

Proposal to the EBU for a National Club Pairs Championship

Ian Payn, the new EBU Chairman at the AGM in November, has identified on the EBU's Tournaments Forum that there is an increasing gap between the average tournament player and the average club player making the transition from club to tournament increasingly difficult. The new format for the Larsky Cup has resulted in many club players playing in a Kent-organised event for the first time or after a long interval. We believe that this format could be adapted to a national competition which could entice players to take the first step on the road to tournament play.

Our proposal for a new National Club Pairs Championship is as follows:

1. The EBU would designate a week (or better still a fortnight) as the club qualification period. Anyone who scored 50% or more at any club event held in that period submitted through UMS would qualify to play in a quarter-final. Many players would play in multiple heats and some would qualify with multiple partners. The aim at this stage is simply to get as many people as possible qualified. Where the EBU holds an email address for a player they would be notified by that method of their qualification and of the time and location of quarter-finals. For those without an email address or where the email bounces a letter would be sent to the club where they qualified either in hard copy or electronic form. If a pair wished to enter they would have to notify the EBU in which quarter-final they wished to play and with which partner. A player would only be allowed to play in one quarter-final and only with a partner with whom they had qualified.
2. Quarter-finals would be one session events organised by counties. Small counties which were geographically close might organise one event between them. Geographically large counties such as Kent and Yorkshire might hold several quarter-finals. If a county only organised one quarter-final then that would have to be on a weekday evening or a weekend. Where it organised more than one could be on a weekday afternoon. Anyone scoring 50% or over in a quarter-final would qualify for a semi-final. A similar notification process to heats could take place although it is to be hoped that email addresses could be captured at the quarter-finals but once again qualifiers would have to nominate their semi-final.
3. Semi-finals would be organised by the EBU and would be similar in number and format to the National Pairs Regional Finals in recent years with a similar qualification structure.
4. The final would be organised by the EBU and be similar to the National Pairs final but we should find a way to highlight the club at which the winning pair first qualified.