

The proposal of HKLBA to organize one premier league only on weekends

In 2013, the CoM conducted a review of the League format. It was concluded that "In coming years, the League Panel will organize a double round-robin Premier League and a single round-robin Triples League each year." This format ran for ten years. It was time to review.

On or off, we received suggestions to replace the current format of two league competitions per year with one premier league with more sides per division. In recent years, the number of entries in each League kept increasing, increasing the demand for venues and leading to more and more rescheduled games. Here are some points to facilitate our discussion.

The proposed change in Premier League

1. Number of sides per division – 16 (can be in the range of 5-18)
2. Format – fours, two bowls per end, 18 ends per game.
3. Number of teams per side – three (12 players)
4. Promotion and relegation – three sides up, three sides down
5. Division grouping in subsequent years – assuming 16 sides per division.
 - a. Play standard double round-robin if the lowest division is 9-18 sides.
 - b. If the lowest division is 19-20 sides, the number of sides in the two lowest divisions will be adjusted to max 18.
 - c. If the lowest division is 21-24 sides, add a new division with 5-8 sides (playing two double round-robin games, playing each opponent four times).
 - d. If the lowest division is 25 or above, add a new division with nine or more sides. (playing standard format of double round-robin)
6. Prize winners – 3 sides in each division (2 sides for division with eight or fewer sides)
7. League calendar – around 30 weeks. The league start date can be considered in early Jan or late April each year.
8. League will be open for entry with five months in advance and a year-round schedule arranged.
9. Tied players - players will tie after 12 games.
10. In principle, we will auto-allocate all games before issuing the league fixture, saving the effort on self-arrangement. There may be some exceptional cases, like the HKYDT exam period.

Analysis of the change

Pros	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All games can be pre-arranged much earlier, with a year calendar2. Clubs have more advanced information for their planning (games/players)3. With fewer divisions, new clubs can promote faster to reach the top division if they are strong enough4. Players can have more chances to play against high-division players5. More focus on league competition and players development
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Align with LCSD land-based booking policy 7. A more extended break can be scheduled for the maintenance period of the grass
Cons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We lost the format of the Triples league (3 bowls per player). Can consider organizing Triples League in mid-week daytime. 2. Clubs cannot use Triples league (if we do not organize) for training or test of the line-up 3. In the later stage of the League, some games will be routine when their results do not affect any promotion or relegation 4. Each side has to consider more reserves due to the long league period 5. Small clubs have to ensure sufficient members throughout the year

The league Panel discussed the subject. Most panel members support One premier league with 16 sides per division on weekends.

On the weekdays, the panel had no strong views between organizing a Triples League or keeping the status quo.

Please refer to Appendix for the panel views for more details.

Forward

1. This proposal will be reported to the Council of Management (CoM) and circulated to member clubs for comment, discussion, and approval.
2. Upon CoM approval, the League may start in 2024.
3. This league format will be reviewed after running for two years, say in 2026

Appendix

1. Panel views on One premier league on weekends

The League panel discussed, and most members supported one premier league on weekends.

The viewpoints of panel members were consolidated below

Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The implementation of 1 league per year can also free out more game weeks for competitions and other inter-clubs events.• It could release more space for National games and more flexible time for players.• 如果只得一個聯賽，球員數量問題亦可避免。• The new idea is quite interesting. It is a new approach with fresh vibes.• I prefer a slightly longer break in March/April to allow more time for green maintenance.• It can reduce a lot of administration effort and make the League games more professional• The break of 16-20 weeks can be allocated flexibility to fit in major events• The fixture can avoid the hot and rainy summer, which can minimize the hazards of heat stroke and rescheduling due to weather conditions• However, in drafting the details, we need to bear in mind the capacity of the existing greens in coping with the no. of sides. If possible, there will be no games on Sunday nights.
Object
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The League will last for a very long period and become boring. Support maintaining existing leagues• Suggest keeping the current format of two leagues to allow local players (all potential HK squad members) to be familiar with different formats of team games (Triples and Fours). To train players from the grassroots layer and to provide options to the elite layer• Suggest aligning format with significant events (triples in 2 bowls, 18 ends)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Help local players get used to the modern game format○ Keep up the pace of the game to tackle the issue of lacking green rinks and playing time management.• This will reduce the number of players who dislike participating in open competitions.

2. Panel views on whether to organize a triples/mixed league on weekdays

With the assumption that one Premier League of 16 sides per division will be arranged on weekends, the panel had no strong views between organizing a Triples League on weekdays or keeping the status quo (no league games on weekdays)

Support to organize Triples/Mixed League on weekdays.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two woods Triples can be introduced as weekday league and local tournaments.• Triples League does have provided opportunities for small and beginning clubs to join official league games. It facilitated some big clubs to release high-level players to play for lower-level sides or even other small clubs to achieve better results.•
Object
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am concerned about the tight supply of public greens. If a midweek league is organized, it will block off many rinks. With the regular training courses organized by the LCSD and the free-use scheme, it might adversely affect national competitions. Players might be put off from entering the National Competitions due to the increasing difficulties in rink booking.• Since some public venues, e.g., ALC, would be block-booked for over six months per year on the weekdays for district events, I would have reservations about organizing Triples or Mixed League on weekdays.•