**Selection Committee Selection Policy – a paper for the AGM**

Contents

[Background 1](#_Toc450659487)

[Scope of the selectors remit 1](#_Toc450659488)

[The Northern league 1](#_Toc450659489)

[Tollemache 3](#_Toc450659490)

[The President’s Cup 3](#_Toc450659491)

[The Derbyshire match 4](#_Toc450659492)

[Conclusion 4](#_Toc450659493)

# Background

The selection committee currently has no written rules or policy concerning who and why it selects teams for the various events over which it has jurisdiction. It has a set of rough, unwritten guidelines that the committee more or less works to, but there is no actual policy. All of the selection committee meetings that have taken place since the last AGM have thrown up issues for the committee and highlighted the need in a variety of ways for such a selection policy.

This paper is the considered views of the current selection committee on a selection policy for the MCBA. It is the view of the committee that a selection policy is necessary for the proper running of the committee. It is further the view of the committee that some matters are rightfully and properly in the remit of the selection committee and the Council and AGM is therefore asked to ratify these areas. However there are other broader policy decisions which are rightfully and properly the remit of the Council and ultimately the membership. These areas the selection committee requested a decision from the Council and it was also agreed that the matters would be put to the next MCBA AGM.

# Scope of the selectors remit

The selectors are currently responsible for selecting teams for:

* The Tollemache qualifier (and final if Manchester qualifies)
* The Northern league (and all counties superfinal if Manchester qualifies)
* The Presidents’ Cup
* The Derbyshire match

Each of these events present different challenges to the selectors but the Northern league is where the problems are most sharply defined and hence this is discussed first.

# The Northern league

The Northern League has A, B and C divisions. Each division plays four matches a year in various venues around the north of England and the winners of each division play a one day “superfinal” against the winners of the other regional leagues around the country (i.e. the A division winners play a final, the B division winners play a final and the C division winners play a final).

Until two years ago Manchester had a team in each division. However at the request of the League two years ago Manchester added a second team to the A division. Last year the Manchester players of the Northern League were asked whether or not it wanted to continue with this and the vote was 2:1 in favour of continuing. The selectors select four pairs for each team for each of the four matches so 16 pairs on any given day.

The presence of an A2 team presents significant difficulties for the selection committee. Whilst in theory a sensible idea in practice the difficulties are legion, largely caused by Manchester having insufficient strength in depth to select suitable teams for both the A2 and B teams. A compromise has to be struck and whichever compromise is chosen leads to unsatisfactory outcomes.

The current policy is to select the best team available for the A1 team.

There are then a number of possible policies for the A2 and B teams:

1. Select the next best four pairs for the A2 team and the 9th – 12th best pairs for the B team. This has the advantage that the A2 team is now competitive in the A division and stands a reasonable chance of finishing halfway or above in the A division (it has little chance of winning since by definition it is weaker than the A1 team). However the flip side is that the B team has virtually no chance of winning the B division. Whilst it certainly will not finish bottom (Manchester is a strong county after all) it is highly unlikely to win. Thus Manchester’s chance of capturing the A and B division titles is remote and it has little chance therefore of going on to win the B division superfinal.
2. Select pairs 5-8 for the B team and pairs 9-12 for the A2 team. This gives Manchester a good chance of winning the B division and therefore going on to the B division superfinal, but consigns the A2 team to an almost inevitable bottom of the A division as it is simply not-competitive in that field.
3. Deliberately mix up the 5th-12th pairs between the A2 and B teams. This makes them more evenly balanced in terms of strength but means that the A2 team is still not particularly competitive and the B team less likely to win the B division.
4. Deliberately mix up the A1, A2, and B teams. (This is the least preferred option of the committee).

There is a view amongst certain members that to do anything other than option 1 is “against the spirit of the league”. However, MCBA selection policy is none of the Northern League’s business and in any case the chair has been consulted who sees no problem with any of the options.

The selection committee has had significant problems selecting teams for the A2 and B teams this year and none of the potential policies given above are satisfactory. The results of the A2 team over the last two years indicate that Manchester cannot realistically put out two teams of the required standard, and at least some of the players have become rather demoralised at repeatedly turning up as cannon fodder.

It is the view of the committee that none of the above options is satisfactory at any level. Whilst it has now completed selecting teams for the Northern League it believes that it is not viable for the county to have a second team in the A division and that therefore the County should withdraw its A2 team in future years.

However, a recent meeting of the Council confirmed that it wished to continue with two teams in the A division and that its preference was option 3 above. The Council agreed that this would be put to the next MCBA AGM.

The unwritten policy for the C division is to allow anyone who wants to play for the county to play. But what precisely does this mean? There are a number of pairs who wish to play for the C team (good!). Should the selectors simply therefore rotate them, ensuring that no player or pair plays two matches in the same year? Should the selectors have any element of selection, particularly in the later rounds of the Northern league? Should there be an element of “reward” – for example should players be picked more often if they are county officials and/or work in their clubs?

Lastly on the Northern league is the matter of the all counties superfinal. Manchester won it this year. It is another unwritten rule that players who have not played in the Northern league that year will not be picked for the superfinal. This could be seen to be entirely at odds with the decision to always select the best team possible for the A1 team. If the best team possible is always selected for the A1 team in order to try and win the Northern league, why does the county not select the best team possible for the superfinal and thus increase its chances of winning the all counties superfinal? The Council confirmed it wishes to continue with the policy of only selecting players for the all counties superfinal if they had played at least one match in that year’s Northern League.

In summary therefore the selection committee ask the MCBA AGM to:

1. Take a decision to withdraw the Manchester A2 team from the Northern league from next year. If that is not agreed, then to confirm the Council’s decision of option 3 above for selecting the A2 and B teams or to decide on a different option.
2. Provide advice on how to select the C team.
3. Provide advice on whether players who have not played in the Northern League in a given year should be selectable for the all counties superfinal.

# Tollemache

It is the united view of the selectors that the best team available should be selected for the Tollemache. There are however differences of opinion between the selectors (as there are between the players in contention) as to how many pairs should be selected. Some selectors favour selecting four pairs, a reserve and a NPC who can step into play if needed whereas others favour selecting five pairs plus a reserve and an NPC who would not be expected to play except in extremis.

There are a number of players who are automatic Tollemache selections for the county, but it is not always obvious how to pair them all up to maximum advantage. Moreover there are occasions when a fifth pair would be significantly weaker than the other four and therefore would weaken the team overall.

It is thus the view of the selection committee that the strongest Tollemache team should always be selected and that this, depending on availability, could mean four or five pairs. The committee thus believe it should be free to select four or five pairs as appropriate and Council has confirmed this.

# The President’s Cup

The current policy is to select the best team available for the President’s Cup. This year the second day of the Presidents Cup clashed with the all counties superfinal resulting in a significantly weaker Manchester team on the second day.

Council has ratified the committee policy of selecting the best team available for the President’s Cup.

# The Derbyshire match

The current policy is to select the best team available from B and C team players, but concentrating on the lower end of the B pool and the upper end of the C pool. A1 team players are not considered for this match.

Council has ratified this policy.

# Conclusion

It is the view of the selection committee that a selection policy is needed for the county and it seeks to have this policy confirmed by the MCBA AGM.

Selection Committee

May 2016