

RESTRUCTURE OF THE HBA SATURDAY COMPETITION

This is a proposal to restructure the Hills Bowling Association Saturday Competition into Four Divisions of eight teams in each Division. The attached Division break up is based on the team positions after the seventh round of the current HBA season, (after 23 Nov 19). It is acknowledged those positions may change by the end of the season however the basis of the composition of the Divisions would remain based on current season finishing positions.

The purpose of this proposal is to provide a stronger, more even competition across all of the Divisions, to give each Club both an incentive and opportunity to compete for HBA Pennants on a more even footing at all levels and to encourage Clubs to develop players who can be competitive at the highest level of their ability.

With Four Divisions of eight teams, promotion and relegation becomes a real opportunity for every team competing with the provision that no Club would have more than two sides in any one Division. The Grand Final winning side in each of Division 2, 3 and 4 would be eligible for promotion, with the side finishing last in Division 1, 2 and 3 being demoted to the lower Division providing the promotion/relegation does not cause one Club to have more than two teams in any one Division. If that were to occur, the Grand Final runner up could be eligible for promotion and the side coming second last could be eligible for demotion. As a last option the promotion/relegation would not occur for that team/Division in that year.

To effect this change, the sides finishing ninth and tenth in Division One would move down to Division 2 in the first year. This would give those Clubs an opportunity to rebuild their teams in a more competitive environment and with the opportunity to be promoted back into Division 1 at the end of the season if they are successful.

Within the current standings, the structure of Division 1 and Division 2 would be fine, however Division 3 and 4 would need some consideration. Lobethal and Uraidla would have two sides in Division 3 and Meadows would have 2 sides in Division 4 with no side in Division 3. Lenswood would have only one side in Division 1 and clearly would need a second side in Division 4.

The recommendation is that under this structure Division 3 would revert to a three rink competition and Division 4 would remain a two rink competition. Under that arrangement, Mount Barker would drop one side on Saturday, to initially have one team in each of the four Divisions.

As a minimum, Lenswood would need a two rink Division 4 side to go with their Division 1 side. Uraidla and Lobethal would need to consider their positions with two sides currently within the Division 3 competition, and if that is sustainable with 3 rinks in Division 3 sides.

Under the current standings:

Lobethal would have Division 1, 2 and 2 x Division 3 and Division 4

Uraidla would have Division 1, 2 and 2 x Division 3 and no Division 4.

Gumeracha would have Division 1, 2 and 4

Hahndorf would have Division 1, 2 and 4

Oakbank would have a Division 1 and 3

Woodside would have a Division 1, 2, 3 and 4

Mount Barker would have Division 1, 2, 3 and 4

Mount Pleasant would have Division 2, 3 and 4

Meadows would have Division 2 and 2 x Division 4 - no Division 3

Lenswood would have Division 1 only. (must have a Division 4)

The required adjustments to the current standings should be reasonably negotiable with the Clubs with a view to strengthening and evening out the overall competition without compromising on the purpose which is to have eight teams in each Division.

With four eight team Divisions the ideal competition would be two rounds (14) games plus finals. This structure would provide an extended, more family friendly break over Christmas, more opportunities for Clubs to run Club Tournaments, Social and Corporate events and to open up more avenues for the Association to conduct the Championship events.

Opportunities for Growth at Club Level:

While having four Divisions of eight teams would cater for the number of players currently playing within the HBA, this structure could be seen as restricting Clubs and the Association in regard to growing participation and increasing numbers across the clubs. To accommodate new players, some flexibility may be needed at the bottom level Division 4, but this does risk the ability to maintain the integrity of the competition and to maintain an equitable promotion and relegation system for each of the Divisions.

A possible solution could be for the HBA to sponsor a non-Pennant competition between Clubs for new/additional players, playing for an HBA trophy in a set play type of competition played in a pairs or triples format. This would give Clubs an opportunity to introduce new players to competitive bowls without being involved in a more formally structured Pennant competition.

If there were to be sufficient growth in participation over time, then the HBA would have the flexibility to introduce an eight team Division 5 competition in the future. This would need to be a longer term view because as we have seen competitive Pennant Bowls is not particularly a growth industry in our area, the State or across the country.