



## How our members are helping to shape British League

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Players, officials and volunteers from across the range of British League have helped us to shape a strategy document for the competition.

Based on feedback from a consultation project earlier this year, a document has been agreed which details the vision, mission and objectives of British League, plus some medium-term priorities.

It is just over a year since the chairmanship of the British League committee and oversight of the delivery was brought in-house and led by Neil Rogers, Head of Competitions and Events, a move that was made to ensure the British League became more closely aligned with the rest of the competitions calendar and strategy.

The consultation process received almost 100 responses from players, coaches, officials, parents and organisers. These responses provided valuable feedback and guidance on where members see value from British League across the senior, junior, women's and veterans' sections.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, most (84%) highlighted the competition opportunity, followed by the social occasion (49%) and the opportunity to gain ranking points (46%). Other important themes included the development opportunity (40%), club promotion (32%) and inspiring fellow club members (26%).

Additionally, a large number of general comments also provided valuable insight. Some of these related to things we are already actively addressing; others related to format and delivery, which will now be considered further by the British League Committee; and also to the strategic considerations.

Critical amongst the latter was whether British League exists to support club-based development, or facilitate participation and competition-opportunity for teams, or whether both approaches are valid. It was agreed that British League should 'make sport accessible' to all legitimate and licensed members, and will therefore continue to welcome teams as well as more traditional clubs.

[Click here to read the strategy document](#)

Neil Rogers, Chair of British League, said: "This has been a hugely valuable and worthwhile exercise – not only have we given all British League players and stakeholders the opportunity to feed-back to us and to shape future direction, but we have established an essential framework to guide us all in the decisions that really matter to members."

The strategy has been published as entries open for the 2020/21 season. All the documentation for the new season, including entry forms, can be found on the [British League section of this website](#).

In light of the coronavirus situation, teams are being asked to pay 50% of the entry fee up front, rather than the normal practice of 100%, to enable us to continue planning and working with venues. We have also released an [event cancellation and refund policy](#) which outlines how and when decisions will be made on whether events can proceed as the situation changes.

A series of improvements has been made to the entry process – the first of a number of changes planned to enhance the British League's status as one of the flagship events in the domestic competitions programme, and to improve the experience of everyone involved.

Previously, each British League section had its own set of paperwork, regulations, payment methods and entry deadlines. Regulations and documentation are now more standardised.

Primary among the other changes is the decision to appoint a British League Executive Officer to the full-time staff of Table Tennis England – the process has been delayed by the coronavirus pandemic but will be resumed at the earliest opportunity.

This commitment and investment by the Table Tennis England Board is intended to provide professional help which takes away some of the administrative pressure from our volunteer organisers – on tasks such as generating fixtures and checking ranking lists. It also allows a consistency of approach across all areas of the British League and the ability to work to strict deadlines.

On the officiating side, the Technical Officials Committee (TOC) will be involved in appointing umpires from next season, ensuring that sufficient umpires of the required standard are available at each event.

The British League fixtures and results website, launched in time for the 2019/20 season, had some expected teething problems, but is now a stable, fit-for-purpose platform with scope for the functionality to evolve from 2020/21 and beyond.

Neil Rogers said: "These changes have all been made with several purposes in mind – to support our volunteers; to provide the teams with the best possible experience; to ensure a consistent approach throughout the league; to ensure the British League remains relevant and contemporary; and to ensure it retains its place as our flagship domestic league competition.

"I'm particularly grateful for the support we have had from a number of key volunteers, particularly Gary Wood, Malcolm Macfarlane and Alan Ransome, who have shown tremendous ongoing commitment to taking British League forward – but also to all the volunteers who work so hard to make these events a success."

Among the other developments are a new guidance document to help Senior British League, Premier Division clubs, covering everything from publicity and live streaming to the development of club officials, volunteers and venues. Premier Division press officer Wilf Reeve, who was appointed last season, will continue in 2020/21.

Neil Rogers added: "Across all sections of the British League, we are confident that these changes will be well received by players and clubs – and we will continue to consult and listen to their views as we shape the next few years of British League."

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