

SOMERSET MENS COUNTY LEAGUE - RULES (11/25)

1) **Name**

a) The League shall be known as the Somerset County League. The League and the Divisions within the League may be named to incorporate the names of sponsors.

2) **Entries**

a) The League will be open to clubs affiliated to the SBA. Each club may enter two teams per three rinks they have available for use (e.g. Clubs with their own six rink green may enter up to four teams). If a club has more than two greens (i.e., more than six rinks available at any time then more than four teams can enter the league).

Addendum For the 2025 season, the League Committee will run a pilot scheme to see if 2a can be extended to incorporate a fifth team for a club that only has one six rink green. The pilot club shall be Ilminster B.C. and depending upon the success of this pilot scheme rule 2a may be modified for the following seasons.

Following the trial, it has been concluded that a fifth team entry is possible, and that team shall be allowed to play home games if and when the diary permits.

Each team shall comprise three rinks of men.

b) Joining fees and annual subscriptions shall be set by the League Committee and shall be collected with competition entry fees in the autumn of the preceding year.

c) Clubs wishing to enter new teams in the League shall apply by 31st July of the previous year.

d) Continuing membership thereafter shall be assumed.

e) Clubs wishing one or more of their teams to resign, which shall be their lowest team(s), shall advise the County League Secretary in writing as soon as they have resolved so to do, stating clearly when such resignation is to take effect.

3) **Structure**

a) For the Somerset County League, the County shall be divided into three administrative regions.

b) There shall be two County-wide Premier Divisions of twelve teams each. The remaining teams shall be divided within their Region into one or more divisions according to the table below. All divisions are based on merit. The winners of Premier Division 1 shall hold the Dewar Shield Cup and the winners of Premier Division 2, The Sun Life Cup. The winners of the regional First Divisions shall hold: East – the Tony Jones Cup, North – the John Durston Cup, South & West – the Trophies of Radstock Cup. The

winner of East Division 2 – the David Bendall Trophy. The winner of North Division 2 - the Don Bridges Cup. The winner of South & West Division 2 - the Ken Leamon Cup. The winner of North Division 3 - the Paul Davies Cup.

c) Where there are eleven or more teams in a division, each team shall play each other team in the division once. Each team shall play the same number of home and away fixtures (as far as possible). Where there are six to eight teams in a division, each team shall play each other team in the division twice, once home and once away.

d) At the end of each season, the bottom two teams in Premier Division One shall be relegated to Premier Division Two and the top two teams in Premier Division Two promoted to Premier Division One. The top team from each regional first division shall be promoted to Premier Division Two. The bottom three teams in Premier Division Two shall be relegated, each to its appropriate regional first division. Within regions, normally the top three teams will be promoted (the top two teams where there are no more than eight teams in the division) from a lower division to a higher division. The number of relegations will be as required to realise the target structure for the coming season. Where an extra division is being created or removed, the League Committee shall determine promotion and relegation between the divisions.

e) Promotion and relegation issues shall be indicated to clubs from the first League weekend in August. Remember this is only an indication.

4) Registration of Players

a) Players are registered for a club through making their first appearance for a team in the League.

b) Such players must not represent more than one Somerset League club in any one year.

c) A player, who is also a member of a Club which is not affiliated to the SBA and who has entered either National Championships, National Competitions or County Competitions from that Club shall not be entitled to play in the Somerset County League.

d) Where clubs have more than one team within the league structure, their teams will be designated by appropriate alphabet letters, where A shall be the senior team followed by B, C, D or further if required. For the purpose of this rule, a higher team is the team with the earlier letter, even where the team is in the same division. Players shall be considered as being in the team seniority based upon the first game played.

e) Providing all teams play on the same week, players may be freely moved between the various teams. When all teams within a club do not have a fixture scheduled on the same match date, up to three players may play for a lower team even if they have played

more frequently for a higher team. These players: must not play skip and must not play on the same rink.

Contravention of this rule will lead to a penalty being applied according to rule 9(c).

f) When a team has three games or fewer left to play in a season, it can field up to two players who have already played more often for any one higher team in the club so long as they have played at least once for the lower team. These players shall not play skip, nor shall they play on the same rink. Players are excluded from this rule if they have played less than four games (or part thereof) for all the teams in the club during the season.

5) Arrangements of Fixtures

a) Fixtures will be played on set Saturdays. The set Saturdays to be used shall depend on the number of teams in the division

b) Fixtures shall start with trial ends at 2.30pm. Start times may be varied by mutual agreement, subject to confirmation by the League Secretary. The match must start within 30 minutes of the agreed time with teams fielded in accordance with Rule 6(c) or as varied by Rule 6(d).

c) Before the commencement of the season, with the prior agreement of both teams and the permission of the League Committee, the fixture may be re-arranged to be played on any other Saturday (or Sunday) between 1st May and the final League Saturday.

d) When any league team's fixture dates are affected by Performance Team trials or Performance Team fixture dates, those fixtures must be rearranged, and must be played before the last Saturday of the League season.

If any fixture arranged by this rule and no date fulfilled by the last Saturday, then these fixtures will be null and void.

All such arranged fixtures must be sent to the League Secretary.

e) No games are to be postponed to allow National Competition club matches to be arranged on a fixed League date up to National Finals fortnight.

f) As far as possible, fixtures between teams from the same club will be arranged for early in the programme.

g) Catering arrangements are to be agreed between the clubs before the day of the fixture. Unless mutually agreed, play shall be continuous.

h) The following season's fixture programme will be issued to Clubs as soon as possible and published on the County website.

6) Play

a) Except where varied by these Rules, all matches must be played under the “Laws of the Sport of Bowls (including Domestic regulations for Bowls England)”. Matches shall be played over 18 ends, with two trial ends. The use of groundsheets is allowed only with the agreement of both captains. The use of floodlights is permitted, provided their use has been mutually agreed before the start of the game.

b) Smoking on the green is prohibited during all matches played under the jurisdiction of the Somerset Bowls League. For the purpose of clarification, the "green" in this instance is deemed to include a minimum of 1 metre on the bank surrounding the playing area. Mobile phones must not be used by players, officials or spectators on the green or immediate surrounds during the game. If carried, they must be switched off except, for emergency use only, they may be switched to ‘vibrate’.

c) Rinks shall be drawn by Captains. Home teams must ensure that adjacent rinks are used, or at least that no play takes place on any rinks between the designated rinks for the match.

d) If a player has to leave the green due to illness, a substitute who is validly registered, or will become validly registered as a result of playing in the match, can be used. Where no substitute is available or where a full team is not fielded, the team may play with one player short in up to two rinks, subject to Rule 39.2.2 of the Laws of the Sport of Bowls. A team with less than 10 players (before or during the match) shall be deemed to have failed to fulfil the fixture according to Rule 7(b), except as in Rule 6(e) below. Players arriving late cannot play, except as substitutes, in accordance with the Laws of the Sport of Bowls.

e) Ladies are permitted to play in the regional Divisions of Leagues, but not in the Premier divisions. If a team in those Leagues cannot fulfil all three rinks with men, ladies may play in the team or in the lowest lettered team if a club has more than one team in the league. In order to fulfil that fixture a maximum of 4 ladies can be integrated in the team but no lady shall be allowed to skip. Ladies will not be allowed to play continuously during the season. If men are available for selection, they must play.

f) In a match between the bottom teams of two clubs, if both teams are short of players and both teams agree beforehand, the match can be played over two rinks, the rink points for the third rink being not awarded.

g) If a team travels to an away fixture but some players do not arrive, those players that do arrive shall play as a rink or rinks (in accordance with Rule 6(d)) in competition for the appropriate rink points. The points for the match and any unplayed rinks shall be awarded to the home team. No further penalties or bonuses shall be awarded.

h) Whites or club-coloured shirts shall be worn for all matches, to include white or club trousers/shorts, (regardless of the agreed start time). If club-coloured shirts or trousers/shorts are worn, then they should be by all the players in the team. Flat soled bowling shoes shall be worn.

i) All bowls shall carry club stickers. Where provided, the stickers shall be those bearing the sponsor's identification.

j) Umpires may be appointed by the home team who shall be responsible for the reimbursement of any out-of-pocket expenses claimed. Where no umpire has been appointed, the captains of the opposing teams must reach agreement on the outcome of any dispute arising from the playing of the match before the result is confirmed and advised to the League Secretary.

7) Failure to Complete a Fixture

a) Except as in 5(d) above, a fixture may only be postponed due to inclement weather. Such fixtures shall be rearranged on the earliest mutually agreeable date providing it is before the end of the League season and advised to the League Secretary within 7 days from the day for which the original fixture was scheduled. In the event of the failure to agree, the game will be deemed 'null & void' with no points awarded to either team. Should it be physically impossible to play on or before the last League Saturday (e.g. the postponed game was on the last Saturday), then the decision of the League Secretary shall be final.

b) A team failing to fulfil a fixture shall have 6 points deducted and 10 shots awarded against it. The opposing team shall be awarded 12 points and 10 shots. If a team fails to fulfil more than two fixtures in a season, on the third occasion, the team is deemed to have resigned from the League with immediate effect – Rule 9(d) applies.

c) If play is curtailed or interrupted by the weather, so long as at least 11 ends have been completed on each rink, the result at the end of the game shall stand. Otherwise, the game shall be cancelled and restarted as though the fixture were postponed.

8) Notification of Results

a) Results shall be e-mailed or the website result card completed by the home team captain to the League Secretary by 8pm, or as soon as the result has been agreed if later, on the day of the fixture. Failure to do so shall result in a fine of 3 points on the first occasion, rising by 1 point for each subsequent occasion.

b) Both team captains must each arrange for a completed result/team sheet card (i.e.: two cards), signed by both captains and identifying which club the card comes from are to be e-mailed or the website result card sent within 24 hours of the end of the match. to the appropriate Regional Secretary. Failure to do so shall result in a deduction of 3 points on the first occasion, rising by 1 point for each subsequent occasion. -

Continued abuse of this rule may result in the team not being invited to re-join the League next season.

c) Amongst other things, result/team sheet cards shall be checked to ensure the valid registration of all players. Players are to be identified by first and family names. Ladies are to be further identified by the prefixes Miss, Ms or Mrs. If not, three points will be deducted for each offence.

d) If possible, results and up-to-date league tables will be issued to clubs and the website on Saturday or Sunday after a relatively full programme of fixtures has been played.

9) Scoring

a) Each winning rink per team shall be awarded 2 points, drawing rinks 1 point each.

b) Each winning team shall be awarded 6 points, drawing teams 3 points each.

c) Playing an ineligible player will lead to a 3 points deduction on the first occasion by a team. If that same ineligible player is played again, a 6 points deduction will result on the second occasion and 12 points on each subsequent occasion. Multiple ineligible players in the same team will result in a separate penalty for each player. In addition, the rink(s) the ineligible player(s) play on cannot record a win. If they score more shots than their opponents, the shots are zeroed for both teams and the rink points awarded to their opponents.

d) In the event that a team resigns from the league during the course of the season, all fixtures completed by that team shall be considered void and any points obtained by the team's opposition in matches already played shall be forfeit.

e) Prize money will be awarded to the leading positions in each division. The exact amount will depend on the success of securing appropriate sponsorship. Please note Clubs' representatives are expected to attend the annual Presentation Lunch to collect their prizes personally.

f) Finishing positions (from top down) are determined firstly by the greater total number of points scored and, if equal, then by the greater shot difference and, if equal, then by the fewer shots conceded and, if equal, then by the greater number of games won and, if equal, then by the greater number of rink points scored. If any finishing positions remain unresolved and they affect promotion or relegation, then play-offs on a neutral green shall be arranged by the League Committee.

10) Sponsorship

a) The League shall seek sponsorship deals and shall be free to agree separate deals for each division within the League. Clubs may be required to display advertising (on hoardings, banners, shirts, etc.) to comply with sponsors' conditions.

11) Changes to League Rules

- a) Additions or amendments to the Rules shall be made only by either
 - b) The Executive Board or
 - c) The Annual General Meeting of the SBA or at such Special General Meeting convened for the purpose by a motion put forward, in accordance with Rule 9(a) of the Constitution.
- d) Requests by Clubs for Rule changes must be submitted in writing to the League Secretary from one proposing Club with at least two supporting Clubs.
- e) Proposals for changes shall be made by 1 September each year and shall then be considered by the League Committee who shall make recommendations to the Executive Board at its October meeting. The Executive Board shall proceed in accordance with either a) or b) above.
- f) Changes that have been agreed by the Executive Board or the AGM in accordance with either a) or b) above that do not affect the fixtures programme for the following year shall be implemented for that year.
- g) Changes that have been agreed by the Executive Board or the AGM in accordance with either a) or b) above that would affect the fixtures programme shall be implemented for the second following year.
- h) Changes that have been agreed in accordance with a) above shall be placed on the agenda of the appropriate AGM for information.

12) Conduct of the League

- a) The overall governance of the League shall be by the League Committee. The League will be administered from day to day by the County League Secretary, with the assistance of the Regional Secretaries who shall be appointed as required.
- b) In the case of a dispute which cannot be settled by mutual agreement between clubs concerning the arrangement or conduct of fixtures or the reporting of results, a clear statement of the dispute shall be made in writing to the League Secretary or appropriate Regional Secretary within two days of the date on which the dispute arose. The decision of the League Committee shall be final and binding and must be accepted by all parties.

13) No of Teams in League Structure in Regions

In Division One	In Division Two	In Division 3	In Division 4
20	14	6	0
21	14	7	0
22	11	11	0
23	12	11	0
24	12	12	0
25	13	12	9
26	14	12	0
27	14	13	0
28	14	14	0
29	12	11	6
30	12	12	6
31	13	12	6
32	14	12	6
33	14	12	7
34	12	12	10
35	12	12	11
36	12	12	12
37	14	12	11
38	14	12	12