

NOTES – STATE LEAGUE DELEGATES STATE VOLLEYBALL CENTRE

12 July 2017

The Challenge

State League has grown without a long-term vision for the competition structure and has rapidly exceeded the capacity of State Volleyball Centre (SVC) under the current competition conditions. This has resulted in two major challenges:

1. The size and speed of growth has seen reactive decision-making, including bylaw development, responding in an ad hoc manner to the latest issue, rather than proactively shaping the competition consistent with a preferred structure.

In consultation with Delegates, work has been completed to define principles for the administration of State League; these have subsequently provided a guide to decision-making. See [Appendix One](#).

Issues that result:

- Uncertainty for Clubs year to year
Clubs participate without certainty year on year as to the structure of divisions and the number of teams against which they will compete. New and emerging Clubs compete without the benefit of established criteria upon which they can rely. This lack of certainty does not facilitate, encourage, or reward growth.
- 'Ideal' State League composition
The existing bylaws define State League as including Premier, Reserves, Division 2, Division 3, Junior State League; Premier and Reserves must comprise at least eight teams, whilst the agreed principles include up to 10 as preferred total of teams.

State League should provide an entry point for players and an opportunity for individual development. State League should provide an environment for Clubs to thrive. State League should not compete with affiliates for social only participants; those individuals who are not seeking to improve.

- In the longer term, healthy, succeeding affiliates better serves volleyball
VVI does not want to usurp or undermine existing social indoor competitions:
 - VVI can't accommodate all the social indoor participants in State League
 - State League Clubs are not structured as social indoor providers; moreover, this would not be a sustainable model given the proximity of Clubs
 - It is more desirable to have sustainable, thriving affiliates; more providers providing more opportunities to more participants

- Exemptions may be granted at the discretion of the Board
Bylaws continually evolve to respond to the needs of the competition, but a range of conditions, eg Club entries, remain at the discretion of the Board. While it is appropriate that the Board retains ultimate authority over the competition, it is also reasonable that Clubs and participants have as much as possible the security of consistency in decision-making. This would be better served through consensus on the long-term vision for State League.
2. The second major impact is that the competition as it is currently accessed (court and time allocation) considerably exceeds what is available at SVC. The extent of this constraint needs to be understood, on a best-case scenario SVC can host approximately 505 matches in a 15-week season. The 2017 State League season required 676 matches.

Even considering the two current regional Clubs that have capacity and some metropolitan affiliates that sought to host home games, it is not reasonable to expect this to be the solution to the deficit.

Court time has already been extended into the morning to accommodate the introduction of Junior State League, which will continue to be prioritised by VVI.

It is a reality that the traditional perception of State League as fully contained at SVC on a Saturday afternoon needs to be adjusted.

The Options

- Restructure the competition to align Club entries
All Premier team entries are mirrored in the Reserves Division
- Cap the number of Division entries and utilise a promotion-relegation system
Place a cap of 10 on each Division and promote championship teams and relegate last-place teams
- Cap the number of entries in Division 2 and seek to fixture Division 3 in mid-week metropolitan affiliate competitions
- Utilise mid-week metropolitan affiliate competitions
Seek to identify an appropriate standard of social indoor competition within metropolitan affiliates and fixture select lower division State League teams to play in those competitions
- Utilise mid-week metropolitan affiliate venues
Seek to extend the existing bookings of social indoor competitions to create additional court space and mid-week timeslots for State League games
- Utilise additional weekend timeslots at SVC
Later timeslots would likely be available Saturdays and courts are typically available Sundays
- Do nothing
Continue to allow the competition to evolve without an agreed vision and seek ad hoc solutions in a reactive manner

The Solution

VVI propose that the environment required for Clubs to grow and succeed and for the administration of State League would be enhanced by pursuing the following:

- Create a structure that effectively has three 'sections': Premier-Reserves-Juniors, Division 2-Division 3-Juniors, Other. The criteria would be quite simple:
 1. Clubs with a minimum two men's, two women's and two Junior State League teams (one each boys & girls) would automatically be eligible to compete Premier (Premier, Reserves, & Junior State League)
 2. Clubs that do not have a full complement of teams but are in development and Clubs that choose not to seek entry into Premier-Reserves would be eligible to compete Division 2-Division 3
 3. Clubs and teams that exist as outliers would compete in an entirely separate non-exclusive Division
- The Premier and Reserves Divisions would mirror each other, between Divisions and across genders, including Junior State League for metropolitan Clubs
- Securing ongoing access to a second multi-court venue in Melbourne for regular use

Appendix One

State League Review - Outcomes

This comprehensive review was driven by club representatives in conjunction with Volleyball Victoria after the 2015 State League season. The process included extensive dialogue with stakeholders (players, coaches, officials, volunteers, etc) across a range of activities (ie development of working groups, stakeholder survey, etc) and had a strategic focus on three core aspects of the competition:

1. Purpose
2. Structure
3. Bylaws

This review produced several outcomes which were presented to the Volleyball Victoria Board and were officially endorsed for adoption within State League 2016. As a result, there have been some changes to the State League Bylaws and/or the interpretation of existing Bylaws, which now reflect the purpose and structure as identified by the review process.

Presented below are the key principles and outcomes from the Review and the implications for the 2016 State League season.

State League Purpose

- To provide a competition framework that complements the development pathways for players, coaches, and referees from novice to elite
- To provide stakeholders, particularly Clubs and Associations, with competition opportunity at every ability and aspiration for their members
- To provide a promotional tool for the sport attracting individuals, affiliates, sponsors, and partners that enhances our relationships