

Suggestions and Feedback report for 2023

The issues raised have been segmented for ease of review

Club names and player names have been removed from examples given.

Unnecessary comments and unconstructive statements have been removed.

The league response is shown

All Senior Matches

Season Parameters & Start times

Comment / Suggestion

"Start league games at 1.00pm, play Saturdays only, start the season from May instead of April Fixtures"

League Response: Insufficient Detail to consider

There was no explanation or reasoning for this suggestion, it would severely reduce the amount of cricket played and match start times has already been considered at length.

Further Comment

Saturday start time discussions were held at all post season meetings with clubs and whilst many options were discussed there was no clamour for any specific change.

Consideration will be given to reduced overs in the lower tiers in the future subject to club views.

Sunday start times were also discussed at length and club meetings established that a majority of clubs wish to see an earlier start time on Sundays but mindful of junior cricket being played on a Sunday morning.

Agreed to start Sunday League games at 1.30pm

Fixtures

Comment / Suggestion

"All divisions with even numbers of teams MUST have fixtures every week. Having 4 blank Saturdays is unacceptable. It means players get a taste of having weekends off throughout the season and we lose momentum as a club and it harms availability in future weeks. We wait a long time for the season to come around and I personally feel let down by the league this year. If a competitive game cannot be accommodated then the league should provide a fixture matching system showing grounds and sides that might be free for a friendly. Being PREMIER is more than how you handle elite cricket. 2033's elite players are today's division 5 13 yr olds. The pathway needs to be healthy for the game to continue into the future.

The standard in GMCL Div 5 is FAR stronger than other local leagues bottom divisions. There are very good players not getting games owing to what I perceive to be laziness from the fixture committee.

Sunday cricket having a blank month May/June is equally unacceptable. Again, there should be games every week."

League Response: Mitigations in place for 2024

Our aim is always to maximise the fixtures for the teams in each division however, in any division of less than 12, should we choose to provide additional fixtures over and above the normal full schedule of every team plays every other team home and away then we have to determine if that decision could affect promotion and relegation (i.e. when we have done this before we have received complaints that one team had their extra fixture against a team at the top and their rivals had their extra game against a team at the bottom – how could we possibly determine who would be top and bottom when building the fixtures). We therefore try to stick to the fixtures of playing each other home and away only. For 2024 only two Saturday divisions have less than 12 teams and therefore the number of blank dates is significantly reduced.

As regards friendlies, we have raised this issue with teams in the past and some have said that they are happy with a couple of days off in the season, others not so. Even if two clubs have a blank date it is not

always the case that either have their ground available and so clubs should always seek to arrange their own friendlies to play suitable opponents home or away as required.

It is certainly not laziness from the fixture "committee". We have many lines of communication to the league and raising your concerns early season would have helped us find a solution to your problem.

In 2023 there were many games cancelled and rearranged due to bad weather and therefore unfortunate that the rescheduled cup games did make a hole in the Sunday League fixture calendar for many teams alongside the rained off league games. We have taken measures to resolve that for 2024 by spreading out the cup competitions and removing the reserve dates for the first round of the cup competitions to mitigate games lost should 2024 also be a season of bad weather.

Comment / Suggestion 2

My first piece of feedback would be to ensure that there are no free Saturdays in the calendar for senior league cricket. As my first season playing 2s cricket after many years playing 1s cricket, it was strange to see any free weeks. I think the GMCL and any league structures number 1 priority should be provide cricket every Saturday during a season. We had youngsters not playing games of cricket in the peak of summer on a Saturday which isn't helpful and may lead to some taking up other sports. Whether this means a reduction of leagues, or teams playing each other more than twice, whatever it is, more games is better for the league, the clubs and the players

League Response 2

Fixtures are not team focussed, they are ground / venue focussed so, in a division of say 11 where one team does not have a game that team's regular ground may not be available if their 1st or 2nd XI is already using it. Similarly, it isn't necessarily the case that where there is a blank date for a number of teams across different divisions on the same day that there are any grounds available.

We have in past seasons, offered to fixture "friendlies" to cover blank dates for a team where grounds are available but generally clubs have not wanted such games.

If any team does require a friendly for an available ground then the league has many lines of communication and will facilitate the contact between clubs.

Comment / Suggestion 3

The rearranging of fixtures in the Sunday divisions, which again was a shambles this year – at one point I think there were some teams with 3 outstanding fixtures in our Third XI's division heading into the last week of the season. How can they be expected to fit 3 fixtures into one week? It seems almost absurd. There should be some sort of timescales set on rearrangements – or indeed the other option is simply not to allow them at all. This would make the situation very clear for everyone, and there couldn't possibly be any confusion then.

League Response

Free Sundays at grounds are limited, particularly so for clubs with two Sunday Teams and in a year like 2023 when so many games were also lost to the weather it can be difficult to rearrange all games. Clubs must be more proactive in bringing games forward to fill blank cup dates when they have been knocked out.

Comment / Suggestion 4

if we could avoid a debacle like last year's when they (season fixtures) were (I think) 4 months later than 'planned' and then issued something like 3 or 4 times – this doesn't help with planning. I realise there were medical issues last year – but if that means that there is a single point of failure within the system then that needs addressing in some capacity.

League Response

Yes there was a skills gap following illness, an issue we continue to reduce year on year by recruiting more volunteers.

Eid

Comment / Suggestion

"Particularly last year, this was a major bone of contention for several clubs. I must be honest and say I don't recall what happened this year – maybe it fell on a day that didn't matter, or perhaps I have just forgotten. Either way, my point will remain – the League can set specific rules regarding abandonments, postponements etc, but it must stick to those rules. There are scenarios of results that can be planned for, and should be – so that every possible outcome has a process in place for what happens in those circumstances."

League Response

Arrangements were made for Eid in 2023, the many match rearrangements required last season were primarily due to loss of cup and Sunday league games due to the very bad weather, some clubs were affected more than others.

There are 2 main Eid celebrations, the dates of which do change annually, and the dates are not definite until the time, but in 2024 one is before the season, the second will fall around 17/18 June but could start on Sunday 16 June dependent on the relevant factors. A limited number of games have been scheduled for 16 June and if the celebrations do not begin on the date, then this can be used by everyone as a spare date. In 2025 there will again be one Eid observance in the season, around Friday 7 June which may affect games on Jun 8 for some teams.

Match Forfeits

Comment / Suggestion

"The rule around forfeiture is good and achieves a purpose to prevent games being unnecessarily cancelled. However given the clear difference between Saturday and Sunday cricket & the fact that the majority of senior players on a Saturday are not "ordinarily" allowed to play Sunday cricket due to the restricted & starred players rules can i suggest that the rule be slightly ammended to say that "the senior team to lose 3 points will be the senior team for the day the forfeiture occurs" i.e Sat 2nd team forfeit then Sat 1st team punished & similarly Sun 2nd team forfeit Sun 1st team punished". As opposed to now where a Sunday 2nd team forfeiture could impact on a Saturday 1st team - which is unfair to all those Sat players who aren't allowed to play on a Sunday."

League Response: Point Accepted- changes to Penalties in progress

There will be a new penalty regime in place for 2024 for a wide range of team penalties. Details to follow.

Player Registration Deadline

Comment / Suggestion

"Not being able to register players beyond end Jul harms availability and the efforts of clubs to attract grass roots players mid season."

Example (Detail redacted) 2 new players came to XXX CC this year. One just before the cutoff- xxxx inspired to come back to cricket after 8 years and enjoying the ashes etc, he's played circa 10 games in the 2's/3's since Mid Jul. The other came on 2nd August and could have played 8 games for us and would have improved our Sunday team. He'd played for us years ago and wants to get back playing now his kids are older. We've been unable to play him because he approached us after the cutoff. Makes us a laughing stock in the eyes of the player. We send out messages to recruit new players and then when one bites, we can't offer them any games with 8 weeks of the season left.

Grass roots players should not be impacted by rules designed to prevent clubs with budgets abusing power and buying solutions to problems. Essex league only had these cutoff dates for overseas, pros and transfers BETWEEN clubs in the same league. Blanket bans on registering new players doesn't make sense."

League Response: No action at this time.

The deadline is in place for all clubs of all standards because we have promotion and relegation all through the competition and we have cup competitions for all standards.

- This deadline has been in place for many years.
- The purpose is to stop clubs loading up teams for those final weeks.

It is unfortunate that the player in your example was caught up by this, we have to have the cut off somewhere.

- Other leagues may have different rules to suit their circumstances, but they may have different issues than us and they are free to apply the rules they feel necessary, but we cannot have different rules for different types of players.
- We had 868 new players / transfers last season, and we have to check every one of those registrations for veracity.
- We have clubs in other leagues on our doorstep from where players can be brought in, we have other Saturday leagues and we have other Sunday leagues within short distance of our catchment area and there are leagues to the south, south east, east, north east, north and west, so management and checking of these registrations is not a simple matter.
- We cannot potentially have challenges to results for the final games of the season where false claims / registrations may be made requiring us to keep doing these checks all the way to the end of the season.

By removing all new registrations, we eliminate this potential issue for every club and every division at the business end of the season.

Match Balls Supplied

Comment / Suggestion

"This all went very quiet didn't it after the clubs were asked all to pay the 10% higher bills whilst the GMCL spoke to the company. I suppose queries I have would be – did the GMCL know or not know about the price increase? How did it happen that (it would appear) we effectively seemed to find ourselves tied into paying whatever prices Tiflex wanted to charge. Could they have put prices up by 20%? Would we have had to pay that? I really think this is something that probably needs to be agreed at the end of the current season – i.e. Now, so that clubs have some clarity, and aren't suddenly hit with an unforeseen price rise. I firmly believe this is a situation that could have been avoided."

League Response

The current directors responsible for ball supplies as one part of their portfolio of tasks were also blindsided by this increase. Notification of the increase was apparently sent by the supplier but not received / seen by league officials involved. Prices are reduced for 2024 as a result of negotiations since this event.

Bowling Restrictions – Minimum 5 bowlers

Comment / Suggestion 1

"Minimum 5 bowlers will stop people leaving the game. Give more people more things to do on a Saturday. Stop a few people hogging all overs. Create additional dynamics on a Saturday. Mirror professional cricket. Develop younger lads by giving them a bowl."

Comment / Suggestion 2

"I'd support a limit the number of overs a bowler can bowl to 1/5 of the total overs available, so in a 50 over game it would be 10 overs per bowler.

Cricket is a team game and this would reduce club/team's reliance on a few very good players. It also gets more people involved which I think would massively benefit the game and league as a whole in terms of participation numbers. It forces clubs to have 5 (or 6) bowlers in their XI and rewards teams who can bat for longer periods of time (i.e. see off the opening bowler(s) and first change). It's done in all formats of limited overs international cricket for a reason. It also levels the playing field for clubs who cannot afford to pay a player to bowl 30% of the overs every week without fail."

League Response: Not Accepted

This suggestion was discussed at the Club meetings and Exec meetings held post season but was not generally supported because there are already restrictions placed on bowlers' overs in all competitions and club representatives and exec volunteers felt further restriction to be unnecessary.

Over Rates

Comment / Suggestion

"Penalise a team not bowling their overs at 16 per hour with a one point deduction penalty. For those only just outside the time limit (10-15 mins) they can appeal. However only two appeals per season allowed. At present, captains know umpires have few powers available to them to improve over rates in game time. Without having effective rules this could affect promotion or relegation places. The critical matches in any season are in September when days are shorter."

League Response: Accepted with a new approach

The league has many rules in place to enforce our fair play requirements and equalise the parameters of the game, overs, fair deliveries and time available and in managing these issues we have a number of penalties and differing policing and reporting methods in place, but we recognise that there are issues with consistency of reporting so this winter we are finalising a process to bring all penalties other than discipline under a single system of yellow & red cards for teams at a club. More details to follow.

Wides- Blue Lines for Umpires

Comment / Suggestion

"Makes the umpires life's easier, creates consistency in decisions, takes pressure off the umpires."

League Response: Not Accepted

This suggestion was referred to the Umpires' Association.

It has been highlighted that despite common belief, a blue line is no more definitive in determining a wide than the crease line, it is still a judgment based on umpires opinion using the same factors.

The general feeling at league meetings was that there was no reason to confuse the issue for players with a additional lines.

Promotion & Relegation Numbers

Comment / Suggestion

"My suggestions is that now the linear system is taking shape we should move to 2 up 2 down rather than 3. It will create a more sustainable model for clubs and allow them to plan longer term."

League Response: Not Accepted

It is not stated why it will "create a more sustainable model" or what that means. The evidence of our competition is that there are more competitive games at the end of the season because we are 3 up, 3 down. Many clubs came from leagues where there was nothing to play for from half way through the season and the clear statement from the club meetings post season is that 3 up 3 down is the preferred option to avoid those "dead rubber" games in the future.

Comment / Suggestion 2

"Promotion and relegation - in Division 1 this year, 2 up and 4 down out of 12 is half the teams. It is far too much in my opinion. That's half the teams in the division that will be different! I understand at least part of why it was done, in terms of evening out the number of teams in divisions – but to me part of this was also done to accommodate new club(s?) and I think this is an example where the league needs to consider its existing members before prioritising new ones."

League Response 2

It is normally 3 up 3 down out of 12 which is also half the teams.

Yes two new clubs were added to create a division of 14 for the season, this was done solely not to immediately impact our existing clubs in all divisions below this level, this is always the key factor in our planning.

Bonus Points

Comment / Suggestion

"Revamp the bonus point system, you should earn a bonus pint is you achieve 75% of the target irrelevant of whether you are bowled out. Also the 3 wicket rule should be increased to 4 wickets"

League Response: Not accepted

This has been discussed at length at the club meetings and subsequent Exec meetings. There was insufficient support to reduce the requirement to gain a bonus point, the award of which should remain a difficult challenge.

Comment / Suggestion 2

"I'd switch to a much simpler, easier to understand system whereby there are multiple bonus points awards for runs and wickets e.g.

Bowling points

1 - 3 wickets; 2 - 5 wickets; 3 - 7 wickets; 4 - 9 wickets; 5 - 10 wickets

Batting points

1 - 100 runs; 2 - 125 runs; 3 - 150 runs; 4 - 175 runs; 5 - 200 runs.

There would need to be adjustments to the points awarded for winning, but there are lots of leagues around the country that use a very similar system which could be copied.

I believe this would make the BP system easier to understand for all players. I think it would also keep teams interested in games longer (i.e. even if the team is 100-2 chasing 105, you can still get a BP by taking a further wicket) as there's always points available."

League Response 2: Not Accepted

This was not seen as a simpler solution because it would require a complete revamp of the league's points system.

The points system for wickets and runs was one of a number of systems considered prior to league formation but felt to be inappropriate because of the wide variety of ground sizes and a points system based on wickets taken would not encourage preparation of the best wickets and / or a heavy investment of volunteers to consider wicket standards on a pitch by pitch basis.

Comment / Suggestion 3

"The bonus point system seems a bit flawed. This is very much impacted on the toss winner and what they decide to do first. We feel you benefit everytime from bowling second rather than batting second. When bowling second we feel it is easier to gain a bonus point by bowling a team out before reaching 75% of the target. However when batting second having to knock a score off with only 3 down doesn't feel fair. We feel it should be 75% of the batting order i.e. knocking the score off with 7 or less down to make the requirements even."

League Response 3: No Change.

The purpose of the bonus point is to reward excellence in both innings

- *To bowl well in the first innings to restrict the score AND bat well losing few wickets*
- *To bat well in the first innings AND then bowl the opposition out for less than 75%*

Or to recognise close games when losing

- *losing but take 7 wickets or more*
- *losing but scoring 75% or more when chasing but not all out*

It was agreed to retain the current system.

Bonus Points when time lost

Comment / Suggestion

"No overs should be lost until 30 mins after the scheduled start time.

This will allow for bonus points being in play for another 30 mins. We start at 12.30 when it was 1 o'clock in previous years. It will allow more cricket being played and 30 mins extended isn't too long to ask. Maybe restrict the tea break to 10-15 mins if this applies."

League Response: Accepted and expanded

This suggestion was discussed at length in club meetings and Exec meetings with a lot of support. It was agreed that there would be no reduction in match overs for a total delay of or less than 30 minutes in total throughout the day and therefore if no overs are lost then all bonus points will remain available until the total time lost exceeds 30 minutes.

Player Eligibility – Starred Players

Comment / Suggestion

"Rules for 3rd XI eligibility need to be made simpler. A blanket ban on first team players playing Sunday 3's is unfair on smaller clubs. e.g.

Club 1 has first team in Div 3 and 2's in Div 5, Club 2 has first team in prem and 2's in Div 3

Club 2's Sunday 3's is allowed to field players of Div 3 standard when club 1 cannot.

Understand the need for a rule but should be based on Saturday division, not 1st XI"

League Response: Not Accepted

The Starred Player system put in place by the league is designed to stop the best players at a club from playing in the club's 3rd XI / Sunday team.

- *The league do not set standards of players at a club or compare the standard of players in different divisions to determine eligibility*
- *our rules provide each club with opportunities to play players on a Sunday who do not play on Saturday to give more players the opportunity to play for your club and help you grow.*
- *It is the club's responsibility to attract players to fill the eligible places in the teams that are registered.*
- *It is the club's responsibility to only register teams for whom sufficient players are available.*

Every club registering a 3rd XI Sunday team must have a minimum of 27 players available; the 11 players eligible to play on a Sunday will find their appropriate level on a Sunday, we do not think it appropriate to find a way to improve your Sunday team because your Saturday team play at a lower level than another Saturday team.

Additional Comment from Suggestor

"Also having complex formulas/percentages of Saturday 2's games played as a basis for Sunday eligibility is impossible for a VOLUNTEER skipper who's just trying to get 11 blokes out for a game of 3rd XI cricket, to manage esp when the Sunday league is of better/equal standard to Saturday.

This system would work were all sides to play on the same day but the Sat vs sun element makes it hard.

WCC has circa 30 regular players. We have to have overlap between 2's and 3's to be able to field sides."

League Response:

We are volunteers too. The requirements are not complex, the calculations were brought in at the request of clubs to improve the decision making and help ensure genuine Sunday League players played in their relevant cup team.

Comment / Suggestion 2

"The starring system in our opinion needs a bit more work as it still allows disproportionate numbers of 1s and 2s to play Sunday cricket. This limits encouragement for teams to have big playing sections. Surely the league want as many people playing (yet rewards teams that stack their 3rd XIs with 1s and 2s players)"

League Response

The point made here is not clear.

- *A team with 1 Saturday team is allowed to play 6 Saturday regulars in their Sunday team;*
- *A team with 2 Saturday teams is allowed to play 6 Saturday regulars in their Sunday team*

We do not believe this to be disproportionate or allowing anyone to stack their teams.

Comment / Suggestion 3

"A change to the starred player numbers reducing by 1 or 2 had been proposed by a number of clubs at post-season club meetings"

League Response: Not Agreed but other change agreed

Agreed to maintain current starred player rules but to amend the exemption rules to two specific game day exemptions and the option to seek two "season long" exemptions.

Player Eligibility in the Cup- Rule 10.2.1.3.1.1.

Comment / Suggestion

"This rule needs to be removed completely. Also rule 10.4.1.3.2. needs to stay but the vice versa bit needs to come out. I flagged a similar issue a few years ago for 1X1 T20 that got changed but I've noticed there is still a clear and obvious error this time on the first team cup rules;

"No player, having played for the First XI in the Cup shall be allowed to play for the Second XI in the same round of the cup competition (and vice-versa)."

The 'vice versa' bit clearly needs to come out. Obviously a rule is needed for 2X1 Cup to stop clubs playing 1st team players in the 2nd team cup but a rule that potentially makes a first team have to pick a 3rd teamer for a Derek Kay tie just because, through no fault of their own, the 2nd team are still in their cup is obviously not correct.

For example XXX CC 2X1 played in the Cup Semi Final. We picked the team a genuine 2nd team knowing what our full strength 1st team is for the Derek Kay Semi Final the following week. Then a 1st team player gets injured on Monday or something happens which means he can no longer play in the semi final on the 16th July. As we can't pick 2X1 players from the Cup on the 9th a 3rd teamer would have to play. Clearly this cannot be right because if XXX CC 2X1 had got knocked out of the cup first round then the 1st team would have the full squad available to pick from as usual, why should 2nd team success hinder a club's first team squad options?

You can't possibly have a rule where a club's 1st team is being hindered by the success of its 2nd team. That cannot be correct, obviously if a 2nd teamer is playing first team then they are not a ringer anyway.

As I say this 'vice versa' got removed mid season for 1st XI T20 a few years ago and it needs to be removed from the 1X1 cup too."

League Response: Not Accepted but mitigation applied

The situation that arose here is very occasional at most, brought about by fixture congestion and the 2nd XI playing their round of the cup before the 1st XI because of other competitions.

The purpose of the rule is to ensure one player only plays in one level of the cup in each round to replicate the situation of teams playing on the same day, to remove the rule would remove that for all rounds and teams which is not what is wanted.

Many clubs already manage their squads and cup selections due to injury and holidays and are unable to play their strongest teams.

The fixture calendar has been adjusted to mitigate the risk of this reoccurring any more frequently. The cup competitions will start earlier in the 2024 season and all 1st XI and 2nd XI cup games are fixtured for the same day.

Player Eligibility – Junior Exempt Players

Comment / Suggestion

"Whilst wholly in favour of the Junior Exemption rule, with the wording of the rule as it is regarding Academy or County U16, the concern is that it limits the progression of Juniors who are playing 1st (or 2nd) team cricket predominantly with one specialism. For example, a junior picked as a bowler in the 1st team who bats 11 - if this continues through the season this will be detrimental to their overall batting development so should be allowed to play 3rd team cricket - if only as a batter, rather than a bowler. We had the example this year of Christian Jacobs who was selected as a wicketkeeper for Derbyshire U16 and who desperately needed to regain batting form but as he had played for County U16 was not eligible for the 3rd team. The rule should be altered to either cover County Academy players and allow County Pathway players to be free to play unencumbered, or if you need to restrict Pathway Players, use the County U18 as the reference point. Given the players it currently affects are still at secondary school, it seems the wrong cut off point at U16 Age Group, especially in Year 11 when the GCSE exams could stop players playing on Saturday's due to revision - the rule would also stop them playing on a Sunday if they had played County U16 in the season."

League Response: Under Review

It was agreed to maintain the present rule as a direct result of the amendment to the exemption rule.

DLS – 20 over minimum

Comment / Suggestion

“in the event that a team batting 2nd has achieved a 20 over target prior to an interruption in play without the 20 overs being completed, the match should be awarded to the team who has achieved the target. This will remove the situation where a result is determined as to whether the ground is fit or otherwise, particularly because in the event the target has already been achieved no further play would be necessary. There is also a similar scenario where following a reduction in overs and a revised DLS target score is necessitated, the game will be awarded to the batting side on resumption if that revised DLS target has been achieved.

There is a flaw in the current rules.

They currently state that a game has to have 20 overs completed by both teams to constitute a game. But it also allows the side batting 2nd to chase a 20 over target in less than those overs if they think they can chase it down.

And yet where there is a situation that the target has already been achieved (when a 2nd innings is interrupted prior to the 20 over threshold), the game is classified as abandoned.

In application (especially in 45 / 50 over cricket), the team who is batting 2nd is that far in front such they have already achieved the target, it is perverse that they are not awarded the win.”

League Response: Not Accepted but adjustment made for cup games

This issue relates to the mechanics of DLS and the point at which targets are set for a second innings.

If a game ends abruptly due to weather prior to the 2nd innings reaching 20 overs, then the target is either the first innings plus one or any revised target set after any overs were lost prior to the end of the game. What the mechanics of DLS does not allow is for the system to be manipulated to create a target based on 20 overs when there will not be a return to the field.

Where there is a return to the field the revised target will be set based on the total overs available, a minimum 20.

A return to the field allows both teams the opportunity to win the game. If the teams cannot return to the field the bowling side are unable to win.

The DLS mechanics will not be amended by a league rule.

However, as a trial in 2024, in the cup to help us get cup games completed on the field, cup games can be completed with a minimum of 10 overs per side or a minimum of 10 overs in the 2nd innings.

Teas

Comment / Suggestion

“Teas – the league needs to make a proper decision – we can't have the same situation we had this year, especially where we had some teams such as xxxx cc providing teas for themselves but not opposition. That is absolutely outrageous – if you can provide a tea, you should be doing so for both teams. This is another example of the League, in my opinion, not being strong enough to make a decision.”

League Response: under continuous review

Every time we have looked at this issue it has split clubs down the middle, we had a vote and the 38 clubs who voted split 19:19. Teas are mandatory at the highest level, but below that some have already said they have lost the people who used to do them, or they cannot afford to do them, what do we do then? Fine them the money they can't afford in the first place or more to the point money that the players don't want to pay. The situation you describe isn't acceptable especially if you are providing teas for them at your ground. This issue remains under review but at present there are no changes to current arrangements.

Saturday Competition

Overs

Comment / Suggestion

"Div. 1 and below should be 45 overs not 50. Too many players are being lost because of the length of matches in the lower divisions"

League Response: Not Accepted

There was insufficient support at club meetings and the subsequent Exec meetings for a reduction in what the league considers the higher divisions; the delineation will remain the separation of Saturday Championship and Saturday Regional Divisions.

Deputy Professionals

Comment / Suggestion

"The point was made that GMCL are out of step on this matter with other ECB Premier Leagues"

League Response: Not Accepted

It was agreed to revise the deputy professional rules in line with other leagues and a full review of these rules would be published.

Division Structure- Linear

Comment / Suggestion

"I think Division 5 (and Division 4) should become linear, as soon as possible. As firstly, the locality of our games was not local at all with significant distances travelled with far closer teams in other leagues. Making the local aspect not relevant anymore.

More importantly, it would allow a fairer competition. At my club as an example, xxx cc, we rightly didn't win promotion this year, but we comfortably beat every team in the bottom 4 (4 games involved bowling the opposition out for below 80), which wasn't good cricket for anyone involved. The opposition didn't have a good game, we beat someone so comfortably we learnt nothing and it didn't provide adequate competition. I appreciate this will need to be phased in, give teams adequate notice. But, having played other division 5 teams in the Cup, it would allow us to play those who are more equal to us. I also find a huge variance in different division 5s, for example a team who nearly won promotion in another Division 5, we hammered in the cup with us missing 6 regular 2nd team players, and their full 2nd team. Having a full linear system would allow anomalies like this to be got rid of.

Better cricket for all teams, a more equal league system, players playing at the right level for them encouraging greater participation. Also, given more relevance to more teams as the season goes on. The teams in the middle/bottom of Division 5 had nothing to play for, i don't think we can allow this to happen to 3 separate divisions."

League Response: Accepted in Principle- Review in Progress

Club Meetings and Exec meetings held after the 2023 season are generally in favour of more linear divisions to increase the competitiveness because our lower tiers are getting stronger, although the scale of the change to linear is yet to be decided and more consultation will take place.

No change will be made for 2024, more consultation will take place and if agreed, changes may be phased in from 2025 for Division 4.

Additional notes on the points raised: in the regionalised structure:

- *it is not possible for every club to only play the clubs nearest to them for example whilst "Team J" may be the club 10th nearest to "Team A", "Team A" may not be one of the 10 teams nearest to "Team J".*
- *In order to manage this, we regionalise by areas each containing the required number of teams to make up the tier.*

Division Structure – separate 1st XI & 2nd XI

Comment / Suggestion

“In Saturday Competitions the league ladders should be split to create 1st team and 2nd team competitions. At present there are teams playing in the same leagues (mainly Divisions 2, 3 and 4) that have different eligibility criteria for players competing against one another. This as a point of principal is unfair.

We feel that the creation of a 2nd XI ladder will create fair and strong competition and will result in clubs understanding their true standing in that category.

It will also result in a champion 2nd XI team instead of them being placed mid table in a division made up predominantly of 1st XI teams.

Historically it may well have been that there wasn't enough clubs to create this structure but with 60+ clubs now active on a Saturday, we propose that is sufficient to create a competitive, fair ladder and will re-energise the 2nd XI community.

We are aware a form of vote around this has been taken before. The issue with this is many of the clubs voting are already playing in all 2nd XI leagues so it is not of importance or relevance to them so they may suggest it doesn't need changing.”

League Response: Not Accepted

This is a contradictory suggestion to the suggestion to increase the number of linear divisions which is proposed to increase competitiveness for all the teams in the lower divisions.

- *In separating the teams by grade, the best 2nd XIs would be competing at a lower standard than currently,*
- *In separating the teams by grade, we will be doubling the problem of having divisions of less than 12 at the lower end of the tiers and likely increasing the number of blank dates on Saturdays. On current numbers this would leave 5 1st XIs without a full division, 4 2nd XIs without a full division and a 3rd XI.*
- *The Sunday Competition has 1st XIs through to 6th XIs*
- *This should not be about the name of the team; our focus should be on the comparative standards.*
- *Having a 2nd XI champion is easily determined from the highest placed 2nd XI at season end.*

New 2nd XI joining the league

Comment / Suggestion

“Any 2nd XI team joining the league should start in the bottom division. XXX CC were unable to field a 2nd XI team for much of 2020 and 2021 in their previous league yet somehow found themselves put into div 4. This is unfair to the founding clubs of the GMCL that promotion spots are being taken away to facilitate for joining clubs. This also adds to the disappointment that div 5 teams played 4 less games than every other div. Stop prioritizing the higher level clubs who are playing 24+ games when div 5 are playing 18.

If you put new clubs into the league at the bottom div, firstly it's fairer to those already down there. If they are that good a team they will soon be promoted to their true level, your giving existing clubs the chance to be promoted (if new clubs join in bottom div then you can increase promotion numbers).

By making the leagues more even in terms of numbers it gives us all more games to play. I spend 6 months not playing, I don't want to have an extra 4 weeks spread out because you don't want to relegate anyone from higher div's to make the numbers fairer.”

League Response: Principle Accepted

The example quoted isn't accurate, but the point is accepted.

The decision was taken to have larger divisions at the higher end on the event referred to, so as not disrupt promotion all the way through the structure but it did reduce the matches available at the lower end, the impact was on fewer clubs and so why that option was taken.

Sunday Competition

Division Structure – one team per club

Comment / Suggestion

“Don't have teams from the same club in the same league. Its a fairly obvious sporting principle which undermined the integrity of a league.”

Comment / Suggestion

“Clubs with 2 teams in the same division simply cannot be allowed. It needs to be raised. It completely undermines (potentially) the integrity of competition and then raises all sorts of questions about throwing fixtures, team strengths, who is eligible for which team – I could go on. It just cannot be right.”

League Response: Accepted and in place for 2024

This situation arose from the sudden growth in the number of 4th XI teams in 2023 and due to issues arising with multiple teams applying to the regional divisions. It was the intention to correct this but the comments are wholly accepted and the situation corrected for 2024.

Division Structure – Teams in Competition

Comment / Suggestion

“Sunday Cricket - where clubs are playing with 1 team on a Saturday and then either 1 or 2 teams on a Sunday, the eligibility criteria for players in the teams playing on Sunday are unfair.

Rule : where the first XI play in the Saturday competition and the 2nd XI play in the Sunday League Competition then all club registered players not on List A are eligible for the 2nd XI throughout the season. In a competitive 3rd XI league structure this massively favours clubs playing in this situation.

It also applies to where clubs classify their Sunday team is named as a 3rd XI even if they are in effect the 2nd XI team (IE only have 1 team playing on Saturday)

There are two options.

1. Create a league on a Sunday specifically for clubs who have one team on a Saturday so they can all play under the same eligibility criteria or;
2. Adjust the criteria for eligibility so that it prevents teams playing many 1st XI players on Saturdays and then again on Sundays.

Our recommendation would be to option 1.”

League Response: Not Accepted

- *The issue over naming 2nd XIs as 3rd XIs no longer happens*
- *There seems to be an underlying belief in this suggestion that teams are approximately equal because they have the same grade name i.e. 2nd XI, 3rd XI etc. We have Saturday Premier League Teams with 2nd XIs from Div 2 down to Div 5, no two clubs are the same, how can teams be equal because of their name?*
- *The suggestion appears to want all teams segmented by the strength of other teams at the club and not want an open competition. How many different competitions would be required to match all the different types of club, and their teams.*
- *The wild card in this is that some players, some good players, can only play on Sundays. It does not matter what the team is called.*

Division Structure – Unrestricted League

From Club Meetings

“There is an appetite for a Sunday League competition with few or no player restrictions. Several alternatives have been proposed but for 2024 we propose to run with an open 40 over competition of the style run in some other leagues where batters must retire at 50 and bowlers may only bowl 8 overs. The only restriction on players is no players deemed as professional or Category 3 may play. Numbers dependent on the entries but we will aim for an 18 game season.”

League Response

Agreed to introduce an unrestricted competition with specific restrictions on overs and runs scored. This information has been included in the form for clubs to notify us of which teams they are entering next season.

Cup games creating rearrangements

Comment / Suggestion

"Cup competitions are a bug bear for our Third XI, again they are massive which eats into Sunday league cricket meaning we don't play much in May/June"

League Response: Accepted, Mitigation put in place

Yes, we agree it is a problem for 3rd XIs particularly as in 2023 with so many games rained off and cup reserve dates taken up. We cannot easily resolve this but for 2024 we are mitigating this by starting the cup earlier in the season and removing the reserve date for the first round of the cups. The aim is that the Sunday teams can at least have a game every other week during this busy period when grounds are available. This can also be helped by clubs bringing forward games when their pitch is available when knocked out of the cup.

GMCL20

Revert to Premier / Championship Structure

Comment / Suggestion

"To revert back to a Premier / Championship structure. The introduction of the Mixed Competition, whilst a worthy experiment, was not ideal in that the adherence to the eligibility rules was patchy to say the least. A reversion to the previous structure would enable clubs to field whatever standard of team they feel appropriate."

League Response: Agreed

*We have dropped the Mixed Competition for 2024, too difficult to agree and enforce rules for a mixed competition.
Teams will be placed in the competition based on their Saturday team Position.*

Dates of Competition

Comment / Suggestion

"We have a suggestion that we start the competition later to hopefully have warmer weather and help improve attendances.

We have to have a winner in the Premier Competition by the last Sunday in July to go forward to the national competition. It has been suggested that we either have no rearrangements for bad weather with the problem being over a 5 or 6 game tournament a single abandonment could impact the table significantly or the previous year's winners enter the national competition but the issue with this is that the team will be different and may be of different strength and not best representing the league."

League Response: Agreed

Agreed, moved to later start and to just have 1 reserve week in GMCL20.

Finals Day-Arrangements for the final

Comment / Suggestion

"Having been involved in T20 finals days over last few years it has become apparent the hosting club is advised less than 2 weeks prior to the day which doesn't give clubs a chance to arrange the best day possible and the well-produced surfaces required. My suggestion is that as a prize for winning the T20 competition as long as your ground is up to standards, and you want to host it they should be awarded finals day the following year. There is no issue with it being a neutral venue if they don't reach the final the following year and would give the hosts plenty time to arrange the day the competition deserves."

League Response: Not accepted

This has not been progressed, on the basis that it could end up being a regular event at just a few clubs whereas the process as it is now does give the opportunity of hosting to anyone reaching the top 4 and there tends to be one surprise team each year and at least they have a 1 in 4 chance of hosting. If clubs cannot see the chance to host which would generate good income for the club, then there is less kudos in getting to the final and less enticement to do so.

GMCL20 Powerplay

Comment / Suggestion

"Instead of the powerplay being 6 overs at the start of the innings. Have a 4 or 5 over powerplay at the start and the batting side can take 1-2 overs of powerplay whenever. After the 6 over and before the 18th over. It will involve more tactics in the game. Allows players to think differently. Allows the batting team to take an advantage. A little bit different in an already exciting comp and format of the game"

League Response: Not Accepted

This matter was discussed at the post season club meetings, and it was felt that whilst agreeing that the suggestion has a little merit, it is a minor change with limited benefit but adding unnecessary complexity.

GMCL20 Forfeits

Comment / Suggestion

"GMCL20 forfeits - we had 2 at least – I think it was 3 - and 2 of them were home games which has obviously had a significantly negative impact on our bar revenue. I now expect us to post a loss this financial year and that is at least partly responsible. Add to that they were very short notice so arranging a friendly was nigh on impossible. I think this needs looking at in terms of potential financial penalty for being unable to fulfil a fixture, as well as a minimum notice period. The best thing to do is say – don't enter a team if you can't put a team out – it's fairly simple. But I do think financial penalties should be considered and given to the opposition if the opposition was due to be at home and therefore expecting a significant bar take."

League Response

It is fairly simple, and amazing that we have already thought it, we say it every year in fact.

We know that financial penalties can never accurately reimburse the loss of income from a home game because it will be affected by many things including weather. We do have financial penalties for match forfeits and applied where the criteria are met.

We are also reviewing the whole penalty process for 2024 which will include financial penalties and future elimination from competitions for forfeits as already happens in cup games.

Umpire Matters

Umpire Fees in Div 5

Comment / Suggestion

"If you don't have a club umpire you have to pay £82.50 a week for the umpire. Over a season of 18 games this can be £1400. If you add on scorer another £400+ which is around £180 per player a season. Sadly we lost our club umpire before last season and have made a huge effort to get a new one, including offering more money and transport costs all to no avail. To punish a club financially on top of what is already a disadvantage in the game seems harsh and unnecessary. We are happy to pay £45 and the the other team £45 but one team paying £82.50 is ridiculous.

The rule just makes no real sense. It doesn't motivate us to try harder to get an umpire as we feel we have tried everything. One of the things we liked about the league when we moved was that you didn't receive financial punishments for everything as every penny of income at the club has to worked hard for."

League Response: Not Accepted

We would like all our matches to have two umpires.

The rules should not be relaxed to make it easier not to have two umpires

The rules will be enforced to make it clear that the club not providing a club umpire when required will pay 1.5 x the fee.

Rain Panel Umpires

Comment / Suggestion

“Clarity on which divisions can a rain panel umpire. The current suggests only division 4&5 teams can use a rain panel umpire.

We experienced a 1st team being able to call a game off using a rain panel umpire when a league umpire was appointed. We was then denied a rain panel umpire later in the season for 2nd v 2nd team with only club umpires available. When a rain panel umpire was contacted we was told as per the rules stated on the GMCL website a rain panel umpire is only available for teams in divisions 4&5.

My suggestion would be a rain panel umpire is available for all divisions. To avoid any doubt in the decision and to provide an auditable trail, the umpires report should be made available to both captains and include photos to support their decision.”

League Response: Not Possible

It is correct that on a Saturday only Divisions 4 & 5 can use the services of a rain panel umpire.

It is expected that clubs above that level will always have the equipment and facility to protect the square from the weather for a decision to be made later in the day.

There are insufficient umpires to provide the service across the whole league.

New Clubs & Umpires

Comment / Suggestion

“Umpires - if we haven't enough numbers of umpires the league absolutely cannot continue accepting new clubs and therefore increasing the number of fixtures for which we already have insufficient umpires. I raised this last year on at least one occasion – we cannot continue to expand the number of fixtures we have of we have dwindling numbers of match officials. The two are at complete odds and it simply makes no sense.”

League Response: Not Accepted

New clubs joining the league do bring umpires who add to our league panel and do bring club umpires too. The responsibility to add new umpires to the panel falls to all clubs

Umpire Crib sheets

Powerplay Overs

Comment / Suggestion

"League rules state that the powerplay overs is either nine or eight yet the crib sheets say ten, which is correct? "

League Response: Referred to Umpires' Association

The error with the umpires' crib sheets has been referred to the Umpires Association.

Cup Competitions

Cup Draws- Request to pre-draw the cup competitions:

Comment / Suggestion

"Would let winners know immediately where the next round is and if at home can begin to prepare wicket and also allows teams to rearrange Sunday fixtures as soon as possible."

League Response: Not Possible

This would be the ideal solution for the league too, but because we have multiple competitions at each grade it is not possible to pre co-ordinate the draw as it gives too many possibilities to build into the draws.

Mitigation:

This matter has been under consideration by the league for some time and for 2024 the following will happen:

- 1. The cup competition will start earlier in the season allowing additional time between rounds to increase the time for preparations.*
- 2. There will be no reserve date for the first round freeing up another Sunday for the Sunday league competition therefore meaning fewer rearrangements for the Sunday league games.*

Declarations

Comment / Suggestion

"What is the rationale behind the decision to not allow declarations in the cup? This takes away a fundamental right of a team captain to try to win a game especially when the match will be rain affected rather than having to toss a coin. I have asked for an answer on this which basically boiled down to DLS doesn't work on a Sunday!!! I have spoken to over twenty umpires, captains, club chairmen and senior players since I was made aware of this rule, only two knew that it existed and none could understand the reason for it. I was advised that as this situation has only arisen once in over 200 games then if its not broke don't fix it, but it is broken so needs fixing for when it happens again.

It took me an age to find the rule in the GMCL rules page, as this rule does exist and it differs from the rule for league fixtures it should be on the umpire crib sheet should it not?"

League Response: Not accepted

- This rule was in place at the commencement of the league and was accepted as a league rules because it was always used in most league's cup competitions. It is a standard rule in one day cricket throughout the game. The exception is that we allow declarations in our league competition and not that we don't in cups.*
- DLS works on every day of the week.*
- This rule has not been changed, it has not been determined as broken or otherwise. DLS is there for weather.*
- There are quite a few rules that differ for cup games, another key one is where weather wholly disrupts a cup game (i.e. no play) then the reserve date can be used. In the league it would be classed as abandoned.*

Cup Overs

Comment / Suggestion

"An observation I have had is in relation to cup matches is that players are confused over the rules regarding overs, bowlers power plays etc. Can you not simply standardise the cup rules. Its Sunday, its the cup, therefore 45 overs, 5 bowlers min, 9/10 over powerplay, legside wides, no ball free hit etc. whether its prem league or division 5 then everyone, players scorers, umpires, spectator's know the rules. "

League Response: Not Agreed

Discussions with clubs, captains and players at several club meetings over the winter has not been able to verify any confusion and the discussions found no appetite for change to the cup competitions.

Grounds

Ground Inspections

Comment / Suggestion

"Thorough ground inspections. Having played at XXX CC where there was no sightscreens and at XXXX where there are large holes in the ground, I feel that there are no pitch inspections being carried out, and if they are, not in the lower divisions. You can't expect a decent standard to come from such poor pitches. Ground inspections should be more regular, giving teams more of an opportunity to right the wrongs rather than being overlooked."

League Response: Agreed

Regular inspections is the goal, but we also take umpire feedback, although it is accepted that some of the lower division teams do not get as much attention.

Comment / Suggestion 2

Still nothing seems to have come from this considering the work we put in to ensuring we met them. Especially now considering what I have heard about xxx cc, but seemingly don't have a ground? Is that true? what standards are they held accountable to? It is our intention as a club to spend tens of thousands of pounds on square renovations in the next year or two – why are we bothering?

League Response 2

The process did not work well in 2023, steps have already been taken to ensure 2024 is much improved. Clubs who hire grounds or share grounds are still subject to inspections. We welcome all clubs investing in their ground and are pleased to hear about it to improve your own standards.

Juniors

Under 9 groups

Comment / Suggestion

"The U9s leagues should be more regionalised so travel can be reduced. Accept all teams but have them closer teams more frequently. As U9s cricket isn't particularly competitive, and is more about getting kids playing cricket than it is about quality it makes little sense to make parents travel 30 minutes in rush hour traffic, from Worsley to Stand for example. It'd make it easier for all involved to set up appropriately and creates a culture that will retain more kids from U9s hence improving the strength of the league in the long run. It'd be good for U11s softball too but I understand not many teams choose to join that league, though the idea of the league is brilliant as it allows more children to start playing after U9s."

League Response

The Under 9s competition is regionalised. Regionalisation is by area. What we cannot do is have everyone only playing their nearest clubs. That is actually impossible.

Late fixture arrangement

Comment / Suggestion

"There were several times this year I believe where they split into performance leagues where we didn't find out our fixture until only a few days in advance. How can clubs / managers be expected to put out a team on a Wednesday say if they don't even find out there is a fixture until the Sunday? I also believe the junior season went on for a long time – once the school holidays begin, fulfilling fixtures becomes more difficult – maybe the scheduling could be looked at."

League Response

The Performance Leagues can only be organised at the conclusion of all the games in the regional competition and so to avoid stretching the season even further, a point also made, there has to be a quick turnaround from regional to performance, which by necessity meaning a speedy turnaround for fixtures.

Technology

MyActionReplay- cameras

Comment / Suggestion

"At the end of the season our camera had been down for weeks. It is a bit ridiculous that we paid hundreds of pounds for the hardware but we aren't receiving the service that goes with it. This is perhaps not in the league's remit but a bit of pressure wouldn't go amiss."

League Response

We were in contact with cricHQ and the My Action Replay partners as soon as the cameras went down following a tech issue, as things developed we were in contact with the CEO of cricHQ pushing for answers and a resolution to the unsatisfactory position. We have an officer who is now in regular contact with them to obtain a solution for the season ahead which will be shared as soon a progress is made.

Other League Matters

The AGM

Comment / Suggestion

"last year it seemed to suddenly come about at the last minute. It cannot be that hard to pick a date, venue, time and communicate it to clubs in a timely manner."

League Response

The AGM date is published on the League calendar of dates and the web as soon as arranged and notified to the IT team, we are not aware that there was a delay in publishing last year, this year it is on 21st Jan at Milnrow CC at 10am.

Penalties

Comment / Suggestion

"At the post season meetings, the overwhelming majority of clubs supported the imposition of penalties for the breaking of rules including: Late starts slow over rates, forfeits, ineligible players (starring and appearance based)."

League Response

Further discussions required but the process agreed.

A separate meeting will be arranged to agree the penalties and what rules should be covered along with the whole appeals process for the league penalties that do not relate to disciplinary matters.

Richard has started to identify those rules, which a penalty would apply to.

Equality & Diversity Training

Comment / Suggestion

The introduction of the ECB Equality on line training was discussed and the importance of encouraging people to carry out this short training session.

League Response

It was agreed that Captains and Club Welfare Officers would be mandated to undertake this training. Discussion will be held with the ECB on how this could be recorded to ensure compliance. This would be included in the revised MoU.