

**THE TOP 27 COUNTIES GET TWO QUALIFIERS FOR LEAMINGTON IN  
2 WOOD SINGLES - 4 WOOD SINGLES - JUNIOR SINGLES - PAIRS - TRIPLES – FOURS  
SENIOR FOURS AND JUNIOR PAIRS ONLY GET ONE ENTRY**

PRESS CONTROL & CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW TO COMPARE ENTRIES IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE  
AGAINST OTHER COUNTIES

[0d5381eb-f8ee-4f61-bc59-beb6e165a050.pdf \(bowlsenglandcomps.com\)](https://www.bowlsenglandcomps.com/0d5381eb-f8ee-4f61-bc59-beb6e165a050.pdf)

NOTTS NEED AT LEAST 50% MORE ENTRIES THAN IN 2022

**IN THE NATIONAL COMPETITIONS  
SENIOR SINGLES & PAIRS – MIXED PAIRS – MIXED FOURS – CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS  
EACH COUNTY WINNER WILL QUALIFY FOR LEAMINGTON  
THERE WILL BE NO REGIONAL FINALS**

**PLEASE READ THE COMMUNICATION BELOW FROM BOWLS ENGLAND**

**Subject: Bowls England - National Competitions and National Finals 2023**

Further to the Counties' Conference, we write to advise of the communication we will be making public tomorrow given entries open for the National Competitions.

Thanks to those who fed back on the Conference, much of which complemented our own reflections. The discussion on the National Finals qualification for 2023 was not quite positioned with the clarity we would have liked, and we acknowledge it may have been better to have:

been clearer on the board position following the meeting the day before.  
shared the Dorset and Worcester AGM proposals in advance – these are both attached for your information

Nevertheless, the discussion was enlightening, and it was great to get your perspectives, which have helped shape our thinking.

After the meeting, the Board discussed the subject further and concluded that:

The principle of 60 qualifiers with no Regional Finals provides the best solution for 2023, balancing the various competing priorities. We have subsequently increased this to 62 qualifiers as these can be accommodated across the 30 rinks without any negative impact (30 matches and 2 byes).

The additional 14 qualifying places should allow 14 counties to have a second qualifier, rather than giving the largest counties 3 places. Whilst the 3-2-1 idea has the potential to be fairer in terms of chances of reaching Leamington, we feel it over-complicates matters for 2023. This means the 27 counties with the most entrants per event will receive 2 places and the 8 counties with the fewest will receive 1 qualification place.

In order to effectively deliver the National Finals, we need to have clearer policies around duplications and match timings. There is a gap in the Inter-County as we want to discuss reducing this to 18 ends aligned with all other fours events.

Making changes at an AGM to a competition programme due to start in 6 weeks' time would cause significant issues and negatively impact the vast majority of people.

We have consulted a few critical friends in relation to the above and prepared a public statement as well as the schedule for the 2023 National Finals. We thank all those who assisted us over the past week in various discussions. Please find the statement below that will be issued tomorrow and the outline for the National Finals is attached. We'd be happy to chat through with

you. Alistair and Lee best in the first instance, and we will no doubt pick this up as a group at the drop in next week.

Please also see attached an updated Calendar of Events. International dates will be added to the calendar once finalised following discussion with British Isles colleagues in the coming weeks.

We hope you will amplify the announcement tomorrow to ensure players in your county are aware of the opportunity to enter the national competitions.

### **BOWLS ENGLAND OPENS 2023 NATIONAL COMPETITION ENTRIES**

We are delighted to announce that entries for our individual and club National Competitions are now open. Always popular and keenly contested, 19 National Competition winners will be crowned at Victoria Park in August 2023, alongside 16 National Championship victors.

We have also announced our schedule for the 2023 Bowls England National Finals in order that players and spectators may start to plan their year ahead.

### **National Competitions**

Our competitions are open to players of all abilities – with a range of events designed to meet your individual requirements. They give you a great opportunity to challenge yourself and make new friends or perhaps rekindle old rivalries.

We particularly welcome entries from those who may not have entered one of our competitions before, as this is a great opportunity to improve your game, test yourself against different players and perhaps win a place, and a few bragging rights, at the National Finals at Royal Leamington Spa. With all area winners proceeding directly to the National Finals in 2023, your chances of treading the hallowed turf are significantly increased!

All events are organised on a knock-out basis, with the early rounds played locally and the National Finals at Victoria Park, Royal Leamington Spa, which hosted the Lawn Bowls and Para Lawn Bowls at Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

So, whether you are a regular competitor or new to our sport, we have plenty of opportunities for you to get involved.

Entries are now open – [enter online here](#)

The closing date for entries is 9am on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March.

### **2023 National Finals**

The National Finals will run from Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August inclusive.

We have listened to feedback from this summer in relation to the Regional Finals and number of qualifiers from each county. With this in mind, our schedule has been developed consistent with a number of key principles, including but not limited to:

Priority given to National Championships

Increasing the number of qualifiers to 62 in all National Championships (with the exception of the Senior Fours and Junior Pairs, which remain at one per county). This means an additional 14 qualification places and, with 30 rinks available, enables the green space at Victoria Park to be used maximally. In all those events with 62 places, those 27 counties with the highest entries per event will receive two qualification places, with the remaining 8 receiving one place

No regional finals in National Competitions – all area winners proceeding to Leamington will provide a significant increase in qualifying places available

Inclusion of Top Club Finals within the National Finals

Minimising duplications wherever possible

## **Policy on duplications and match time limits**

The 2023 schedule has been devised to minimise clashes. Historically we have sought to accommodate players in more than one event scheduled to run at the same time. Due to the volume of events and the multiple qualification of some competitors, it is inevitable that a small number of players will have matches that clash. For the best interest of the event, we have developed a clear policy on duplications to allow players, clubs and counties to make informed decisions.

In 2023, in all rounds of National Championships all players with a scheduling duplication will be accommodated.

We shall also seek to accommodate players with scheduling duplications in the following National Competition events, where time and green availability permits:

Champion of Champions  
Family Pairs

However, in order to ensure the smooth running of the National Finals and for the wider benefit of the vast majority of players, spectators, volunteers and umpires, should scheduling clashes occur involving any of the following events, teams will be required to provide substitutes. **This will be a condition of entry.**

We would encourage players/teams to review the schedule prior to entry and be mindful of the implications of entering the following competitions if successful in the National Championships or National Competitions:

All inter-county events  
All inter-club events  
National Mixed Pairs  
National Mixed Fours  
Senior Pairs

To support the increased number of qualifiers and removal of Regional Finals, we are also introducing time limits for the completion of matches in order to assist the smooth running of the National Finals. We feel these are reasonable, will assist umpires in managing slow play and will help avoid scheduling clashes due to matches over-running. The limits (to include trial ends) are as follows:

National Championships

Two bowl singles – one hour and 15 minutes  
Four bowl singles – two hours and 30 minutes  
Pairs, Triples and Fours – three hours and 30 minutes

National Competitions

Singles – two hours and 30 minutes  
Pairs – two hours and 30 minutes  
Inter-Club – three hours and 30 minutes  
Inter-County – TBC

## **AGM Propositions – important information for National Competition entrants**

We must make all players considering entering National Competitions aware that Bowls Dorset has put forward a proposition to the Bowls England AGM in February 2023 proposing 70 qualifiers (two per county) from 2023.

Bowls England does not support this proposition because it will:

Create greater inequality between counties in terms of the chances of qualifying for the National Finals based on entry numbers received. Counties with the largest number of entries have up to 20 times more entries than the smallest counties, and their players would have a correspondingly smaller chance of qualifying.

Mean that plans for 2023 cannot be finalised by players, spectators or officials causing significant disruption and inconvenience.

Negatively impact on the event delivery for officials, volunteers, county officials and staff, and compromising our duty of care for our workforce's wellbeing.

Make no impact on entry numbers for National Championships given that many counties have already completed their competition entry process for the 2023 season.

Create additional work at all levels of the game, time which can be better invested in getting more people playing.

Precede the National Competitions Review (see below) and will hamper the full review that has been agreed to be carried out by that group as part of our 'Fit for the Future' Strategy.

If this proposition is passed by county associations, then we shall need to change the domestic schedule and National Finals programme just over 6 weeks before the start of the season. This will include:

Reintroducing Regional Finals to enable the National Finals, with the additional rounds, to be completed within the allocated event period.

Continuing to stage the Top Club, or other Finals, on a separate weekend

Amending the National Finals schedule for re-publication following the receipt of entries and publication of draws

A proposition put forward by Worcestershire for a similar change but from 2024, will also be considered at the AGM. Whilst Bowls England acknowledges the desire to have more qualification places, it does not support this proposition as it will similarly hamper the National Competitions Review process. The proposal for 2023 is an effective solution balancing a range of considerations in terms of delivering the event.

### **National Competitions Review**

We have committed to deliver a National Competitions Review and a working party is being assembled. Their recommendations, if approved by the Board, will be implemented for 2024.

Whilst we are delighted that competitions retain a good level of popularity within our membership, we are also acutely aware of a number of challenges. Entry numbers have been in decline for many years (particularly in women's events), the latter stages are being dominated by a reducing pool of players, age bands at junior and senior level may not be conducive to encouraging participation and the competition landscape is complicated for those considering taking part.

Providing the right competitions at the appropriate level is fundamental to the future of our sport. National domestic competitions should deliver great experiences for players, inspire new people to play our sport, stretch and prepare our best players for international bowls and increase our sport's visibility. The review will inform how this is best achieved. Ideally, we would wish to complete the review and implement positive changes that take our sport forward, provide fairness across the country and better meet the needs of all bowlers.

We shall shortly be advertising for members to join this group so please do keep your eye out if interested in working with us on the National Competitions Review. All stakeholders will be consulted as part of this process.