

# Proposals for voting changes to offer of Federation Leagues and Tournaments

Earlier this summer John Low conducted a survey on issues relating to the number of teams entering certain leagues and tournaments, and the attitudes of clubs towards those events. This was discussed at the last Committee meeting and the Committee presents this statement to the AGM for its approval.

The aim of these proposals is to strengthen the Federation's support for the ordinary club player and to provide events which will attract more of those players to enter. This means, amongst other considerations, taking into account an increased reluctance to travel and the increased cost overnight stays for competitions.

We also wish to distinguish what the Federation offers from the events sponsored by the Croquet Association/Croquet England.

We need to recognise the changed landscape of croquet – the predominance of GC in this Federation and the diminishment in popularity of AC in the majority of our clubs.

With these points in mind we propose:

1. to **recast the AC Teams Competition as a single day of 14pt handicap on full lawns** with the same rules as the AC B League. The last few year's have seen the number of teams taking part reduce and we hope this may provide a better inducement for more clubs and members to take part.
2. **to drop the Women's AC competition.** Put simply, there are far fewer players of AC in the Federation, and far fewer of them again are women; there are even fewer younger players. It has become a struggle to find sufficient players to make teams from mixed clubs, let alone a single club; the current manager has decided she does not wish to take on that work again (because of the struggle to find participants) so this seems the appropriate moment to call time, albeit reluctantly, on a competition which we know a lot of women players have enjoyed in the past.
3. **to drop the One-Ball competition.** If fewer members are playing AC, even fewer have ever played one ball. This is the youngest of the Federation tournaments, starting only in 2018 and has only been played in 3 of the last 5 seasons. There is no market for this form of croquet and I suspect it will not be missed.
4. **to drop both the AC A league and the GC level league.** Both these leagues are attracting only a small number of club entries and it is anecdotally clear that those clubs taking part for the most part have great difficulty raising a team when they do enter. A class players in both formats have a wealth of CA tournaments to attend and are understandably reluctant to find time to enter Federation events as well. As a result the teams end up having players in them who are outside the optimum handicap range and this in turn may take those players away from the Federation leagues to which they are more suited. By concentrating of leagues and competitions in the B-D class range the Federation can offer a choice of competition which those players might not otherwise have.
5. **to recast the Southern Challenges as two geographically delineated B/C class competitions with a playoff between the winners of each competition.** You may know that the Southern Challenge was originally started as an invitation event by the Sussex County Croquet Club. At some point it was passed over to the Federation and expanded into the current 3 events. There have been some preliminary

discussions with Sussex about returning the Division 1 Challenge to them to run in its original form and it is our understanding that they would be willing to do so. As a Federation event it doesn't really fit any more as more than half the teams entering are not from this Federation at all. Passing it on will allow the Federation to concentrate on increasing the number of teams and players in our two B/C class challenges. It is proposed to rename the events and one proposal so far is the Croquet South East Challenge North/South.

6. to undertake efforts to support the development of mini one day jamborees at geographically well-located clubs in the area. We recognise that a lot of players don't want to travel very far for competition. We have two major locations for our competitions: Sussex County and Surbiton. We believe there is room for more local jamborees to be organised in strategically placed clubs. Last season Dulwich organised one such jamboree and it was by all accounts a great success. The Federation proposes to support other clubs to do the same.

It is recognised that, as listed above, this seems like a lot of negative choices, but the Committee believes these proposals represent an opportunity for the Federation to concentrate its efforts on encouraging the development of the game at the skill level of most of our members.

Although the Committee is presenting this as a package, it recognises that each item will need to be debated and crucially, voted separately by the meeting.