



**The Ryman Surrey Championship**

2013 Players Survey

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# 1 Introduction

In June / July 2013 the Executive of The Ryman Surrey Championship formed a sub-committee, together with the Chairman of the Cricket Committee, comprising the following members, to formulate a consultation strategy with playing members of the league.

- Crispin Lyden-Cowan (Chairman)
- Peter Murphy (Treasurer)
- Richard Laudy (Rules and Playing Conditions)
- Paul Taylor (Surrey CCC)
- Olly Roland-Jones (Cricket Committee)

This sub-committee decided to launch a county-wide survey of all playing members of our league. The questions (see Appendix One) were considered carefully, and were validated / amended by an independent expert on surveying, in order that they were fair, unbiased and garnered the information that could be useful to The Executive in determining it's future strategy.

The timing of the survey was considered carefully, and was deliberately launched to coincide with:

- The end of the ECB Survey
- The peak playing time
- To facilitate feedback that can be considered for the 2013 Council Meeting

The Survey was conducted anonymously, but asked participants to register their club and their normal XI that they would expect to play in.

The Survey was closed on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.

The entire Executive of the Championship would like to thank all clubs and players who have responded to this survey, the first of its kind within Surrey. The information imparted via the survey represents a significant and valuable source of information that will guide the Executive in its thinking for some time to come.

## 2 Survey Responses

The survey was circulated to all Chairmen, Treasurers, Secretaries, Captains and Council Representatives, via email. It was placed upon the Championship Web-Site Home Page, and circulated via Twitter.

The following table represents the total number of responses received, subdivided by the respective XI's

XI	Responses	Percentage
1st XI	244	29%
2nd XI	252	30%
3rd XI	195	23%
4/5th XI	155	18%
Total	846	

All Championship clubs across the county were represented in the survey responses, and all Championship XI's in those clubs were represented.

### 2.1 Conclusions of The Survey

There are three main areas of concern arising from the Survey. We have detailed these areas of concern, below, with our Executive Committee response and proposals. We have also included some of the comments from the Survey (anonymously)

For information, we have received over 600 individual comments, from the Survey, which broadly fall into three areas. However, we have noted a number of comments that we cannot categorise, nor wish to respond to at this time.

Whilst we would like to respond positively to all comments received, this is not going to be practical at this time, but we will take note of all comments and consider them all as we develop our evolutionary approach to transforming recreational Cricket in Surrey.

The conclusions of the survey have given us a considerable amount to think about and we have prioritised our proposals in order that we do not overload the Championship with too many major changes in too short a space of time. We fully intend to incorporate more changes in future years as our proposals are approved and bed down.

However, we remain open to change should our clubs so desire, and are fully committed to representing the clubs and players views in moving forward.

## 3 Accessibility

It is evident from responses that a major concern for clubs and players is the future of their clubs, the retention of players and the accessibility of Cricket.

We note the following from the Survey:

### 3.1 Limited Overs

**Issue:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> XI and 4<sup>th</sup> XI participants in the survey have indicated by a majority that they would prefer to play a Limited Overs game only. The 2<sup>nd</sup> XI players have indicated by a small majority that they would prefer to move to a Limited Overs game only.

**Executive Response:** We propose to recommend changing the format of the game for the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI and 4<sup>th</sup> XI divisions and all leagues therein to a Limited Overs format, for the entire season. We propose to consult with the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI representatives to establish an appropriate time frame, if desired, to move to a Limited Overs game only.

#### Example Comments from the Survey:

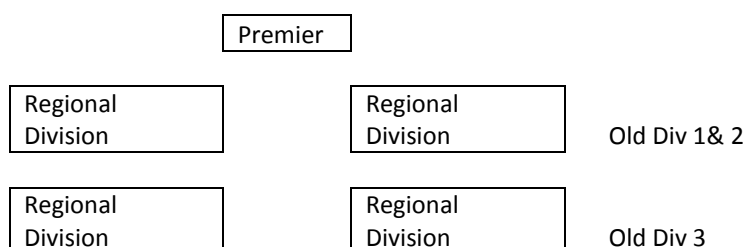
##### Limited Overs

- All limited overs cricket with an added incentive for bowling and batting points
- To abolish timed games in favour of all limited overs throughout the season.
- As stated above all limited overs cricket, the best team will win each week rather than playing good cricket to come away with a handful of points!
- Abolish draws, create incentive to chase result

### 3.2 Travel times for 3<sup>rd</sup> XI players

**Issue Raised:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> XI and 4<sup>th</sup> XI are often embryonic training XI's for younger players coming into senior cricket for the first time. This often creates issues with travel times and journeys around our county. There was an appetite across the survey results for regional 3<sup>rd</sup> XI cricket outside of the Premier Division.

**Executive Response:** We propose to recommend that we regionalise the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI league, to broadly reflect the operational structure of the 4<sup>th</sup> XI – i.e a County-Wide Premier Division and two Divisions at Level one and two Divisions at level two below the Premier.



We would aim to get 4 regional divisions of 10 per division, with a 2-up and 2-down from the lower regional division to the upper regional division and one up and two down from Premier to upper regional division.

The allocation of clubs to a new division upon promotion or relegation (except going into the Premier) will be decided at the end of each season on a regional basis (as the 4<sup>th</sup> XI is at the moment).

We believe that this will increase the number of people available to play cricket within clubs. We also believe that the annual “shuffle” of regional divisions will increase the variety and experience of cricket in our county.

#### **Example Comments from the Survey:**

##### **Regionalisation**

- Have the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI like the 4<sup>th</sup> XI style with the prem + regionalised
- regionalised leagues are a good idea - all leagues should have home and away matches
- Why not have regional leagues, especially in somewhere like Croydon where Addiscombe, Purley, Sandersted, Old Mid, Old Whits, Mitcham, Sutton.

- regional cricket might be a good way to go to cut back on travelling time and then you could start all games at 12/12.30

### 3.3 Start Times and End Times

**Issue Raised:** A huge number of responses in the Survey were concerning the start time of Saturday Cricket, and very importantly, the ending time of Cricket on Saturdays. This was causing players to consider not playing when distances had to be travelled for away games, and later finish times were affecting the income of clubs in respect of Bar Revenue / Food Income.

**Executive Response:** We propose to recommend that we rationalise the end time of all cricket in the Ryman Surrey Championship, to 7.00pm at the latest for all matches. The corollary of this is different start times. However, with our proposals detailed below we believe that the start times and ending times of cricket on Saturdays can be relatively comfortably unified.

We have undertaken some research on the average length of matches, the average number of overs per hour and have concluded that to achieve a target 7pm finish, the following start times would be appropriate.

1<sup>st</sup> XI 120 over matches – 11am start

1<sup>st</sup> XI and 2<sup>nd</sup> XI 100 over matches – 12 Noon start

3<sup>rd</sup> XI and 4<sup>th</sup> XI matches 1pm start

We would like to propose that the “Golden 30 mins” rule apply for all limited overs matches in all XIs. This will mean in the event of a weather interruption the first 30 minutes of the interruption will not be used for recalculating the numbers of overs remaining.

#### Example Comments from the Survey:

##### Earlier Finish

- Start time should be 11.30 for 2nd team , so early finish is possible
- Earlier start times, there is no reason we shouldn't start at 11/12pm all through the season it means we finish earlier and have longer in the bar, or people have time to get home and spend with families.
- Starting the timed games in Div 2-5 at 12am instead of 1pm, so that they finish earlier.
- Games to finish earlier, finishing much after 7pm makes Saturday evening plans very difficult and wives seem to be less and less understanding these days!!!

### **3.4 Club Income – Bar / Food**

**Issue Raised:** Different / later start times and formats adversely affects the ability of the club to raise money through it's bar and food income.

We are acutely conscious that late finishes adversely affects the ability of clubs to generate income. Equally, very early finishes of games can have a similar effect. Trying to get the right balance is enormously challenging.

**Executive Response:** We believe that the start times detailed above will help clubs maximise the possibilities of income generation. Clearly there will be instances where XI's have a very early finish – but we cannot legislate for such an instance. We have had significant comments that a 6-7pm finish encourages players and supporters to stay at their clubs, whereas perversely a later finish actually diminishes club revenue significantly. Our timing proposals take this into account.

The vast majority of 3<sup>rd</sup> XI and 4<sup>th</sup> XI play away from their main club ground, even when they are playing at home. Often they are up to 30 mins drive away. We believe the regionalisation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI (and the continued regionalisation of the 4<sup>th</sup> XI) will help in getting players back to their club houses more quickly after games.

*To be clear, we are proposing that all games in the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI and 4<sup>th</sup> XI are limited overs. We note that the Survey results (See Appendix Two) clearly and significantly demonstrated that this was desired by the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI's and 4<sup>th</sup> XI's*

#### **Example Comments from the Survey:**

##### **Late finish impact on social activities/Bar revenue**

- Timed cricket is an outdated concept, as is having late start times of 1pm. Matches could easily begin at 11 or 12 every week, meaning players and umpires are able to get home to their families (or to the bar!) earlier.
- I enjoy going back to the bar but often you miss events outside of cricket because of games finishing so late.
- Earlier start times, there is no reason we shouldn't start at 11/12pm all through the season it means we finish earlier and have longer in the bar, or people have time to get home and spend with families.
- Start times. These are currently inconsistent across the divisions and with games finishing as early as some do, club bars can be dead after 8pm
- To be considered - - All limited over fixtures - All games from Premier Division and all divisions below start at 12pm. Reasons why - - One format with a result (barring bad weather) in every game.



- Having one format would allow teams to work on tactics and improve as the season progresses.
- The timed game of 120 overs in a day is far too long and as a result the standard of cricket and the quality of players in these games is decreasing.
- The timed games were supposed to teach batsmen to bat for long periods and bowlers to bowl long spells. What use is this if the county do not pick from club cricket? - The toss influences the outcome of a timed game too much.
- All games starting at 12pm. a) All teams are back at the clubhouse at a similar and reasonable hour to help with bar takings.

## 4 Negative / Confusing Cricket

### 4.1 The Old Ball

There was a significant amount of honest and robust comment about negative cricket being played across the County.

Issue Raised: The retention of the old ball for use during the second innings of timed games. This subject was raised a considerable number of times. The rule about NOT using the old ball applies in the 1st XI and the 4th XI only. Therefore this rule applies only to the 1<sup>st</sup> XI Division Five, all 2nd XI and 3rd XI. Assuming the advent of limited overs only cricket in the 3rd XI this rule will no longer apply for the 3rd XI. From the comments received this rule appears to encourage negative cricket through the use of defensive fields from the start of an innings, and it also reduces opportunities for young seam bowlers. It may potentially contribute to players choosing not to play certain fixtures or certain types of fixtures. Also, if other rule changes being put forward are adopted the use of the old ball would be restricted to 2nd XI timed games only which would make it even more of an anomaly.

Executive Response: Therefore we propose to recommend abolishing this rule in any timed game cricket fixtures.

#### Example Comments from the Survey:

- USE OF THE OLD BALL FOR 2nd INNINGS: This should be banned.
- The ability to take the old ball in the second innings is dated.
- The ability to take the old ball in time games is absolutely ridiculous. I have not spoken to a single cricketer who is in favour of this rule, despite its wide use. The fact that a team can win the toss, elect to bat first, choose to bat to 55 overs, then choose to open the bowling with the old ball and the field spread, is far to great an advantage simply for winning a coin toss. It also promotes extremely negative cricket, making for boring games.
- Remove the ability for the side batting second to take the old ball in the time format. Many of us use the approach because it is available but it is increasingly spoiling certain games and amongst other things often mean young seamers miss out on overs to older spin bowlers (bit of a stereotype but it usually works out that way) which cannot be good for the future.

## **4.2 50 Over rules**

**Issue Raised:** The rules for the 50 over Limited Overs game (particularly in the 1<sup>st</sup> XI) are confusing and do not follow any recognised standard for such 50 over cricket. Further, The T20 rules are particularly complex in the event of an interruption.

**Executive Response:** We propose to recommend that we simplify the 50 over Limited Overs game rules, for all such matches and apply the same rules across all leagues. This will make it easier to manage these games, from a club and league perspective, and increase the enjoyment of this form of cricket.

We will look closely at the T20 rules with the aim of simplifying these, particularly in respect of the rules covering interruptions

## 5 Pitches & Umpires

There was a considerable amount of comment about Pitches and Umpires in the Survey

### 5.1 Umpires

**Issue Raised:** The number of qualified and or independent umpires supporting all levels of cricket in the county is insufficient. There are simply not enough umpires to go around.

**Executive Response:** We recognise that there are not enough umpires supporting our leagues. We have asked clubs to send clubs forward for training, to joining the ECBACO etc. We also recognise that there are some financial restrictions on clubs in funding the training of umpires, where there are more important calls upon the funds of clubs.

We therefore propose to establish an annual fund of £1000 to subsidise the training of umpires. We propose that clubs can apply to have up to 100% of the costs of sending an umpire on a training course, repaid to the club upon demonstrable proof that the club has paid the funds for the training and the trained umpire has stood in at least 4 matches (by registering the Umpire on the relevant Play-Cricket Scorecard). Once this simple criteria has been met we will reimburse the club 100% of the costs paid.

The Executive will reserve the right to cap the total expenditure, in respect of this initiative, to a maximum of £1000 in any one calendar year, if the Treasurer so chooses.

We also propose to ask the ECBACO (Surrey Branch) to consider “group discounts” for clubs sending two or more people for training, to reduce the cost pressures on both the clubs and the Championship.

Whilst we as an Executive cannot provide more umpires, we can facilitate the training of umpires and we fully intend to support any and all initiatives in this respect.

#### **Example Comments from the Survey:**

##### **Umpires**

- The one thing I have been disappointed with the most has been the pitches & lack of official umpires, as there are an unbelievable amount of bias team members who don't know the meaning of LBW & other areas as they never seem to give them out.
- Maybe league appointed umpires in the 2nd XI as the quality this year has been poor.
- need to invest in running refresh courses for the 1st & 2nd team (premier league) umpires annually.
- Possibly even more important is umpires for the Premiership 2nd XI

- All games to have two designated umpires down to 3rd XI

## 5.2 Pitches & Equipment

**Issue Raised:** The quality of pitches and equipment used at cricket grounds is often poor and requires early attention to facilitate good cricket.

**Executive Response:** We recognise that clubs are more often than not, acutely short of funds to invest in better quality of pitches and better more up to date equipment. This appears to be the case at 3<sup>rd</sup> XI and 4<sup>th</sup> XI grounds, which are often recreational grounds, or grounds that do not have dedicated groundsmen.

We are therefore proposing to increase our annual investment fund up to £10,000 over the next two to three years, subject to ECB funding. We are proposing to extend the criteria for application for investment, from clubs for grants from the Investment Fund, to include equipment that can be easily stored or secured, or be easily transportable to other grounds, so that league games on Saturdays have a better chance of starting and completing.

For example, we are looking to invest in portable drying devices and portable ground sheets that can be taking to grounds to facilitate the starting of a game, where no such equipment exists. We believe that such equipment will help clubs continue a game once it has got underway, should there be relatively minor rain interruptions. We have noted that some clubs who have such equipment already have managed to complete games, in this respect .

Additionally, we are prepared to extend / increase the amount granted to clubs to facilitate the purchase of equipment that will contribute to the playing of the game.

We will continue to require clubs to comply with the criteria of seeking community and member involvement when applying for a grant from the Championship.

### Example Comments from the Survey:

#### Pitches

- Also, the state of the pitches are awful, some players sliding on metal objects on the pitch, even at 2 clubs there were 2 pitches overlapping and our fielder had to look over his should every time he heard someone hit the ball just in case is was heading his way.
- Better pitches, umpires
- Can Surrey reach out to local councils who provide varying states of pitches for 3/4th teams
- pitches and grounds to better more enjoyment in playing teams with good grounds with covers and decent pitches.
- Quality I pitches and make sight screens compulsory at 3rd x1

- The quality of pitches within the league hasn't been great.

### 5.3 Bonus Points

**Issue Raised:** There was a large number of comments regarding the introduction of bonus points.

**Executive Response:** We recognise that clubs and players would like to see a more equitable distribution of points via the bonus points mechanism. There are many different systems of bonus points around cricket in England, and we would like to see which of these would work best in our county. Therefore the Executive will be looking very closely at this over the coming months with a view to proposing a way forward. However, in the light of all the other changes proposed at the moment we feel that this should reasonably wait for 12 months to allow the current proposals to bed in.

#### Bonus Points

- Definitely bonus points to encourage positive cricket throughout the game and not just when a win is on offer.
- Introduce batting and bowling bonus points to encourage and reward positive play throughout timed games.
- Bonus points both batting and bowling for all time games.
- To bring in extra bonus points, i.e. for how many runs scored and wickets taken in a match.
- Time cricket needs a big overhaul, it is far too reliant on the toss and rewards sides for playing negative cricket. Batting and bowling points are a must. A bonus point format would give sides that have lost early wickets when batting second an incentive. In the same situation it will reward sides that have performed well despite not being able to claim the final wicket. Currently you have a situation where one side completely dominates the game (300-2 plays 100-9) but just fails to take the final wicket. They are currently rewarded by just 3 extra points. If bonus points were awarded for passing 180, 220, 260 and 300 runs and 3, 5, 7 & 9 wickets, then in the situation above the dominant side receives 12 points the dominated side 1. A much better reflection on the game.
- An incentive such as bonus points to prevent negative cricket. There is nothing worse than a team batting second blocking out for a draw from ball 1. Makes it a waste of a Saturday afternoon for everyone involved. Teams will always do it to stop a team getting 13 points. Bonus points are desperately needed!!

## 6 Summary of Proposals

### 1<sup>st</sup> XI

- Rationalise the 50 over game rules
- Rationalise the T20 rules
- Start time 12 noon for limited overs
- Start time 11am for timed game
- Abolish the “Old Ball” rule in 1<sup>st</sup> XI Division Five

### 2<sup>nd</sup> XI

- Rationalise the 50 over game rules
- Start time 12 Noon for all games
- End Time 7pm
- Abolish the “Old Ball” rule

### 3<sup>rd</sup> XI

- Regionalise the non-premier divisions
- Start time 12 noon
- End time 7pm
- All games to be 50 overs per side limited overs
- Abolish the “Old Ball” rule

### 4<sup>th</sup> XI

- Start time 12 noon
- End time 7pm
- All games to be 45 overs per side limited overs

### All XI's

- Umpire Training Costs contribution.
- Increase and extend the Investment Fund.

## **7 Appendix One**

The questions asked in the Survey:

**Club Name**

**Normal Team**

**Which of the following best describes which format of cricket you would prefer to play**

- All Limited Overs
- All Timed Game
- Mix of Limited Overs and Timed Game

**Which of the following is important to you when playing cricket:**

- Format of Game
- Length of Game
- Start Time
- Finish Time
- Getting a Result
- Bonus Points
- Standard of Opposition
- Quality of Pitches
- Club Membership

**Please describe your motivation for playing Cricket**

**Would you like to regionalise the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI and or the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI**

**Please leave comments for the Cricket Committee**



## 8 Appendix Two

Summary of the Survey Results.

Responses by XI

XI	Responses	Percentage
1st XI	244	29%
2nd XI	252	30%
3rd XI	195	23%
4/5th XI	155	18%
Total	846	

Format of Game

XI	Limited Overs	Timed Game	Mixture
1st XI	45%	2%	53%
2nd XI	53%	5%	42%
3rd XI	61%	6%	34%
4 / 5th XI	59%	15%	26%
Total	53%	6%	40%

An overall total of 53% of our players have indicated that the Limited Overs format is preferable. However, the 1<sup>st</sup> XI appear not to want LO, but a majority in the 2/3/4's do want this.

The overall total on favour of LO without the 1<sup>st</sup> XI in the figures is 59%

### **Regionalise 2<sup>nd</sup> XI**

<b>XI</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1st XI	39%	61%
2nd XI	30%	70%
3rd XI	29%	71%
4/5th XI	41%	59%
Total	35%	65%

The survey has clearly indicated that we should not consider regionalising the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI

### **Regionalise 3<sup>rd</sup> XI**

<b>XI</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1st XI	53%	47%
2nd XI	48%	52%
3rd XI	61%	39%
4/5th XI	63%	37%
Total	55%	45%

The survey indicates that a large majority of 3<sup>rd</sup> XI players want to regionalise their divisions.

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### **FORMAT OF GAME**

<b>Format of Game</b>		
<b>Format</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Critical	104	12%
Important	362	43%
Irrelevant	31	4%
Not Important	95	11%
Very Important	245	29%
(blank)		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>837</b>	

A vast majority consider the format of the game important / very important / critical.

<b>Length of Game</b>		
<b>Length</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Critical	81	10%
Important	371	44%
Irrelevant	19	2%
Not Important	105	13%
Very Important	261	31%
(blank)		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>837</b>	

Players appear to be concerned about the length of the game.

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### **START TIMES**

<b>Start Times</b>		
<b>Start Time</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Critical	75	9%
Important	349	42%
Irrelevant	20	2%
Not Important	180	21%
Very Important	215	26%
(blank)		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>839</b>	

A large majority consider Start times as Important / Very Important – i.e 77%

### **FINISH TIMES**

<b>Finish Times</b>		
<b>Finish Time</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Critical	99	12%
Important	279	34%
Irrelevant	32	4%
Not Important	188	23%
Very Important	232	28%
(blank)		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>830</b>	

The Finish Time is considered as Important to Critical – i.e. 74%

### **RESULTS**

<b>Getting a Result</b>		
<b>Result</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Critical	221	26%
Important	266	32%
Irrelevant	15	2%
Not Important	111	13%
Very Important	229	27%
(blank)		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>842</b>	

Getting a Result is fairly evenly balanced between Important and Critical.

### **BONUS POINTS**

<b>Bonus Points</b>		
<b>Bonus</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Critical	96	11%
Important	243	29%
Irrelevant	63	7%
Not Important	209	25%
Very Important	232	28%
(blank)		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>843</b>	

Bonus points appears to be fairly evenly distributed

### **PITCHES**

<b>Quality of Pitches</b>		
<b>Pitches</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Critical	230	27%
Important	221	26%
Not Important	8	1%
Very Important	382	45%
(blank)		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>841</b>	

No one mentioned pitches as irrelevant.

### **OPPOSITION**

<b>Standard of opposition</b>		
<b>Standard</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Critical	113	13%
Important	344	41%
Irrelevant	16	2%
Not Important	27	3%
Very Important	338	40%
(blank)		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>838</b>	

The standard of opposition is high on players agenda.

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**MEMBERSHIP**

<b>Club Membership</b>		
<b>Club</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Critical	131	16%
Important	325	39%
Irrelevant	22	3%
Not Important	74	9%
Very Important	280	34%
(blank)		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>832</b>	

Players appear to want to be getting an experience from their club membership