



**Scottish Hockey Adult Outdoor Competitions
Short Life Working Group**

Proposal Document

SLWG – ADULT COMPETITIONS

By Martin Boag (Chair)

01 February 2021

Contents

1. SLWG Proposal	3
1.1. Purpose	3
1.2. Group.....	3
1.3. Process.....	4
1.3.1. Meetings	4
1.4. Inputs.....	4
1.5. Principles.....	4
1.6. Proposal	5
1.6.1. Leagues.....	5
1.6.2. Cups	7
1.7. Chair's Statement.....	7

1. SLWG Proposal

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to put forward a proposal for adult Scottish Hockey run competitions for Season 2021/2022 onward.

I, Martin Boag, was asked by John Mackenzie (President) to chair a Short Life Working Group to look at adult competitions for season 2021/22 onward. As chair I was given permission to form a group of my choice but was asked to conclude the group's proposal by the end of August 2020. This deadline was to allow the proposal to be presented to the Scottish Hockey Management Committee, the Scottish Hockey Board and the Clubs with a view of concluding before season 2020/21 starts.

Our group did not receive a written term of reference and therefore proceeded with the following remit:

“Propose a competition structure (leagues and cups) for all adult hockey run directly by Scottish Hockey for season 2021/22 onward”.

We were given the following information from the Premiership group:

- The Premiership (both male and female) will consist of 12 teams for season 2020/21 and season 2021/22.
- The Premiership will relegate the bottom team to the league below and accept the champions from that league.
- The Premiership's 2nd bottom team will contest a playoff against the 2nd placed team from the league below.

Given the effect of the corona virus on season 2020/2021– the view is that this proposal should be delayed until season 2022/2023 and for season 2021/2022 the existing format should be played with the knowledge of what is to come in season 2022/2023.

1.2. Group

I as chair of the group reached out to several people from across the Scottish Hockey family looking to include participants from a wide range of geographical locations, ages, playing experience, coaching experience, technical and volunteer experience to join the process.

The members of our group consisted of:

- Gordon Black – Helensburgh Hockey Club, West District Mens Outdoor Competition Convenor;
- Martin Boag – Chair, past President of Scottish Hockey;
- Euan Cowan – Western Wildcats, Scottish U18 Internationalist;
- Chris Duncan – DOH Edinburgh Academy, Inverleith Mens Coach, Scottish Women asst. coach;
- Jamie Frail – Head of Domestic Hockey, Scottish Hockey;
- Fraser Munro – Umpire;
- Siobhan Penman – Stirling Wanderers;
- Becky Ward – PE High School of Glasgow, Western Wildcats, Scottish Women Internationalist;
- Alex Williams – Gordonians Merlins Ladies, Umpire.

1.3. Process

1.3.1. Meetings

We met as a group on the following dates and the meetings were recorded and minutes were taken.

- 3rd of July 2020
- 20th of July 2020
- 28th of July 2020
- 11th of August 2020
- 17th of August 2020
- 26th of August 2020
- 2nd of September 2020

We also met as a group with the Management Committee on 2nd November 2020, who had questions and suggestions about several areas of this document. This resulted in an update to this document.

- Note – this document was reviewed once again by the chair of SLWG and President in February 2021 and this document updated to v4.

1.4. Inputs

At the start of the process, I as chair was provided with several emails from different parties who had shown an interest. I also reached out to a few individuals to submit their thoughts. These emails were shared with the group and as a group we decided not to invite any party along to any meeting as the suggestions made were clear.

It was not possible to reach out to all clubs or interested parties given the short time scale in which the group had to reach a conclusion.

1.5. Principles

We discussed and agreed as a group the following principles from which we would conclude our proposal.

Number	Description
1	A national league is a national league (Premiership, National & Reserve) – if you enter you must be prepared to travel to play anywhere.
2	Premiership and National League be restricted to 1st teams only
3	If there is to be a split mid-season there should be between 12 & 16 teams in a league at start of the season
4	Teams to play as many games against similar opposition as possible
5	Clubs who have Premiership, National & Reserve status should be allowed to retain this and only lose this on the pitch
6	Clubs can only enter SH Competitions by meeting standards (standards to be decided by Management Committee)
7	Playoffs back to the clubs for Relegation & Promotion (3 game playoffs - Dutch style). For Euro playoffs, 1 game and played at Glasgow Green.
8	All teams to have choice to enter open Scottish Cup
9	Cup games as premier and only game over weekend (Friday night lights / Saturdays / Sunday)
10	Condense the period over which the cup/plates are played (Management to decide when)

11	Cup games - Lower ranked team becomes home team rounds 1 & 2 only. If teams are in the same division then game is played as drawn.
12	Cups draws should be non-seeded. Last year's semi-finalists to receive a bye to round 2.
13	Cup & Plate draws mapped from round 1 where possible
14	Cup winners to enter European playoffs (taking 4th place spot if they are not already in top 3 of the Premiership). Runners up, 2 nd or 3 rd XI's not eligible to proceed to playoffs.
15	Premiership clubs not allowed to participate in plate competition

1.6. Proposal

We discussed and agreed as a group the following proposal for League and Cup Competitions.

1.6.1. Leagues

Our proposal for the league competitions are as follows:

Competition	Entry Criteria	Expected No. of Teams for Season 2022/23	Split	Promotion/European Playoffs	Relegation
Womens Premiership	1 st Teams only	12	Split into 2 leagues of 6 after 11 games	European playoffs to be a single game and played at Glasgow Green Or at a venue chosen by Scottish Hockey	Bottom team is relegated to National League 1. 2 nd bottom team plays off with 2 nd top team in National League 1. (3 games Dutch style playoffs)
Womens National League 1	1 st Teams only	12	Split into two leagues of 6 after 11 games	Top team is promoted to Premiership. 2 nd top team plays off with 2 nd bottom of Premiership. (3 games Dutch style playoffs)	Bottom team is relegated to National League 2. 2 nd bottom team plays off with 2 nd top team in National League 2. (3 games Dutch style playoffs)
Womens National League 2	1 st Teams only	9	No split. Play each other home and away	Top team is promoted to National 1. 2 nd top team plays off with 2 nd bottom of National 1. (3 games Dutch style playoffs)	See Note 1
Womens Reserve League	2 nd and 3 rd teams only where 1 st teams are NL or Premiership	12	Split into two leagues of 6 after 11 games	N/A	See Note 2
Mens Premiership	1 st Teams only	12	Split into two leagues of 6 after 11 games	European playoffs to be a single game and played at Glasgow Green. Or at a venue chosen by Scottish Hockey	Bottom team is relegated to National League 1. 2 nd bottom team plays off with 2 nd top team in National League 1. (3 games Dutch style playoffs)

Mens National League 1	1 st Teams only	13	Split into two leagues one of 6 (top) and one of 7 (bottom) after 12 games	Top team is promoted to Premiership. 2 nd top team plays off with 2 nd bottom of Premiership. (3 games Dutch style playoffs)	See Note 1
Mens Reserve League	2 nd and 3 rd teams only where 1 st teams are NL or Premiership	12	Split into two leagues of 6 after 11 games	N/A	See Note 2

Note 1 – The group felt it was important to allow both the womens NL 2 and the mens NL1 to grow over the next few seasons and for SH to encourage teams to enter these divisions. The ideal scenario would be for both Mens and Women's competitions to have two NL divisions of 12 teams in each. Once a NL2 was full and there are 1st teams from the districts showing an interest in joining the NL then the bottom team would be relegated to their district and replaced by a willing 1st team from across the district's top leagues. In the case of more than one district first team is willing to step up – Scottish Hockey Management would plan playoffs of the interested teams to identify the team to step up to the NL.

Note 2 - If there are 12 teams in Reserve League - Bottom team relegated to district if there is a 2nd or 3rd team willing to replace them. District 2nd/3rd team playoffs if >1 wanting to go into Reserve League.

We feel that we are giving each team within each club two options as to where to compete.

As a 1st team – you can play in the Premiership (if you have earned the right to play there) or National League (and enter immediately if there are spaces and you meet the required standards) or play in your own district.

As a 2nd or 3rd team – you can play in the Reserve League (and enter immediately if there as spaces and you meet the required standards) or play in your own district.

Pathway for a 1st team is to reach top district league and then apply to National League if there is space and they meet SH criteria, if no space they enter playoffs to win on pitch the right to play in National League.

Other formats that we considered for the leagues:

Format	Comments
Premiership/NL/Conferences	We considered having a 12-team premiership, a 12-team NL 1 which would both have only 1 st teams and then Conferences A & B below that which would have 1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd teams drawn ahead of the fixtures being issued. However, we felt that this did not meet as many of our agreed principles as our preferred option.
Premiership / Conferences	We considered having a 12-team premiership and then Conferences A & B below that which would have 1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd teams drawn ahead of the fixtures being issued. Again, we felt that this did not meet as many of our agreed principles as our preferred option.
Status quo	We considered keeping the current structure for both the men and the women. Again, we felt that this did not meet as many of our agreed principles as our preferred option.

1.6.2. Cups

Our proposal for the cup competitions are as follows:

Competition	Entry Criteria / Outcome
Mens Scottish Cup	1st teams playing in Premiership, National League or District. 2nd and 3rd teams playing in Reserve league. Cup winner entering European playoff as team 4.
Mens District Cup	1st & 2nd teams playing in District. 2nd and 3rd teams playing in Reserve league.
Mens Reserve Cup	3rd teams and below.
Womens Scottish Cup	1st teams playing in Premiership, National League or District. 2nd and 3rd teams playing in Reserve league. Cup winner entering European playoff as team 4.
Womens District Cup	1st & 2nd teams playing in District. 2nd and 3rd teams playing in Reserve league.
Womens Reserve Cup	3rd teams and below.

We feel we have some innovative principles around the cups which we feel would rejuvenate the competition and give kudos back to Scottish Cup after several years where it has been perceived to be a second-rate competition. To repeat our main principles for the cup:

Principles
Cup games as premier and only game over weekend (Friday night lights / Saturdays / Sunday). <i>This is to encourage clubs to showcase cup matches.</i>
Cup games - Lower ranked team becomes home team round 1 and 2 only. If teams are in the same division then game is played as drawn. <i>Again, this is to encourage lower ranked teams to showcase cup matches.</i>
Cups draws should be non-seeded. <i>This is to give every team who enters a fair chance in the draw.</i>
Cup winners to enter European playoffs (taking 4th place spot if they are not already in top 3 of the Premiership). Runners up, 2 nd or 3 rd XI's not eligible to proceed to playoffs. <i>This is to give every 1st team theoretically the chance to progress to Europe.</i>
Scottish Cup – the previous seasons semi-finalists will be given a bye to the second round.
Scottish Cup - no Premiership teams to play in the plate. <i>This is to encourage non-Premiership teams to enter the Scottish Cup.</i>

1.7. Chair's Statement

I would hope that the clubs will view this proposal favourably and give it due consideration. I believe the process we have followed has been: -

- Robust in that we have taken minutes and video recorded each meeting.
- We have a group with wide range of views from across the Scottish Hockey family.
- We considered several options before concluding.

Finally, as chair I would like to offer my thanks to the group for their time and input over the last 8 weeks.