

Indoor Club Consultation

As we continue to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic we understand this season is unlike any other. The purpose of this consultation is to determine the format of the Scottish Hockey Indoor Season 2021/22.

It is our intention to run an indoor programme starting on the first weekend in December (4th/5th) which will run until the last weekend in January (29th/30th). Men's matches will be on Saturdays; and Women's matches on Sundays.

We recognise that Indoor hockey poses different challenges than outdoor competition. In the traditional indoor format, there is limited/no time for rearrangements. Therefore, consideration must be given to the potential impact of Covid-19 with teams being required to isolate/test at short notice.

Additionally, many clubs have highlighted potential barriers to participation including no access to training venues and player numbers.

The format of any indoor competition must be driven by the following principles:

- **Health and Safety of all participants**
- **Fairness and Integrity**
- **Practicality**

In this current climate, it is proposed that Option 1 below, "No promotion/relegation", is the optimal format for the 2021/22 season given the current regulations on testing/isolation which may impact teams across the season.

It is understood that there will be varying opinions across the membership on the format of any indoor competition, therefore, included in this document are multiple options for discussion.

Option 1 - No promotion/relegation

- Run a traditional format of all indoor competitions (National 1/2/3 and Men's Regional league)
- No promotion and relegation across all leagues
- National 1 determines European Places with cross overs and final. National 1 may feature a condensed/sprint competition if required.
- Games can be scheduled in a morning/afternoon slot. Note some back-to-back games will be required (National 1 may not feature back-to-back or half day format)
- Teams that choose not to play at the start of the season will have spaces filled by other teams in lower leagues (or new teams) where possible
- The teams that withdraw before the start will need to re-enter the following year and their space in their relevant league will not be kept.

Pro's

- Provide competitive opportunity at all levels
- No team gains a competitive advantage/ is disadvantaged in the event that the full games schedule cannot be completed.

- Removes pressure from clubs who are impacted by Covid-19 with isolation/awaiting test results who either cannot attend or need to pull players in from lower teams within their club
- Game schedule can be written in a half-day morning/afternoon format reducing the number of teams at the venue at one time.

Cons

- Cost (competition entry/training venue)
- Physical challenges of playing back-to-back games
- No promotion or relegation until season 2022/23
- Prolongs the impact of Covid-19 and causes disruption across two seasons (19/20 not played & 21/22 no promotion/relegation). By season 22/23 the composition of teams may be different.
- If no back-to-back games is the strong preference, then a full day format will be required which increases the number of teams in the venue at one time.

Option 2

- Run a traditional format of all indoor competitions (National 1/2/3 and Men's Regional league)
- National 1 determines European Places with cross overs and final. National 1 may feature a condensed/sprint competition if required.
- Playoffs for promotion/relegation where required.
- Games can be scheduled in a morning/afternoon slot. Note some back-to-back games will be required (National 1 may not feature back-to-back or half day format)
- Teams that choose not to play at the start of the season will have spaces filled by other teams in lower leagues (or new teams) where possible
- The teams that withdraw will need to re-enter the following year and their space in their relevant league will not be kept.

Pro's

- Completes league season – winners awarded and promotion/relegation
- Competitive opportunity at the correct level for all teams that wish to enter

Con's

- Fairness – Potential impact of Covid-19 if teams cannot attend and there is no room to reschedule.
- Playing back-to-back games may result in a drop in performance due to the physical requirement.
- If no back-to-back games is the strong preference, then a full day format will be required which increases the number of teams in the venue at one time.

Option 3 - Regional participation approach

- National 1 can operate on a traditional national basis to determine European places

- Combine the leagues per region Men's National 2/3 & Regional 1 and Women's National 2/3 and split based on location.
- No promotion or relegation.

Pro's

- Collective reduction in the volume of travel required
- Provides competitive opportunity for all teams
- Possibility to add additional teams where numbers permit
- Indoor competition can return to a previously established format in 2022/23
- Performance players have choice to play in competitive environment in Nat 1 or local

Con's

- Venue availability will determine where/when regional leagues can be played
- Playing teams of different ability against potentially teams in higher ranked league
- Numbers in the regional format will be determined by entries received
- Cost of competition entry fees/ training facility