



This fact sheet has been prepared following enquiries from interested clubs in joining the BCL for the 2018 season.

For any other queries contact Secretary Ray Taylor on 07850 447492 or email Raysue11@aol.com in confidence.

The History

The Bolton League was formed in 1930 and has consistently performed in the LCB Knockout competition providing 11 winners and 24 finalists only second to the Northern League.

The League

The BCL has 20 clubs within a 10mile radius of the town centre extending to the Wigan, Chorley and Salford boroughs, although clubs outside this radius would be considered.

The Expansion

The BCL target is to recruit 4 clubs to expand the current 2 divisions, ultimately to create two divisions of 12clubs

Deadline for applications is 31st May 2017 although the league may bring forward this date.

Which division would we start in?

Opportunity to start in the Premiership has been made available in 2018 as the 2017 structure is currently split with 10 clubs in the Premiership and 10 clubs in Division 1.

How would this work?

In 2017 two clubs would be promoted with two clubs relegated leaving opportunities for new clubs to enter straight into the Premiership division for the 2018 season subject to qualifying criteria ie/ current playing standard; facilities etc

Fixtures and League Format?

League games are scheduled on a Saturday played over 50overs win/lose format with bonus points.

The Hamer cup is played on Sundays with Fridays reserved for Twenty20,clubs have the option of playing midweek.

Professionals

Premier division clubs need to employ a cricket professional and may also engage an overseas amateur.

Division 1 clubs can also engage a UK based or overseas professional and overseas amateur. An overseas amateur can be registered in lieu of professional, if preferred.

Club Professional signings announced for 2017 include former test cricketers Qaiser Abbas, former South African Franchise player Brett Pelsler. Overseas amateurs include Dominic Drakes West Indies u19 and former 1st class and county players Adil Nisar, Oliver Newby.

I hear the 20/20 was a big success in the BCL?

Clubs play in a regional group competition with 3home 3away games. In 2016 Clubs who marketed the competition to local communities reaped significant financial rewards providing opportunities to attract new sponsors and members.

As a recognised ECB associates league the Twenty20 winners represent the BCL in the ECB National competition covered by SKY TV.

BCL club facilities

Member clubs have and continue to invest in facilities. Most clubs have roll on covers and electronic scoreboards. Partnerships with Paul Tatton ECB pitch advisor and Hart Common grounds maintenance provides clubs with specialist advice and equipment to maintain and improve the playing arenas at discounted rates.

With clubs like Westhoughton again hosting Lancashire CCC 2XI games in 2017, Lostock's newly built ground opening in April 2017 with Bradshaw and Atherton also hosting other County matches the BCL continues to raise its profile as an ECB recognised associate Premier league

What will the 1st division standard be like?

The 1st division will provide a good standard of competitive cricket with a mix of the original Bolton League and former Bolton Association clubs. With Little Lever, Astley Bridge, Atherton, Adlington, Blackrod and others is competing for promotion.

How does the league make decisions?

The league is run by the clubs with officials elected on an annual basis.

Steering groups provide advice/guidance on rules, discipline; facilities/grounds; grants, PR etc

Juniors

The league runs age group cricket at u9s, u11s, u13s, u15s, u18s and the league also runs an u21s team

Junior cricket can be regionalised to avoid travel difficulties.

The BCL runs junior interleague teams at under 12, 14 and 18 age groups which compliments the Bolton District teams at under 11, 13 and 15.

Umpires

The league has over 70 registered umpires, sufficient to cover all 1XI and 2XI fixtures

BCL - PR & Marketing

The league is developing a new website in conjunction with live scoring app CricHQ to provide latest club bulletins, match reports and a record of the leagues history and future milestones.

BCL have official Social media sites with both Facebook and Twitter accounts

The Bolton News provides good coverage with all matches and scorecards reported weekly together with other focal points of interest. During the summer coverage can extend to six days a week.

The league also has 2 correspondents who have a regular column in the Bolton News.

The Bury Times also provides coverage

Sponsorship

Anthony Axford Ltd Timber Merchants have been the league sponsors for over 15 years. This relationship has been forged and continues to strengthen as the BCL moves into this new era.

The T20 competition is sponsored by Dixon Air Conditioning

The Peter Stafford Trophy sponsors are Heineken

How competitive is 2nd XI cricket?

Second teams play in a 2 division structure independently of 1XI standing and also have promotion/relegation and cup competitions

Would the BCL be looking to expand further in the future?

The league's target is two divisions of 12 which will provide high quality competitive cricket.

There are no plans to extend beyond 24 clubs

What is your take on the amount of money which is being spent within local cricket?

The BCL is an open league.

Whilst local cricket has been going through considerable change in recent times the BCL has remained stable recruiting additional clubs in 2016 and currently has 20 clubs in two divisions.

BCL believes clubs can find a level where they are best placed to compete.

This offers opportunity to rebuild, develop talent and provides realistic promotion ambitions without the financial pressures to recruit players from outside the club.

In providing a two division structure clubs are not under same pressures to fear they will lose players to rival clubs in a larger league structure where the fear of relegation to lower leagues prevails.

Should a club fall on hard times, how will BCL support them?

The league supports all member clubs whether it's through playing strength or financial hardship. Flexibility by the league committee supported by steering groups offered Tonge an opportunity to rebuild in 2016 and we all look forward to seeing the club go from strength to strength in 2017.