



## South Norfolk Community League 2011 Consultation Summary



**All but two teams** returned the consultation questionnaire providing valuable feedback on the season and the competition as a whole. Thank you to all clubs who took the time to complete the online form.

**Leaving aside** the most contentious issues until the end; the deployment of county players in fixtures and Sunday only games in the U11 League, there was almost universal support for a move to an average rather than total points table with, in the case of default, teams being deducted ten points from their total and having that defaulted game added to their total played.

**With regard** to removing the obligation of clubs to rearrange rain affected fixtures, only a quarter of those wished to stick with the current arrangement of compulsory rearrangement with over a half opting to play the games if at all possible with the removal of subsequent penalties should this, for whatever reason, not be possible.

**All clubs** agreed that the amount of games, start and finish times of the league were about right apart from a few U17 teams who felt that the competition should end earlier although not if this was at the expense of a smaller league.

**Most rated** arranging games as only fairly easy with several suggesting that all clubs should have one person only for the organisation of all youth fixtures.

**Sadly** it seems that girls' cricket still has some way to go as there was almost no support for the return of the softball league or in fact for any girls' cricket at all - very disappointing.

**Better news** was that most clubs reported youth member numbers stable and there are already over forty teams registered for the 2012 Leagues.

**Social networking** still has a way to go amongst youth managers and although many were aware of the league's presence on Facebook, less than 20% had actually accessed any content.

**The League** believes that fixed days for competitive games, as in most other sports, is the way forward to minimising player unavailability and making diary planning easier for busy families. The current arrangement of fixtures on random days can, for some, be a real deterrent to regular participation. Some clubs may welcome the flexibility that such a system provides but generally, players and parents do not.

**To this end** The League introduced for a trial period Sunday only U11 fixtures in 2011. Of the nine teams taking part, seven declared the trial very successful; one quite successful and only one felt that this format was not at all successful. All but one club played all or most of their games on the scheduled Sundays and seven clubs out of nine voted to retain Sunday only fixtures.

**With such** an overwhelming mandate The League will continue with Sunday fixtures for the U11 league in 2012. Clubs should bear in mind that the new rules no longer make it obligatory to rearrange rained off matches unless that is the mutual agreement of both clubs.

**A small majority** of clubs supported the idea of moving all age level fixtures to regular days in future although for 2012 the arrangements for the other three leagues will remain the same.

**And finally** to the most controversial issue which has yet to be satisfactorily resolved; the deployment of county players in SNCL league fixtures. Responses to the consultation were inevitably subjective; clubs with county players wanting to use them and clubs without preferring such players to be excluded from the competition. Several replies put forward persuasive arguments both for and against their involvement and these are summarised here:

### **The argument for**

- *The Junior Alliance (at U11 & U13) is currently a pairs format and county boys are keen to play in the SNCL which is played under "proper cricket rules."*
- *Small clubs with only one county player would be disadvantaged by having to exclude their strongest cricketer and, if not playing in the Junior Alliance competition, would be unable to provide them with any league cricket and therefore more likely to lose that player to another club.*
- *The presence of county players in a side can raise the standard of cricket and often provide leadership and guidance to less experienced or younger cricketers.*
- *Some clubs are considering switching their participation from the Junior Alliance and playing in the SNCL as this provides more games over a longer period in a preferred format. Preventing any county inclusion would dissuade many from pursuing this route.*

### **The argument against**

- *Clubs without a county player (likely to be the smaller ones) will be even further disadvantaged and this may deter them from playing league cricket at all with the possibility of the loss or reduction of youth cricket at that club.*
- *Large focus clubs with their greater resources already dominate the leagues and the inclusion of county players when they have plenty of other youth cricketers available gives them an unfair advantage over teams from smaller clubs.*
- *County players always feature in Junior Alliance fixtures (if their club plays in these) and also have plenty of county games. Their inclusion in SNCL league games denies an opportunity to another youth player.*

**The League** feels that to honour its original objectives county players should be excluded from all games but accepts there should perhaps be a middle way forward. Having consulted widely on this issue and after taking all views into consideration the following proposal is to be trialled in 2012.

**Clubs will be allowed** to field one county player only per fixture as long as their opponents have indicated that they will also field a county player. To avoid the impractical situation of team managers having to contact their opponents before every fixture, teams will make a declaration of intent at the beginning of the season as to whether they wish to include such players in their side.

This new ruling is intended to allow teams to include county players on a like for like basis, but not against clubs who do not have such a player or players available, or have decided not to use them in these fixtures.

### FAQs

**What is a declaration of intent?** A notification at the beginning of the season (on entry) that you wish to select a maximum of one county player for your league fixtures - this will be indicated against the club's name on the league tables.

**What if we don't have a county player?** You will notify this on entry and opponents will **not** be able to include a county player in fixtures against you.

**Does this always have to be the same county player?** No, you can use as many county players as you like but only one per game.

**Can I use a county player against all clubs?** No, you can only use a county player against clubs who will also be including one and have notified this at the beginning of the season.

**What if we have notified we are going to be using a county player but they're not available?** Once you have made the notification, opponents who have also declared their intent

will still be entitled to include a county player even if yours is unavailable, so you need to think carefully about your decision before the start of the season.

**I'm sure** that we've not heard the last of this but the above ruling seeks to strike a balance between the needs of the smaller clubs and the ambitions of the larger. The League prides itself on its flexibility and consideration for all players and managers. This proposal will be reviewed at the end of the 2012 season.

### **Proposals for 2012 Season**

**Tables will move to an average** rather than a total points system to decide league positions.

**There will no longer be an obligation** to rearrange rain affected fixtures except by the mutual consent of both teams. If they are voluntarily rearranged, which for many will be the preferred option, and then eventually, for whatever reason not completed, there will be no penalty for either team.

**Teams defaulting** or failing to arrange a fixture in the allocated time window will be deducted ten points with one game added to their total.

**The U11 league** will continue Sunday only fixtures with the programme notified by The League.

**The inclusion** of county player proposals detailed above will be trialed during 2012 and reviewed at the end of the season.

**The U17 competition** has twelve teams registered for 2012 making it too large to run as a single league.

Should all or most clubs confirm the proposal is to split these teams into two regional groups of six who would each play the others once (five games).

The top two teams from each league would then play each other once (three games) to decide the U17 winner for the 2012 season.

Although the top four teams could simply play a knockout for the title, this is a league competition rewarding consistency over the whole season rather than a single performance.

The five games in the first league would be completed by the end of the school summer term with the six week holiday reserved for the winners' league.

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The League welcomes any views on the above proposals which should be sent [here](#)

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