

SUSSEX COUNTY BOWLS - MEN'S SECTION

COUNTY AND PRESIDENTIAL MATCH SELECTION BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POLICY

as updated 2nd December, 2024

Award of Credit Points towards a County Badge

In the Men's Section of this County prior to 2016, it was the practice that any player who applied to play in a County match was allocated a match, but he could only play in one match during any season. Once a player had played three matches over a period of four years he was presented with his County Badge. The reality of this was that this County were virtually 'giving' County badges to players - merely because they have played a certain number of County games - not because they had 'earned the right' to become a County player. That was not considered to be right and a proposal for change was put forward.

In the Women's Section - **as in many other Counties throughout the country** - a player is required to 'earn their County Badge' by achieving results in County Competitions and the procedure for the Award of a County Badge in the Men's Section was therefore changed at the AGM in 2015. **A player is now required to gain - nine credit points - to be awarded his County Badge and these points are 'primarily gained' by reaching various stages of County Competitions.**

That procedure was in operation from 2016 to 2018, but following representation from several areas and after discussion by the GPC, it was agreed that a proposal would be placed before a Special General Meeting, following the Executive Meeting on 26th April, 2019, to allow a non-badged player, who is selected to play for the County - as one of the 2 - maximum 3 - unbadged players permitted who 'may be' included in a match, to be awarded one credit point - for being included in the 'original team selection sheet' - for any County match - and then actually playing in that match. This was agreed at the Executive Meeting. **It was emphasised that it was therefore vital that only non-badged players who are considered to be of a sufficiently high standard are nominated.**

NB: At the AGM in December, 2021 the Men's Section Rules were clarified to state that an unbadged player can play any amount of games in a season, but can only earn a maximum of three credit points through playing in County matches and just two in any one season. The other six credit points required MUST be obtained through results in County Competitions.

Selection of Players for County Matches

The basic County Selection Policy is laid down in the Men's Section Rules - Paragraph 4. It is expanded on as below.

Selection of players for County Matches is carried out by the Selection Committee - which comprises of two Selectors from each of the four Areas - who are elected at the AGM by those members of the Executive Committee – who are from their Area only. The Chairman is in attendance to run the meeting and the Secretary to take notes and deal with paperwork. Neither of these two make decisions on the selection of players (unless they are also a selector) , **but they may make comments and need to ensure correct procedures are being followed.** This Committee and these elected selectors decide the policy for selection and decide who will be selected for all County matches.

In 2016 the Selection Policy was changed as mentioned above. It was decided that no longer would players be selected for a County match - just because they had applied to play in one - **but that teams would in future be selected - on ability - in an attempt to start winning games instead of losing most of them.** Prior to 2016 this County lost approximately two thirds of games played, as we did not put out strong representative teams. From 2016 onwards we now win about two thirds of the games played.

The Policy was therefore **changed to select teams consisting primarily of - County Badges players and no longer to just to give a game to any player who indicated a desire to play for the County.** It should be clearly noted out our Women's Section **will not play any player who is not a County Badged player - and that is the procedure used in many other Counties.**

In the Men's Section it was decided that players selected for County matches, would be **predominately County Badged players** - and that unbadged players should seek to gain credit points through achievements in County Competitions to enable them to eventually be selected for County Games. **It was however, also decided that TWO - and in exceptional circumstances three - non-badged players 'may be' included if considered to be of sufficient high standard.** It was also agreed that a player may now be selected to play in more than one game during the season – if he is considered good enough.

A Form F2 is issued to all clubs and a copy is available on the website, that any player may complete if they feel they are good enough and wish to be considered for selection for the following season. Only players who have completed and returned this Form F2B, by the required cut-off date, may be considered for selection by the Selection Committee. At the Pre Season Selection Meeting, these forms are passed to the selectors for the relevant Areas, who then agree on a split of the clubs to ensure each selector is dealing with an equal proportion of the players and then they notify the County Secretary accordingly of which clubs each Selector is dealing with.

Prior to each set of matches being selected, a form is sent out to all players who are on the Selectors list, asking if they are available for the three/four games due to be selected at the next meeting. Once the deadline for the return of forms has passed the two selectors in each area, meet and discuss the availabilities received and nominate through to the Secretary – **up to** - five players for each position Skip, 3, 2, Lead – **listing them in priority order of their suggested selection.** **Selectors are aware that they should only nominate players who they believe are capable of representing the County in such positions and should not nominate players for positions - just to fill up the boxes.** Players may be nominated on the sheet for more than one position.

It became apparent over the years, that several players - who had submitted a Form F2 indicating they wished to be considered to play for the County - were failing to reply to an email from their area selector - seeking their availability for matches. It was therefore agreed that whilst a phone call to ensure the correct email address had been used - would be made for the first set of matches - after that - **if a player failed to have the courtesy to reply to an email from his selector - he would be removed from the list of players to be considered.**

Once the Secretary has lists from all four area selectors he produced a master sheet which contains – **up to** - 20 proposed players for each position for each game. This sheet is initially passed to the County President to allow him to select his own rink.

This master sheet is then used by the Selectors at the meeting to select the players for the other rinks. When selections are being considered at a meeting, the selectors often know very little about certain players from the other areas so it was therefore decided by the Selection Committee, that it would be useful to 'encourage' – **non-badged players** - to participate in Vice Patron matches in order that selectors from other areas could also see them play and thereby support their possible selection when proposed by the Selectors from their own division at meetings. It was also considered that playing for the VP's, means that a player is playing with people from other clubs - which is a similar situation to playing for the County - and is therefore a good grounding for County matches.

The Vice Patrons is the only competitive Competition in this County where players from all four areas can be seen – **not only by the Selectors from their own area – but also by Selectors from other areas** - **the majority of whom, play in these games**. Whilst it is not a pre-requisite to selection, it is a further useful indication of a player's ability, especially if a player is being selected for the Billingham League Team in his area and and it was decided that serious consideration should be given before selecting non badged players - who do not play at that level.

All County friendly matches are now played in midweek and it is fully understood by the selectors, that member who work, need to take time off work to play in County matches and would similarly be indeed unable to play regularly in VP matches, which are also played midweek. However, the vast majority of members who apply for County selection are not workers so 'non badged' players who wish to play for the County – should most probably, also be able to play for ~~the VP's~~

Whilst it is fully understood that certain players may have limited availability early season, due to involvement in County Competitions and that certain other players can only play in local matches due to 'ailing' family members, **selectors are required to make every effort to ensure that players being selected have made themselves available for a reasonable proportion of games during the season, both Home and Away!** Players are either committed to the County and wish to represent the County or not both Home and Away - and players who are committed and of a suitable standard must surely be given priority.

Prior to the start of the 2022 season it was agreed by the GPC that the Selection Committee would also in future, select teams for the Presidential (formerly Executive) Matches. Many of these matches are Celebration matches against clubs celebrating their 100th Anniversary, so these teams will always contain as many of the Presidential Team and the six Senior Officers - who are available - in order to honour the achievement of these club. Selectors have been asked to, where possible, attempt to select players who have applied to play for the County or in such Presidential matches, who are non county players, in order that they may be seen and considered for future County matches. Many of the Celebration matches are requested by the clubs to be mixed matches so the number of opportunities for players to be selected, may be limited.