

It was great to receive so much feedback and it is incredibly helpful to be able to reach out and use the combined wisdom of the wider volleyball community to get input during these unprecedented times; as usual the diverse views make clear that any decision we take will not please everyone. Please read the document below before completing [the survey form](#) we have created to collect responses, please complete once per team (if the answers are different per team).

## Background

The following outlines the Competitions Working Group thinking on the [prior consultation feedback](#) and the other areas that we are considering.

Please make sure you read this in conjunction with the previous consultation.

Also please remember that this is an ever-changing landscape and we are trying to make the best decision we can with the information we have at hand and this is changing on an irregular basis.

Financial viability for both clubs and VE is very important and the number of teams competing has a large impact on the financial viability of events in the same way as the number of players in a club has a large impact on the viability of a club/team.

## Facilities

Now that the government has given the okay to open leisure centres & sports halls.

We expect that even with this announcement that there will be a number of restrictions on the use of facilities.

Through the previous consultation and the announcement from BUCS there appears to be a strong possibility that school and university facilities may not be open this calendar year.

*Our first request so that we can understand the possible impact is that you contact your facilities and get an understanding of their future plans. E.g. open from the 25<sup>th</sup> July and no issues with your team using e.g. 2 not available for booking until January 2021 at the earliest.*

Having this information is key to our future planning.

## NVL & Cup

### Cup & Shield

We have reluctantly concluded that we will not be running the Cup or Shield this season, Cup rounds need to be played on certain dates to keep the competition on track, this is difficult enough in normal circumstances. With the possibility of local lockdowns (e.g. Leicester) and teams being impacted by test and trace it would not be practical to run a Cup/Shield competition.

### NVL Fixtures

Having listened to the feedback from everybody and recognising that it is exceptional circumstances we believe that there are two likely scenarios and therefore we are proposing the process for fixtures will be as follows;

We will plan for 2 scenarios – a full season and a half season. We will do this knowing that teams are not yet able to provide hall/team availability! Once we have received response about venue and team availability and VE have updated our guidance, we will decide if a full season is possible and when it will begin otherwise it will be a half season starting in January (subject to government, VE and venue guidelines). This will allow teams to book venues as soon as possible to ensure venue availability.

- 1) We will request teams to provide details of special requests (e.g. we have a men's and a women's team and would like them to play home fixtures on the same day and venue) e.g. 2 for home fixtures what is the default day for home fixture (Saturday or Sunday)
  - a. The more teams prepared to play double headers and or triangulars the lower number of weekends required to play all fixtures

- 2) We will not be accepting requests for teams to not play on certain dates as we cannot accommodate this complexity (and as no dates are yet available!)
- 3) We will use our usual process to create a set of draft fixtures (without dates) doing our best to honour the requests made in step 1 but teams need to recognise that most teams have requests and as per our prior consultation there are other considerations (e.g. referee availability) meaning we cannot promise to honour all requests. This process includes considering things like
  - a. Balancing the number of home fixtures teams receive (as much as possible)
  - b. Travel considerations
  - c. Sequencing fixtures so that teams get a balance of home and away fixtures throughout the season
- 4) Each team will be provided a list of fixtures with week numbers (rather than dates) and can then negotiate any required changes subject to divisional lead approval.
- 5) Once we have responses on venue opening and teams able to compete we will assign dates to the fixtures and issue them to teams.
- 6) We will then hold fixtures meeting per division approximately one week later facilitated by the Competitions Working Group lead for that division where any changes that are required can be made.
  - a. Team representatives will be required to come knowing what other dates are possible for their team (venue, team, etc.) and with a spirit of co-operation e.g. if a team has been allocated 8 home fixtures we would expect teams to come with a **minimum of 12 dates** they could host a home fixture i.e. 50% more dates than home fixtures.
  - b. The meetings will be staggered to ensure that if clubs have more than one team then cross team dependencies can be handled by team representatives.
  - c. We expect the vast majority of the fixtures to be finalised at the meeting with the divisional lead having the authority to allocate a date if teams can't mutually agree.
- 7) The process of appointing referees will then begin.

Following this process will enable us to make the best use of the lockdown hiatus to optimise the list of fixtures and the fixtures meeting will facilitate the process of finalising the fixtures in the most timely way possible.

#### Extending the season

We have concluded that extending the season by up 1 month is reasonable and will be done if required to complete the scheduled fixtures in the season. We will not extend beyond this to protect the outdoor/beach season and due to player and hall unavailability due to student exams.

#### Costs

Volleyball England and the Competitions Working Group have been working hard to reduce the costs associated with running competitions and any possible cost reductions will be reflected in the fees teams and players pay in the upcoming season.

#### Regional lockdowns/team unavailability due to test and trace

Clearly it is important that as a responsible NGB we don't do anything to encourage teams to do anything that would break government, venue or VE guidelines and so we will continue to trust teams to do the right thing. We expect teams to have a roster of a minimum of 8 players and in these unusual times we suggest a bigger squad will give you more flexibility and greater income. As such having 2 players unavailable due to Coronavirus should be seen as the same as having players

unavailable due to injury/illness or holiday, etc and would not be seen as a reason not to play a fixture.

In the event of a regional lockdown or entire team being unavailable due to test and trace then the process would be

- 1) Attempt to reschedule the fixture later in the season.
- 2) If the fixture cannot be played the result would be a tie with the points split between teams.
- 3) If too many fixtures are un-played (see below) then the season would be declared incomplete with no promotion or relegation.

### Curtailed Season

We have updated the regulations to give guidance on what the Competitions Working Group are likely to do in the event of a season being curtailed.

Although the exceptional circumstances may require the Competitions Working Group to modify the guidance below, we thought it important that teams are aware of how we would most likely treat this circumstance

- a. For a full season likely to be completed if at least 60% of scheduled matches in all divisions have been played.
- b. For a half season likely to be completed if at least 80% of the scheduled matches in all divisions have been played.
- c. All un-played matches will be awarded as a draw.
- d. If the season is not completed (point a. or b. above) there will be no promotion or relegation.
- e. For all Cup competitions unless the competition has reached the finals stage the competitions will likely be voided and no winners. If semis having been played, then teams will have the option to play the final; VE will support by trying to appoint referees and paying for those they appoint and providing medals.

*If the season is half season would teams prefer the season to be null and void with no promotion or relegation?*

### Teams wishing to pause the entry for a season

If a team is unable to enter the league for the upcoming season the Competitions Working Group is proposing for this season only! A team may suspend its entry and be permitted to re-join the same division the following season. The team would be required to pay the relevant team entry fee to hold its position but would not be required to pay player registration fees.

If more than 20% of teams in **any** division decide to exercise this option, the Competitions Working Group do not feel it would be reasonable to complete the season and the season would be declared null and void with no promotions and relegation. Matches would still take place and the results of these matches would be used to inform the Competitions Working Group in the event teams did not enter the following season and teams were needed to fill gaps in higher divisions.

*Do you support this proposal if not why not?*

### Junior Competition

As you will have seen the junior competitions area has received a significant boost with the recruitment of two new volunteers and the thoughts for next season are outlined below and we welcome your thoughts.

Volleyball England Junior Club/Schools Membership is Free. You can find out more about it here - [https://www.volleyballengland.org/membership/membership\\_home/junior\\_clubschools\\_membership](https://www.volleyballengland.org/membership/membership_home/junior_clubschools_membership)

Despite the difficulties thrown up by COVID19 we still aim to recruit, reward and retain young people in our sport. To avoid losing a year of competition and a cohort of players we are planning for an “exceptional” season of 2020/21.

#### 2020/21 Proposed Structure:

Our “Cup” system could be significantly impacted by COVID restrictions. So, a view has been taken to create competition that would stand alone if parts of the country experienced local lockdowns. By the nature of what we are planning this will be more inclusive and we believe has potential to recruit more teams.

If any competition is allowed to take place in the remaining months of 2020 these will be “invitational” events organised and hosted by schools/clubs or regions on dates attributed to Rounds in the calendar.

Subject to government, VE and venue guidelines from January 2021 these will be planned to run on a 2 Tier system. Provisionally held on the already calendared dates of Round 2, Last 8 and Cup Finals weekend.

Tier 1: Centralised - for teams who regularly compete at Last 8 and above (limited to the perceived best 8 teams). Qualifying criteria to be finalised. **Feedback and suggestions invited.**  
Some movement across the Tiers is possible and envisaged.

Tier 2: Regionalised for teams not strong enough to be in Tier 1. Ambition is to find 2 court venues to make “events” and share resources e.g. referees.

#### U15 Competition

For tier 2 only: To encourage participation of young people, particularly those experiencing their first taste of the competitive 6v6 format, matches will be played on short courts (16m x 9m) This has three major advantages: a shorter court reduces power and space, 2/3 courts can fit in a traditional sports hall and it will reduce costs. These factors are aimed at increasing the number of teams with clubs/schools entering B and C teams. It is also hoped new teams will take the opportunity to compete.

#### Costing for all junior competitions:

As the events are to be cost neutral, entry fees and player registrations will be required to cover venue hire, safeguarding, referees and medals etc.

**One option to reduce cost would be if teams provide referees.**

**For tier 2 events we will need clubs/schools to confirm if they are able to host events and the costs involved.**

#### Inter-regionals

The Regional Working Group will be considering whether it is feasible to organise the 2020 Inter Regionals before the end of the year. If not, their focus will shift to the 2021 Inter Regionals in May 2021.

#### Beach Inter-regionals

The provisional dates for the Inter Regional Beach Volleyball Championships are the 10/11th July 2021. Subject to confirmation of the beach volleyball calendar by approx. Feb 2021.

## Other Competitions

### Student Cup

This competition is currently at risk as we are waiting to hear about the HEVO programme and the availability of university teams/venues to compete.

### Sitting Grand Prix and Cup

Due to the increased risk of playing this format we are currently working with the sitting volleyball community to identify how and when sitting volleyball can return.

The finals of the GP could not be at the Cup Finals, as we have chosen not to run this.

It would be helpful if Clubs could start looking for potential venues (preferably central) for some sitting GPs to take place in the event that the NVC is unavailable. If necessary, the Competitions Working Group might consider North/South venues to balance Teams' travelling.

*We would be interested to know if teams would want the season to be extended to allow all GPs to be played costs will need to be covered by participating Teams.*

## Next Steps

Please provide any feedback via [this survey](#) by 17:00 on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July.