

PROPOSAL SUGGESTIONS REGARDING FUTURE FORMATS OF THE THURROCK & DISTRICT ASSOCIATION LEAGUE PROGRAM

I will commence by explaining the need to discuss this subject, it was mentioned by myself at the A.G.M in January 2026 that the association is approaching a time when the structure of the current leagues will be no longer viable. This is due to the number of clubs in the association decreasing and the number of playing members in most of those clubs also on the decline.

The current league structure is as follows:

7 teams in the premier league – playing 3 rinks of 4 players – 1 triple rink permitted

5 teams in Division One – playing 3 rinks of 4 players – 1 triple permitted

5 teams in Division Two – playing 2 rinks of 4 players – 2 triples permitted

There are various penalties related to the above formats which become active when teams do not field a full quota of players, or fail to field the full number of rinks, these are listed in the league rules.

Two problems are easily recognisable from the league structure above one is the leagues are unbalanced i.e. different numbers of teams in the leagues the second is if any team drops out of divisions one or two, they will lose their integrity as a league and will not be worth continuing with.

So, we move on to the options available to resolve the above situation, I must add these are my personal ideas there may be other views that members wish to put forward for consideration.

OPTIONS

Option 1 - Reduce all current leagues to a 3 rink triples format.

Pros

1. This will allow more teams to take part in the leagues, as only 9 players are needed for each game, so clubs with a large membership or a very small membership will benefit from this option.
2. It will unify all leagues so promotion and relegation from all divisions can take place.

Cons

1. Whilst this format may suit clubs with a large or small membership it would have a detrimental effect on some clubs with a medium membership i.e. a club with 17 playing members at present would be using 12 players for league match leaving 5 members not playing, if the triples option is introduced that same club **would not have** sufficient players for 2 triples teams, this would result in 8 of their 17 players not playing.
2. In the present format of 4 players per rink if a player is not present a triple can be played obviously if we adopt a triples format and a team are a player short, they will have to concede a rink.

OPTIONS

Option 2 – Slightly controversial, this is to allow any club in the association that have lady members but do not have a team in the TALBA league, is to allow those clubs to use their lady members in Men's leagues.

Current association clubs in this bracket are as follows:

FORD SPORTS - GRAYS TOWN – SOUTH OCKENDON – STANFORD

Pros

1. This would help increase the number of players available to these clubs, three of them belonging to division two, who at present can only play 2 rinks of 4 this might enable them to play 3 rinks of four and again help unify the leagues.

Cons

1. This option would have to be sanctioned by TALBA.
2. This option would only benefit a small number of clubs in the association.
3. The Men's association would no longer be an all Men's league.

Option 3 – Even more controversial, this is would be to combine TALBA with the T&dba so all future leagues would be played under a mixed format.

Pros

1. This would increase the number of players playing in the leagues substantially, probably meaning that the current system of fours would remain, but could still operate in a triples format if required, and clubs would be able to enter more teams thus helping unify the leagues.

Cons

1. This option would have to be sanctioned by TALBA
2. The Men's association would no longer be an all-Men's league.
3. The Ladies association would no longer be an all-Ladies League

I would like to add a caveat to the above option 3

Which is the two associations both the T&dba plus TALBA would remain as independent organisations with each having their own officers, but the league program would be solely administered by the T&dba league secretary, TALBA would continue to run their own competitions and friendly matches.

Option 4 – This is to allow clubs that wish to include ladies in their teams to do so, keeping the TALBA league but play the fixtures on a different evening.

Pros

1. This would allow the Ladies to run a TALBA league if they so wish.
2. It would again increase numbers for the T&dba leagues.

Cons

1. This option would have to be sanctioned by TALBA because it means changing the TALBA League evening.

I must stress once again these are only my personal thoughts, and all other permutations if suggested are open for discussion, the point i must get across is that if we as an association do not address this issue promptly we will lose the leagues because there will not be enough clubs to take part in them, we do not have vast numbers of new players coming into the game so in my opinion we must use our resources i.e. players as wisely as possible.

SIGNED League Secretary *Mr R F Clark*