

FEDERATION OF EAST MIDLANDS CROQUET CLUBS

LEAGUE MANAGER'S REPORT – 2018 SEASON

14 of the 21 clubs in the Federation took part involving 21 teams over 63 matches with 131 different players participating.

I suspect the main issue of 2018 were the heat levels and the resulting hard playing surfaces for most clubs. Sometimes skill was overtaken by ground factors which at least produced some topical fun. How that affected the results and the league positions we will never know.

Division 1

The decider of who won this division went to the last league match of the season. In the end Ashby A maintained their winning position. Two matches, Leicester v Ashby A and Long Eaton A v Pinchbeck included six 7:6/6:7 games. The Nottingham A team were bottom of the division only managing to draw one of their matches.

Division 2

The winners of this Division, Woodhall Spa, won all their matches. Long Eaton, newly promoted are, on games different, bottom of the league.

Division 3

North Hykeham seemed to get energised this season with 5 wins topping the division. A new club from Louth were bottom, which is not unusual for a new entry, but I am sure they gained lots of expertise to make them a challenge for next season.

Play dates

I set out this year's fixture list on a three weekly cycle as a guide. Exactly two thirds of matches were played in the period one week before and 3 weeks after the listed date. Interesting a further 8% was played more than 7 days earlier. This guide seems to reasonably work so I intend to continue this next season.

Substitute Players

I had a query about an interpretation of these rules. There could be some advantage to using a fourth player. I have always assumed that a substitute could be called upon where a player had a medical or stamina issue, an unexpected event occurring during the match or an opportunity for newer players to experience competitive matches. The latter might not be appropriate in the upper division(s). I therefore suggest we add the words 'The substituted player 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, to allow an additional player to experience competitive play'.

Result order

Currently the league result order is Most Match Wins: Most Games Wins: Who Beat Whom: Most hoops run. During the season there was an instance of 'who beat whom' being an issue as the two teams had drawn their match.

I propose that it should be Most Match Wins: Most Games Wins: Most hoops run: 'Who Beat Whom'. Putting 'Who beat Whom' at the end of the sequence means it is less likely to be an issue. If it did happen and was a drawn result, I propose that we would then use only the 9 singles games to determine 'Who beat Whom' as each game has to go to a win/lose situation. If agreed I will edit the rules.

Handicap levels

The current limits on team total handicaps, in any match are, for Div 2, not below 8 and for Div 3, not below 14. The actual average in Div 2 was 19.10, and with a range from 14 to 25 (with individual handicaps from 3 to 11) and in Div 3 was 26.74 and with a range from 19 to 33 (with individual handicaps from 3 to 12).

Some matches had a total handicap differential between the two teams of 10, and one match in Div 2 the difference was 13, thus, I think giving an advantage to the lower handicappers to win games before the less skilled players had a turn. Is this working?

I do not want to enter the world of matches involving handicap play as this would probably not be welcome by players not experienced in such play. One could argue that no team should have an individual player whose handicap was below a certain criteria but that would be prejudicial for a low handicap player in a club that had only one team in the league. So perhaps tightening the limits will reduce the swing and I suggest next season the team handicap limits should be set at 14 (Div 2) and 20 (Div 3). If agreed the rules will be amended.

Other Facts

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

13 Teams relate to the A6 'corridor' and 8 from Lincs (Div 1: 6/1; Div 2: 4/3; Div 3: 3/4).

10 drawn matches

Just over 50% emailed Results via leagues@

30% submitted Results by post

The first team to complete its programme was Ashby C

Two teams used the same players for all their matches, Darley Dale A and Richmond Park.

At the other extreme Louth used 11 players

The Future

The 21 'First contacts', plus a known new club, were emailed in October to give their informal opinion as to the number of teams that they will field in 2019 as I was aware that additional teams might come forward. The outcome of this survey, with one club not replying, is there could be three additional teams next season.

The options if 3 extra teams, as I see it are:-

First come first served. Rather rough and perhaps not fair to clubs with slower procedures.

Increase the number of matches in the season per division from 6 to 7. Administratively simple but some teams have expressed the view that the current 6 matches are a reasonable limit, especially for those clubs with local and tournament commitments.

Set up a fourth division, thus reducing the matches in the season to initially 5. The rules for the fourth division for the first season would be exactly as the third division.

Have a split between the 'A6 corridor' teams and those from Lincs into a division 3 west and division 3 east but this produces problems with promotion and relegation. EG how does one deal with two relegations from Division 2 of clubs in the same sub-region?

The region is to be split into two zones. This would produce lost opportunities to meet a wider group of clubs.

2019 proposal

If one extra team – division 3 to be increased by one team

If two extra teams – divisions 2 and 3 are to be increased by one team each. Two teams to be promoted from this year's division 3.

If three extra teams – division 4 is to be introduced. The total league to be reordered after 2018 promotions and relegations and then split with, maybe, some more experienced new teams going direct to division 3. This would produce divisions of 6:6:6:6 (ie 5 matches each).

If four, or more, extra teams – as above paragraph but with an extra team in Division 4 (6:6:6:7). If appropriate, also an extra team in Division 3 (6:6:7:7).

It may be reasonable in 2019 to promote and relegate more than one team in the lower divisions.

Clubs will be asked at renewal in 2019 to confirm their teams earlier than the date of the next meeting so that proposed final division allocations can be presented to the meeting.

David Gregory