

Dear Club Cricketer,

League cricket review in Essex 2018/2019

Purpose

To find a way to connect the leagues in Essex, that in the long run provides the opportunity for clubs to reach their aspiration, support sustainability and grow all parts of the game.

Any change must ensure that the leagues in Essex continue to be a rich source for home-grown players for Essex and England.

Background

Over many years there have been discussions around the structure of league cricket within the county. Currently there are 2 options for clubs wishing to play in a premier league – namely, via the East Anglian Premier League (“EAPL”) or the Shepherd Neame Essex League (“SNEL”).

The EAPL is fed by the Two Counties League (North Essex and Suffolk clubs), the Tucker League (Cambridgeshire clubs) and the Norfolk Alliance (Norfolk clubs) and this is the focus for clubs in the north of Essex.

The SNEL is a members’ league and new entrants are voted in by its members only when a place becomes available. A recent survey has shown that fifteen clubs outside the structure of this league wish to have the opportunity to reach premier league cricket.

The current offering for clubs’ teams below 2nd XI level seems to be positive following the changes made by leagues in relation to formats and start times. The challenge from the clubs outside the SNEL comes from 1st and 2nd XIs.

The SNEL committee has made different restructuring proposals to its member clubs on more than one occasion and all these have been voted against. A new approach is now being taken in the light of recent advice from the ECB which states that the SNEL needs to find a way to support clubs wishing to reach their aspirations and to encourage growth in the game.

A meeting of the Essex County Cricket League (ECCL), the SNEL and the T Rippon Mid Essex League (TRL) took place in June 2018. The majority of clubs that showed an interest in joining the SNEL played in the ECCL and TRL. This meeting agreed a mandate for change and that three simple proposals should be discussed by players, clubs, officials and leagues to come up with a way forward for club cricket in Essex.

Proposals

These are all currently very broad to ensure an open discussion by players, clubs, leagues and officials and a decision being taken that is the right one for all levels of the game for the next 10 – 20+ years. The proposals are as follows: -

OPTION 1

Maintain the status quo - This option may well lead to implications around funding for leagues, clubs and wider cricket development in Essex.

OPTION 2

Create a promotion and relegation route between the SNEL, ECCL and TRL. Most of the clubs who have shown an interest in accessing the SNEL have come from the TRL and the ECCL as mentioned above. This option will need to carefully examine the entrance criteria for being able to access promotion and adopt clarity for any club facing relegation in terms of which league they will rejoin.

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OPTION 3

Set up a new Essex Premier league structure which is most likely to be run by Essex Cricket through the Adult Participation Group linking in with the ECB via the new County Partnership Agreement. This proposal would consist of a county-wide structure for the top 1st XI teams in the County (potentially including clubs from the Two Counties League, Tucker League, EAPL, SNEL, ECCL, Herts and Essex League and TRL). The remaining teams and clubs would remain in their existing league structures which would feed the new Essex Premier League.

Conclusion

The aim must be to achieve the continuing development of the Essex league structure at the top end and to provide the right structure for the growth and sustainability of the game at all levels.

Structured conversations need to be undertaken with responses from players, leagues, clubs and officials at all levels of the game. It is also recommended that the next generation of players is involved in the discussion so that the best long-term structure can be put in place.

What we would ask of you now is for you to forward this letter to all members of your club with a request that they undertake the short survey to give us an understanding of the general feeling towards the 3 proposals.

Once we have feedback on the 3 proposals, we are proposing that a working group is set up by the Adult Participation Group, representing all levels of the game to advance a stronger proposal on the way forward for league cricket in Essex. This proposal will then be presented to all clubs and leagues for further discussion.

Timeline

August / September – Clubs and Players survey of 3 proposals

September – Adult participation group to discuss responses to the proposals develop a strong more in-depth proposal

October / November – New paper to be presented back to clubs and leagues,

January – Feedback from clubs sort and Forums planned to discuss next steps.

Here is a link to the survey to enable you to have your initial say on the future of League Cricket in Essex. It will take less than 2 minutes to complete and the closing date for this survey is Monday 17th September.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Essexleaguecricketreview>

Regards



Dan Feist
Head of Cricket Operations

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