

GC Leagues Manager's Report 2019

A record number of 36 teams competed in the four GC Leagues this season such that five clubs now have two entries each in the Handicap League. This particular league, split into North and South divisions, is nearing capacity and it may be advisable to consider alternative options should interest continue to grow. The new all-singles format in this league ran with very few problems and I hope that the few clubs who voted against its introduction will come to regard the change as a beneficial one. My records show that there were at least 56 handicap changes made during the season by players from the 12 clubs represented.

I am pleased to report that infringements of the rules were minimal and in all cases a resolution could be made satisfactorily within the existing framework. I do though need to reiterate last year's request for deputising team managers to be briefed fully on their responsibilities. Most problems arise when a deputy manager claims not to have known the rules, and in particular did not have access to a copy during the match.

Communications with GC contacts worked very smoothly this year and I am most grateful for their cooperation and assistance whenever it was needed. Several clubs will be aware of the difficulties faced by Bransgore largely as a result of their welcome entry to the Level Play league and the outrageous timing restrictions imposed by their local council. They have put considerable resources into trying to resolve this issue and I would urge opponents who are due to visit to check the latest position beforehand and to be aware of the options allowed by the rules to achieve a satisfactory match to be played.

Implementation of the new SCF website from a GC Leagues point of view was not without its difficulties. I am indebted to our IT guru, Steve Fisher, for helping me get to grips with some of its idiosyncrasies and I hope, provide a service which clubs and members alike found useful. Please let us know where you think improvements might be made and I am sure we will endeavour to consider them carefully. Two clubs with multiple entries opted to use identifier names rather than the traditional A, B, C labels and this appeared to work without problems.

Participation on the lawns this year, in all leagues, was as competitive as I have ever seen it. The final tables though do not show how late in the season it was before many of the leagues had a clear winner. The cliff-hanging result from the North v South Handicap final typifies, I think, the health of our current GC structure and is a tribute to all of our Federation clubs whose hard work and support for the leagues can be recognised.

Although not strictly my remit I think it appropriate here to record our congratulations to last year's Handicap league winners High Wycombe who thereby qualified for and won the inaugural GC Federations Shield by defeating Durham in the final.

Final league results and comments are as follows:

Level Play

Despite an additional entry from Bransgore the Winchester/Phyllis Court domination continues for a sixth year. No club won or lost all of their games but this time it was **Phyllis Court** who finished with the best record.

Handicap

Nine teams entered the North division with four of them sharing the top positions on 10 points each. Unusually there were three possible winners depending on the result of one final match between Phyllis Court B and High Wycombe Kites. A drawn match would have given the title to High Wycombe Kestrels but for the raptors it wasn't to be and **Phyllis Court B** took both points to win the division.

On the same day the South division was decided as **Bransgore** leapt over both East Dorset teams with a late run to win the division by 11 points to 10.

The North South final at Henley was another cliff-hanger. With 15 games completed Phyllis Court led Bransgore 8-7 and the two number one players were left to decide the match. By the new rules, in this situation either player could win the title for their club. At the 13th hoop **Phyllis Court** finally prevailed.

One Court

A second entry from Basingstoke replaced Winslow but it was last year's winners **Caversham** who finished with a clean sheet and the title.

Doubles

A new entry from Winslow made a six team competition but again **High Wycombe** were too strong and won all of their games to take the title for the third consecutive year.

Roy Tillcock
GC Leagues Manager