



# NATIONAL LEAGUE COMPETITION STRUCTURE CHANGES 2019-20

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In 2016, as part of the BDM research, a Competitions and Leagues review undertaken by Basketball England. Alongside this review, the BDM research group for competition researched what competition should look like across of various playing outlets with the following brief:

*Competition should enable the effective delivery of the coaching and technical & tactical group outcomes and also be a key tool in ensuring standards are observed. The groups should consider:*

- Thinking about all playing levels
- Providing balance across multiple playing structures
- All formats of the game and reducing barriers (eg. cost and travel)
- Investigating other countries' models

There was a strong message from Basketball England's membership, with 54% of respondents asking for improvements in leagues and competitions, the main areas for improvement identified as:

- Improved officiating
- Operating junior leagues at each age group (not every second age group)
- Better matching of ability of teams in leagues
- Reduce travel and providing games closer together geographically
- Better Scheduling

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# LEAGUE & COMPETITION ADVISORY GROUP

Basketball England's Competition Advisory Group, has been formed with the aim of developing players and increasing standards across all levels of the sport through an improved competition structure and had its inaugural meeting on 25 March, agreeing that a "player first" approach should be adopted across the sport at all levels. This would ensure the continued rapid growth of basketball in England whilst improving player development and enjoyment of the game, and reducing cost and travel distances for members. The Group is also keen to improve the standard of venues and the behaviours of those competing in and attending games.

The key tasks for the group are:

- To develop Basketball England's long-term league and competition strategy and to make sure it is implemented effectively.
- To introduce new initiatives and programmes and make sure that any changes made are sustainable over the coming years.
- Most importantly, to pass important information back to their organisations, clubs, regions and networks to improve communication at all levels.
- For further information click [here](#):

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# CHANGES AHEAD

As a result of our research into competition, it has become apparent that there is a need to thoroughly review the framework of competitive basketball which takes place in England to ensure that players' experiences are being optimised relevant to their age and stage of development, also taking into account their geographic location and the affordability of our game.

As a part of the new Game Plan due to be released and the three year plan for competition., Basketball England have prioritised National League Competitions as a 'Year One' priority to improve standards, create a new playing opportunities by reviewing all playing levels across the game and matching playing abilities, easing fixture congestion, reducing travel and supporting the needs of the competitions, when it comes to amateurs playing in the sport.

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# THE NEW SEASON 2019-20

With all of this in mind and in consultation with the League and Competition Advisory Group, continuous feedback with clubs, the following changes for the 2019-20 season will be applied:

## Senior National League Restructuring – Men’s Competitions:

- NBL Division One Men – Remains at 14 teams with a review of operating standards
- NBL Division Two Men – Split to North (12) & South (12) Competitions, reviewed operating standards
- NBL Division Three Men & Four Men becomes one league NBL Division Three Men with multiple regional leagues of ideally 12 teams per league.
- Removal of Men’s National Trophy, Men’s Patrons Cup, Men’s National Shield and replace with a more enticing offer for the league winners at each level. This will reduce the amount of double-header weekends and alleviate fixture congestion, ensuring a more balanced playing season for all teams.
- All teams to gain Clubmark ahead of entry to the 2020/21 National League season.

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# THE NEW SEASON 2019-20

With all of this in mind and in consultation with the League and Competition Advisory Group, continuous feedback with clubs, the following changes for the 2019-20 season will be applied:

## Senior National League Restructuring – Women’s Competitions:

- WNBL One Women – Remains as it is with a review of operating standards
- WNBL Two Women – Remain as it is and continue to grow the game at this level..
- All clubs to gain Clubmark ahead of entry to the 2020/21 National League season.

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# THE NEW SEASON 2019-20

With all of this in mind and in consultation with the League and Competition Advisory Group, continuous feedback with clubs, the following changes for the 2019-20 season will be applied:

## Junior National League Restructuring: 3 Tier Model

- Move to a three tier structure for the Junior age groups where possible and especially for male competitions with the opportunity to adopt at the lower end female age groups:
  - Premier Competitions** – aimed at players and coaches competing at or aspiring to be at national team level, Premier competitions will have reviewed operating standards, home / away fixtures, a national play-off system and will be expected to attend a series of meetings and professional development opportunities to improve the competition and their club's offering.
  - Conference Competitions** – aimed at players who are not of premier standard or for clubs who cannot commit to the demands of premier competition, Conference competitions will feature home / away fixtures, leagues of 12 competitively matched teams, with the league winner crowned as the league champion. Hybrid Zone Defence will be used at U16/18 age groups.
  - Regional Competitions** - aimed at lower level players to fill gaps in the competition market, competitions will be monthly triangular fixtures, no play-offs and rules to ensure all must play and no zone defence at U16/U18 age groups.

Note-No zone defence is across all U14 age groups, man to man is mandatory.

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With all of this in mind and in consultation with the League and Competition Advisory Group, continuous feedback with clubs, the following changes for the 2019-20 season will be applied:

## All Must Play Rule – U14 Boys & U14 Girls Age groups

Through feedback and to encourage all players within a team to play during a game, this rule is to be amended to fit better at these age groups and implemented in all Under 14 boys age groups across three playing levels and to continue in the Under 14 girls age group.

To introduce the first stages of the framework and allow players to play in the flow of the game at this age group, coaches will be asked to remain seated to coach during the game across all Under 14 age groups. They can be stood at the start of a game, half time, during quarter breaks and through timeouts. No coach can be stood up during the game.

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With all of this in mind and in consultation with the League and Competition Advisory Group, continuous feedback with clubs, the following changes for the 2019-20 season will be applied:

## Junior National League Restructuring: New Age Groups & Standards

- Creation of playing opportunities at the U12 age group at Conference / Regional level. A mixed league and a girls only league to be created, offering triangular fixtures with a focus developing players and an all must play approach.
- Entry into all leagues, as a new team, is referred to the Regional Management Committee / Regional Talent Manager for sign off to ensure that the new team adds value to the local basketball landscape.
- All clubs to gain Clubmark ahead of entry to the 2020/21 National League season.

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