

## Appendix A

### Select Committee on Competitions

1<sup>st</sup> weekend of the national series.

I have based most of this report on what happened at the u13 level held in Draycott as I attended the event. However, have include the other age groups as well but to a lesser degree.

The national series for the u13 girls and boys held at Draycott and well run by Martin and Jim

When the invites went out to the clubs it only stated that the club provides venue and tables however with a month to go TTE wanted the clubs to cover the umpires ,organiser and referee and to pay the officials expenses and claim it back, also we were asked to take over video of the top division this clearly was not asked at invite stage and is not what we at Draycott expected to do, eventually TTE provided everything.

Being on August bank holiday and also whilst the Euro mini's was running affected the number of participants with only 9 girls turning up out of 12 who accepted the invites. The competitions team who run the competitions calendar should have thought this through. With a better date selected.

This date was awful for those traveling down to Plymouth on the busiest time of the year for holiday makers – a 4 hr drive from the midlands was taking 8-9 hrs  
There has been lots of complaints about this.

I also think the launch of the event could have been better with poor communication throughout – Even to the point of having to ask the competition team to email out to the players start times ( with less than a week to go). communication is an easy thing to critic however the launch of any new product or in this case event needs special attention and I don't think this was done well. To the point where I think people do not fully understand the reason for the event or that it is in place of the national cup.

I had various coaches and parents at Draycott saying they had booked hotels as they did not know when the event would start. If they had known it was 10 am they would have travelled. And not needlessly spent the money or time

There was a lack of communication around who was selected for the groups after the first tranche went out. it could only be found on TTE Facebook which a lot of people may not use.

The first set of invites had non eligible players. The event is for Gb players only. So those that are eligible to play for England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales etc. this also caused confusion and I had spoken to TTE prior to the invites going out to get this right but it clearly did not happen.

At Draycott the u13 girls was run as two divisions, however if there had been enough time to organise then it could have been a 9-person round robin. It meant that there was a group of 4 and a group of 5. This was not down to Jim or Martin who worked tirelessly to have a good event. Three people did not communicate that they were not coming, Martin had to chase on the day and this was the reason it was not a 9 person round robin that could have been run on 4 tables.

At the other venues a round robin for the girls was run, as again there was a poor turn out.

The U13 boys had three divisions with three people dropping out. So, the atmosphere was better than on Saturday as all tables were used and more people in the hall.

Draycott were asked to provide at late notice 6 tables from the original 5 so the three divisions could run on two tables each and this worked well.

I have thought long and hard about the purpose of the event and I feel that it covers two bases

- 1) Performance – with the top 12 girls and boys playing each other over 4 weekends  
It was stated that the performance team would make certain that the players attending the England squads would be told it was a mandatory event and that they must enter it and only those with a very valid reason would be excused  
I hope this has happened as its imperative the success of the event.

- 2) Development the next 18 players  
Especially for the u11-u12-u13 players and for the girls. Which is a key priority in the Table Tennis united strategy document The girls have very few events purely for them and often only get points from National Cadet league where they are playing in mixed teams against boys 15yrs old. Therefore, have very few points.  
The event initially invited only 12 girls at U13 but did change to 24 invited players at U13 level which clearly is a step in the right direction. If it had stayed at only 12 invites, then I think only 5 players would have attended. Which clearly is not cost effective or a good competition.

I feel that 30 girls and boys should be invited to cover off the development side (the no 60 ranked u13 boy was invited and won two matches)

The rational of only 24 girls out of 43 u13 girls in the rankings I have taken in consideration. As TTE want to have relegation out of the competition for the two lowest placed players in div 5 but I still feel that for the first year or until it is an established competition over a period of years it is about getting the places filled for development purposes I do believe that over the next few years it will be a prestigious event that all will want to play in it. Also as seen in the u13 boys there are clearly talented players without the ranking points that need to be seen and considered.

The original document also stated that TTE would continue down the list of eligible players to get the full quota this was not done for the u13 girls.

I think that once the competition team know who has agreed to come and who has declined then they should go down the list inviting more players until all players have been exhausted or 30 places accepted. It was stated that the competition's team would do this but it did not happen for the u13 girls.

I feel this is not difficult to do and a suggestion to Martin was that a reserve list was sent out at the same time as the invites to the players so that short notice invites could be sent. For the u13 girls this is only 19 players and for the boys it can be extended as necessary.

This practice used to happen in the U13, cadet and junior national championships and worked very well when dropouts occurred. All the parents and players I spoke to who

participated in these national events with reserves only had good things to say about the reserve list.

I think that the performance team should have a representative at all three venues for both days as the first two divisions should be about performance players playing each other. It a pressurised situation It was good to have martin at the event from a competition's perspective.

I understood the reason for no relegation in the first weekend for the u13 girls and boys I agree with this as the players that turned up needed to be rewarded for coming to the event.

I think that relegation out of the event for the bottom 2 players in div 5 is a good idea (**but only if there is a div 5**) and feel that each division should be two up two down with two staying in the division.

A sad comment I had from a coach and parents was that IF Plymouth has the same number of girls entrants that turned up at Draycott and run as two groups with one a group of 4 players they will not travel to the event as its not enough matches. This again is a clear indication to invite 30 players and have a reserve list to call on.

I feel that at St Neots ( the next venue for the u13's )it is Imperative to get as many players up to 30 as possible playing In both the girls and the boys events as this could have a big implication on how Plymouth will go. And that the players attending England training are advised that the performance team want them at the event and that consequences stated in the documents are followed through for those that don't attend without a valid reason.

A further comment that was given to me was that it could and should have been played in either a central venue or at least once in the north of the country to even out travel – I actually like that it is held in clubs rather than central venue but that is only my view.

Other comments were that parents cannot be in two places at once and if more than one player from a family is invited at different age groups families cannot facilitate one or the other child.

I was also told that if any player is relegated out of the competition from those that made the effort and on a bank holiday would very harsh and also that as all the u13 u15 and u19 had spaces there would be no reason to do this.

At the latest ranking run the points won and lost were not included and parents , players and coaches felt this was another sign that the competition people did not care about the people involved. I spoke to head of development who said that it was a sport 80 issue and that this communication would be put on the web page.

I do think that the event will become the best event in the country calendar however the above points need to be addressed.

Please see below the committee's summary of recommendations to address the points outlined above:

**Venues:** Organise the venues in a more central location, either by selecting clubs or one central venue to run this competition, as to avoid the excessive travel the players, parents and coaches.

**Improve communication:** Provide clear and complete information in the initial invitations, including venue address and start times. Communicate draw and fixture details at least two weeks before the event, using accessible channels beyond social media.

**Avoid scheduling conflicts:** Select event dates that don't coincide with major bank holidays or other significant tournaments to maximise participation.

**Expand participation:** Invite up to 30 players for U13 events, implementing a reserve list to manage dropouts and ensure a robust level of competition.

**Enforce mandatory attendance for performance players:** Table Tennis England Performance staff should mandate the attendance of England squad players to enhance the prestige of the event and improve match quality.

**Clarify hosting expectations at the invitation stage:** Clearly outline venue, equipment requirements, and associated costs when inviting clubs to host, avoiding last-minute logistical challenges.

**Reintroduce relegation and promotion system:** Implement a consistent two-up, two-down system across divisions, with potential leniency for players attending during busy periods.

**Ensure Table Tennis England Performance Team presence:** Ensure representatives from the performance staff are present at all venues to monitor players and support event objectives.

**Address ranking points transparency:** Ensure ranking points are promptly updated and communicated, and that they are reflected in the next ranking period to maintain trust and motivation among participants.

**Jon Bayliss**

**National councillor Derbyshire.**

17<sup>th</sup> September 2024