

FEDERATION OF EAST MIDLANDS CROQUET CLUBS

LEAGUE MANAGER'S REPORT – 2021 SEASON

Figures in brackets are the same data from 2019.

PART A

Despite Covid it was a surprisingly good season, even though it could not start until mid May and some teams started even later, but in the end all matches were played.

13 (15) of the 21(22) clubs in the Federation took part involving 22 (23) teams over 70 (77) matches with 132 (153) different players participating.

Division 1

Nottingham A top the division with 4 wins and a draw

Division 2

Long Eaton won the division with 5 wins and a draw

Division 3

Nottingham B won 4 matches and drew the other two and topped the table.

Abandoned matches

One match was abandoned after four games due to heavy rain. I recorded a draw.

Play dates

I again set out this year's fixture list on a three weekly cycle as a guide but only 42% (52%) kept to the period one week before and 3 weeks after the listed date. Interesting a further 19% (8%) were played more than 7 days earlier. This year I think Covid distorted the programme but anyway the cycle system seems to be a useful tool so I intend to continue this next season.

Other Facts

7 (7) Clubs, providing teams, relate to (roughly) the A6 'corridor' and 6 (8) clubs from Lincs.

13 (13) Teams relate to the A6 'corridor' and 9 (10) from Lincs (Div 1: 6/1 (5/2); Div 2: 4/4 (4/4); Div 3: 3/4 (4/4)).

One team (Three in 2019) used the same players for all their matches, Leicester B, whereas Torksey utilised 9 (12).

Out of the 70 matches, 25 finished 7:5 and 10 were drawn. There were 38 home wins and 22 away wins

Out of the 840 games 220 (ie 26%) finished with only one hoop differential (eg 7:6, 6:5 etc). One match had 7 such games and a further 7 matches had half the games finishing this way. This is such good competition.

A third of matches were won by teams with a poorer handicap than their opponents

There were 9 (0) players with a handicap better than zero.

Issues that came up

One team asked to play a substitute that was outside of the accepted differential – I advised that this was not allowed.

I was notified of an error in ranking reporting. Within 48 hours the reason for the error was found and corrected.

A result sheet was sent in with a player of handicap 9 being replaced after round one with a player of handicap 6, a clear breach of the rules. It later transpired that the handicap 6 player had been held up in traffic and the two captains agreed that the available spectator with a handicap 9 should play round one in order to get the match started. In these circumstances I withdrew my strict implementation of the rules. I think it is important that such information should be given on the result sheet or accompanying email to reduce correspondence.

Temporary supplemental rules

It is the intention that the supplemental rules introduced this season, due to Covid, will be removed for next season, so we revert to the basic rules – a new rules sheet will be issued for the 2022 season.

Agreement – the meeting is asked to accept Part A of the report.

PART B

In this part of the report decisions are required on issues raised during the season or have otherwise appeared

Half way markers – Dunston B raised whether they should be compulsory. Even without markers I think it is disappointing that disputes over whether the ball is off-side or not are occurring and apparently not easily resolved in a friendly spirit. I have discussed this further with the club and we suggest the following additional rule.

“The halfway points A to H, as shown in WCF Rule 8.1.1, should be marked with either paint marks or pegs. If the halfway points are not marked and there is disagreement in a game as to whether or not a ball is offside, the game should be stopped and the situation resolved using some sort of measurement or determination by a non-player, but if the decision is still debatable then the away side should be favoured by default. Once this is resolved the game should restart without loss of time.”

Elsewhere I also suggest the following *'The home team should have available during the match a copy of the rules referred to in clause B01 and have available a measuring device (eg tape or string) to determine any measurement dispute'*

DECISION REQUIRED – Yes or No to additional rules.

Catering – a few clubs raised concerns that home teams were not providing catering this season. I foresaw this as a potential Covid issue with Supplemental rule 4. As this supplemental rule is to be removed in 2022, then home clubs will be expected to provide catering as previously. I presume this is acceptable. DECISION REQUIRED – Yes or No.

Division 1 handicapping – Sheffield U3A have proposed that ranking better than -1 should not be permitted as *'players may feel intimidated by being faced with players with -2, -4 handicaps'*. (If this had been implemented for 2021 it would have effected 4 players – three from Nottingham A and one from Sheffield) (As background the actual range of the total sum of the handicaps in division 1 was -3 to 25 with the largest differential of 15) DECISION REQUIRED – Yes or No to the proposal.

Handicapping generally – currently the total sum of the handicaps in Division 2 must not be below 12 and in Division 3, not below 18. This season the actual range of the sum of handicaps in Division 2 was 15 to 32 with the largest differential of 14; and in Division 3 was 19 to 37 with the largest differential of 19. Should we change the limits to 16 and 20? DECISION REQUIRED – Yes or No.

In addition there is sometimes a single player with a relatively good handicap playing with poorer handicap players, which maintains the total sum within limits, but perhaps distorts the match results. I wonder whether we should say that no player in the trio should have a handicap better than approx 40% of the total handicap sum? (In practice this 40% would be rounded up and a published as a whole number inserted into the rules ie to read 'no player can have a handicap of x or better').

DECISION REQUIRED – Yes or No to a 40% limit?

There is an Advantage GC method of play being trialled - see an article in the Gazette in May 2021 written by Stephen Mulliner. The method sets out a system whereby players start a game with advantage scores where their handicaps differ (eg if a handicap 6 plays a handicap 10 then they start the game -1:1 meaning the stronger player has to run 8 hoops to win or the weaker player 6 hoops). If the trial is successful and Advantage becomes an option in the Golf Croquet rules we should consider this in later years.

Declared Handicap levels – I have to work with the information players give me when deciding if handicap limits etc are being adhered to. Elsewhere in the agenda there is an item addressing the issue of whether or not declared handicaps are correct..

Ranking – New World Croquet Federation rules relating to ranking were issued mid season. Currently results are reported to Ranking where played on a full-size court and played in Division 1 or 2. The new rules establish that courts with a unit length of 6 yards (full-size are 7 yards) are eligible for reporting to ranking..

Matches played on smaller courts are also eligible for reporting to ranking where the players in an event have an average grade score of 1600 or below eg 1400 (handicap 4 or above- eg 6) and matches do not have a time limit of less than 40 minutes.

The latter means that nearly all matches played in Division 1 or 2 on small courts are eligible events. The WCF rules state that all results from such events should be reported to ranking. I was concerned that this may be an onerous requirement and I took a straw poll locally, and assuming this is replicated elsewhere, it seems that many players do not see any advantage in their scores being reported to Ranking.

Therefore I propose that from 2022 all results in a match are reported to ranking where they are played in division 1 or 2 and are

- a) Matches played on courts of a unit length of 6 yards or more, or
- b) Matches played on smaller courts where the average handicap of the players is 4 or above **and** one or more of the players at the match request the results be ranked (This will be achieved by a question on the 2022 results sheet)

DECISION REQUIRED – Yes or No to this proposal

David Gregory
14th October 2021