

North Wales Men's Hockey League

PROPOSAL 2

The following proposal is in response to a motion raised at the North Wales Mens Hockey AGM 2009. The motion raised was a recommendation to instruct all North Wales clubs to withdraw their lowest placed North West league teams and enter those teams into the North Wales league. In addition the North Wales league would be moved to a Saturday, from its current position as a Sunday league. It was stated that this would ensure fixtures were fulfilled in the North Wales league and improve the standard of hockey within that league. The motion was tabled and adjourned to allow all club representatives to have adequate time to consult with their committee/members.

The counter proposal is, in itself, very simple in that;

1. the North Wales league remains on a Sunday (where BOTH clubs agree in advance matches may be played on a Saturday)
2. clubs are not required to withdraw any teams from the North West league
3. the North Wales Mens Hockey committee are charged with investigating, implementing and policing a systems to ensure the fulfilment of fixtures within the North Wales league
4. the North Wales Mens Hockey committee are charged with bringing to an SGM/AGM (whichever is the soonest) a proposal which addresses the value of winning the North Wales league.

These items are based on the following concepts:

- 1a. Moving the North Wales league games to a Sunday was done to improve the fulfilment of fixtures, and it worked. Returning to a Saturday is likely to make fulfilment of fixtures and even bigger issue rather than resolve it.
- 1b. The North Wales league currently provides teams with an advantage over North West rivals in that it allows clubs to 'grow' a team over a number of years by supplementing the team with players who have already played on a Saturday.
2. Clubs would be forced to withdraw teams from as high as division 7 of the North West league, it would then take a minimum of 3 years to return to this level. The argument that playing in the North Wales league will provide a better standard of matches if flawed in that a) if the team deserved to play at a higher standard then they would be promoted through the North West league
b) teams currently playing in divisions 7 of the North West league clearly would not play at a higher level by being forced to play teams pulled out of divisions 9 and 10.
3. Until the North Wales committee can resolve the issue of fulfilment of fixtures it is irrelevant to try to address the standard of games which aren't occurring.
4. Clubs can not be expected to commit higher standard players to the North Wales league until there is greater value in winning the league, than promotion in the North West league.

North Wales Men's Hockey League

PROPOSAL 1

To restructure the North Wales Men's Hockey League (NWHL), by moving all games to a Saturday and having the league comprise of the lowest placed team from each of the North Wales Men's clubs. This would mean the lowest placed team in each club withdrawing from the North West Hockey League to compete solely in the North Wales Men's League.

REASONING:

Over the past few years the NWHL, played on a Sunday, has become nothing more than a glorified friendly league. At times the NWHL has been treated with little respect from some teams, with games postponed on an alarmingly regular basis and leaving large number of games forfeited/un-played at the end of the season. Also the varying standard across the league and between teams on some match days has caused numerous problems. Often teams are made up of whoever is available that week; some teams made up of first team players others young children, who are relatively new to the sport. This is a supposed development league therefore why are 1st team players playing? Bringing games to a Saturday would mean teams would be more organised and the standard much closer, meaning a more worthwhile and competitive league. Players would play a good standard Saturday game and then not have to commit to another day of playing, a commitment which is a lot to ask of amateur players who have other commitments.

POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE PROPOSAL AND COUNTER ARGUMENT:

People may question the standard issue, i.e. one club's bottom team being the 5ths and another being a club's 2nd team, but having looked at the North West Hockey League all the lowest placed teams from North Wales Clubs are in leagues between division 10 south and division 7 south. The difference between these 3 leagues is minimal and therefore would not lead to a gulf in teams within the new proposed NWHL. The gap would in fact be much less than it is currently! Clubs may argue that taking a team out of North West would mean they would be stuck in the same league each year and players like to have a goal of promotion to aim for. I have two arguments opposing this claim; 1) what is the point in getting promoted as you can't over take teams from your club in the league structure and more importantly 2) If players are good enough to play higher then they move up the sides in the club. The lower teams want competitive fixtures granted and this is what we will provide, however the emphasis from the clubs on these teams should be development and the performance aspect of hockey and the results driven environment should be for the performance teams, i.e. the 1st and 2nd teams in the club. What is the point in clubs bragging we have 5 teams in our club all in North West 6 and higher, but our 1sts are only in the North Regional league?! Wouldn't clubs prefer to have a team in the North League proper and have non-relegation pressured teams to allow young, potential first team players to develop in a league where they can express their talents in a competitive, but like I say non relegation pressured league. Another argument could be travel. Some clubs especially in the North East have said it's easier for them to travel into the North West of England than across to the North West of Wales. This for me is a limited argument. Most journeys would be an hour max, with obvious exceptions, but these would be once a season at the most. The furthest trip is a max of 2 hours for most teams. We also owe Dysynni a service, it is the committee's duty to provide all clubs in North Wales with a decent level of hockey, something we are not doing at present.

BENEFITS:

- A more competitive and meaningful league.
- A League that will help develop new players and youngsters. (Talented players will ultimately progress through the teams, up to the performance sides within the clubs i.e. 1s and 2s.)
- A strong and well organised league which people respect.
- Potential for the league to develop to 2 divisions in the future.
- A league which will increase the profile of hockey in North Wales and potential attract players who just want to play social, enjoyable and competitive hockey with their region and not travel across the border.
- There is always the opportunity for talented players to aspire to higher levels in the clubs and region.
- Sundays would free up and could be used for Junior Regional Performance Centres. (We have struggled in recent years to run North Wales age group teams. This is part down to availability of dates due to league fixtures, availability of coaches/players due to club league commitments. If we had a more structured Junior Performance squad set up then this would impact on the clubs performance teams and the representation of players from the region in the national squads, all for the better)
- The North Wales League Cup would be contested between teams in the NWHL. Breaks in league fixtures, strategically placed during the season would mean the North Wales League Cup could be played on Saturdays keeping Sundays free for other regional hockey activity.