



**National League  
Competition Workshop  
Agenda - August 3rd 2022**

## **National League Competition Workshop**

### **AGENDA**

August 3, 2022

**Introduction** – the workshop will be split into four sections; Developments for Feedback, Motions for Voting, Other suggestions for the 2022/23 season and ideas to develop ahead of the 2023/24 season.

#### **1.0 Developments for Feedback**

- 1.1 Introduction of e-scoresheet system
- 1.2 Live Stream Software for Clubs
- 1.3 Grand Finals
- 1.4 Apply international scoring system for matches
- 1.5 Summary update of key changes to Competition Rules

#### **2.0 Motions for Decision**

- 2.1 Adoption of FIVB rules in real time (DVC)
- 2.2 Promotion & Relegation places (NLMC)

#### **3.0 Other Feedback & Suggestions for the 2022/23 season**

- 3.1 A Minimum of 14 matches per team should be scheduled in the Premier Division (Aer Lingus)
- 3.2 An assessment system for promoting clubs outside of the standard promotion/relegation system should be developed (Aer Lingus)
- 3.3 Cup Formats (NLMC)

#### **4.0 Concepts and ideas for the 2023/24 season**

- 4.1 Gauge interest in using DataVolley stats system across the National League (NLMC)
- 4.2 Centralisation of National League Referee appointments
- 4.3 Regionalisation of Division 2 and below

## **1.0 Developments for Feedback**

The following are developments the National League Management Committee wish to apply for the coming season. The Committee would like feedback from clubs on the following:

### **1.1 Introduction of e-scoresheet system**

Overview: VLY will introduce electronic scoring for all National League matches. This means matches will be scored using a laptop rather than paper scoresheets. Match scores are available in real time and automatically updated to the VLY website with league tables also updating immediately after each game concludes.

VLY will provide 1 x laptop to each National League club. Does require internet access (3g sufficient).

The product will be provided free of charge for clubs through a partnership agreement with Genius Sports/Data Volley.

Pros:

- Admin time reduced for VLY staff (scanning, uploading, opening post, filing etc)
- Admin reduced for Clubs (no posting of scoresheets etc)
- Professionalises delivery of League programme
- Instantaneous access to results and tables
- Live scoring on VLY website – will drive hits and engagement
- Match day operations easier for Referees to check rotation issues
- Clear scoresheets and removal of handwriting issues

Cons/Potential issues:

- Power source required in halls
- Additional training required for scorers and clubs
- Internet access needed (hot spot required)

### **1.2 Live Stream Software**

Overview: VLY will provide each National League Premier Division & Division 1 club with Swish Live streaming software (value 400eur) to provide Live Streams of their home games. Matches can then be streamed Live through a specific VLY National League Channel, where all games will be stored.

Success of the project largely depends on clubs commitment to streaming games with an ideal scenario of all Premier & Div1 games being streamed.

Package available in yr1 on an opt-in basis with a review in the close season.

Pros:

- Additional exposure for clubs and the sport
- Commercial opportunities for club sponsors
- Opportunity for opponent scouting
- Referee development opportunities
- General raise in standards

Cons:

- Halls will require min 4g connectivity
- Clubs may need to purchase tripod for appropriate camera angle

***Question: Is your club interested in Live Streaming National League matches?***

### **1.3 End of Season Grand Finals**

Overview: VLY will introduce a Grad Finals style end of season event to determine the overall League Champions of the Premier Division & Division 1 competitions. The event will follow a similar setup and production as the St. Patrick's Challenge.

How it works:

- The top 3 teams in each Division qualify for the Grand Finals which will be held over a weekend.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> plays 3<sup>rd</sup> in the elimination match on Day 1.
- 1<sup>st</sup> plays the winner of the E-Match in the Grand Final
- The team in 1<sup>st</sup> in the League will be awarded the League Winners Shield
- Both finalists will receive end of season medals

Pros:

- Creates an end of season spectacle and major showcase of the sport
- Keeps teams fighting to the end i.e teams from 1-5 in the table have something to play for
- Provides marketing opportunities and media attention on the sport
- Event acts as an inspirer for next generation
- Replicates most major European Leagues
- Commercial opportunities for potential sponsors

Cons:

- Overall league winners may feel achievement de-valued if they don't win the Grand Final
- Additional cost to VLY to run the event

Notes: depending on the outcome of 2.2 (Promotion & Relegation): If only one team is promoted/relegated then the team that wins the Grand Final will be promoted to the Premier Division. In the case that two teams are promoted/relegated, the both finalists of the Grand Final will be promoted to the Premier Division.

#### **1.4 Implement International standard match scoring system**

Overview: VLY will implement the world-standard points system for the National League meaning that teams will earn 3pts for a 3:0 or a 3:1 win, and 2pts for a 3:2 win. Teams will earn 1pt for a 3:2 defeat.

#### **1.5 Changes to Competition Rules**

Overview: VLY is in the process of revisiting the competition rules, in advance of the 2022-23 season. Some changes that may impact your clubs planning at **this stage in the year** are:

- A change in the rule covering jersey numbers – from the start of the new season, jerseys can be numbered 1-99.
- A relaxing of the rule relating to the wearing of undergarments, which will now be permitted.
- A change in the wording of the rule relating to duration of matches, particularly in Division 2, where the average duration of a match came close to exceeding the 90 minutes suggested in the rules for venues to be booked.

## 2.0 Motions for Decision

The following are motions which the NLMC would like club approval for:

### 2.1 *To adopt the FIVB rules in real time (DVC).*

**Overview:** Currently any changes to FIVB rules (typically published in November and implemented from January 1<sup>st</sup>) are adopted by VLY during the off season. This motion will mean that when Intl rules change, the volleyball rules implemented in the National League will change in alignment.

**Pros:**

- Keeps alignment with Intl best practice
- Prepares referees and national team players better for Intl competition

**Cons:**

- Rule changes will typically occur mid-season, requiring strong communication to referees, clubs and players.

### 2.2 *Promotion & Relegation places*

Much discussion has been had in regard to the appropriate number of teams to promote and relegate at the end of each season. The NLMC wishes to seek the opinion of member clubs in this matter.

Option 1: 1up/1down system

Option 2: 2up/2down system

Note: With the grand final system, only the Grand Final Champion will be promoted. In option 2, both Grand Finalists will be promoted.

### 3.0 Other Feedback & Suggestions Ahead of the 2022/23 season

The following has been provided by way of feedback and/or suggestion to improve the National League competition. The NLMC wishes to gain the views of member clubs on these suggestions.

3.1 *Aer Lingus: to ensure that in Premier Divisions, a minimum of 14 league matches are scheduled for competing teams.*

3.2 *Aer Lingus: to develop an assessment process for teams moving up divisions, outside of the normal promotion/relegation system.*

3.3 *NLMC: Cup Formats*

**Overview:** To refresh the knock-out Cup Competitions giving each team in the National League a chance to participate and to experience a 'proper' Cup Final delivered in a quality venue with high level event production.

All Finals including Youth and School Cup finals will be held over the Cup Final weekend. This format will replace the weekend Championships competition which will be delivered as a mixed team recreational competition only.

Rationale: This concept allows VLY to deliver a full weekend of Cup Finals with the potential of hosting Schools finals mid week in the build up, generating hype and buzz to promote the sport.

The current Championships format means that lower division players don't get to experience a 'proper cup final' as multiple matches are happening at once.

**Idea 1:** Cup Competitions are divided by Leagues. Your league determines which Cup you enter. This allows for Cup Competitions to be delivered over 3 match days culminating in a Cup Final Weekend. **Cup entry would be mandatory.**

Potential Issues: Clubs cannot play players 'up' for Cup matches. Restricts Cup Competition to National League teams. Alternatively, cups are classified as 'Senior' (Premier) 'Intermediate' (Div1) & 'Junior' (Div2 &3). Recreational teams can enter at a level that is deemed appropriate.

**Idea 2:** Two Knock Out Cup competitions are held: Association Cup & The Shield.

Association Cup – for the top 12 teams based on the previous season results. Top 4 Premier Division teams receive bye in round 1.

Association Shield – for the rest, including recreational clubs.

Clubs are invited to submit suggestions on by August 31<sup>st</sup> via email to [info@Volleyballireland.com](mailto:info@Volleyballireland.com)

## 4.0 Concepts and ideas for the 2023/24 season

The following are working ideas and concepts that could be introduced ahead of the following 2023/24 season to improve the professionalism, credibility and reputation of the National League. The NLMC are keen to get initial written feedback from clubs over the next few months on the following ideas:

### 4.1 *Introduce DataVolley stats system across the National League (NLMC).*

DataVolley is a stats-based tool that provides performance measures in serve, attack, passing etc. All teams and player stats will be available and published online. Clubs will need to have an allocated 'stats person' to code each game from the scorer's table. Can trial in 2022/23 for any interested clubs.

### 4.2 *Centralisation of National League Referee appointments*

Referee appointments will be centrally coordinated by Volleyball Ireland for Premier Division and Division 1 fixtures. This will remove additional pressures from club secretaries having to organise referees, whilst supporting the implementation of a Referee pathway. A pilot weekend will take place in the 2022/23 season to test the system.

### 4.3 *Regionalisation of Division 2 and below*

To help further grow the sport and remove barriers to participation (mainly travel) the NLMC will explore the possibility of regionalising Division 2 and any league below. This will provide a pathway for non-Leinster based clubs to enter the National League and develop a competitive club.

**Ends.**