

Report of second meeting of Competition Working group

The group had reviewed the input that they had received from various interested parties such as the Leinster Branch Chair, The National Technical Director, various individual members through the ITTA website and the veterans society. The goal of the meeting was to start to define the outline of proposals based on this input as well as the views of the group, so that this could be reviewed by a number of interested parties. Once that feedback was received a revised proposal would then be sent to the various boards for consideration.

Description of different tournament types

1. Classification : Players play in banded divisions (within their age / gender group) with players who finish near the top of a particular band being allowed to play in the next higher band.
2. Grand Prix: Players play in banded events (within their age / gender group) as well as being entitled to play in an open event (within their age / gender group). No possibility of promotion between bands on the day
3. Open event: Players enter into an open draw (within their age / gender group) which is seeded and play until eliminated
4. Pure Banded: Players play in Banded divisions based on ability only
5. Classified Banded: Players play in Banded divisions based on ability only but within predefined age / gender groups
6. Team Tournaments: Two or more players make up a team and the team usually plays a mixture of singles / doubles. Many formats possible
7. Challenger Events: Elite players are excluded, entrants are roughly ranked and then play various rounds to qualify for their particular division. Emphasis is on lots of games.

It was agreed that all tournaments have advantages / disadvantages and that a mix of tournament types is the best way to accommodate the varying needs of players.

Though there was some resistance in some areas to mixing age groups and genders, Ulster had been holding mixed tournaments for more than 20 years and the overwhelming majority of players were familiar with the concept and accepted it.

Looking at **Junior** competitions first the proposal is as follows for the mix of events that should be run at a national level

4 National Classification events per year with some split over 2 days/weekends to allow all players attend (some players can not play on Sundays due to religious beliefs)

12 Challenger type events for non elite players (e.g. 3 in each province open to all who wish to enter, but probably fairly locally based).

Looking at the **Senior** Competitions there were different views with respect to the mix of tournaments as shown below.

Competition Type	Amount per Tony	Amount per Chris
National Classification	1	1
Grand Prix (No doubles)	2	3
National Team Events	2	1
Pure Banded Events	2	1
Total	7	6

Other points.

- We need to re-evaluate each year for a few years to see what works and what doesn't. For example, if the pure banded events become very popular we would organise more of them.
- Elite Players and their coaches would need to plan what Irish tournaments they were to play in at the start of the season with the National Technical Director so that he/she can take into account the player pathway, foreign tournaments / training, success of various events, etc., and reduce the pressure on performance players to play too many Irish events.
- Provincial branches should be encouraged to run appropriate types of events for their own needs.
- Standardisation needs to be imposed for the running of events and this will include training of organisers / referees.
- Need to consider specialist events such as wheelchair / Vets. Goal is to include them but without negatively impacting on the main tournament (particularly where players are playing in too many events and are not available to play when required)
- Need to consider adult challenger type events.
- Suggested that the outline calendar structure for both major national and provincial events be determined by the tournament committee in advance of the calendar meeting, bearing in mind possible commitments outside the country (Six Nations, European/British tournaments, schools events, etc.) and training requirements.
- Any ranking system used in a revised system has to be considered, and it would be wise to look at a system of "dummy" points for players absent on Irish trips if there happen to be clashes