

Select Committee on Competitions Report to National Council
29th March 2025

The Select Committee on Competition is made up of
Alan Ransome OBE – Chairman
Karen Tonge
Jon Bayliss
Lois Peake

Junior and Girls Performance

Concern has been expressed that there are competition regulations and ranking procedures which are detrimental to cadet and junior girls progressing to the highest level. Proposals have been made to make changes to remove these obstacles.

This time last year the Committee discussed a problem with a regulation in what was then the Junior British League condition which prevented any player who participated in the Junior British League now called the Youth British Clubs League, from playing in the National Cadet and National Junior Leagues, now called the Cadet British Clubs League and Junior British Clubs League. The problem here was that it was felt some years ago having players from the Junior British League playing in Junior and Cadet National Leagues would be too strong and make competition uneven and would, therefore, be a disadvantage to the overall competition.

While the Select Committee agree that the boy's are not able to ply down, and views are the majority, that this is a good rule but for the girls it is a hinderance and this is the area where we need strong, young players coming through to restore our English position in the European and World rankings.

Except for the top few junior and cadet ranked girls, girls playing in Junior British Clubs League and Cadet British Clubs League is not a problem because the junior and cadet leagues are mixed so boys are playing against girls so the girls other than the top 5 or 6 are not at a playing standard to have an adverse influence on these lower standard competitions.

This view was supported not just that of National Council Competition Select Committee but also supported by the Performance Department and Gavin Evans is in favour of this change now and was last year.

This was discussed with the Competition Department and they thought it was a useful idea and wanted to consider it further and possibly look to implement it for the coming season. However, attempts have been made to confirm this in both January and February without result and, therefore, the Committee are raising this point through National Council and asking for this to be implemented for the 2025/26 season.

The Committee have also been approached by coaches who have been concerned by the way that some lower ranked positions ranking points have been awarded when boys play girls. The problem we have identified here is that the crossover ranking point in standards is not correct and, therefore, we are finding that when a boy with 120 points plays a girls with 250 points, the girls is expected to win and, therefore, when the boy who is high standard but lower ranking wins

the match the girl loses a significant number of points and, therefore, the rankings figures for these need to be adjusted to avoid this.

This has also been raised with boards Competition Advisory Committee. Please find an Appendix 'Analysis of a girl playing in the Cadet British Clubs League' relating to this

We would like this to be referred by our Committee to the Competitions Advisory Committee under the Chairmanship of Ritchie Venner to look into resolving this difficulty. We believe that the development of a strong women and girl's team is very important and strong cooperation between the Association Department should be coordinated to help to achieve this.

Loss of Control

We raised this at the last meeting when we identified that the loss of good standing had produced significant number of competitions running in England now outside the remit and control of Table Tennis England. Since the last National Council meeting this has expanded further with high prize money tournaments now being organised by a company by the name of Matchpoint Sports who are hiring club facilities and running these tournaments. This is in addition to the ones organised by Simon Morgan and TT365 as well as the VETTS Society and BUCS.

We remain concerned about this and would like to see all of this returned to the way that it was being managed since our inauguration approximately 100 years ago whereby all event are in some way associated with, recognised by and regulated by Table Tennis England.

Changes to Competition Regulations

The Committee is concerned by the method which is being implemented for changing regulations for British League and other competitions. Changes to these regulations appear to be taking place with groups headed by some TTE staff. New Tournament regulations were introduced prior to the start of this season regarding the status of Closed Tournaments which were damaging to League through England had to be withdrawn. Further changes to British League regulations are being considered after a consultation with participants. The procedure which operated for the first 30 years of the British League, we believe, produces better and more satisfactory changes to any regulation and this was when propositions came to the British League Conference they were considered by all of the clubs and were voted on, and if the majority were in favour, then the changes were implemented.

The benefit of this was similar to the parliamentary process, there was opportunity for those involved in the competition were able to consider the changes being proposed, to speak at the meeting about them and then to vote. By hearing the debate the members who were carrying the vote had more information on how to make their minds up which way to vote. We are concerned changes will be made under this consultation system with people sending in their views and then without wider consideration the regulations are changed. A problem with the British League Conference system was that attendance was low because of the cost of travel for the clubs, but now with video conferencing this problem is no longer a difficulty and, therefore, the views of the members can be taken into account and is more likely to produce a satisfactory result and better regulation.

We would recommend that the Board reconsider this and reimplement the conference system with the power to change the regulation with voting. This system has continued in the County Championships and as far as we are aware is continuing to work well.

National Series

The new National Series is being implemented for junior, cadets and Under 13's. This season there are three significant complaints which have come to the Committee.

Many parents and coaches were very disappointed that the National Series did not extend medals to all divisions - saying it was clearly a lack of understanding children. The final weekend only gave out trophies to the winner Div 1 plus medals to r/u and third place.

Hongkongers were invited then their invitation was withdrawn - again a coach advised a massive disappointment for these players.

Below are Attendances for week 4 plus a few comments

U13 girls - 17 girls attended (Amber Lemmon won though she only attended two of the four weekends) no reserves asked to attend in case of withdrawal

U13 boys - 22 players attended (as they asked reserves in the boys)

Venue Draycott

U15 Cadet girls - 17 girls in attendance (no comments received)

U15 Cadet boys - 25 boys in attendance (no comments received)

Venue St Neots

U19 Juniors

Again few players attended Plymouth, only 10 in the U19 girls with none of the top 7 ranked players in attendance.

In the boys only 12 boys attended with 4 of the top 10 players in attendance.

Overall, disappointing that reserves were not called to play across all ages and events to maximise the competition and that our top players were missing in some of the events.

Thanks to Jon Bayliss for compiling the above. Jon has also produced a spreadsheet giving further information which is attached.

We do believe that this competition has value but needs to be played at a central venue and fewer weekends should be used with either three single dates for boys and girls or two full weekends with boys and girls playing on both days.

Alan Ransome OBE

Chairman

National Council Select Committee on Competitions

24th March 2025