

Members Advisory Group

Members'
Advisory
Group

Cost-Effectiveness of Tournaments

Draft Final Report

August 2022

Key Issues from the Discussion

1. Strengthening domestic competition must be a priority for TTE
2. Competitions need to be simpler and cheaper to run
3. Demonstrating value for money is essential
4. Encourage top-player participation
5. Move toward more “group-based”/”play for place” formats
6. Address the challenges of providing formats that work for junior girls
7. Review the role of Prize Money
8. Communication, transparency and accountability
9. Pool knowledge/experience with others who run tournaments
10. Sponsorship would solve many problems
11. Extend the NCL/NJL model to other age-groups
12. More attention to scheduling events for juniors

Each of these issues is explored in more detail in the subsequent slides

Strengthening Domestic Competition

- The domestic competition is seen as fragmented and not providing a structured approach
- With regard to GPs, a vicious circle seems to have been generated in which the top players no longer participate and which discourages the next level down from entering. And so on.
- There is a widespread view that the TTE Performance Team discourage the top young players from competing domestically. This works against the aim of improving domestic competition.
- Merging the Senior Nationals with the equivalent competitions for the younger age-groups (cadet and younger) would enable the young players to see the senior players they are aspiring to emulate. It would most likely generate a bigger audience of players, coaches and parents who would stay to watch the Senior events.

Value for Money is Essential

- Participating in tournaments is expensive.
- Entry-fees alone are around £90 for a typical spread of events at a GP.
- With travel and accommodation, the cost can easily reach £200 per person over a weekend competition
- As this may result in the player only playing 5 or 6 matches, this does not represent good value for money
- Whilst reducing costs remains a challenge, the focus must be on offering more value.
- This could be more matches (eg via more group play), the opportunity to play against top players or increasing the social/enjoyment element of the competition

Competitions should be simpler and cheaper to run

- Clubs need to be empowered to run competitions without having to jump through too many hoops.
- The natural choice should be to use local officials whenever possible. Video tutorials to make players and local volunteers aware of their responsibilities as umpires would help reduce the need for fully-qualified umpires.
- A more uniform online system for entries to assist club tournament organisers. This would cut down bureaucracy and provide a uniform tournament organiser system which could include a result input system. At present every Tournament Organiser has a different way of doing it which reduces efficiency
- Some participants felt recent requirements intended to deal with particular problems have resulted in over-complicating tournament management, eg referees and their deputies not being allowed to undertake more than one role. However, some were of the view that as Referees were required to resolve any disputes over the interpretation of the Laws of the Game, they should be available at all times to deal with such issues, and hence not take on other roles.

Encouraging Top Player Participation

- At the moment, the fragmented nature of domestic competitions means that they are simply a series of discrete events which are not actively linked. Moving towards more of a pyramid structure would clarify pathways to elite level. Perhaps the GPs could provide a route for automatic qualifying for National Championships.
- Enhancing the ranking points available at GP events would encourage participation by top players. Although GP tournaments are classed as 3-star events – they have the same ranking multiplier as 2-star events. Increasing the ranking multiplier to similar levels of 4-star events would encourage participation by top players. This would be very easy to implement and could be a “quick win”.
- Conversely, not playing in a certain number of GP events could result in loss of ranking points.

Move to Group-Based/Play for Place Competitions

- Perhaps the time has passed for the traditional “knock-out” competitions (even with a preliminary group stage).
- Toward the end of most such competitions, many tables are not in use which implies resources are not being used as well as they could.
- Competitions which are entirely based on playing in a single group (“ratings” style event) or in which players move from group to group depending on their performance (“play for place” format) seem to be strongly preferred by players as they result in more games.
- Group-based events also simplify umpiring requirements

Provide formats that work for junior girls

- Group-based play is less satisfactory for competitions involving junior girls.
- There is often a wide disparity between the standard of play between junior girls, partly because fewer junior girls play in competitions
- Junior girls often get moved into a group of junior boys, which is not ideal
- This disparity in the standard of junior girls often makes it difficult for junior girls to secure ranking points – which is demotivating

Prize Money

- This comprises a significant proportion of expenditure at GPs – perhaps a third of total expenditure – and along with venue hire is the biggest single item of expenditure.
- But it is not clear either what Prize Money is intended to achieve or what it is achieving in practice.
- It does not seem to be encouraging general participation by players nor participation by top-ranked players.
- There is some indications that it simply encourages one-off participation by top European players which actively discourages participation by English players
- If no Prize Money was provided but with no knock-on effect on income would transform the financial aspects of tournaments
- A hard look at the role of Prize Money is recommended

Communication, Transparency and Accountability (1)

- There is an expectation that information about the income & expenditure of tournaments will be provided. This is done for VETTS events and there is an expectation that something similar will be done for TTE events.
- More detailed break-down of expenditure on tournaments would be helpful in identifying areas for cost-savings. There are a range of headings that are relatively small but which when combined make up about a third of expenditure

Communication, Transparency and Accountability (1)

- Some participants felt that communication is very poor from competitions. Draws for Nationals and key events are only sent a few days before the event despite the draw date being around a few weeks before. Parents need to book hotels and players need to prepare for tournaments. This needs to be improved.
- Policies for participation/invitation need to be shared well in advance. The National Cup this year was viewed as unsatisfactory. In previous years it was top 10 players, last year it was Top 10 plus 2 wild cards. No policy on selection for the National Cup was shared this year.
- Many players enter competitions to get into the top 10. But with only 10 days to go invites were sent out to players. Unlike previous years, only the Top 8 juniors were invited, plus the Runner up and Winner from the cadet national cup. Not surprisingly, the players who missed out were upset.

Share Knowledge & Experience

- There are a number of individuals, clubs and organisations (such as VETTS) that have a lot of experience in running tournaments – and doing so in a cost-effective way.
- Putting in place arrangements that would enable these groups to share their experiences with TTE would be welcome
- This might identify opportunity for working together that could reduce costs

Sponsorship

- Many problems could be resolved if GP events attracted sponsorship.
- But it is recognised that securing sponsorship is difficult. Tournaments and competitions need re-configuring or re-imagining so that they provide something that sponsors value. This is challenging.
- Perhaps a focus on finding local sponsors in the area where the GPs take place would be more fruitful.

Extend the NCL/NJL Model to Other Age Groups

- NCL/NJL competitions are a great success as are local league/city based junior leagues, eg Nottingham Junior League. This is where many young players start their competitive journeys. Could this model be extended into the senior ranks, eg U21 or U25 leagues to provide competitive opportunities for those players who are not able to play during the week.

More Attention to Scheduling for Junior Events (avoiding exam periods)

- Too many competitions for young players take place at the end of the season during the crucial exam periods such as GCSEs and A-levels. Every effort should be made to find more suitable slots in the calendar for these events.

Alignment with Competition Review

No	Issue	Alignment	Comment
1	Strengthening domestic competition must be a priority for TTE	Fully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A core part of the Competition Review
2	Competitions need to be simpler and cheaper to run	Fully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the key principles
3	Demonstrating value for money is essential	Fully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of matches is seen as a key parameter
4	Encourage top-player participation	Fully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the key principles
5	Move toward more “group-based”/”play for place” formats	Fully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the key principles
6	Address the challenges of providing formats that work for junior girls	Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater focus on Women & Girls – but the specific issues of formats for junior girls not considered
7	Review the role of Prize Money	Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged that Prize Money is not seen as important by most participants. But not clear what next steps are
8	Communication, transparency and accountability	Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not clear that these issues addressed
9	Pool knowledge/experience with others who run tournaments	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not addressed by the Review
10	Sponsorship would solve many problems	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MAG report acknowledges the challenges of gaining sponsorship. A view that seems to be shared by the Review
11	Scheduling of Events	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may be considered as part of the new “periodisation” approach

Next Steps

- ***Discuss issues raised by this project with the Competition Review project team.***