

**ANALYSIS OF THE  
PARTICIPATION OF CLUBS  
IN BRITISH LEAGUE  
COMPETITIONS**

# Background

- In the recent MAG project on “Clubs Development”, a number of clubs expressed the view that TTE national competitions should support club development
- In particular, it was suggested that only “proper clubs” (not specifically defined – see next slide) should be allowed to enter British League competitions
- It was suggested that there were a number of “clubs of convenience” which were only created for the purposes of entering teams in British League competitions
- As a follow up to the Clubs Development project, MAG has undertaken a project to investigate this issue in more detail and to make recommendations
- Clubs also suggested that clubs who participated in British League competitions should be encouraged to develop their own players – rather than drawing on players who had been produced by other clubs

# “Proper Clubs” and “Clubs of Convenience”

- In the discussion with clubs, the term “Proper Clubs” was not defined, but was taken as implying the following:
  - a club which had a “physical presence” by being associated with a venue
  - a diverse membership of social, league and national competition players
  - Development programmes, particularly for junior players
  - Such clubs didn’t have to be “Premier” or “Associate” clubs but would undertake the activities typically associated with such clubs
  - Unregistered clubs could well meet the definition of “Proper Clubs”
- By contrast “Clubs of Convenience” were taken as implying:
  - Only existing to enter teams in British League competitions
  - Having a membership that was limited to those who played in BL competitions
  - The expectation was that “Clubs/Teams of Convenience” would be “unregistered” clubs

# “Teams of Convenience”

- Separate to the concept of “Clubs of Convenience” is the closely related concept of “Teams of Convenience”
- This refers to players playing in a team at a “Proper Club” but other than playing in the British League for the club have no other connection with the club
- This is not something that we have been able to assess as it requires a more detailed understanding of the players who are playing for a team
- It can also be regarded as a matter for the Club to resolve (should they wish to do so), rather than for the British League to get involved

# Data Collection

- The relevant data was extracted from the data sets in TT Leagues for the 2021/22 British League competitions
- The club of each team in each Division of all British League competitions was identified
- The membership status of each club was identified (ie Premier Club, Associate Club and Unregistered Club)
- The number of members of each club was recorded
- This produced the data sets shown in the next two pages
  - A break-down of each competition of number of clubs by membership type
  - The number of “Clubs of Convenience” in each BL competition
- The definition of a “Club of Convenience” was that it was a club with less than 15 members. It is recognised that this is an arbitrary definition. We identified 11 clubs that met this definition

# The Data – Breakdown by Club Type

Club Type	SBL	WBL	JBL	VBL	BL Overall
Premier	56%	58%	68%	46%	57%
Associate	19%	19%	13%	30%	21%
Unregistered	20%	3%	8%	21%	15%
Home Countries	5%	19%	11%	3%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No of Teams	100	31	79	87	297

# The Data – Number of “Clubs of Convenience” by BL Competition

Club	Type	No of Members	SBL	WBL	JBL	VBL	Total in BL
Club A	Associate	8				1	1
Club B	Associate	9	1				1
Club C	Associate	6				1	1
Club D	Associate	6				1	1
Club E	Associate	6				1	1
Club F	Unregistered	4				1	1
Club G	Unregistered	5	1				1
Club H	Unregistered	8	1				1
Club I	Unregistered	5				1	1
Club J	Unregistered	6				1	1
Club K	Unregistered	10				1	1
		<b>Totals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>

# Conclusions (1)

- A large majority of the teams that participate in British League competitions are from either Premier Clubs or Associate Clubs. Around 80% of teams in BL competitions come from such clubs
- Teams from “Unregistered Clubs” are only a small minority (around 20%). This applies particularly to WBL and JBL competitions where teams from “unregistered clubs” make up only 3% of teams participating
- Although the definition of “Clubs of Convenience” is somewhat arbitrary, the data suggests only a small number of such clubs participate in BL competitions. Only eleven such clubs have been identified. Most of these play in the VBL competitions. There do not appear to be any “clubs of convenience” in WBL or JBL competitions.



## Conclusions (2)

- Although the number of “clubs of convenience” is small, as there are about 150 clubs competing in British League competitions, this represent about 7.5% of the total. This is a significant proportion.
- However, this over-states the significance of teams from “clubs of convenience”. All these clubs only enter one team in British League.
- There are about 300 teams in British League. So a better indication of the size of the issue is given by the proportion of teams in British League that come from “clubs of convenience”. The proportion is about 3.5%. This is a better indicator of the significance of “clubs of convenience”

## Conclusions (3)

- Given the small number of teams from “clubs of convenience” that compete in BL competitions (and that most are in just one competition), it seems inappropriate to change the eligibility criteria simply to deal with such a small number of clubs.
- The issue of national competitions encouraging clubs to develop their own players has not been addressed
- However, it is felt that attempting to introduce new regulations that would require clubs to develop “home-grown” players are likely to be fraught with difficulty – both in defining such a regulation and in its subsequent implementation.
- Opportunities for “gaming” any such regulations are likely to be numerous and counter-productive.