



## Competitive Events: Update

Issued: 25 March 2021

Whilst 2021 will look a little different, the feedback we have received since we shared our outline plans with counties, clubs and players has been understanding and positive. There is a recognition that we have to adapt and our conversations have confirmed that we share a common goal – getting the maximum number of people participating and competing in a Covid-friendly manner. We will review the experience of competitive bowlers over the summer in any future planning.

Our work in developing the revised domestic competitions programme for 2021 took into account the following key factors:

- Covid guidelines
- Government roadmap
- Player and official safety

We also wished to ensure the greatest possible flexibility for counties and Bowls England to:

- Respond to changes (or delays) to the roadmap
- Enable additional rounds to be played in a single day if necessary

The national finals will run from Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> August to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September inclusive. The change for 2021 will provide additional time for the county/area qualification rounds to be completed and provide flexibility should there be any delay in the relaxation of restrictions.

The Commonwealth Games format will be utilised in all rounds of all events excluding inter-county fixtures. This will provide greater flexibility for match arrangements in the qualifying stages and enable the national finals to take place over a shorter period.

We thank all counties who provided feedback regarding the inter-county events, which whilst varied proved that there was appetite to host the events in 2021. We have developed a programme that includes provision for all inter-county competitions to be held later in the season on a knockout basis, with all rounds over the traditional 21-end format.

We are now pleased to share with you in full our plans for the 2021 domestic competitions programme:

- [Summary of Events](#)
- [National Finals – Daily Schedule](#)
- [National Championship Qualifiers by County](#)

- [National Competitions – Play-by dates](#)
- [Inter-County Events – Planned Programme](#)

We have prepared a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document to help answer some of the questions that you may have.

Should you have any other questions that are not covered within, please e-mail:  
[comps@bowlsengland.com](mailto:comps@bowlsengland.com)

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### Format of Play

What is the format of play in National Championships & National Competitions (excluding inter-county events)?

The Commonwealth Games format will be utilised in all rounds of all events excluding inter-county fixtures. This will provide greater flexibility for match arrangements in the qualifying stages and enable the national finals to take place over a shorter period providing more flexibility for the qualification stages. The formats are: Singles (Status quo); Pairs (3 bowl/18 ends); Triples (2 bowl/18 ends); Fours (2 bowl/15 ends) and have [been summarised here](#).

Will there be refunds for any players who do not wish to play the shorter formats or are not available for any revised dates?

There will be no refunds – we are confident that the overwhelming majority of players are keen to participate this season and, from our consultation, only a minority of respondents spoke in favour of retaining the more traditional formats. With the finals being completed within the window of the National Finals we anticipate the vast majority will be available for final stages should they qualify.

### National Finals

What dates are the National Finals?

The national finals will run from Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> August to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September inclusive. Click here to view the [schedule of events](#).

Why has the National Finals been reduced in length for 2021?

We have worked to develop a competitive events programme in accordance with the government roadmap. The change for 2021 will provide additional time for the county/area qualification rounds to be completed and provide flexibility should there be any delay in the relaxation of restrictions.

How many qualifiers will our county have in championship events in 2021?

The number of [qualifiers per county are detailed here](#) and places are allocated by event, in the interest of fairness, to those with the greatest number of entrants.

When will our county need to notify Bowls England of our qualifiers?

The revised date for notification will be Monday 16 August. This provides an additional two weeks (women) and three weeks (men) to confirm qualifiers.

Why has the number of qualifiers been reduced in 2021?

The reduction in qualifiers is designed to enable us to utilise space within Victoria Park safely and manage the number of people on site at any one time – players, spectators and officials. We plan to use only four rinks on any green during each session.

Will spectators be permitted?

Alongside venue owners Warwick District Council, we will be developing plans for our National Finals with the duty of care for players, officials and spectators being our number one priority. Subject to government guidance, we are hoping spectators will be permitted at the National Finals although we

believe it will be likely that numbers will be restricted, and measures will need to be taken to ensure all those at the venue enjoy the event safely.

#### Why are men's and women's events being run simultaneously?

We have planned the schedule to ensure that there are no potential clashes in the 'Blue Riband' events, whilst also maintaining a similar number of participants on site each day during the event. Following feedback from counties, we have planned the women's triples and fours to be completed during what would be the traditional 'women's fortnight'. This will minimise disruption to the majority of women qualifiers who may have already made plans.

#### What about those players who have booked annual leave/hotels?

We appreciate it may be challenging for some players however this is a proposal based on our objective of maximising participation and we anticipate the majority of players will have flexibility around their availability.

### National Competitions

#### When will the draws be published?

The draws for all National Competitions will 'go live' by Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April in order to give participants time to organise their fixtures. [Click here to view play-by dates.](#)

### Inter-County Events

#### What is the plan for the Middleton Cup & Johns Trophy?

We thank all counties who responded to the request for feedback, which whilst varied proved that there was appetite to host the events in 2021 if possible. The majority of responses favoured a knockout event utilising the traditional six rinks, and we have allocated dates for each round accordingly. Matches will be played at a neutral venue, however to assist with match arrangements rounds can be played on a three home/three away basis should the two participating counties mutually agree. The semi-finals and final of the Middleton Cup and Johns Trophy will be held on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September respectively – venue TBC. All inter-county events will be held over 21 ends in recognition of the increased travel time likely to be involved. We shall contact counties w/c 29<sup>th</sup> March with further information. [Click here to view the programme.](#)

#### What is the plan for the Balcomb Trophy, White Rose Trophy, Walker Cup & Amy Rose Bowl?

These events will be played on a knockout basis in 2021 with all regional finals on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July and the finals being held simultaneously on the final day of the National Finals – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September. Whilst we appreciate that some younger players are eligible for the two events specific to their gender, in the spirit of maximising participation we trust that counties will view this as an opportunity to involve more players in the respective events should they be involved in both. All inter-county events will be held over 21 ends in recognition of the increased travel time likely to be involved. We shall contact counties w/c 29<sup>th</sup> March with further information. [Click here to view the programme.](#)