

Please discuss within your squads between now and 13 April 2019 and advise me of the outcome.

The Agenda for the AGM to be held on 27 April 2019 will then be distributed.

ITEM 1

James Lane of Amersham and Chalfont Vintage writes,

‘Over this season we have noticed a number of teams are struggling for numbers especially for away games, a problem we have also encountered.

On a few occasions we have lent players to the visiting opposition and conversely we borrowed when playing away and on one occasion at home.

Additionally I am getting pushback on the travelling required to fulfil our fixtures, it's possible players from other Alliance teams may also make the same comments.

Another collective issue appears to be the teams are aging with few new players coming in, at ACHC we are having trouble recruiting with several suitable candidates citing travel as a reason.

One way to reduce the travel may be to section the Alliance into areas, just for example North & South; a split could be:

Area: North

Amersham & Chalfont; Oxford; South Berkshire; Woking; Epsom; Windsor.

Area: South

Haslemere; Havant; Guildford; Oxted; Southampton; Winchester.

The local areas play each other home and away and play the other area either home or away on alternative years.

Another option could be top of the alliance v bottom, based on the results at the end of the season, top play each other twice and bottom once; then the bottom play each other twice and the top once; this would give the added benefit of more even than uneven games over a season and less travelling.

A final note in October & February as a club we struggle to fill all our fixtures over half term weekends, I understand that different regions have different half term weeks then taking the middle weekend off may be a compromise.

Note: half term dates. Hampshire and Surrey have 28-Oct to 1-Nov for Autumn 2019 but Kent have 21-Oct to 25-Oct. Other regions not known.

We would welcome a debate on this or any other proposals at the AGM.

As a team we enjoy playing in, and the camaraderie of the Alliance both on and off the pitch but we have reached the point where ACHC may not be able to continue in its current guise’.

WSFA Teams will be asked to vote ‘In favour’ or ‘Against’ determining next Season’s fixtures on the basis of a **North / South Split** as described with an end date for discussion set as 15-June 2019 to allow for fixtures to be set and published by the end of June.

WSFA Teams will be asked to vote ‘In favour’ or ‘Against’ determining next Season’s fixtures on the basis of **Top half v Bottom Half** of the Alliance Table 2018/19 as described with an end date for discussion set as 15-June 2019 to allow for fixtures to be set and published by the end of June.

WSFA Teams will be asked to vote ‘In favour’ or ‘Against’ determining next Season’s fixtures on the basis of **all teams playing each other home and away** in line with this season with an end date for discussion set as 15-June 2019 to allow for fixtures to be set and published by the end of June.

ITEM 2 Wessex Masters’

NB This is NOT a proposal; merely a subject for discussion.

In February 2019 Paul Marks approached Rob Kenwick regarding the discussion we started last season regarding a possible coming together of the WSFA and the Wessex Masters’ league. John Spencer from Southampton as Acting Organiser met Paul.

He wasn’t particularly looking to merge our leagues. More like exploring the possibilities around Vets hockey in general. He is also going to talk to the London Vets League to see if there is any mileage in having a more coherent strategy across the South as a whole. *He has since spoken to the Chairman of the London League and he believes that their clubs are happy with what they have.* Paul totally understood our position with respect to age rulings and the difficulty with geography.

There were two significant points:

1. The second division of the Wessex Masters league has a top half and bottom half split. This is similar to the WSFA league, in that the top 3 (Woking, Epsom and Oxford) are significantly stronger than the remainder of our league. Paul wondered if there was any possibility of some or all of our top 3 moving to Wessex with some or all of their bottom

clubs (Trojans 2, Chichester, Havant 2 and Salisbury 2) moving to WSFA? Paul will be asking their bottom clubs for their views.

2. The London league rule for age eligibility is

The age qualification date for league/cup competitions for Veterans (40+), Super veterans (50+) and Grand Masters (60+) will be December 31st of the calendar year in which the season ends, (i.e. for the 2017-18 season is 31st December 2018.) In the Super veterans league/cup competitions all players must be 50 or over on the qualification date except that no more than TWO players aged 47 and over may be on the field at any one time.

Should we align our age rule with London, so that if any club movements happen in the future, there will be no confusion?

John recently asked Paul for an update so that we could consider putting something forward for discussion at our AGM. His reply was

'it would be helpful to know if your clubs are interested in entering into discussions with the Wessex Masters' League with a view to consolidating our resources to produce a competition aligned with the main age groups for Masters' hockey - O40s, O50s and O60s.'

WSFA Teams will be asked to vote 'In favour' or 'Against' **discussions** with the Wessex Masters' League with an end date set as 15-June 2019 to allow for fixtures to be set and published by the end of June.

John is happy to enter discussions with the Wessex Masters' League. However, it isn't known if we would have enough teams in the O60s group to make a full league. The Wessex League could have 3 clubs (Trojans, Salisbury and Chichester). WSFA teams might comprise Southampton, Winchester and Havant, maybe South Berkshire and Amersham and Chalfont.

Organiser's Comments

The current arrangements are that we aim to play all teams home and away each season.

It has always been the case that teams can agree to play the scheduled fixtures or not, without any penalties being incurred. (Reasonable notice of intent to cancel or postpone a game is expected so as to avoid incurring pitch hire costs etc.). Two spare dates have been included in the calendar to cater for postponed games or they can be played at the beginning / end of the 'league' season by agreement with the opposition. Dates of games can be changed by mutual agreement between the two teams so that games are not played at half term.

If clubs want to change from playing in the WSFA for the Wessex Masters' League and vice versa, there has always been free transfer between the Wessex Masters' and the WSFA and vice versa.

Please see our Rules on the website, wsfa.co.uk.

Should we change our age requirements?

The Alliance is a "League" of friendly fixtures. The aim is to play enjoyable and evenly matched games between teams made up of Over 50's players.

No objection will be made to players under that age as long as they are of a similar ability and approach. THEY SHALL NUMBER NO MORE THAN 2 WITH NO ONE UNDER 45, except the goalkeeper if that is unavoidable.

The WSFA is asked to give a view and if in favour of a change to define what the change should comprise.

We ran an age survey about 5 years ago. It is proposed to run it again, basically asking each club to make a declaration at the AGM as to the average age of their playing squad as at 31 December 2019 in respect of the 2018/2019 season and repeat this each season, at the same time as asking Clubs whether or not they plan to compete the following season.

This might help to avoid the last-minute withdrawal of participants such as occurred before this season started.

Regards

Rob Kenwick