

NZ Indoor Bowls (Inc.)

Summary of discussion from player forum chaired by NZ President Nigel Warnes during the NZ Championships held at Ashburton - June 2018

NZ Championships - Order of Events

Suggested that NZIB consider amending the order events played to Fours, Triples, Pairs and Singles. Singles is considered the 'premier' event and perhaps competition should build up to this 'blue ribbon' competition. Discussion included availability of players for whole week.

NZIB Response - *retain status quo to ensure less pressure on host district with venue setup and avoid any need to provide markers outside opening weekend.*

NZ Championships - Prize Money

Suggested that NZIB revisit the level of prize money for the Master events as the current level is not enough to entice the rank and file bowlers to travel to attend.

NZIB Response - *reviewed annually with level of prize money dependent upon entries.*

NZ Championships - Dates

Does NZIB need to move the Nationals to a date which coincides with the school holidays in an effort to attract more junior competitors? General comment was that majority prefer the current scheduling of the Nationals.

NZIB Response - *has been raised previously and defeated at AGM's. May result in higher costs for participants with high demand for travel and accommodation during school holidays.*

NZ Championships - Qualifying

A drawn game is a 'good' game. Competition rules need to revert back to draws remaining as draws (not played out). How many points to qualify - 5 or 6? Popular consensus of those present was in favour of 6 points to qualify and draws count; then 5 points to qualify with draws to count; and then status quo. How easy/difficult would it be to introduce a plate event for non-qualifiers?

NZIB Response - *gives NZIB more control over the length of each event. Conditions of play to be amended to revert to popular consensus (6 points to qualify and draws count) but section winners will be retained. Significant administration difficulties with any plate event including player availability and the size of the event - considered logistically impractical currently.*

NZ Championships - Secrecy!

Question was raised as to why some aspects of NZIB control is perceived to be kept in secret? Why are Player of Tournament points not on display after completion of each discipline? Why is time-clock not available for all to see? Some Centres/Associations advised that they were using 'large' timing devices to combat issue of time-wasting and that this had proved to be a clear deterrent in this regard. Ashburton venue had a 'clock' available and felt that if available there and in other venues this could be utilised if practicable.

Comment - *Player of Tournament points published daily from date of this forum. Venue time clock implemented as 'indicative' timer for Academy and Masters events and Championship Fours with positive feedback. Proposal for having time clock 'displayed' was put to vote and overwhelmingly supported.*

NZIB Response - *issue of Player of Tournament points resolved. Time-clock issue to be resolved where practical i.e. host venue has suitable 'clock' facility readily available to controllers.*

Inter-District Challenge

NZIB was congratulated on introduction of this new competition on Thursday evening of Nationals. Players were looking forward in anticipation to event.

NZIB Response - *scheduled again for 2019 as was regarded as a promotional success. Minor tweaking of conditions of play to be implemented.*

Marketing and Promotion

General consensus that there needs to be a concentrated effort to provide better marketing of our sport. Do some of our rules need to be updated to make it more exciting - suggested that relaxing some of the rules that do not impact on the actual game - e.g. following bowl up the mat! World Cup was a winner; in general junior programmes are better today than they have been in the past. What do we need to do to get our sport included in the Commonwealth Games schedule? Many looking forward to Inter-District challenge to see how this type of event could be a catalyst to better promote our game. Need to 'sell' our sport with more meaningful use of terminology - 'game for all ages'; our sport is not 'cheap' it is 'affordable'. Need to learn more from sports like 10-pin or darts and take our game to the public - e.g. darts was generally only seen as a pub sport and now look where it is at. Centres/Associations need to consider taking 'come and try' games to local centres - Westfield or similar malls, Warehouse or similar stores - put on exhibition games and involve local celebrities.

NZIB Response - *appreciative of a lot of good ideas. District challenge and World Cup International event held in May (England) are both steps in the right direction. Is Commonwealth Games a possibility we should be aiming for in the future? Generally agreed marketing and promotion is a 'work in progress'.*

Junior Development

The introduction of the AIMS games, local secondary schools competition in conjunction with NZ Junior Singles event and Young Guns event have all served to promote the sport to the younger generation but do we need to investigate the need for a 'younger' section at the Nationals in a similar vein to the Masters?

NZIB Response - *no plans currently for any movement in this regard. North Island and South Island Secondary Schools events provide additional exposure in addition to events identified above.*

Media Coverage of Sport

Noted that Maori Television had been present for news coverage of the North Island Championships but no media were present for Nationals. President explained that we had in the past televised the singles and pairs events but that this had become cost prohibitive. General agreement that there needs to be more emphasis on use of digital media and the introduction of 'live' streaming at these Nationals was step in the right direction. Coverage of World Cup from England was noted and appreciated. More 'live' streaming of Mat Blacks requested.

Comment - *hosts for 2019 Trans-Tasman event proposing 'live' streaming of multiple games.*

NZIB Response - *another 'work in progress'. NZIB is committed to taking advantage of the use of digital media at every opportunity, where resources permit.*

Academy and Masters Events

Expand this event to include Mixed Pairs or Mixed Fours. Consideration should be given to utilising the reserves named for these events by adding an additional game/games.

Comment - *still need to name reserves even if competition is expanded to include mixed events.*

NZIB Response - *retain status quo. Still need reserves regardless of extra disciplines.*

Norway Indoor Bowls Development

Overview given of development of indoor bowls in Norway who have only been playing for past six years. They have specifically targeted 40/50/60 year old age groups and other sports where players are no longer able to compete. Significant government funding is available (oil exploration) and a specific health-based programme to provide funding to sports bodies who get the public involved by active participation in sport. Sweden also has a government funded programme.

NZIB Response - NZIB personnel are exploring avenues for access to the background promotional material used both in Norway and Sweden.

Affiliation Fees

Does NZIB/Centres need to consider higher affiliation fees for those players contesting championships? Lesser fees = lesser recognition. Concern that higher affiliation fees would result in less participation in representative games and consequent reduction in availability of top level competition amongst players. Suggested that NZIB investigate/revisit levels of affiliation fees for social and associate organisations.

NZIB Response - retain status quo. All levels of affiliation fees are subject to an annual administrative review.

Henselite Champion of Champion Singles

Suggested that NZIB consider amending the Henselite event to be conducted on same basis as Mixed Fours and Mixed Pairs - playoffs in current zones with eight regional winners playing in a round-robin event over 15 ends. Reconsider local and zone playoffs to revert back to games of 15 ends if zone playoffs adopted.

Comment - proposed format was put to vote with overwhelming support.

NZIB Response - appreciate the positive response for change in this event but for consistency across similar events will retain games of 12 ends. Have planned to include the NZ Junior (under-18) Singles event using the same playoff format from 2019. Note - any planned changes for 2019 have subsequently been rescinded pending developments for the future of our game to be discussed at the AGM.

NZ Masters Events

Does length of games need to be reduced - appeared to be some tired competitors at end of day's play?

Comment - not well received suggestion!

NZIB Response - no further action required.

Bowls New Zealand

Does NZIB need to consider a closer liaison with lawn bowls administrators at Bowls NZ?

NZIB Response - should not lose sight of closer ties. NZIB does have a signed Memorandum of Understanding with Bowls NZ. We need to revisit this agreement.

'Image' of Indoor Bowls

Our sport needs more 'noise' including likes of background music - there is no atmosphere! The Academy and Masters events generate a lot of 'noise' and this is appreciated by the players. Does NZIB need to consider offsetting the finals of the Open and Masters events to avoid them being played at the same time - spectators afraid to make too much noise out of consideration for players when other event still in progress.

NZIB Response - currently under consideration for inclusion in the scheduling of the 2019 nationals.

Patterson Trophy

This event has existed for 20-30 years with some minor tweaking to the format - is it time for a change? Is there any desire for a two-tier competition with a promotion/relegation option?

NZIB Response - *currently reviewing the format for the future of this event. Proposals will be presented for consideration of all associations/centres prior to any implementation.*

Feature Game

NZIB was advised that sponsor for past two years was not able to continue and generally accepted that this was a popular innovation that needs to remain. Kevin Boothby was thanked for his idea and generous support.

Comment - *Ron and Rae Inglis have generously offered to take over sponsorship of this event.*

NZIB Response - *pleased that this popular extension to the nationals will be retained.*

Island Tours

Discussion included - Island tours may well have lost their appeal; consider a weekend test match only; some representative players consider game against the touring team as the highlight of their representative competitions; save costs by billeting players; teams stay longer in Centres and play a Triples tournament with local players followed by the representative game; consideration of adding a mixed pairs (8-bowl) and/or mixed fours event to the island event; NZIB to consider possibility of nominations for both teams being published after nominations close.

Comment - *reconsider the idea of triangular event (northern/central/southern). Previously published plan still available.*

NZIB Response - *analysis of the format for future tours is the subject of constant scrutiny and annual review. NZIB Executive is not in favour of publishing nominations for any events.*

Masters Test Match

Separate event to be held in conjunction with Island tour 'test' match.

Comment - *currently held in conjunction with Academy match!*

NZIB Response - *no further action required as already scheduled during nationals.*

General

Many Masters players are present here at Nationals but not playing in local events. Have any Centres/Associations considered separate local Masters competitions?

Lack of communication locally about events in their area, in particular promotion of the Island tour - is this a common issue or perceived?

Suggestion to amend playing conditions to accommodate one more end after the whistle at the end of the game was not supported.

NZIB Response - *NZIB Executive appreciated the opportunity to meet directly with our 'playing public' and valued the feedback and opinions on a diverse range of subjects. Consideration will be given to holding similar events at future nationals not less than two yearly.*