



Bowls England
Riverside House, Milverton Hill
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www.bowlsengland.com

Patron: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

BOWLS ENGLAND OUTLINES PLANS FOR 2022 DOMESTIC SEASON

We are delighted to have been able to deliver a full season of domestic competitive events in 2021, culminating in our National Finals in Victoria Park, Royal Leamington Spa. The season provided a number of challenges as we sought to enable all bowlers to participate safely whilst navigating through the gradual relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions. We thank everyone for the part they played in a full summer of competitive bowls.

The introduction of shorter formats in all events provided the maximum flexibility for players, clubs and counties to arrange their respective matches. The change in format has led to a healthy debate on our national competition programme and, building on previous insight, we have digested the recent survey which was completed by both current and prospective participants.

As part of our core aim to grow participation in lawn bowls, a priority is to deliver an annual programme of national competitions which provide a structure and environment for all players to feel challenged, rewarded and committed to our sport. This involves satisfying the needs of existing competitions entrants, whilst ensuring competitions are accessible for as broad a range of bowlers as possible. There is little doubt the number one barrier to people entering competitions, or entering more competitions, is pressures on their time.

To that end, our outline plans for 2022 were sent to all county associations last week and, following their feedback, we are pleased to share them more widely.

National Finals 2022

We have repeatedly outlined that 2022 is a challenging year for the domestic calendar, and we have been advised that Birmingham 2022 has use of the Victoria Park venue until Thursday 18th August. Building in venue set-up time, the indicative dates for the Bowls England National Finals are **Thursday 25th August to Sunday 11th September inclusive**. We will be meeting with Birmingham 2022 and Warwick District Council to confirm this and are mindful of the challenges of the later date on players and spectators.

We will be reflecting on this year's National Finals and making improvements based on your feedback. We aim to go on ticket sale for the 2022 National Finals before the end of 2021. Please sign up to our Jack newsletter for updates.

National Championship 2022 – Formats and Qualification

Following an analysis of the survey results and feedback from counties, we will be running all the National Championships using the following formats:

- Singles (including Junior Singles) – 21 up
- Pairs (including Junior Pairs) – Four bowls 18 ends
- Triples – Three bowls 18 ends
- Fours (including Senior Fours) – Two bowls 18 ends
- Two-bowl singles – Two bowls 21 ends

VAT No: 926 4696 86

Registration No: 06297656 (England & Wales) Limited by Guarantee

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For the integrity of the events, the same format must be played at all stages of the Championships including county qualifying rounds. As in 2021, there will be 48 qualifiers for the National Finals in Championship events. The 13 counties with the most entrants in each event will receive two qualification places.

The closing date for receipt of qualifier information from counties to Bowls England will be Monday 8th August 2022.

Inter-County Events

To provide more space in the competition schedule, the Middleton and Johns will remain as knock-out competitions and the Finals will be played as part of the 2022 National Finals. Qualifying for the Balcomb Trophy, Walker Cup, White Rose Trophy and Amy Rose Bowl will also remain as knockout as in 2021, but the Regional Finals for the respective events for each gender will be on separate dates. We shall circulate the programme for inter-county events next month once the wider National Competition programme has been confirmed.

National Competitions and National Finals Schedule 2022

Based on the feedback and the logistical challenges of fitting around Birmingham 2022, we will spend the next few weeks working on the following:

- Developing the National Finals schedule to maximize the number of players taking part and enhance the spectator experience
- Formats of play in National Competitions and the point at which each competition proceeds to the National Finals
- Introduction of regional stages of National Competitions to reduce travel time for players and to take advantage of staging local events around the Commonwealth Games
- The financial viability of additional live streaming during the 2022 National Finals

Entries for National Competitions will be opened once this work has been completed, which we anticipate to be towards the middle of October.

International Events and Commonwealth Games preparation

Discussions regarding the British Isles events (Championships and International Series) are ongoing between the nations that form the respective organising bodies regarding plans for 2022. Details will be circulated once finalised.

More broadly, the England squad's preparations for Birmingham 2022 will become more intense as we get closer to the Games. We will be organising the international schedule once we are clear about the domestic calendar, working with all stakeholders to ensure our players are well-prepared mentally and physically for a home Games.

Autumn Counties Meeting

We will be meeting with Counties in the autumn to explore some of the outstanding areas of discussion for the 2022 National Championships, Competitions and Finals, as well as looking forward to 2023 and beyond.

We will continue to assess the merits of changes made to competitions, digest feedback from players about their experience of playing in national competitions and ensure our competitions programme meets the needs of participants and Bowls England's strategy.

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