

## National Competitions Review

### Propositions to the 2024 Bowls England AGM

The below details all 19 propositions, what it means in terms of change and the rationale behind them.

Proposition	What this means	Rationale
<p><b>BLUE RIBAND</b></p> <p><b>1.</b> <b>To elevate Blue Riband and Performance events at the Aviva National Finals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain current formats in all rounds of Blue Riband events.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Singles</b> – Four bowls per player; 21 shots</li> <li>◦ <b>Pairs</b> – Four bowls per player; 18 ends</li> <li>◦ <b>Triples</b> – Three bowls per player; 18 ends</li> <li>◦ <b>Fours</b> – Two bowls per player; 18 ends</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Retain current Aviva National Finals qualifier numbers – 62 in Championship events.</li> <li>• Adopt current approach to qualifier allocations by county per event.</li> <li>• Play in qualifying rounds to be evenings and weekends – daytime by mutual agreement.</li> <li>• Qualifying for all four events to be managed by Counties.</li> <li>• Greater investment in these events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue Riband events to be the ultimate aspiration for outdoor bowlers in England.</li> <li>• These events to be lifted within the Aviva National Finals through increased prize fund, streaming/TV focus and event presentation.</li> <li>• Creates greater commercial and sponsorship opportunities.</li> <li>• Avoids clashes in schedule for all participants in Blue Riband and Performance events.</li> <li>• Provides fairness in qualification based on entry levels at county level.</li> <li>• Maximises use of green space at Aviva National Finals.</li> <li>• Ensures players of working age may participate in all rounds.</li> <li>• Helps provides 2700 qualification places across all events (based upon all propositions being supported).</li> </ul>
<p><b>PERFORMANCE</b></p> <p><b>2.</b> <b>To elevate top-level county competition consistent with international level</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balcomb Trophy &amp; Walker Cup played by 10 players per county.</li> <li>• Matches played in four disciplines – Singles; Pairs; Triples and Fours.</li> <li>• Formats to mirror international events – currently:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Singles – Four bowls per player; 21 shots</li> <li>◦ Pairs – Three bowls per player; 18 ends</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates high quality inter-county competition and international feel for players.</li> <li>• Provides opportunity for top 350 county players per gender to showcase ability playing world formats.</li> <li>• Assists the England Performance Team with Player ID and selection, removing need for trials and reducing burden on players.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Triples – Two bowls per player; 18 ends</li> <li>○ Fours; Two bowls per player; 15 ends.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds a partnership culture between England and County management.</li> <li>• BE expenditure on Talent ID aligned to inter-county competition.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.</b> <b>To amend playing numbers and formats in White Rose Trophy &amp; Amy Rose Bowl</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White Rose and Amy Rose played by teams of 5 players.</li> <li>• Shorter matches played in four disciplines and world formats. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Session 1: Singles and Fours</li> <li>○ Session 2: Pairs and Triples</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Maximum of two entries per county; 48 nationally.</li> <li>• Counties may merge with other counties for participation, not performance, reasons subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prior agreement of Bowls England</li> <li>○ Agreed plan to develop more junior players over course of three years.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• No Senior Internationals permitted in White Rose Trophy and Amy Rose Bowl.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates a more consistent junior player pathway (note the British Isles Under 25s series is rinks but we expect this to change).</li> <li>• Provides greater opportunity to learn skills and tactics in world formats.</li> <li>• Restricting Senior Internationals avoids significant mismatches thus improving the player experience.</li> <li>• Assists the Performance Team with Player ID and selection, removing the need for trials and reducing the burden on players.</li> <li>• Builds a partnership culture between England and County management.</li> <li>• Increases the opportunity for young players to participate and promotes youth development within counties.</li> <li>• BE expenditure on Talent ID aligned to inter-county competition.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.</b> <b>To standardise the age in all junior events to under 24 on 1 April annually for both genders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ White Rose Trophy</li> <li>○ Amy Rose Bowl</li> <li>○ Junior Singles</li> <li>○ Junior Pairs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Some players who have been eligible will not be.</li> <li>• Qualifying for Junior Singles and Junior Pairs to be managed by counties as current.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates a clearer junior player pathway.</li> <li>• Provides opportunity for players identified during event to potentially experience junior international bowls in following season as part of performance progression.</li> <li>• Delivers gender equality.</li> <li>• Players competing within a smaller age range.</li> <li>• Winners to represent England in British Isles Championships in following seasons as relevant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Note: There is not currently a British Isles Men's Junior Pairs, but we expect this to change.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>5.</b> <b>To introduce under 17 Singles events for both genders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under 17 on 1 April annually</li> <li>• Managed as a National Competition by Bowls England</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates a clearer junior player pathway and demonstrates commitment to boosting junior participation.</li> <li>• Creates greater opportunity for young players to participate within their own age group.</li> <li>• Winners of Junior Singles and Junior Pairs to represent England in British Isles Championships in following seasons as relevant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Note: There is not currently a British Isles Women's U18 Singles, but we expect this to change.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>6.</b> <b>To create multi-county regional events</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Balcomb Trophy</li> <li>◦ Walker Cup</li> <li>◦ White Rose Trophy</li> <li>◦ Amy Rose Bowl</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Events take place at eight single green venues, which are geographically accessible.</li> <li>• Four or five counties at each venue over a weekend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Exception is Amy Rose which will work on six teams at each venue.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Current regional groups reviewed to reduce travel.</li> <li>• All eight venue winners in each event to the Aviva National Finals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a more intense experience for players and coaches replicating international competition.</li> <li>• Promote the sport of bowls and the essence of inter-county competition across the country.</li> <li>• Create a festival environment, generating revenue and publicity for host clubs and Counties.</li> <li>• Support Performance Team Talent ID with all players at single venue, removing need for trials and reducing burden on players.</li> <li>• Events integral to future international selection process ensuring prospective England players take part.</li> <li>• BE expenditure on Talent ID invested in support of inter-county competition.</li> <li>• Opportunity to commercialise these events and explore options for streaming.</li> </ul>
<b>TEAM SPIRIT</b>		
<p><b>7.</b> <b>To retain Middleton Cup and Johns Trophy in agreed format</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counties to have open vote between KO with Plate OR Round Robin.</li> <li>• Following vote, Implementation Group to review regulations in conjunction with counties to consider logistics based on feedback including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Draw</li> <li>◦ Venues for fixtures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognises the importance of the Middleton Cup and Johns Trophy within the county calendar.</li> <li>• Provides opportunity for leading county players to experience representative bowls.</li> <li>• Assists counties with selection for Balcomb Trophy and Walker Cup.</li> <li>• Reduced burden on England players.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-Final and Final of Middleton Cup and Johns trophy to be played during the Aviva National Finals.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>8.</b> <b>To introduce a Mixed Over 60 Inter-County event</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Played as straight knock-out.</li> <li>• All players 60 and over on 1 April annually.</li> <li>• 24 players per county (12 men and 12 women playing as six mixed rinks).</li> <li>• All fixtures midweek/daytime on set dates</li> <li>• Semi-Final and Final played during the Aviva National Finals.</li> <li>• Following vote Implementation Group to review regulations in conjunction with counties to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Draw</li> <li>◦ Venues for fixtures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides inter-county representative play for those who may no longer participate in other county events or have never had that opportunity.</li> <li>• Retains more people in senior competitions delivering a positive experience of playing with people of a similar age.</li> <li>• Meets growing demand for mixed bowls.</li> <li>• Generates income for host clubs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9.</b> <b>To revamp the Top Club event to attract more clubs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 players per team</li> <li>• Updated format <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Session 1: 2 x two-bowl triples (two sets of six ends)</li> <li>◦ Session 2: 3 x three-bowl pairs (two sets of six ends)</li> <li>◦ Each match to a conclusion to determine winner.</li> <li>◦ One end tie-break if required in each match should the score be one set each, therefore any match will be won 3-2; 4-1 or 5-0.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Multiple entries permitted per club.</li> <li>• An individual player may only represent one team in any season.</li> <li>• Separate events for each gender.</li> <li>• Final stages played during the Aviva National Finals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivers a more modern, exciting format, which means every game retains an interest throughout for players and spectators.</li> <li>• The sets format would mean that every match would be in the balance until the second set of session 2.</li> <li>• The proposed format is more accessible to more clubs, providing greater opportunity for smaller clubs (in number) to participate.</li> <li>• Provides option for larger clubs to have multiple entries to satisfy the needs of their members.</li> <li>• Was the key recommendation to come from the CWP Sub-Group for Inter-Club activity.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event open to every member of club regardless of gender</li> </ul>	

<p><b>10.</b> <b>To amend the Club Two Fours to an open event</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 players per team.</li> <li>• Multiple entries permitted per club.</li> <li>• Individual player may only represent one team in any season.</li> <li>• Two rinks.</li> <li>• Final stages played during the Aviva National Finals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivers gender equality for this competition and means the club team represents the whole club.</li> <li>• Removes requirement for an additional women's event in an already packed calendar.</li> <li>• Provides opportunity for women to compete and test their game in this environment.</li> <li>• Inspire more women to have the confidence to play in national competitions.</li> <li>• Gives us an opportunity to trial more open events and build cross-gender club camaraderie.</li> </ul>
<p><b>11.</b> <b>To restrict entry in the Champion of Champions to 'Club Champions ONLY'</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry in the 'Champion of Champions' to be the previous year's Club Championship Winner only.</li> <li>• Removes current allowance for following to enter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ County Singles champion</li> <li>○ County u25 Singles champion</li> <li>○ Senior Singles area winner</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Champion of Champions was identified in our Club Survey 2020 as a key part of club engagement with Bowls England.</li> <li>• Boost the value of the event by not permitting several entries from same club.</li> <li>• Further develops the relationship between all clubs and Bowls England.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PARTICIPATION</b></p>		
<p><b>12.</b> <b>To remove the Two-Bowl Singles Championship from the Aviva National Finals programme</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counties may continue to organise competitions locally, but their conclusion will take place within the County.</li> <li>• More effective use of green space at the Aviva National Finals and fewer clashes.</li> <li>• Removes concerns of 'no shows' at county level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-bowl is the least valued event in the current programme for participants (39% of players rated as least valued of all events).</li> <li>• County feedback showed high number of no shows in county qualifying rounds.</li> <li>• Travel for a 45-minute game at county and national level cited as a turn off.</li> <li>• Majority of participants also participate in other events so not detrimental to participation levels.</li> <li>• Will create space in county calendar and the Aviva National Finals to deliver Proposition 1. A vote against will significantly increase schedule clashes.</li> </ul>

<p><b>13.</b> <b>To set the age limit for all senior events (excluding Senior Fours) to players aged over 60 on 1 April annually and permit daytime play in those events</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Senior Singles</li> <li>○ Senior Pairs</li> <li>○ Tony Allcock Trophy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Those aged under 60 on 1 April, who may have competed previously, will not be eligible. These players are likely to be playing in other events.</li> <li>• Play to be weekday, daytime.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates fairer, more enjoyable competition for players in this age group.</li> <li>• Increase entries from 60+ players who do not currently enter as they 'do not think they are good enough'.</li> <li>• Player survey showed the introduction of daytime events were particularly supported by those aged 60 and over. Matches played in the daytime will free up rink space in the evenings for other competitions.</li> <li>• Increases the chances of new qualifiers to the Aviva National Finals and alleviates potential clashes with Blue Riband events.</li> </ul>
<p><b>14.</b> <b>To retain the Senior Fours age limit in line with British Isles qualification requirements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently over 55 on 1 April annually.</li> <li>• Consistent with British Isles entry criteria.</li> <li>• Play to be evenings and weekends – daytime by mutual agreement.</li> <li>• Qualifying rounds to be managed by Counties as current.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures that the national winners are eligible to participate in British Isles event.</li> <li>• Any change to age banding at British Isles would automatically necessitate change at national level.</li> <li>• Given lower age limit ensures that those in employment, who wish to participate, may do so.</li> </ul>
<p><b>15.</b> <b>To introduce 'Novice Pairs' for new and less experienced players</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One player in the pair 'not badged' i.e. not qualified for the Aviva National Finals.</li> <li>• One player no more than three years' playing experience (both could have less than three years' experience).</li> <li>• All players under 17 eligible regardless of playing experience.</li> <li>• Entry policed at 'point of entry'.</li> <li>• Further work by Implementation Group to clearly define entry criteria.</li> <li>• Managed by Bowls England as a National Competition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a clear gateway to the national competitions programme.</li> <li>• Meets the demand for a competition for those who do not currently enter or enter without aspiration of reaching the Aviva National Finals.</li> <li>• More attractive to those who don't enter because they are 'not good enough'.</li> <li>• Will encourage participation in other competitive events over time.</li> </ul>

<p><b>16.</b> To change eligibility to the Family Pairs to anyone who has not played international or county level (Balcomb and Walker) representative bowls in the last 5 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent International and leading County players are no longer eligible.</li> <li>Further work by Implementation Group to clearly define entry criteria, including for players outside England.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly identifies that this event is not aimed at 'elite' bowlers.</li> <li>Ensures players are not competing against players of significantly different ability.</li> <li>Criteria ensures that those who have played at high levels in the past but are now more recreational may still participate with other family members.</li> <li>Allows more time for elite players to focus on competitions valued by national and County management and opens up more time for purposeful practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>COMPETITIONS MANAGEMENT</b></p>		
<p><b>17.</b> To further investigate how to consolidate the administration for the benefit of players and administrators as part of implementation plan, taking into account the array of systems already in place at county level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single point of entry through an online competition management system.</li> <li>One place to manage and view competitions activity.</li> <li>Consistent dates nationwide for entry to enable national marketing campaign to drive entries.</li> <li>Important piece of work for the Implementation Group with no set timescale at this stage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved player satisfaction making it much easier to manage their competitions activity.</li> <li>Enables one national marketing campaign, increasing in entry numbers and income for counties and BE, which can be reinvested.</li> <li>Demonstrates a joined-up approach between Counties and BE in terms of data management and communications.</li> <li>Reduces fraudulent entry from players not affiliated.</li> <li>Reduced workload for volunteers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>18.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This applies to:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Singles</li> <li>Pairs</li> <li>Triples</li> <li>Fours</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures consistent approach to competitions management in line with current practice.</li> <li>Values the work that counties do in managing the qualifying stages.</li> </ul>

<p><b>County Associations to continue to manage Championship events</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ U24 Singles</li> <li>○ U24 Pairs</li> <li>○ Senior Fours</li> </ul>	
<p><b>19.</b> <b>To introduce set dates in the later rounds of the Top Club as a trial for 2025 as part of national calendar</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Set date for later stages will be included in the 2025 annual calendar.</li> <li>● Implementation Group to consider logistics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Player survey showed 61% in favour of set dates in some national competitions.</li> <li>● Whilst deemed not practical in all rounds, introduction of set dates for later stages will enable players/clubs/counties to plan.</li> <li>● Alleviate concerns from clubs and players on match arrangements, particularly 'inter-county' rounds.</li> </ul>



