

FEDERATION OF EAST MIDLANDS CROQUET CLUBS

LEAGUE MANAGER'S REPORT – 2024 SEASON

Part A of this report contains purely factual data. Generally bracketed data is from 2023

PART A – factual data

Overall there were 116 scheduled matches ie 1392 games (one match in GC30 and one in GC45 were not played)

In all there were 33 (30) teams in the 3 GC leagues from 14 clubs

There were 233 players over the three leagues.

ADVANTAGE	27 players
GC30	53 players
GC45	153 (170) players

There was some duplication with players playing in more than one league. The actual number of **different** players was 193 (180). Of these 40 players played in two leagues. None played in all three leagues.

ADVANTAGE PLAY

4 (6) of the 22 clubs in the Federation entered a team for this league. 2 teams came from the A6 'corridor' and 2 from Lincs. Each team played each other at home and away, a total each of 6 matches per team out of a total of 12 matches.

Bakewell were the league winners with 5 wins and 1 draw (ie they did not lose any match)

Other facts

No team used the same players in each match. The highest pool of players was from Woodhall Spa with 8 and an average of 6.75.

Of the 12 matches, 6 (50%) were home wins, 5 (42%) away wins and 1 (8%) drawn.

4 matches were won by the team with the weaker handicaps

92% of games reached +6 or +7 in time

42% of matches were won 7:5 compared with around 25% on level play matches.

Players' feedback

The 4 team coordinators were asked if they would recommend their clubs to enter this league in 2025. 3 replied yes and one replied no because they could not get on with the scoring.

We could do with more teams in this league.

LEVEL PLAY - GC30

There is no comparative data from 2023.

5 of the 22 clubs in the Federation entered a team in this league. 3 teams came from the A6 'corridor' plus Dunston and Southwell. Each team played each other at home and away, a total of 8 matches per team out of a total of 20 matches.

One match had to be cancelled due to the weather and could not be rearranged due to planned courts maintenance. The teams elected to call it a draw.

Nottingham C is the league winner with 5 wins (narrowly beating Darley Dale who had less game wins).

There appears to be two concepts of team selection – any willing player irrespective of skill mix and alternatively including one player from the GC45 pool for more probable winning assurance.

Other facts

No team used the same players in each match. The highest pool of players was from Nottingham C with 13 and an average of 10.60.

Of the 20 matches, 12 (60%) were home wins, 6 (30%) away wins and 2 (10%) drawn.

8 (40%) matches were won by the team with the weaker handicaps

Half of matches had 10 or more games reaching time.

Players' feedback

Team coordinators were asked if they would recommend their clubs to enter this league in 2025.

Of the 5 teams, 4 replied that they would recommend a team in 2025 and one (Southwell) said they would not as they considered that the players had matured enough to move onto GC45.

We could do with more teams in this league and ideally sufficient to play either at home or away, rather than both.

LEVEL PLAY - GC45

Comparative data is with the 2023 GC league

14 (14) of the 22 clubs entered one or more teams in this league. There were 24 teams who took part spread equally over 3 divisions. 15 (14) teams came from the A6 'corridor', 7 (8) from Lincs plus 2 (2) teams from Southwell. Each team played other teams in their division once, either at home or away, a total of 7 matches per team out of a total of 28 (28) matches per division. 81 of the 84 matches were reported to Ranking.

One match in Div 1 was cancelled due to illness and could not be rearranged due to planned maintenance. A draw was declared.

Other facts

One team, Long Eaton, used the same players in each match (as they also did in 2023) whereas Nottingham C had a pool of 12. The average was 6.38.

Out of the 84 (84) matches. There were 44 (37) home wins, 25 (32) away wins and 15 (14) drawn.

About 21% (20%) of matches were won by teams with a poorer handicap than their opponents (drawn matches excluded).

There were 7 (4) players with a handicap of zero or better.

In Div 1 – 87% (84%) of games finished in time plus 8 shots etc; Div 2 – 88% (96%) and Div 3 - 84% (46% but remember this division last season was only 30 minute games).

The average team handicap in

Div 1	was 11.57 with a range of 2 – 20, and a differential of 0 – 13,
Div 2	20.36 with a range of 12 – 29, and a differential of 0 – 14, and
Div 3	28.02 with a range of 19 – 39, and a differential of again 0 – 14.

Division 1 - Ashby A top the division with 6 wins.

Division 2 - Nottingham A won the division with 5 wins and a draw (narrowly beating Long Eaton who had a poorer games score)

Division 3 - Southwell B won the division with 6 wins

Promotions/relegations

If next season the number of teams is 24 or less, then we will continue on a three division basis with promotions and relegations, from this year's results in the usual way. If there are 25 or more teams, the previous decision to move to four divisions will come into effect which will mean a more significant adjustment to division allocations – this will become clear at our next meeting.

Other Facts

Amusingly the most common surname playing in our leagues was Johnson with 6 players spread over 4 clubs.

The meeting is invited to accept Part A of the report.

PART B - Decisions

I propose that a brief description of each league be issued to clubs during November, so that all clubs, not just those that attend the AGM, know the difference between the league types. It will be a joint document with the AC League Manager so it will cover all 5 Federation leagues. A further copy of the document will also be issued with the application form in January. This, hopefully, may encourage more teams.

In this part, the meeting needs to make some decisions

What is the future of AGC?

I recommend that we offer this league in 2025 but review at our March meeting if sufficient teams have been entered. **YES/NO**

I do not think there is any need to amend this league's rules.

Level Play

I am increasingly concerned about the time commitment of away teams, especially those travelling a significant distance to matches. I am aware of individual players who will not travel. This of course was one of the reasons to introduce GC30 to reduce the overall time commitment. A further suggestion is that the 'Extension Period' of two further turns for each ball should be stopped. This is allowed under WCF Rule 19.1.3 provided prior notification by the organising body. (This has already been removed from Advantage GC).

Is no 'Ext Period' agreed for GC30? **YES/NO**

Is no 'Ext Period' agreed for GC45? **YES/NO**

Related to this I am aware of a motion to also allow a tied game. I support this motion provided the extension period is also curtailed. It seems rather pointless if both are not taken together. I suggest that the motion is considered as part of this report.

Are tied games to be allowed in GC30? **YES/NO** Are tied games to be allowed in GC45? **YES/NO**

GC30

The handicap limit in this league is the total of 'shall not be below 18'. The spread of team handicaps in 2024 was 25 to 40 with the average at 31. Individual handicaps ranged from 6 to 14 with an average of 10.6. In 2024 we have players of handicap 14 playing against players of 6 or 7. Many players are in the 10-12 range. This is a league for more socially minded players who come to the game for an enjoyable day out mixed with a bit of competition. That is, perhaps, very different to, for example, players in Div 1 of GC45.

I propose that in this league players should have a handicap of 8 and above, ie no team handicap limit.

Is this agreed? **YES/NO**

GC45

My personal view is that the handicap differential is, in many cases, too large. I have proposed some adjustment to this in previous reports but the recommendations were not accepted. I am open to other ideas on how matches could still be competitive but with more balanced competitors.

Generally

I am aware that some teams prefer to start the season later than in the fixtures list issued, on the basis that they need to practice first. Surely most teams are in the same situation. It would certainly help if the first matches were in May thus easing the match load later in the season.

In future I think the season should end by 15th October to ensure sufficient time to finalise entries into the database and preparation of this report before the AGM. It has been fortunate this year that the season naturally finished early, but we cannot always expect that.

Is this agreed? **YES/NO**