



Restructuring of League Cricket Within Essex

Following the recent survey across club cricketers in Essex there is now a mandate to follow up and provide some options for restructuring league cricket in Essex.

Of the 568 individual responses to the survey, 80% indicated that there should be change to the current situation, with the two options proposed being approximately equally favoured.

The purpose of this paper is to give further detail on the two options proposed to allow clubs and players to provide more detailed feedback at a number of fora which will be held during January 2019. Following these fora a preferred option will be progressed and more details regarding next steps and timelines will be defined.

SITUATION

Currently the ECB accredited Shepherd Neame Essex Premier League (SNEL) is a closed structure with new clubs only able to enter the structure if a member club folds, merges or moves to another league. The SNEL is one of the few ECB accredited Premier leagues in England and Wales that has this limitation. The majority of other Premier leagues/Divisions have regular entry via promotion and relegation with a set of criteria for potential new clubs to meet, and the SNEL is under increasing pressure from the ECB to come into line.

TARGET

To create a league structure in Essex that allows for all clubs to have the opportunity to progress to a Premier League, that also brings Essex into line with the majority of other Premier Leagues in England and Wales.

PROPOSALS

There are two draft proposals to be further discussed. These are described in greater detail below.

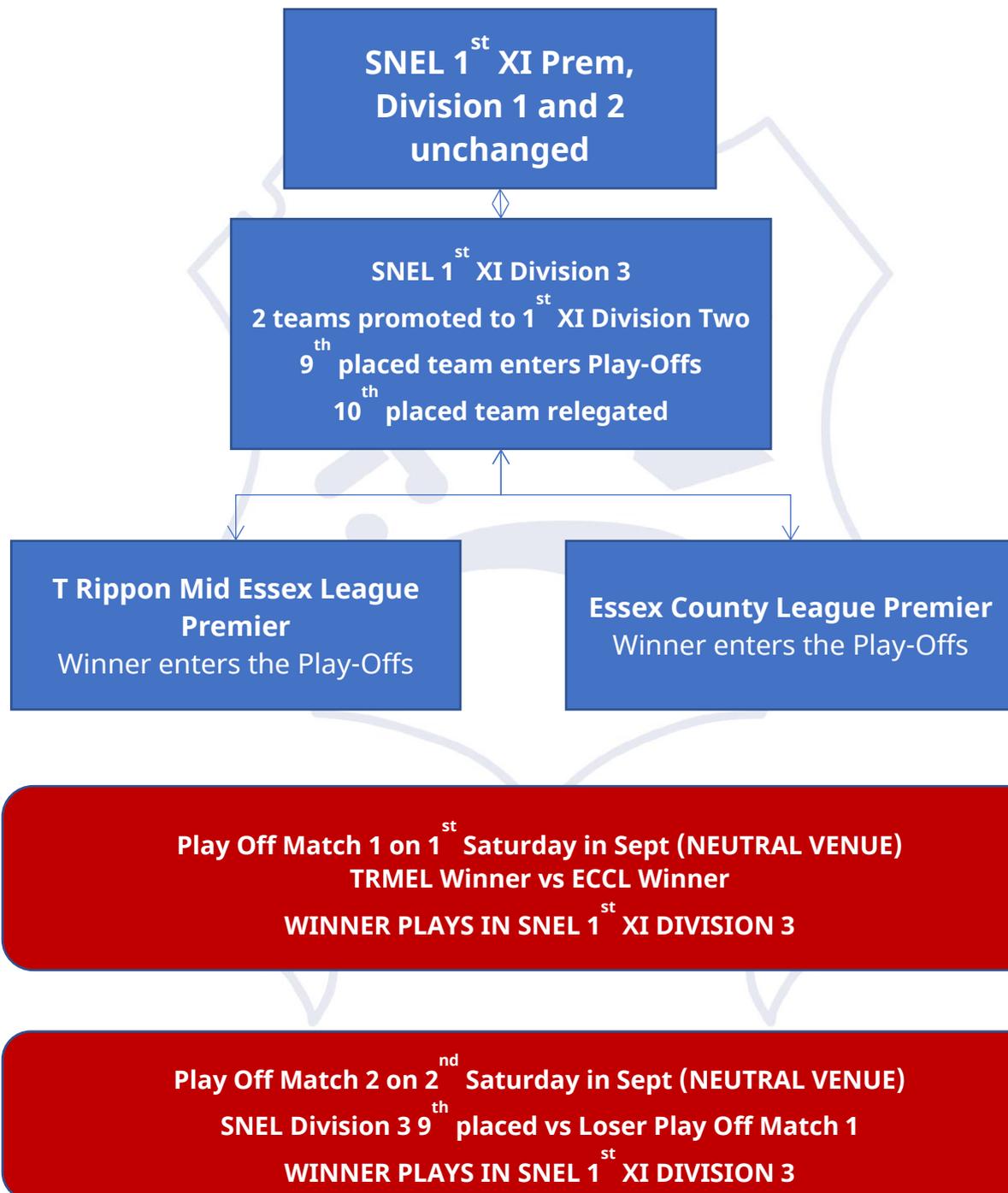
Option 1 – Open up the SNEL to promotion and relegation from other Essex leagues.

Option 2 – Create a new Essex Premier league structure with the SNEL and other Essex leagues acting as feeder leagues to this new structure.





OPTION 1 – Promotion & Relegation to and from SNEL





Questions and Answers on Option 1

Q1 What playing format will the Play-Offs use?

A1 SNEL 50 over playing regulations using SNEL panel umpires and Duckworth Lewis

Q2 Will there be any specific criteria for new clubs entering the SNEL?

A2 Yes – A detailed set of criteria will be agreed by the 3 leagues. Any club with a chance of appearing in the Play-Offs will have to confirm their intention to represent their league in these matches, their agreement to be promoted should they win and their confirmation that they meet the detailed criteria. They would need to provide this information to the SNEL by end of July in that season.

Q3 What happens if the league winner of the TRMEL or ECCL does not meet the criteria or chooses not to represent their league in the Play-Offs?

A3 The runner-up will be offered the opportunity to represent the league in the Play-Offs. If the runner-up does not meet the criteria or chooses not to represent the league in the Play-Offs then that league will concede both Play-Off matches and the 9th placed team in the SNEL will retain their status. If neither league can provide a representative for the Play-Offs, then both the 9th and 10th placed teams in the SNEL will retain their status.

Q4 What happens if the SNEL 9th placed team does not wish to play in the Play-Offs and be automatically relegated?

A4 There will be no Play-Offs and both league winners will be promoted provided they meet the necessary criteria.

Q5 Which league will any SNEL relegated clubs join?

A5 The SNEL club will have to join the top division of the league of their choice once relegated (TRMEL or ECCL). The TRMEL and ECCL will have to ensure their constitutions are amended to allow for this eventuality. It is possible that in any season there could be anything between a net gain of 2 clubs or net loss of 1 club to/from the two feeder leagues depending on the clubs involved and the outcomes of the Play-Off matches.

Q6 What happens to the 2nd XIs of any promoted and relegated clubs?

A6 The 2nd XIs of the clubs affected will follow their 1st XIs into their new league structure. For the SNEL this would be a straight swap into the current league structure. For the TRMEL and ECCL there would need to be amendments written into their constitutions to allow for a club's 2nd XI team joining their league structure at an appropriate level.





Q7 What happens to any lower XIs of any promoted or relegated clubs?

A7 The lower XIs of the clubs affected can choose to join the new league structure of their 1st and 2nd XIs or to stay where they currently are. There would need to be amendments written into the 3 league's constitutions to allow for a club's lower teams joining their league structure at an appropriate level.

Q8 How would this change be implemented from a constitutional perspective?

A8 All 3 leagues would need to vote through the requisite changes to their individual constitutions to allow for the required promotion and relegations of clubs to occur each season without specific voting to be required at an AGM to accept any new club.





OPTION 2 – New Essex League Structure



Play Off Matches on 2nd Saturday in September between 9th placed in Essex Division One, TRMEL Winner, ECCL Winner and SNEL winner
TWO WINNERS PLAY IN ESSEX DIVISION ONE





Questions and Answers on Option 2

Q1 How would the new league structure be implemented?

A1 A sub-committee of the current Essex Cricket in the Community (ECiC) Adult Participation Group would be set-up and would include representatives of all affected leagues, the Essex County Cricket Club (ECCC) Performance team, the Board and staff of ECiC. This sub-committee would manage the implementation and running of the new league structure in the first instance.

As part of the new ECB County Partnership agreement it would be proposed that ECiC would take over the running of the new ECB accredited Essex Premier League from the Shepherd Neame Essex League (SNEL).

The SNEL would then revert to being a feeder league to this new league structure along with the T Rippon Mid Essex League (TRMEL) and the Essex County Cricket League (ECCL). All three leagues would need to amend their constitutions to incorporate this change.

Further details regarding the financing and management of the new structure and of the feeder leagues would be a subject for further discussion with the ECB and ECiC.

Q2 How would the new clubs be selected for the new league structure?

A2 1st XIs of clubs that finish in the highest positions in their current leagues in the season preceding the set-up of the new structure would be invited to take part in the new Essex League structure by the sub-committee referred to above. 2nd XIs of clubs would not be allowed to play in the new Essex league structure.

There would be strict detailed criteria that would also have to be met before a club could be accepted into the new structure. These criteria would also be agreed by this sub-committee.

The sub-committee would have to assess the relevant strengths of the 1st XIs in the various current league structures and would propose the relevant proportion of clubs from the various leagues that would make up the new structure.

It is expected that the new Premier Division would be made up from current Premier Division clubs. The new Championship and Division One would also consist of the majority of SNEL clubs with remainder made up from the highest finishers in the TRMEL and ECCL Premier Divisions and any interested Essex clubs finishing highest in the current Two Counties Division One.





Q3 How does the current Two Counties League fit into this new structure?

A3 At this stage it is not proposed to include the Two Counties League as a feeder league into this new Essex league structure as it is already a feeder league into the East Anglian Premier League (EAPL).

However, if any of the highest finishing Essex based Two Counties Division One clubs, or any Essex based EAPL clubs wish to switch to the new Essex League structure at the point of introduction they will be invited. This will mean that the club's 1st XI would be removed from the Two Counties / EAPL pyramid and they would switch to the Essex league pyramid. This club's other teams could choose to stay in the current Two Counties structure or to move into one of the other feeder league structures.

Q4 What happens if a club chooses not to be part of the new league structure or does not meet the minimum criteria?

A4 They would stay in their current feeder league structure.

Q5 What happens to the remainder of 1st XIs in SNEL 1st XI Div Two and the TRMEL and ECCL Premier divisions once the new clubs have been selected and moved to the new structure?

A5 The 1st XIs not selected to enter the new structure will remain in their current feeder leagues. Each league's constitutions will need to be amended to rearrange their own league structure once the 30 1st XIs move to the new Essex league.

For the SNEL this will almost certainly dictate the need to introduce a merit structure across 1st and 2nd XIs as it is highly likely that somewhere between 10 and 20 SNEL 1st XIs from the existing 1st XIs will remain in the SNEL structure which will not necessarily fit into a multiple of 10.

Q6 What happens to the other teams of the clubs selected for the new league structure?

A6 They will remain in the current feeder league structure with none of these changes affecting them.

Q7 What playing format would the new league structure play?

A7 The new Essex Premier division would probably play similar regulations to the current SNEL Premier Division (IE 120 over timed games and 50 over limited over format) although this would be reviewed with the ECB, ECiC sub-committee and the competing clubs before implementation.

The new Essex Championship and Division One would probably play similar regulations to the current SNEL Div 1/2/3 (IE 95 over timed games and 50 over limited over format) although this would be reviewed with the ECiC sub-committee and the competing clubs before implementation.





Q8 How are the Play-Off fixtures decided?

A8 This will be a free draw of the 3 winners of the feeder leagues and the 9th placed team in Division One with the first named team playing at neutral venues home.

Q9 What playing format will be used in the Play-Offs?

A9 This would be the limited over format agreed for the Essex Championship and Division One.

Q10 What happens if the league winner of the SNEL, TRMEL or ECCL does not meet the criteria or chooses not to represent their league in the Play-Offs?

A10 The runner-up will be offered the opportunity to represent the league in the Play-Offs. If the runner-up does not meet the criteria or chooses not to represent the league in the Play-Offs, then that league will concede its Play-Off match. If two leagues cannot provide a team for the Play-Offs, then the remaining league winner and the 9th placed team in the Essex Division One would play in Essex League Division One in the following season. If none of the 3 leagues can provide a representative for the Play-Offs, then both the 9th and 10th placed teams in Essex Division One will retain their status.

Q11 What happens if the Essex League Division One 9th placed team does not wish to play in the Play-Offs and be automatically relegated?

A11 They will concede their Play-Off match and the league winner due to play them in the Play-Off is promoted.

Q12 Which feeder league will the Essex League Division One relegated clubs join?

A12 The relegated 1st XI will have to join the top division of their designated feeder league. The 3 feeder leagues will have to ensure their constitutions are amended to allow for this eventuality. It is possible that in any season there could be anything between a net gain of 2 clubs or net loss of 1 club to/from the two feeder leagues depending on the clubs involved and the outcomes of the Play-Off matches.

Q13 What playing format will be used in the feeder leagues?

A13 Ideally the top division of the three feeder leagues would use the same playing regulations of the Essex Championship and Division One. Beyond that each feeder league would manage playing formats for all other divisions as they currently do.

Q14 How would panel umpires be assigned to the various league matches?

A14 It is likely that a combined Essex league panel would be created and would appoint to the 3 divisions of the new league structure and the top division of each of the three feeder leagues as a minimum.





Q15 What would happen to the existing SNEL League Cup?

A15 A new county wide league 'FA style' cup could be created including all 1st XIs across the 3 feeder leagues and new league structure invited to enter. Leagues could still continue to run their own competitions with the members of their leagues if they chose to do so.

Q16 How would Essex provide a county winner to the National rounds of the ECB Club T20?

A16 All 30 clubs in the new league structure would be invited to enter the main County T20 competition and a qualifying format would be agreed on once the number of entrants was known. All remaining clubs within the feeder leagues would continue to be able to enter the Essex County Foundation T20 Cup.

Q17 How will the current ECB Premier League payments be used across the new structure and the feeder leagues and how might this impact League subscriptions?

A17 As part of the new ECB County Partnership agreement this funding would be under the control of the Adult Participation group and would be distributed to clubs and leagues as appropriate. The intention would be to maintain the current levels of league subscriptions where possible.

Q 18 How would this change potentially affect the sponsorship of the feeder leagues and will there be a separate sponsor for the 3 top divisions?

A18 All current feeder league sponsors would need to be fully informed of the changes. The feeder leagues themselves will still all have the same number of clubs playing in those leagues so the exposure to clubs will be the same. The new Essex league structure (top 3 divisions) would be open to sponsorship either from a current or a new sponsor.

Q19 What balls would the new Essex League structure play with and how might this effect other league ball deals?

A19 The new ECiC sub-committee, with input from the performance team, would look into the ball arrangements for the new League structure. Feeder leagues could continue to honour their existing arrangements or harmonise across the county with the potential to negotiate a better deal across all feeder leagues due to the increased total order.

Q20 What would the top SNEL divisions be called?

A20 Since it is likely that the structure would need to convert to a Merit structure it would probably make sense to number the divisions as per the TRMEL and ECCL – i.e. Premier, Division 1,2,3 etc.



