

Ballarat Highlands Bowls Region

Hi Everyone

Following the government's announcement of its road-map out of COVID restrictions on Sunday, the Board met last night to discuss what it means for pennant bowls and what our season might look like.

This is what we know so far:

1. The season does not look like starting before Saturday, 6th November at the earliest. (It is possible that we may even start later but let's hope for the best).
2. The Ballarat playing area will start from the round in the draw applicable to that date. ie. If community sport does return as of 5th November, pennant will start on Saturday, 6th November, at the following rounds in the fixture:
~ Ballarat: Saturday Pennant - Round 6; Tuesday Pennant - Round 5 (9th November)

The Highlands area fixture has been moved forward 5 weeks so that all clubs play each other at least once during the year (which would not have happened due to the Melbourne lockdown, if the first five weeks had been scrapped).

Therefore if pennant starts on 6th November, Highlands will start at Round 1; Tuesday pennant – Round 1 (9th November)

3. A decision regarding the format of pennant has not been made as yet, as there are still too many unknowns regarding clubrooms usage, numbers allowed inside, etc. Obviously, we will be playing under one of two formats:
~ 25 ends with a break for lunch / afternoon tea
~ 21 ends straight through (with the availability of a 10 minute break if required, to be agreed upon by both Team Managers prior to the start of the game).

The Board feels that there is no need to rush this decision as we believe that more information will be forthcoming in plenty of time to let clubs know prior to starting our season.

In making this decision, the Board will follow all current and available government and health department guidelines, but also prioritise the health and wellbeing of our clubs and their members. Even if the numbers allowed inside clubrooms are increased, we still need to take into account what this means for large numbers within an enclosed space, given the age demographic of the majority of our clubs.

4. The fixture for regional and state events will need to be revisited and some events may need to be condensed in order to get them played within required timelines.
At this point in time, the Mixed Pairs will obviously need to be postponed, with new dates and fixtures to be drawn up as soon as is possible.

5. Likewise the Ballarat clubs' Greens Inspection schedule will need to be adjusted in accordance with the Ballarat lockdown. Clubs will be notified of the new schedule.

Bowls Victoria are meeting weekly with the government's Sport & Recreation body and there may be further information published on the BV website as early as tomorrow (Wednesday).

There is a fair bit of talk going around regarding the possibility of players being required to be 'double-vaccinated' in order to play bowls and whether clubs, etc should have a policy on this. If this becomes a government regulation for community sport, then Bowls Victoria will in all likelihood produce a policy and associated guidelines and processes. As with a lot of other information, this is still an unknown.

We will endeavour to provide you with further information on this - and any other relevant issues - as soon as the Board becomes aware of it.

Regards
Wayne

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