

**National Council Competition Review Sub Committee**

Alan Ransome: Chairman  
Karen Tonge  
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The Select Committee Competition Review met to review the progress which has been made with the review that was approved by National Council at its January meeting.

There are two parts of the report which have received consideration. The junior and cadet competition programme which has not made very much progress and the Senior National Championships where significant changes have been considered and are in the pipeline for 2025.

With regard to the junior and cadet programme the Committee put forward a proposal to strengthen up to four of the 4 Star junior tournaments to include international team events in the tournament and English junior and cadet international matches on the Friday evening prior to the event.

The problem that was identified is that the competition programme for junior and cadets is not "fit for purpose". This was identified by Simon Mills and Matthew Stanforth previously, and Simon Mills solution to this was to advise the best junior players to join a club in continental Europe, which means while it could possibly help their development, and dependent on how their participation progressed. It did take top juniors away from participating on a regular basis in the English programme. Therefore, it was not an ideal solution.

The Committees proposal was to strengthen the 4 Star tournaments by inviting foreign teams and changing the schedule to accommodate this which would attract many of the best English players which is not the case now. This programme was put together by the Select Committee with cooperation from some of our national coaches. The proposal was supported by Council and was discussed by the Competition Advisory Committee and was agreed that there should be at least one 4 Star to be used as a trial. However, part of the proposal was that there would need to be some financial support from Table Tennis England for the 4 Star tournaments to ensure that they did not make a deficit for the local organising committee and, therefore some funding was required from the Association.

All of this was discussed and agreed as a good way forward by the Chair of the Talent and Performance Committee Don Parker, Chair of the Competitions Advisory Committee Ritchie Venner and the Senior Performance Coach Gavin Evans at a meeting at the National Championships in Nottingham with the Chair of the Select Committee. The Association were not prepared to support the £500. required for the trial.

## Appendix 4

Clearly there is a cost of perhaps £5,000 or so if there were four 4 Star tournaments running with the programme. This is a relatively small sum when you consider the benefit to the sport of having four top junior and cadet tournaments with a continental entry plus the best players from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales also competing.

There is an alternative programme which is proposed in the Competition Review, which would mean that National Cup tournament which is round robin event for the top 10 junior and cadet players would take place three times a year rather than once, at the moment, but where as the programme recommended by the National Council committee would increase the number of competition days from approximately 7 or 8 at the moment, to around 20, the one from the Competition Review would increase it to 9 or 10 but with only English participation rather than international which would not solve the problem.

The National Council Competition Committee do believe that it is very important to rectify this problem for the sport. We know that our juniors and cadet's performances have been poor on the international stage in recent years and this is one of the reasons. Whilst there have been some improvements of late with the training and international programme we are still a long way off where we need to be with this and it would be difficult to make the progress required if we only have a good performance programme without a good domestic competition programme and this needs to be considered.

The second proposal which has been discussed is the National Championships where the committee recognise that the qualification tournament system for the National Championships was not attracting many of the top 50 or 60 players and that the presentation to spectators and television coverage for the Senior Nationals left a great deal of room for improvement.

We are pleased to say that this has now been discussed by the Competition Advisory Committee and a new system is being devised for the qualification but should attract more of the senior players to participate and the schedule is being reviewed for the National Championships itself so the key matches like the quarter-finals of the singles are all played on the show court tables rather than outside courts and the schedule produced which is much more spectator friendly than the one produced in Nottingham in March.

The Committee have put forward further proposals with regard to the British League, Veteran tournaments, Grand Prix', 1 Star and 2 Star tournaments, international events and social events. These are still on the table for future discussions, although it is some 9 months since the National Council paper was approved at our January meeting.

**Alan Ransome**  
**Chairman**  
**National Council Competition Review Sub Committee**

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