage Juniors to play in Junior tournaments.

Action- David McGonnigal to speak to David Greer re friendly junior competitions.

There is funding via Lancashire Badminton Association and this League for Coach development funding.

Advertise for more coaches.

DG - has developed a network of badminton ambassadors in schools - sent flyers. He wrote to all local primary schools about junior coaching.

7. Fixtures

Nick Haigh highlighted that this was a point of conflict between himself and Adrian Greenwood last season and he wishes to prevent this happening again.

Suggestion - Nick suggested that fixtures were arranged by an independent person.

There is a standard BE algorithm that can be used and once the League knows the number of teams in each Division the fixtures can be circulated to clubs prior to the start of the season to move any matches which clash or if there is hall unavailability etc.

We heard that this worked really well in Division 3 and teams were most helpful.

At present there is the option to change the date of a match if both teams agree and this was used many times last season to ensure that the majority of matches were played. If a match is not played by the end of the season this is deemed a 0-0draw.

The pre-planned algorithm has been used for many years with the 2nd half of the season being the reverse of the first half.

Last season there was a rush to get the fixtures out due to resuming play after COVID and the Fixtures Secretary tried to accommodate any issues before the fixtures went out to clubs.

Suggestion- At present fixtures are sent to the committee before being circulated to clubs to see if they can see any issues. Does this still need to occur if the algorithm is used?

DG - it is critical that fixtures are changed for hall unavailability but the more flexibility built into the system this can cause more problems.

Suggestion - This should be considered before the beginning of the season when we know how many teams are in each Division.

Identify playing weeks - League and Cup.

Use algorithm so set up League fixtures.

Circulate to Clubs for review. Any immediate clashes which have to be changed by end of August.

Hall unavailability is a club to club discussions with League Secretary informed.

The Fixtures Secretary has to have the backing of the whole committee and can refer back to the committee.

Using the algorithm will save days of work for Fixtures Secretary and he is happy to use this.

Suggestion- Hall unavailability is the only reason for an in season change of match date. Teams ought to be pulling up from lower teams to field a team. There may be an issue with a Clubs lowest team who cannot field a team if players are playing up!

The feeling in the meeting was this should be the case and strongly adhered to.

Do we need to put to the AGM and also amend the rule in the League Handbook?

DG - The League need to put rigidity back in the system - only reason is hall unavailability. Fixtures to be moved before the start of the season. There are always exceptional circumstances- very serious incident E.g. flu epidemic, bereavement in a club.

8. Late in season player registrations

Communication is key here - if there are exceptional circumstances and the League Committee are asked to address this everybody needs to know the background to it.

If exceptional circumstances have occurred it should be referred to the committee and they decide.

Suggestion-Discuss the remit of Registrations Sub-Committee- do they just manage the initial team members registrations and in-season registration go automatically to the full committee for decision.

The issue of people not responding to emails is that if they fail to respond it is deemed that they have voted YES.

We need a slicker process as in year there is sometimes a time pressure for response but we need to keep it simple.

Again there may be exceptional circumstances but this is the last resort and shouldn't happen more than twice in a season.

Suggestion - discuss at committee meeting then to AGM:

*Not allow late registrations after a certain date - other Leagues use 31/1 or 28/2 but it depends when your season finishes,

*How many matches left - not if less than 5 matches remaining?

*Not if less than 1/3 of the fixtures are remaining.

9. 50% Rule

Action - To discuss at committee meeting - It is unclear what happens if a player does not comply with the 50% rule unless there is a genuine reason I.e. broken leg.

Suggestion is that all games are voided 21-0 to the opposition but this could unwind the season.

The 50% rule does not count in the Club's bottom team - Is it in the rules?

Is 50% too high? - Maybe for the AGM.

This rule stops clubs pulling in people (ringers) when they want but makes it difficult to bring in new people, for players returning to play after an injury and to accommodate people who are students or who work shifts.

DG- Mid Lancs League says there can only be a maximum of 2 players in a team who cannot represent their town team.

10. Ascension BC

Ascension BC stated that they have lost trust in the committee and feel that things are not being done right.

They would like transparency, things to be kept simple and no bending of the rules.

Communication and consistency is key.

Another committee member said that the committee receive a lot of emails asking their opinions but if the rules are simplified this should help. Is this an exceptional circumstance or not - yes or no. The more concise the better.

Suggestions - Look at Blackpool League Handbook.

Go through our Handbook and simplify it and tighten it up.

*Should we have a General Purposes Committee which includes League Secretary, Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer who discuss issues and then ask opinions of club reps?

*Should it stay as it is with every club having a rep on the League Committee?

*Not have so many meetings. Blackpool Handbook says there are to be a minimum of 3 per year plus AGM.

*Do not create rules to overcome problems - how are these issues then dealt with?

*The rules should be set in stone with no flexibility.

The League want everyone to be playing by the same rules on a level playing field.

11. Next steps

*The League Committee will meet on 9/5/22 to discuss the issues and outputs from the EGM and develop proposals for the AGM to be sent to Clubs.

*Clubs to submit any proposals to the League Secretary by 31/5/22.

*All proposals to be discussed and collated by Committee and the full list of proposals circulated to Clubs to discuss pre-AGM for voting.

*AGM - the date and venue will be circulated to clubs at least 21 days prior to the meeting. This will probably be held mid-late July 2022. At the AGM clubs are required to inform the League details of the Club Secretary, playing venue and the number of teams they will field for the 2022/23 season.

Gaye Jackson

League Secretary.