THE TIME FOR CHANGE HAS COME - REPORT

Preface

The MPB Board is alarmed with the number of MPB pennant and state championship players last season (2018/19) having dropped 8% on the previous season.

It is looking to design competitions that may better suit both existing and potential club members, in an attempt to change this dramatic decline.

It is the Board's position that it also wishes to increase participation in lawn bowls across the general population, and wants to work with clubs to assist them to improve their recruiting policies and plans by offering sustainable competitions that provide opportunities for prospective participants to be active in the sport.

A - Pennant structure

Season Start Date

The majority of clubs favored a later start to season 2019/20.
As previously advised by Bowls Victoria, both the Australian Nationals and the Victorian Open will be played in October/early November 2020 and onwards, requiring a November start (or later) to the pennant season from that year onwards.
The Board has decided that the 2019/20 season will start on the last Saturday in October (26/10/19) for Saturday pennant and the last Tuesday in October (29/10/2019) for Midweek pennant.
The dates of the Rounds for Saturday and Midweek competitions are included **at the end of this report.** Please note the following: -

- The Reserve Days have been removed for the sectional (home and away) fixture but have been included for the final's weeks 1,2 & 3.
- The separate Day for the Saturday Pennant Division 1 Grand Final has been removed and has been included to be held on the same day as the Grand Finals for the other Divisions.
- No Pennant to be played during the Vic Open week.
- Saturday Pennant will not be played on the Australia Day long weekend (same as last season).

Saturday Pennant Divisional structure

The majority of clubs favoured the North and South sections being absorbed into one competition. However, the Board has determined that a total change is unworkable and that geographical divides will be maintained in the lower divisions.
The Match Committee is yet to allocate clubs to divisions for next season but last season's promotion and relegation process, together with the distribution, will be considered.

New structure:

Divisions 1 - 3 will be played across the whole of the MPB division.
Divisions 4 - 6 will be played on a geographical North/South divide.
Divisions 7,8 or more if required, **to be a separate competition, branded 'six a side'** two bowl triples and will be played on a 'localised' divide, within the boundaries of North/Central/South (where practicable).

Midweek (Tuesday) Restricted Pennant Commentary

A number of the clubs currently involved in the Restricted Pennant competition indicated that they wished it to continue, whilst a number of other clubs felt that it should be merged into the **Midweek Open** competition.
The Board is very concerned at the sharp decline in participation in this competition and feels that the intended entries will enable only two divisions to be run next season.
The Board doesn't have a great deal of confidence in the long-term viability of this competition but has decided to offer it again in 2019/20.
In accordance with the provisions of the BV/VCAT determinations, a survey of the club members is required for this competition to take place and will be forwarded to the clubs within the next few weeks.

Midweek (Tuesday) Pennant Divisional structure

The Match Committee is yet to allocate clubs to divisions for next season but last season's promotion and relegation process, together with the distribution, will be considered.

New structure:

Midweek Open Divisions 1 - 4 will be played across the whole of the MPB division.
Midweek Open Divisions 5 - 6 will be played on a geographical North/South divide (depending on the entries and in anticipation of greater interest being shown from clubs in the South)
Midweek Open Division 7 or more if required, **to be a separate competition, branded 'six a side'** two bowl triples and will be played on a 'localised' divide, within the boundaries of North/Central/South (where practicable).
Midweek Restricted Divisions 1 - 3 will be played across the whole of the MPB division.

Promotion and Relegation

The Board have endorsed the view of the majority of clubs that offered an opinion on this matter and have decided that two teams will be promoted and relegated out of each division. This enables teams to find their own level and leads to greater rotation across the Divisions, which should result in a larger number of different clubs winning premierships and adds interest to games involving the lower teams in each division.

The **Grand Final** sides will be eligible for promotion.

Saturday Pennant

Division 1 no club can have more than one side in this division. Thus, if a club already has a side in this division after promotions from Division 2 have been finalized, the promotion will not take place for that club/side.

Divisions 2 & 3 if after promotion/relegation a club has more than one side in these divisions, the sides will be as two sides from the same club in that division.

Divisions 4 - 6 if after promotion/relegation a club has more than one side in a division, the sides will be distributed across the North/South divide.

Divisions 7,8 or more if required, as a separate competition promotion/relegation will not be used.

Midweek Pennant

Midweek Open Division 1 no club can have more than one side in this division. Thus, if a club already has a side in this division after promotions from Division 2 have been finalized, the promotion will not take place for that club/side.

Midweek Open Divisions 2 - 4 if after promotion/relegation a club has more than one side in these divisions, the sides will remain as two sides from the same club in that division.

Midweek Open Divisions 5 - 6 if after promotion/relegation a club has more than one side in a division, the sides will be distributed across the North/South divide.

Midweek Open Division 7 or more if required, as a separate competition promotion/relegation will not be used.

Midweek Restricted Division 1 no club can have more than one side in this division. Thus, if a club already has a side in this division after promotions from Division 2 have been finalized, the promotion will not take place for that club/side.

Midweek Restricted Divisions 2 & 3 if after promotion/relegation a club has more than one side in these divisions, the sides will be as two sides from the same club in that division.

Times of play

The Board has decided that as a one off trial, the first round after Christmas in Division 1 will, where practicable, be played as a 'Rivalry Round' game (with near 'neighbouring clubs' drawn against each other) and will be conducted in the 6/9pm time frame on the Friday night.

Similarly, **Division 2** will be played the following week on the Friday night.

This is to be conducted as a one-off round for points and its value assessed by the Match Committee on the completion of the games.

Length of games and format

Of all the topics that views were sought, the strongest support came to reduce Saturday matches to **21 ends**.

The scheduled starting times for both Saturday and Midweek pennant matches **will remain unchanged** from those used in season 2018-19.

Whilst there was some negative comment among clubs about rescheduling abandoned matches, the Board is of the opinion that all matches should be completed on game day where possible.

The proposal to have a **10 am start** should temperatures be forecast above 35 degrees is still under review and will be addressed during the discussions about the changes to the Rules of Competition.

The following formats will apply for season 2019-20: -

Saturday Pennant

Division 1 – 4 teams x 4 players = 16 per side
Division 2 – 4 teams x 4 players = 16 per side
Division 3 – 3 teams x 4 players = 12 per side
Division 4 – North and South – 3 teams x 4 players = 12 per side
Division 5 – North and South – 3 teams x 4 players = 12 per side
Division 6 – North and South – 3 teams x 4 players = 12 per side
Six a Side – 'localized - 2 teams x 3 players = 6 per side (two bowl Triples) (depending on the number of entries)

Saturday Pennant - last season's promotion and relegation process, together with the distribution, will be considered and entries (without fees) will be called for, via an MPB form, and these **will close on 16 September 2019.**

Midweek Pennant

OPEN

Division 1 - 3 teams x 4 players = 12 per side
Division 2 - 3 teams x 4 players = 12 per side
Division 3 - 3 teams x 4 players = 12 per side
Division 4 - 3 teams x 4 players = 12 per side
Division 5 - North and South - 2 teams x 4 players = 8 per side (possibly more players per side depending on the number of entries from the South)
Division 6 - North and South - 2 teams x 4 players = 8 per side (possibly more players per side depending on the number of entries from the South)
Six a Side – 'localized - 2 teams x 3 players = 6 per side (two bowl Triples) (depending on the number of entries)

RESTRICTED (depending on the number of entries)

Division1 - 3 teams x 4 players = 12 per side
Division2 - 3 teams x 4 players = 12 per side
Division3 - 3 teams x 4 players = 12 per side

Midweek Pennant - last season's promotion and relegation process, together with the distribution, will be considered and entries (without fees) will be called for, via an MPB form, and these **will close on 16 September 2019.**

Recording of scores and team information

The Board has looked at the interactive scores recording programme that has operated in Metropolitan Pennant and in some country associations and has decided that this will be adopted for the forthcoming season, depending on availability in the new BowlsLink system.

This will add to the overall game day experience for players, and tutorials will be provided to clubs to walk them through the new system.

For the next season, a dual system using **MPB Pennant Recorders** will be retained.

B - MPB Constitution

Alteration to constitution to hear disciplinary cases and disputes
Under review in consultation with Bowls Victoria.

C - Night Pennant

The Board have instigated a programme with a number of clubs to get lights installed for next season and intend running a Wednesday night competition over December, January and February based on a two bowl triples, two hour game that will be open to non-pennant players and social members of clubs as well full members.

The Board believes this format will appeal to players in the 30/55 age group especially the 'working group' and will be run in two competitions- one among the northern clubs and another with the southern clubs.

A number of clubs have shown enthusiasm for the project and it works very successfully elsewhere.

The emphasis is on a relatively short game with travelling times minimised.

Night Pennant- entries **will close on 14 November 2019**.

D - Media presence

The Board will investigate appointing a **Media Officer,** to service reporting on the sport amongst social media, the traditional newspaper and electronic media as well as other vehicles available.

E - Installation of lights at clubs.

Following the successful obtaining of grants, Sorrento BC, Rosebud Beach and Community BC, Mornington Civic BC and Somerville BC have undertaken to have flood lighting installed at their clubs. Construction is to start very soon and is planned to be completed in September 2019.

F - Regional Cup

There was widespread support for this knockout competition, and it will commence on Saturday 14th September with the final to be conducted on Saturday 19th October.

The format will be three rinks of four players.

The draw will be published as early as possible to enable clubs to plan pennant practice matches.

A **sponsor** will be sought for the Regional Cup.

G – MPB Rules for Competition

The MPB Rules for Competition need a revamp and will be addressed **later** and along a similar process to the 'change' strategies.

H – Club of The Year Award

The Board wishes to implement a yearly award benchmarked on initiatives to increase participation, willingness to experiment to widen the appeal of the game, and of their contribution to the Division.

I – Volunteer of The Year

The Board recognizes the amount of work done by many members of clubs and as a result will make this award on an annual basis.

J - Women's Only Competition

The Board is of the view that some women's sports generally are increasing rapidly in prominence and believes that there is an opening to run this type of competition.

Whilst it was difficult to get a broad consensus among those clubs favoring this format, the Board interviewed clubs that were in favor of this section of pennant being created, to see if a format and time can be established to successfully start a competition.

The clubs in the southern section of the Division agreed that a '2 teams x 4 players = 8 per side' competition be played on Tuesdays in September and October- rotating among the clubs that enter.

The proposed format is two bowl Triples, 24 ends (3 x 8 end games with rotating opponents/rinks)

This competition will be offered and reassessed at its completion.

The format will be also offered to the northern clubs and nearby clubs in the Casey region to see if it can be established in that area.

In accordance with the provisions of the BV/VCAT determinations, a survey of the club members is required for this competition to take place and will be forwarded to the clubs within the next few weeks.

Women's Only Competition - entries **will close on 10 August 2019.**

E.&O.E.

DATES FOR MORNINGTON PENINSULA PENNANT 2019-20

SATURDAY

Round 1	**26/10/19**		
Round 2	**02/11/19**		
Round 3	**09/11/19**		
	16/11/19	**No Play due to Vic Open**	
Round 4	**23/11/19**		
Round 5	**30/11/19**		
Round 6	**07/12/19**		
Round 7	**14/12/19**		
Round 8	**11/01/20**		
Round 9	**18/01/20**		
	25/01/20	**No Play due to Australia Day weekend (Monday 27/01/20 public holiday)**	
Round 10	**01/02/20**		
Round 11	**08/02/20**		
Round 12	**15/02/20**		
Round 13	**22/02/20**		
Round 14	**29/02/20**		
Finals	**07/03/20**	**Semi Finals**	
Finals	**14/03/20**	**Preliminary Finals**	**or Reserve Day for Semi Finals (if required)**
Finals	**21/03/20**	**Grand Finals**	**or Reserve Day for Preliminary Finals (if required)**
Finals	**28/03/20**	**Reserve Day**	**or Reserve Day for Grand Finals (if required)**

Other significant Dates:
28/09/19 AFL Grand Final
05/11/19 Melbourne Cup
15/11/19 (Fri) - 22/11/19 (Fri) Vic Open
26/01/20 Australia Day (Sunday) (Monday 27/01/20 public holiday)
09/03/20 Labour Day (Monday)
10/04/20 Good Friday/Start of Easter Break

DATES FOR MORNINGTON PENINSULA PENNANT 2019-20

MIDWEEK

Round 1	**29/10/19**	
Round 2	**06/11/19**	**Note: Wed due to Cup Day**
Round 3	**12/11/19**	
	19/11/19	**No Play due to Vic Open**
Round 4	**26/11/19**	
Round 5	**03/12/19**	
Round 6	**10/12/19**	
Round 7	**17/12/19**	
Round 8	**14/01/20**	
Round 9	**21/01/20**	
Round 10	**28/01/20**	
Round 11	**04/02/20**	
Round 12	**11/02/20**	
Round 13	**18/02/20**	
Round 14	**25/02/20**	

Finals	**03/03/20**	**Semi Finals**	
Finals	**10/03/20**	**Preliminary Finals**	**or Reserve Day for Semi Finals (if required)**
Finals	**17/03/20**	**Grand Finals**	**or Reserve Day for Preliminary Finals (if required)**
Finals	**24/03/20**	**Reserve Day**	**or Reserve Day for Grand Finals (if required) and Option to hold Div 1 Midweek State Pennant Playoff game.**

Other significant Dates:
28/09/19 AFL Grand Final
05/11/19 Melbourne Cup
15/11/19 (Fri) - 22/11/19 (Fri) Vic Open
26/01/20 Australia Day (Sunday) (Monday 27/01/20 public holiday)
09/03/20 Labour Day (Monday)
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