

Senior British League Divisional Restructure 2016-17

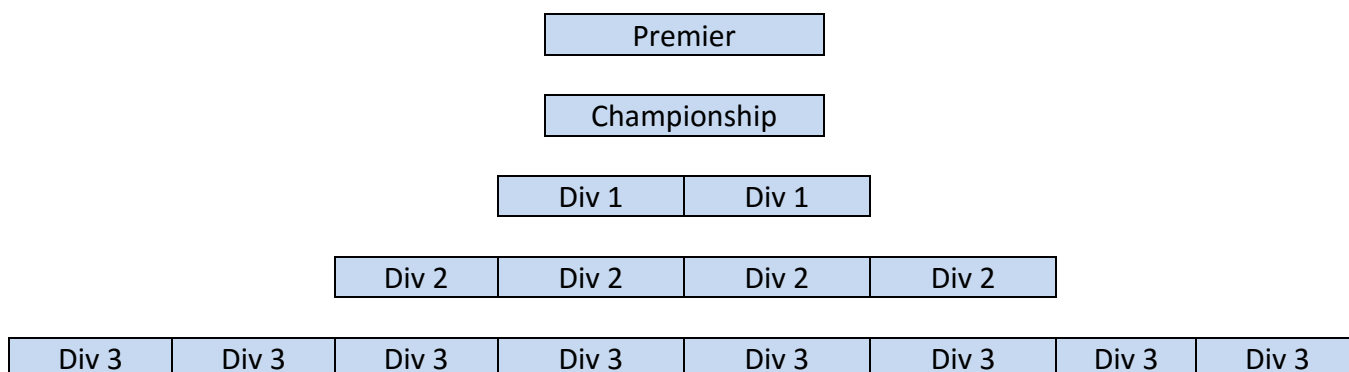
This document is to inform you of a change that the British League committee will be making in readiness for the 2016-17 season.

The current divisional structure is:

- 1 x Premier Division
- 3 x Division One
- 3 x Division Two
- 3 x Division Three
- 3 x Division Four
- 1 x Division Five

We will be changing the divisional format into a pyramid structure, creating a championship division and removing the principle of a series of 3 divisional layers below it. The changes will be introduced for the 2016/17 season. This document explains how the changes will affect your club.

The new divisional structure will be:



Rationale

This new structure will bring with it many benefits, some of which will be obvious as you read this document, others will only become clear and proven over-time.

The main reasons for implementing this change are:

- to put in place a straight forward structure, similar to those on the continent.
- to address the variance of standards in the current division 1 and provide more competitive matches for all.
- to make promotion and relegation easier to understand.
- to reduce distance to venue and the need for overnight stays for division 2 and below.
- to reduce the time taken for new clubs to reach the top-flight.
- allow for regionalized growth of the league.

The Restructuring Process

Please note: No team will be disadvantaged as a result of this restructuring process.

The end of seasons' promotions and relegations will still apply. Once these have been actioned NO further relegations will occur.

For this season **only**, we will run a play-off for two Premier division places using the format below.

- The teams finishing in the top six places of the Premier Division will remain in the Premier Division.
- *The two teams finishing in 7th and 8th place in the Premier Division will play off against the six teams finishing in 1st and 2nd place in each of the three Division 1's.*
- The two teams finishing in 1st and 2nd place in the play-offs will be invited to form the Premier Division, with the 6 teams already there.
- No club may have more than one team in the play-offs.
- *In the event that a team rejects the invitation to enter the play-offs, or is ineligible in some way, the Committee will extend an invitation to the team(s) with the highest Table Tennis England player rating* value of the top four eligible (played 5 team matches) registered players, during the 2015/16 season, from within the entire Division 1 structure.*
- Doubles will not form part of the play-off format.
- Due to the above amendments, the format of the play-offs cannot be decided until we know the number of teams that have accepted the invitation. Please, therefore, be prepared for the possibility of a 2 weekend play-off, or the use of an alternative format, to allow for completion over one weekend. More information to follow.

Championship Division.

The Championship division will consist of 8 teams and be populated by the 6 unsuccessful teams in the play-offs, plus a further 2 teams. This additional requirement of two teams will be filled by the two teams with the highest Table Tennis England player rating values of their top 4 registered players for the 2016-17 season.*

1st Divisions.

There will be two 1st divisions which will be populated from the sixteen teams left, after having populated the Championship division as above. Normal promotion and relegation will still apply, prior to the final population of this division.

2nd Divisions.

There will be four 2nd divisions consisting of 32 teams, and will be populated by the three division 2's plus an additional 8 teams to form the additional division. After the normal promotion and relegation, the additional 2nd division will be populated as per the creation of the Championship division. The 1st and 2nd placed teams in the current three 3rd divisions will be selected. The additional requirement of

two teams will be filled by the two teams with the highest Table Tennis England player rating* values of their top 4 registered players for the 2016-17 season.

3rd Divisions.

There will be no fixed number of divisions up to a maximum of eight. They will be populated by the existing teams from the 3rd, 4th and 5th divisions, plus any new teams, with the hope to fulfill the requirement of many clubs/teams/members/players for regionalization.

Note.

The British League Regulations will be amended to facilitate these changes.

In accordance with current Regulations all teams will be notified of these changes before 31st March 2016.

* to include players from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

The future of promotion and relegation.

Promotion will become, via regulation changes at this year's BL Conference, 2 down, 1 up with committee discretion for the 2nd promotion spot, as our current regulations allow, except for the Championship and Premier divisions, which will follow a new play-off format, as defined below.

1. The 8th placed team in the Premier Division will be relegated, and will not take part in the play-off.
2. The 1st placed team in the Championship Division will be promoted and will not be required to take part in the pay-off.
3. The 7th placed team in the Premier Division will be challenged in a play-off match against the 2nd placed team in the Championship Division.
 - a. If the 2nd placed team from the championship division chooses to decline the option to challenge, then the 7th placed team will retain their Premier Division place.
 - b. If the 7th placed team refuses to accept the challenge, then the 2nd placed from the Championship team will be given the promotion and given a Premier Division place.
4. If both teams decline their Premier place, the SBL Committee will select a team, assuming they 'qualify' for a Premier Division place.
5. No club may have more than one team in the play-offs, therefore, in this scenario, the 7th placed team in the premier division, would not be relegated.

Note: These are the principles that will be distilled into our regulations for 2016-17, but are subject to change and additional detail to cover all scenarios.

Appendix A

1. NO CLUB MAY HAVE MORE THAN ONE TEAM IN ANY SINGLE DIVISION, AT DIVISION 3 LEVEL OR HIGHER.
THIS RULE WILL BE REVIEWED WHEN WE CONSIDER THE CREATION OF THE DIVISION 4 LEVEL.

2. ALL TEAMS THAT WISH TO PLAY IN THE PREMIER DIVISION MUST SATISFY THE 'CLUB CRITERIA', DETAILS OF WHICH WILL BE PUBLISHED LATER.

3. THOSE TEAMS THAT CHOOSE NOT TO GO INTO THE PREMIER DIVISION, ON A HOME AND AWAY BASIS, WILL BE PART OF THE CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION.

Senior British League Committee, January 2016