

## National Council Competition Review Sub Committee Report

13<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### Select Committee Members

Alan Ransome – Chairman

Karen Tonge

Jonathan Bayliss

Liam McTiernan

### Junior British League

From our report to the last National Council meeting there was a suggestion there should be a meeting of the clubs to discuss the movement to three weekends and was accepted by the Competitions Department of Table Tennis England.

The meeting was held on Zoom. Ritchie Venner, Chair of the Competitions Advisory Committee for Table Tennis England, advised the clubs at the beginning of the meeting that changes could be made but he wanted to hear the views of the clubs so this could be considered. Each of the 11 clubs that were present and wanted to contribute were given the opportunity to speak and this was unanimously agreed that all the 11 clubs wanted to stay with the two weekends rather than move to three.

The result of this meeting has been taken back to the Competition Advisory Committee and the Board and we are hopeful of a positive result from this consultation.

### WTT Feeder Event, Manchester and National Championships, Nottingham

Members of the Select Committee were in attendance at both events and were pleased to report that both were successful with the National Championships being an improvement on the previous year.

One fact that was apparent at both is that in the Committees view there is not enough attention given to providing a strong programme for spectators and visitors. In Manchester there was a lack of information on who was playing. This was available online, however, many of the visitors did not have the facilities to be able to log-in to follow this either because they did not have the equipment with them or that the public signal in the Velodrome was very poor and, therefore, did not enable their device to operate satisfactorily.

The scoring board arrangements in Manchester were also unsatisfactory. From the seating the information on the score boards both court side and on one of the walls was not clearly visible and, therefore, this did not provide the information that was intended.

While we understand the Velodrome was the best venue available for the event in Manchester, having the majority of spectators looking over the cycle track to watch the matches was not ideal and this should be avoided where possible in the future.

With regard to Nottingham, despite comments from last season, the scheduling of the Para events from a spectator's point of view was not ideal and some spectators complained about this. The ideal situation would be to have top matches on one court at the same time as the Para event is being played on the other if they are to be featured in the show court area.

One suggestion would be that the Quarter-Final stage the men's and women's matches are played one at a time, side by side, as this would be preferable from a spectator's perspective.

The TTE.TV coverage from Nottingham was good with three tables being shown at the same time. The arrangements for Sunday finals was also good and the players provided some very good matches.

With regard to National Championship qualification the fact that the Under 21 event is moving to a different date to connect with the Junior National Championships, this would leave time available on Friday which could be used for qualification event which would increase the number of people coming to Nottingham for the competition and would likely to provide great spectator numbers from these players over the weekend.

#### Grand Prix 4 Star Senior Tournaments

Table Tennis England have announced that the Grand Prix will not run next season but the 4 Star Senior Tournaments will. The Grands Prix have proved very successful from a size of entry perspective, in the number of entries and the popularity of events over recent seasons and, therefore, their demise will be missed by many of the players who participate in these competitions. It is proposed the 4 Star Senior tournaments next season be hosted by local associations being either counties, leagues or clubs and discussions are ongoing at the moment to invite applications.

The problem we see is that the hosting of Grands Prix by local associations declined because of the probability of the association having to pick up a financial deficit at the end of the competition, and with the heavy cost particularly with sports centre prices and other costs to put on competitions of this kind. It is not clear at the moment how successful the association will be in receiving applications for the Senior 4 Star tournaments.

#### Member of National Council Competition Review Sub Committee

One of our members, Liam McTiernan, has been appointed a member of Ritchie Venner's Competition Advisory Committee, which is one of the Board's Sub Committees, therefore, it is felt that it would be a conflict of interest for Liam to be on both the Board's Committee and the National Council Committee.

We would like to thank Liam for the significant contribution that he has given to our Committees work. He did work on this subject with MAG and was able to bring a great deal of expertise to our Committee as a result of the work he had carried out with the MAG group. One of the reasons for selecting Liam for the Committee was that he was a member of MAG but he was a top player and this gave us a top player representative on the Committee.

The Committee have been discussing the possibility of another member to fulfil this role and we are pleased to nominate Lois Peake. Lois is a high ranking player current at number 8 in the Senior Women's list. She is also a member of Don Parker's Talent and Performance Advisory Committee and has been carrying out useful work for the association in respect of this role.

The Committee's request is that Council accept the nomination of Lois Peake to the Competition Sub Committee.

Alan Ransome  
Chairman  
National Council Competition Review Sub Committee

28<sup>th</sup> March 2024