

CNZ Player and Manager Feedback

Dear all,

The CNZ Tournament Committee has decided to continue last year's policy of sharing the feedback received after each CNZ event and to comment on what changes, if any, they plan to review for events held in following seasons.

Event: New Zealand Open Championships

Venue: Mt Maunganui Croquet Club

Manager: Geoff Young

The table below shows the feedback scores for each question together with how this compares to the average for all CNZ events last season and the Open Championships last season.

NZ Open 2019									
	Str Dis	Dis	OK	Agree	Str Ag	Total	Weighted Avg	CNZ Avg 2017/18	NZ Open Avg 2017/18
Format	0	3	0	7	7	17	4.06	4.01	4.54
Number of Games	1	2	0	9	5	17	3.88	4.17	4.42
Manager	1	1	5	7	3	17	3.59	4.48	4.83
Lawns	1	4	1	7	4	17	3.53	3.95	4.50
Likely to attend this tournament again?	1	1	1	7	7	17	4.06	4.22	N/A
Likely to attend tournament in this location again?	0	0	5	4	7	16	4.13	4.10	N/A
Total	4	11	12	41	33	101	3.87	4.16	4.26

Response to feedback

Format - the following feedback was received

- *The only objection I have is player's choice. It favours the top player that doesn't perform well in the qualifying and then can choose his position when the other places are decided.*
- *I prefer block play post the knockout phase.*
- *The open players choice KO draw meant that Josh AJ and me all played each other in the block then had to play each other in the KO we should have been separated*
- *All very good. For the double plate, it had been announced the 2 first of each section would play in a semi and finale. On the day, only the 1st played in the finale. Not a big deal, but it would have been better to stick to the plan, or make the announcement at the beginning of the plate.*
- *Bronze for 1st round exits was a good idea. Restricting plate to non-qualifiers also good*
- *Insufficient games in the singles, block play in doubles led to strong possibility of pairs being eliminated from NZ's doubles championship with only one loss.*
- *Due to low numbers, the doubles format allowed for more matchplay than usual*

- *Heenan Plate was for non-qualifiers only. I thought best of five came in a round too early*
- *The plate gave me guaranteed games against a range of opponents*
- *A bronze medal for the losers of the first round of the doubles K/O may be a better option.*
- *Having finished 2nd in the Doubles Plate B we arrived on day 3 expecting to play the winners of Doubles Plate A in a semi final as published prior to the tournament. But overnight the manager (or someone???) changed the format so that we had a worthless Best of 3 match for 3/4th. You shouldn't change the format mid tournament without the agreement of the players affected.*

CNZ TC Response

From the feedback, it seems that most players were happy with most aspects of the format.

Player Choice Method: This is now a fairly well established format, having been in use for several years. The very nature of player choice method means that the knockout draw is difficult to predict and could result in players from the block stages meeting again in the knockout, normally because they have chosen to do so. It has been shown to successfully distribute strength throughout the knockout draw, unlike block based seeding. Grade seeding is possibly better but has received negative feedback from NZ players.

Best-of-5 KO: The NZ Open Singles Championship is designed to find the best player, and in order to do that, best-of-5 format should be used as early as possible. Based on the feedback surrounding easy playing conditions, it seems reasonable to have introduced best-of-5 from round 2 (quarter-finals) onwards, and is in-line with the tournament conditions outlined in the Yearbook.

Doubles format: There were a large amount of Doubles consolation games on offer for those pairs who either did not qualify from their blocks or were knocked out during the KO.

It is regrettable that the Doubles plate did not follow the previously-announced format, and we agree that the format which had been announced should have been followed. Future manager's meetings will have minutes recorded.

Due to the unpredictable number of entries received in the doubles, CNZ cannot commit to playing a Bronze Medal-style doubles event format.

Number of games per day – the following feedback was received.

- *9 hours of play is perfect*
- *The tournament felt drawn out with only 2 block games on the second day of the singles and only 1 Bo3 the next day*
- *All good both in the doubles and singles*
- *Should have had more play on last two days for people who were not "winners" - e.g. have prize money and play top 8 as full knockout, and next 8 as full knockout for Bowl/Bronze*
- *The issue of best of three is that it creates gaps with no play*
- *3 games a day is good*

CNZ TC Response

Number of games: 3 games per day seems to have been generally well received. During a 9-day event involving many players, it is inevitable that some players will feel that there hasn't been enough play and others will feel there has been too much. Association croquet matches can vary wildly in playing time and interaction but has a tendency to balance itself out.

Lawns – the following feedback was received.

- *They were slow in the morning.*
- *A bit slow*
- *Excellent lawns, if slightly slow.*
- *Hoops were a little large but lawn was of good quality*
- *Too slow!*
- *Slow lawns wide hoops*
- *The lawns could have used an extra second or two of pace. Was good to see them being mowed regularly but did they really need to be watered heavily every night? Grass doesn't die in a day*
- *All good.*
- *Too slow - hoops we're a little on the easy side. Regarding the lawns - I understand the club can't risk letting the grass die...it's a tricky situation*
- *CMM did a great job, considering how they were 2 weeks prior but still a bit on the slow side.*
- *Should have been mowed lower, excessive watering*
- *There were grooves that affected balls on several lawns. Overall, the lawns were slower than would be ideal - running at between 10 and 10.5 seconds. Regrettably, despite no rain, they did not increase in speed as the tournament progressed. I believe that they were watered daily and the mower height was fairly high.*
- *The lines outlining the court were pale until painted on the second last day*
- *Lawn speed is paramount for this event. Over watering and not cutting the lawns low enough turns this event into a bashers paradise not a game of skill.*
- *The hoop setting was variable. I checked the hoops prior to the doubles final. One was 1/64", three were 1/32" and two were 1/16". I played one game on lawn 5 where the hoops were like barn doors (they had been well set on lawn 3).*
- *I thought overall the hoop setting was not up to the standard you would expect. Both in terms of width and firmness. I believe that the hoops were set using a measuring gauge rather than off the largest ball which may explain the extremely wide nature. I understand it is hard to get hoops firm on sand based courts but I still think more effort could have been made to reset hoops in fresh holes more regularly.*

CNZ TC Response

Lawn speed: It is disappointing to receive unanimous feedback from so many players that the lawns were too slow. CNZ has a policy for Tier 1 AC events of aiming for lawns of 11+ seconds playing speed (weather permitting). Clubs that are hosting Tier 1 events will be expected to aim for this, and feedback will be considered when awarding future events.

Hoop setting: This task is done using volunteer effort. If issues are found with certain hoops at any time, then the players have the right for the hoops to be reset. Soft, sand-based courts are more susceptible for hoops widening and loosening during a day's play. Tier 1 events require that hoops are in fresh holes for the beginning of the tournament and moved again to fresh holes for the final. CNZ accept that it would be ideal to move the hoops every few days, but this is not always possible due to time and resource constraints.

Manager - the following feedback was received.

- *When asked to enforce the rules he failed.*
- *Aside from changing the format of the doubles plate things were well run.*
- *He was a diplomat.*

- *lack of information supplied prior to event, manager said my details were not forwarded from CNZ*
- *Overall nice relaxed management but see below.*
- *Lack of information/decision making by manager around format, player choice method (needed to be clarified by tournament committee), seemed vague and deciding on the spot.*
- *Several players did not receive tournament notes. Many players were allowed to go back onto the same lawn after playing a game or match.*
- *He tended to give some people information and not others. This improved once he wrote instructions for viewing rather than word of mouth*

CNZ TC Response

CNZ has noted the above feedback. CNZ TC have agreed that all future Manager's meetings will have minutes recorded to ensure that a written record is available if the Manager forgets anything. Additionally, a member of the TC will be included when the player information is sent out so that they can correct any errors or omissions.

Other Feedback

- *If CNZ do not address the bullies then travelling from overseas will not be an option.*
- *Too far away. Too hard to get cheap accommodation in Mt Maunganui at this time of the year*
- *The tournament doesn't attract sufficient A grade players.*
- *I do feel our AC Open and GC Nationals should be separated by more than 5 days.*
- *All in all it was a very enjoyable event. CNZ need to work on the bullies that have been tolerated by the managers but actually disrespect the game and soil it for all. Hoops were not as tight as you would expect at a blue ribbon event which lead to sloppy play. The volunteers from the Mt club were fantastic.*
- *The question of who goes through from a block when they have the same number of wins needs to be addressed. It wasn't made clear at the tournament how this was to be decided. In the end it was by using hoop difference but I wonder if this is the fairest system. I would favour going on who had beaten who in the block play, or even using playoffs if time permitted.*
- *The organisers might consider a later date if this event is run at Mt Maunganui again. Early January at a top holiday destination as this is not conducive to encouraging entries from further afield as accommodation is at a premium at this time, perhaps February the weather is still good and accommodation would be more reasonable*
- *Morning teas are not close to lawns 3, 4, 5 and 6 when playing. Have to go to clubhouse to get a cup of tea and something to eat that's if there's anything left. No variety mostly cheese and crackers.*
- *Catering/clubhouse fee - ridiculous. CNZ has allowed a clubhouse fee of \$5 per person per day - during the doubles this amounted to \$160 per day - this is supposed to cover morning and afternoon teas. Yet the caterers complained day 1 about getting through a \$10kg block of cheese, day 2 put out a small quantity of cheese and then just plain crackers, day 3 put out horrible value cookies. This is visible in all tournament with a clubhouse fee - a minimum of 40% of the money taken should be returned each day in food provided for catering (additional money from clubhouse fee above this can cover tea/coffee/milk/sugar). Tournament prize money should be increased - through CNZ actively seeking sponsorship for its flagship event (as ACA did 2018), and provide prize money for more players - e.g. top 8 (to encourage people to participate in playoff, with nothing being paid to people who do not complete matches), 9&10 (Bronze medal winner and runner up), and plate winner and runner up. This will result in people having more incentive to continue playing, and will encourage CNZ to find formats which provide people with more than 2 games per day and avoid having the last two days with zero games for most players or at best meaningless "Z" games.*
- *Disappointing Entry. Costs of accommodation at that time of year and location may be off putting. After section play I question the need for a final for the top two players*

- *Information prior to the tournament was minimal. Managers need to have a list they need to email to players including start times, practise times, format, likely social events to name a few.*

CNZ TC Response

Bullying: This will not be tolerated under any circumstances, and CNZ would encourage the players concerned to make contact and provide a more detailed explanation of what occurred.

Block qualification when tied on wins: As per the tournament regulations, this should have been made clear at the commencement of the tournament. If this was not done, then this was a mistake.

Timings: NZ has a very full croquet calendar to fit in around October-March. To add to this, CNZ is hosting the Women's GC Worlds in early February, which puts a further strain on timings. CNZ also considers university and school holidays when scheduling events, and so possible dates for the NZ Open are therefore quite restricted.

Prize money: CNZ will pursue sponsorship, and welcomes ideas and proposals from the players as to who to approach.

If you would like to provide further feedback in order to help future events, please email croquet@croquet.org.nz

CNZ Tournament Committee