



Warwickshire CBA Warwickshire Pairs League Feedback 2018

We would like to thank everyone who has provided feedback. We have tried to share our thinking with you on matters where you have raised particular concerns, or suggestions. We are sure you are aware that WPL has developed over many years, and it is one of the most successful County events in the UK, and we do keep reviewing all aspects of the event to ensure it remains enjoyable, competitive, and fair to everyone, without being overly onerous in terms of regulation (although we do have to have them!), and commitment. Regardless of our responses, we do appreciate the feedback and we do bear in mind all the comments received, even if we do not agree with them. Thank you!

What you said	Our response
I think the WPL is run very efficiently .	<i>Thank you.</i>
I do appreciate that you have previously canvassed opinion on the start time of 19.00, but I also appreciate that players coming from Coventry, Sutton etc have a much longer, sometimes unpredictable journey time to WPL. Time is tight with 60 and 90 minutes allotted to the 9 and 14-board matches, and we do seem to struggle to start promptly. Would putting the start time back to 19.15 help.	<i>Whether we start at 7pm, or 7.15pm, the prospect of a time traffic problem will remain, as people will, perhaps, set out 10 minutes later and still have an issue! As you know, we always allow some extra time if we know there is a traffic issue, so no one is adversely affected, unless they are alone with their 'traffic issues'.</i>
Out of interest, what is the rationale behind the 4 up/4 down promotion/relegation structure? When there were say, 20 pairs in a division, a 20% of the field promotion/relegation seems very reasonable. Currently, though, 4 /16 is 25% of the field: has anyone else raised this?	<i>The reason is that it provides more movement between the division.</i>
Change to Cross-IMPs. Artificial average in Butler does not feel like true teams scoring.	<i>I applied Cross-IMPs and it made very little difference, but your comment is noted.</i>
Change from Swiss to full round-robin in Division A. 15 9-board matches fits well with the 16 pairs. Every match has equal weight and play-all is fairer.	<i>This would make the event very similar to CPL and BPL, not to mention remove the 'Pair Off' option available to pairs in a division who cannot play for a session.</i>
I can't see any obvious areas for improvement – keep up the good work	<i>Thank you.</i>
The event is always very well organised and full credit must go to the members of the team involved for all their hard work and commitment.	<i>Thank you.</i>
The format seems fine with a real prospect of promotion (or relegation!) for many of the pairs taking part so the interest is maintained right to the last round. Reducing the scale of promotion/relegation would run the risk of reducing that interest.	<i>Yes, that is our thinking.</i>
The “pair-off” arrangements may be somewhat over-generous – allowing highly-ranked players to substitute in the lower divisions means that the competition can be distorted. Perhaps there should be some limit to this substitution or to the number of occasions upon which “subs” are allowed. From a 5-event season, one substitution ought to be the maximum and NGS ratings could be used (with a little lee-way) to determine which “subs” could be called upon.	<i>We have spent considerable time on this topic, but the conclusion remains that finding substitutes is bad enough without over limiting the available subs pool. You made no mention of the opposite issue, with an unsuitable pair substituting in a higher division. We have taken the view that we would not allow a pair to substitute in Divisions B or C who would be granted an automatic placing in Division A. The TD also has the power to award a mismatch if s/he considers a pair is significantly attributable to a higher division. There are rules covering the potential 'strategic' use of substitutes.</i>

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Timings are fine and the prompt finish is important.	<i>Noted.</i>
All-in-all, it is an excellent event and I look forward to the next season.	<i>Thank you.</i>
I think the format and the relegation/promotion arrangements are fine as they are, and can't think of anything I would change.	<i>Thank you.</i>
Thanks to everyone who works hard to organise this.	<i>Thank you.</i>
I think it's an excellent event and I enjoy playing in it. Good to have a Butler scored Swiss format competition and, with the CPL being a different format, it gives variety. I think the 14 board matches with 30 VPs at stake for the last 2 sessions spices it up.	<i>Thank you.</i>
Personally I would prefer 3 x 9 board matches throughout. Some pairs play very slowly without penalty, usually putting pressure on the non-offending pair to catch up.	<i>The reason there are 2 x 2 x 14 board matches within a series is to provide longer matches at the end, which makes the event tougher to win with the resetting of the Swiss. The rules are clear in regard to slow play, so it is difficult to understand the reason for this comment, because the rules clearly state that players concerned that their opponents are likely to cause a time problem must inform the Tournament Director immediately. The reason for this is that if there is a time problem at the end of the match, the TD can assign the missed board fine accordingly. Eg the TD may award a -2/+2 score if only one side is to blame. The TD will also prevent any boards from being started after time (with some exceptions) and fine each pair, assuming no one side is responsoible,-2 imps.</i>
Also would support relegation of 3 pairs only. 4 is a bit drastic.	<i>Noted.</i>
The only "down-side" comment I can make is that some pairs do not understand that it is a competitive event with proper adherence to rules/etiquette/speed of play required. Some opponents have indicated that they are unhappy about "Stop", "Alert" and the requirement to complete all the boards within the given time-span.	<i>Warwickshire has a 'light touch' approach to regulations, and places emphasis on fair play rather than regulation for regulation sake. The round timings are clear and the TD usually announces the time that no further boards may be started. Players concerned that their opponents are likely to cause a time problem must inform the Tournament Director immediately. The reason for this is that if there is a time problem at the end of the match, the TD can assign the missed board fine accordingly. Eg the TD may award a -2/+2 score if only one side is to blame. The TD will also prevent any boards from being started after time (with some exceptions) and fine each pair, assuming no one side is responsoible,-2 imps.</i>
I'm not sure about the arrangement for choosing opponents when we get to the 14 board matches. We ended up playing the winners twice and also another highly placed pair twice. However I can't think of a better way to do it.	<i>Indeed, we had these discussions some years ago when we were revamping the format. The theory behind the 14 board matches is to make the final stretch as tough as it can be. It gives winning all the more substance, than a normal Swiss might. And we could not think of a better way of doing it.</i>
Many thanks for everyone's efforts in running this event: it certainly draws plenty of entries!	<i>Thank you.</i>

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<p>The event is spoilt for me by audible explanations and discussions from adjacent tables. I have to "make" myself not hear, but this inevitably disrupts my concentration. I know, though, that most players seem to enjoy analysing each hand and that, presumably, their evening would be spoilt if they were stopped from so doing. I also realise that announcements are part of the rules and that explanations have to be given. Hard to know what to suggest. Maybe players could sometimes write explanations or use a bit of sign language.</p>	<p><i>Indeed. It is very difficult dealing with players who, for no reason at all, feel it necessary to discuss the hand. Of course, there a times when discussion is necessary, but that is far rarer than the situation that occurs all too frequently. The Laws do cover the problem of loud discussion of hands, but that does not help when one is already trying to block out noise because of one's excellent hearing and the fact that some people find it necessary to bellow what lead would have defeated the slam! We do not have the answer. We could remove the need for announcements, but that would not solve the bigger problem. We could issue serious fines (5 VPs) for loud discussion of the hand, but that could yield other, perhaps unscrupulous, actions. We will endeavour to make some announcements at the start of sessions reminding players to avoid any unnecessary discussion about boards.</i></p>
<p>I really don't like the format of the event. The "must play or find a sub" rule has unfortunate consequences. It can be very tough to find a suitable sub. Often the subs are of a quite different standard. And, more seriously, players get obliged to turn up to play even if unwell, which surely helps the spread of colds, etc, during the winter. Also the event seems technically very difficult to run.</p> <p>Would an alternative to the current format be everyone competing in a single ladder? No promotion or relegation: you just ascend or descend. And it doesn't matter if you don't play. You always play opponents who are on adjacent rungs. Prizes for the top two at the end of the season, plus a number of ascender prizes. (I know you still need an even number, so there would have to be a host pair.) If there happens to be any interest, I can produce a concrete proposal.</p>	<p><i>There is another option of pairing off with another pair in your division who is also unable to play; but this option does not always present itself. Indeed, the suitability of substitutes is an issue, and we have considered various ways of dealing with some of the more serious concerns (eg a pair of internationals substituting in the lower divisions!), but the basic fact remains that whenever substitutes are required it can be a nighmare finding them, so to put too many restrictions in place would make it even worse. Therefore, we have accepted that there will be occasions of randomness (like there is none when substitutes are not used!), but we will put in place safeguards to protect the integrity of the event (ie extremes).</i></p> <p><i>We did consider a single ladder some years ago. We also revisited the matter more recently when we re-introduced the third division because we were well aware that a large division meant a number of players had nothing to play for. A single ladder is fine for those players who might find themselves in with a shot at winning it, but what does it do for those players who will spend all their time down at middle position? Would it not be a boring event it would be for them. Stratification may be an option, but applying it may prove controversial. As it stands, the three division format provides something for everyone. Division A - Winning, or avoiding relegation (usually the bottom four places). Division B - promotion/relegation (top 4 and bottom 4 places, respectively). Division C - promotion (top 4 places) and avoiding being the strongest pair of the event by holding up all the rest (bottom of the heap!). So, with the division sizes there is something to play for every step of the way. Indeed, one pair was knocking on the door of relegation at the final session of the series and was able to finish, by some excellent bidding and play, in the prizes!). A single ladder offers very little of that.</i></p> <p><i>There is also the big problem of who is going to be the perpetual host pair. Having eluded to the difficulties of finding a substitute pair on odd occasions, standard notwithstanding, the prospect of a pair willing to turn up to 10 sessions and go home if not required, will be unlikely. Some immediate issues that spring to mind are, how would the organisation work. Do we wait until 7.15pm to see who turns up then get on with it. Do we require pre-registration. Where would the standby pair play. How would the overall results be calculated, average, total VPs, etc.</i></p> <p><i>It is good that you aired these thoughts, because it makes us review our thinking.</i></p>
<p>The last thing is the timetable. Does it really help anyone to always play on the nth Wednesday of the month? The problem is that sometimes the CPL is on the following day: surely too much of a good thing. And sometimes WPL or CPL are too close to Christmas or Good Friday.</p>	<p><i>Yes, we also keep looking at this and we keep coming up with the same answer. Third Wednesday - no issue, no confusion, no one getting it wrong! CPL moves from the fourth to the third Thursday in December and there have been instances where pairs have not turned up because they got the date wrong! To date, (touching wood), this has never occurred in WPL - famous last words!</i></p>