

FEDERATION OF EAST MIDLANDS CROQUET CLUBS

LEAGUE MANAGER'S REPORT – 2019 SEASON

(This report differs from that issued to the AGM which had been issued with one match in Division 3 still to play)

15 (14 last season) of the 22 clubs in the Federation took part involving 23 (21) teams over 77 (63) matches with 153 (131) different players participating.

Long Eaton managed to top both Division 1 and also Division 3, with Branston A topping Division 2.

A strange thing happened in that only 3 matches were drawn ie 3.95% of matches compared to 10 last season (15.87%).

Division 1

Long Eaton A won all their matches whereas the bottom club Woodhall Spa A lost out by having won less game wins than their rival.

Division 2

Branston A won 6 of their 7 matches. A possibly unusual situation is that Nottingham B were second whereas Nottingham A bottomed the division.

Division 3

Again Long Eaton B won all their matches just like their A team in division 1. Torksey are bottom of the division.

Abandoned matches

This season one match did not take place with a team conceding to the other as they could not obtain players for the agreed date so I had to implement rule 12 and determine the 'result'. This 'result' did not affect the positions in the division.

Another match was abandoned during the sixth game due to, as I understand it a heavy storm and flooded courts.

Play dates

I again set out this year's fixture list on a three weekly cycle as a guide but only 52% kept to the period one week before and 3 weeks after the listed date. Interesting a further 8% was played more than 7 days earlier. Feedback though shows the guide is appreciated so I intend to continue this next season.

Handicap levels

The current limits on team total handicaps, in any match are, for Div 2, not below 12 and for Div 3, not below 18. The range in Div 2 was from 15 to 36 (with the maximum differential in a match of 15) and in Div 3 with a range from 19 to 37 (with the maximum differential in a match also of 15).

I am not too sure if the system fully works but it is difficult to resolve especially where a club only plays one team thus wanting to play a wide spectrum of players in their one team. I suggest therefore that there should not be a change for next season.

Matches have been postponed/cancelled due to one team not being able to raise a team.

There have been at least three cases of matches postponed or cancelled due to one team after agreeing the match date not being able to raise a team, always it seems the away team. There may be other situations that I am unaware of. I am also aware that some teams have formed a team after some difficulty. Is there an issue here? Too many matches, preference not to travel or what?

Other Facts

7 Clubs, providing teams, relate to (roughly) the A6 'corridor' and 8 clubs from Lincs.

13 Teams relate to the A6 'corridor' and 10 from Lincs (Div 1: 5/2; Div 2: 4/4; Div 3: 4/4).

54% emailed Results via leagues@

24% submitted Results by post

Three teams used the same players for all their matches, Darley Dale A, Long Eaton A and Woodhall Spa A whereas Louth and Nottingham A utilised 12.

The Future

I have already been notified that Ashby will only be fielding two teams next season as against their three this season. I am aware that clubs not yet playing in the league may join so we cannot make firm predictions as to the structure until the teams for 2020 are known in January BUT we should look at options:

It has been suggested that 7 matches in division 2 and 3 is too much, if that is an agreed position then I propose

If the number of teams goes down by 2 then keep to 3 divisions ie 7 teams/6 matches each.

If the number of teams goes down by one, stays the same or is higher – have 4 divisions, each containing 5 or 6 teams.

In the latter situation I am minded to maybe split division 3 into divisions 3A and 3B so that newer teams do not all finish in one division and are able to mix with the more established teams. There would be one promotion from each into division 2 and two relegations from division 2.

When the teams are known I will come forward with a firm proposal at our next meeting.

POSSIBLE RULE CHANGES/INTERPRETATION/ADMINISTRATION

I have restructured the rules to bring together linked items without changing anything. Over the years changes have been made and additional clauses added so a reorganisation of the paper was perhaps overdue. This revised document will be issued at the beginning of next season.

Should singles results be sent to the Ranking Officer?

The Chair has ascertained, from the Ranking officer, that only games played on full-size courts and using tournament hoops should be reported.

Firstly do members feel there is a need to submit result for ranking?

If yes, should it be both Division 1 and 2 or just Division 1?

Who should submit the data, the League manager or the clubs? If the League manager, I will need to gather which clubs do not meet the Ranking Officer's criteria above.

The Ranking Officer also needs forename as on the birth certificate and the lack of this produced the largest number of queries I have had to raise following receipt of the Result Sheet.

8 shots rule – comments 'it is a waste of time', 'unnecessary'.

Is that the opinion of the AGM?

Matches that have been abandoned mid match.

One match was abandoned mid match due to very heavy rain. I appreciate that there may be considerable tolerance level differences between players regarding the degree of wet weather they will accept and I think we should not force players to play against their will. It is not just the heavy rain but the conditions of the courts should be taken into account. Some landlords require no play when there has been heavy rain to protect the courts.

I suggest that where rain may be forecast, and after checking the online weather forecast for the local area, a telephone call is made between the contacts for the match, preferably the evening before or at least very early on the day, to prevent travel if it is agreed to postpone the match. It is important that Team Coordinators ensure that the contacts for the day exchange mobile telephone numbers. The match can then either be rearranged or allow the present rule 12 to apply. (ie The League Manager to determine the result).

I propose that where a match starts and is then abandoned, for whatever reason (perhaps not just rain) the captains should either agree to rearrange or not. Where the match is not to be rearranged and at least 5 games have been played the result will stand as the final score for the match. (Any game abandoned as a draw will be ignored). Where less than 5 games have been played then the present rule 12 will apply.

If agreed this will not be written into the rules but kept as an 'Interpretation'.

Results form

In order to make the 5 round and 6 round forms compatible the order of games in the latter part of the match has been changed. This means that all current and previous forms are now out of date. The 2020 forms will have a 2020 watermark and should be used. Previous editions should be deleted from computers.

Substitution rule

I have received a request to change this rule in (originally) division 3. This is the current wording:-

If requested, and with both team captains' agreement, one eligible substitute player may be introduced for subsequent games during any match. The substitute must either have the same or higher handicap as the player they are replacing. The player substituted would normally be someone who has a medical or stamina issue or is involved in an unexpected event during the match or, in Division 3, is to allow an additional player to experience competitive play. After substitution the substitute cannot be changed and finishes the match, the original player having no further part.

The request: *'The condition that "The substitute must either have the same or higher handicap as the player they are replacing" means that the additional player, who is being added "to experience competitive play" has to play all singles - assuming the games are split 2-3 or 3-2. This does not make sense as the inexperienced player would be better playing doubles which a more experienced player to advise. Similarly, if the substitution is being made on 'medical/stamina' grounds then the substitute would perhaps prefer to play doubles thus playing only half as many strokes.*

The only reason I can think of for having this restriction is the idea that a team might be losing and, somewhat as in football, decide to substitute a better player to pep up their team. But this cannot happen as the substitution has to be with "both team captains' agreement". You could add the extra proviso "before the start of the match".

Personally, I cannot see why at the beginning of the match the captains agree that a substitute will be played and which games player 3a and 3b will play, with no restrictions. So I could have 3a playing Round 1 doubles and Round 3 singles and 3b playing the rest. That would make it easier for me to encourage less experienced players to play in matches. As it is the prospect of playing 3 singles, and perhaps losing them all, is not much encouragement for them to take part.'

I have further ascertained from the proposer that references to changes for 'medical/stamina' should apply to all divisions and that playing a substitute for experience should be allowed in Division 2.

My own view is that if all these suggestions are agreed, it possibly opens the door to unexpected situations whereby a team may take advantage of the rules and also the next step would inevitably be a situation where the team is of 4 players of which two could alternate games and potentially have wildly different handicaps. Do we want to go that way?

Notice may be given at the beginning of a match that a substitute may be necessary but in the end does not happen. This is because one of the player's who has a medical condition manages to survive 5 rounds. Thus predetermining the point of substitution is not therefore appropriate.

The number of interwoven questions is complex and in order to focus the decision process and produce clear answers I suggest we work through these questions; it will also enable me to have an easier brief to rewrite the clause if indeed any changes are made. I have added a couple of related issues into this process.

Should the possibility of a substitute be raised prior to the start of the match? YES/NO

Should the opposing captain have a veto on playing a substitute where on 'medical/stamina/emergency' issues? YES/NO

Should the opposing captain have a veto on playing a substitute where on 'experience' grounds? YES/NO

Should the rule be relaxed as suggested where on medical/stamina/emergency grounds? YES/NO

If Yes: Should the substituted and substitute players be able to play any individual games ie not necessarily sequentially? YES/NO

Should the handicap limitations in the current rule for medical/stamina/emergency issues be deleted? YES/NO or perhaps allow a 1 point differential.

Should the rule be relaxed as suggested for players to gain experience, in Division 3? YES/NO

If Yes: Should the substituted and substitute players be able to play any individual games ie not necessarily sequentially? YES/NO

Should these changes also be applied to Division 2? YES/NO

Should the handicap limitations in the current rule where experience is to be gained be deleted? YES/NO or perhaps allow a 1 point differential.

David Gregory
13th October 2019