

Grounds and Fixtures AGM Report 2019-20

29th June 2020

I would like to commence my report by acknowledging that it's been a challenging season in many respects but particularly in terms of scheduling and to thank everyone for their patience.

The start of the season saw 49 teams playing across five divisions in the women's league, which was the same as the previous season. One team, regrettably, had to withdraw (see details below) and we concluded with 48 teams.

We had nine teams in the premier division (up from eight) and 10 teams in division one (static). The season started with 10 teams in division two (static) but this was reduced to nine teams when Dutch had to sadly withdraw their B team near the halfway point. Division three consisted of 10 teams (static) and 10 teams made up division four (down from 11).

The divisions mostly completed the first half of the season under unprecedented circumstances but unfortunately the knock-out competition including the Guv Dillon Cup was not able to take place. As we now know the difficult decision was made to cancel the season.

Availability of pitches continue to be at a premium and as we look to maximize how we use the time available to us:

- The extended time we incorporated for Premiership games last season continued to be implemented successfully.
- In order to accommodate the volume of games in the time available we increased our weeknight slots to include Tuesday at Happy Valley. Teams should continue to expect games during the week, regardless of whether they have a Vets team in their league. Every effort is made to divide the timeslots in a fair and orderly manner, notwithstanding the league order (Prem to Division 4).
- We identified that moving to quarters did result in some teething problems around the stopping and restarting of games and more work has been done to implement measures to ensure that games start and finish on time. We acknowledge that more education, diligence and enforcement of timings need to happen in order for this to work better, with the onus very much on umpires and captains. The consequences of not adhering to starting/finishing games on time could result in a reduced number of game slots and impact the season length, increase number of weeknight games etc.
- There remain some issues with the watering of pitches and the poor quality of others which impacts timings and availability. We continue to work closely with venues to make sure the impact is as minimal as possible.

We will continue to consult and ask for feedback from clubs on all of these changes implemented to ensure that it doesn't disadvantage teams.

The committee would again like to thank Hong Kong Football Club for their ongoing support allowing us to use their pitch and affording flexibility to us.

A successful one-day premiership 5-a-side tournament took place on 11th January at Hong Kong Football Club. The committee would like to thank everyone who was involved in the planning, organization and set up of this tournament, including in particular the team at Hong Kong Football Club, the HKHA office and Eva Thometz of the HKHAWS.

Regarding challenges faced this season, I think it is important to note here that in determining whether games take place, the health and safety of players is our priority at all times. The committee spends a considerable amount of time consulting and reviewing peer groups in Hong Kong and around the world before making decisions.

With so many factors to consider, scheduling is not a 'one size fits all' remit and it's important that Clubs adhere to providing information ahead of time and minimizing requests as much as possible.

My recommendations to the incoming committee are as follows:

- Prepare more contingency plans as potential disruptions should continue to be expected next season
- Continue with the premiership showcase tournament immediately after the Christmas break. Build in the potential for more tournaments as part of a more flexible approach.
- Continue to emphasize the importance of starting/finishing on time (with a lead being taken by umpires and captains) to ensure the smooth running of the league.

Christine Wood
Grounds & Fixtures Secretary