

DRAFT



every game will mean more



Introducing Promotion and Relegation to the BBF Leagues



Introducing Promotion and Relegation to the BBF Leagues

Background

Chief executives of Premier League football clubs were recently asked what their club's most valuable asset is. The answer they gave was not their star player or their stadium. They said it was the league they are in. Without an exciting, high quality league competition they would not be able to attract the best players to their club and fill their stadiums.

Is there something which we can add to the BBF leagues which would increase their value without increasing costs?

The BBF currently has four league tiers – National Baseball League (NBL), Triple-A, Double-A and Single-A. Over the last few years promotion and relegation of teams in the BBF Leagues has been done through a process of clubs submitting a written request to the BBF as part of their BBF registration before the start of the new season.

The concept of promoting or relegating teams based on where they finish in the standings is popular on all continents where football is the dominant sport, but the system is adopted not only by football leagues but by the majority of other sports, including baseball. For example, the very successful baseball leagues in Germany and the Netherlands have adopted the promotion and relegation system.

If a system is introduced where teams are promoted and relegated based on their performance on the field, this is expected to bring the following benefits to the BBF and its members:

- more exciting league
- removes the ambiguity over the BBF's promotion and relegation decision-making process
- teams have a clear understanding of what they must do to win promotion or avoid relegation
- reduction in the number of meaningless games, especially in the second half of the season when a large number of teams are already eliminated from the postseason race
- reduction in the number of meaningless games will also reduce the number of forfeited games - a problem which the leagues are struggling with
- introducing relegation-promotion playoffs would provide postseason drama for teams which have missed out on the postseason playoffs and NBCs
- British regional media becomes very excited when their local team is involved in a promotion or a relegation battle. In such circumstances we have seen how the local community rallies

behind that team and this could provide much needed publicity for clubs and British baseball as a whole

Promotion and Relegation Rules

1. Before the start of the season the League shall announce the Promotion and Relegation format and Playoff schedule.
2. Promotion and relegation shall be contested between teams in the same geographic conference to avoid teams being promoted or relegated to a league in a different geographic territory.

***Example:** A team which wins promotion from Single-A South Pool A will play in Double-A South Pool A in the following season.*

3. The Relegation Places are to be determined by the final standings in the Regular Season. In leagues where there is more than one Pool in the same geographic Conference (e.g. Pool A and Pool B in Double-A South), the Relegation Places will be determined by where teams finish in the standings of their own Pool.
4. The Promotion Places are determined by the teams' ranking after the completion of the Postseason (Playoffs and National Championships). If two teams from the same Division/Pool are eliminated in the same stage of the Postseason, e.g. in the Quarter-Finals, the standard tie-break rules are to be applied.

***Note:** In the example on pages 5 to 7, we have assumed that Bracknell lose to Bournemouth in the Double-A NBC Final making Bournemouth the highest ranked team in Double-A South.*

5. Single-A teams cannot be relegated and NBL teams cannot be promoted as there are no leagues below Single-A and above the NBL.
6. Promotion and Relegation Playoff format and schedule
 - 6.1. After the end of the Regular Season, teams occupying the Relegation Places in each Division or Pool shall face each other in a Relegation Playoff game. The team with the superior record in the Regular Season will be the home team. Such game must be played on a date determined by the BBF between the first weekend after the final game of the Regular Season and the last weekend before the National Championship of that league. The winner of that game avoids relegation and preserves their place in the same League for the following season.
 - 6.2. The losing team(s) goes on to play a Promotion-Relegation game against the highest ranked team(s) in the next league below them. The team in the higher league will be the home team. Such game shall be played on the weekend following the last weekend of the National Championships. The winner of that game will play in the higher league in the following season. The losing team will play in the lower league.

7. Player eligibility

- 7.1. Promotion and relegation playoff games shall be treated as Postseason games for the purpose of determining player eligibility.

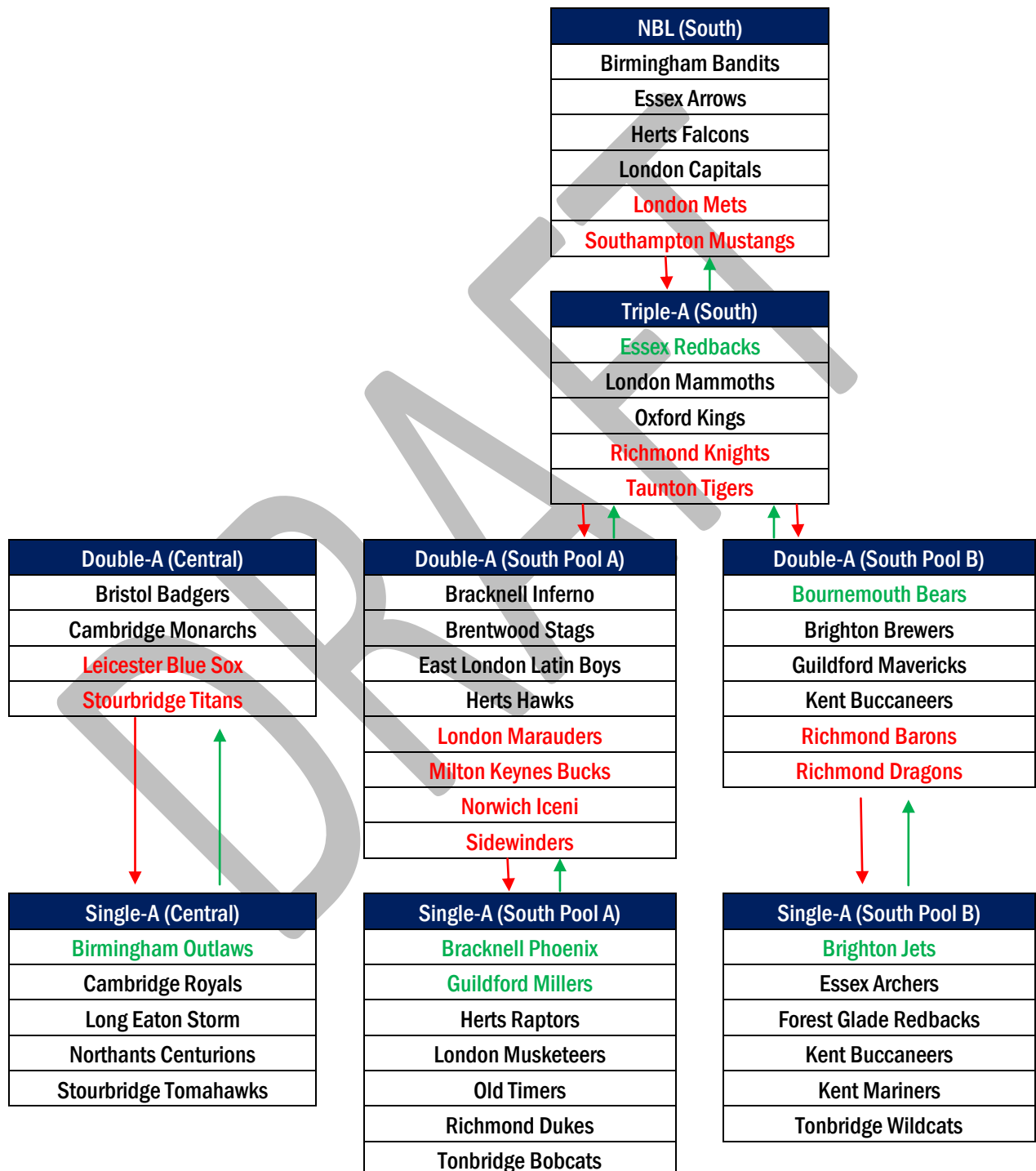
8. Financial rules relating to the Promotion and Relegation Playoff games

- 8.1. If the BBF has no available umpires to assign to a promotion-relegation playoff game, the home team is responsible to provide an umpire(s), in the same way as in the Regular Season.
- 8.2. The home team is responsible to cover the costs of the field, the umpire and provide game balls in the same way as in the Regular Season.
9. In the event that a team does not wish to be promoted to a higher league, they must notify the BBF about this as soon as possible and not later than 31 July of that season. If such team finishes in the promotion places, the BBF shall award this promotion place to the next highest ranked team in the same league division or pool.
10. After the end of the season, in the event that a team applies to the BBF to be relegated to a lower league, the BBF shall determine which team to award their place in the higher league to. The BBF's decision shall be final.
11. Teams wishing to relocate to a different Conference (e.g. from South to Central), must apply to the BBF before the start of the season as part of their league entry registration. If their application is successful, they must be added to the same league tier (e.g. from Single-A South to Single-A Central). If the conference which the team wishes to move to does not have that particular league tier, they shall be assigned to a league tier at the discretion of the BBF. The BBF's decision on such applications shall be final.
12. The BBF may from time to time introduce minimum requirements for eligibility to play in a specific league tier. Such minimum requirements may relate to ballpark, facilities, youth development, financial stability and others. The BBF shall have the right to relegate a team to a lower league tier if they fail to meet the minimum requirements in their respective league tier within a timeframe set by the BBF. Such minimum requirements shall be announced by the BBF in advance in order to give teams adequate time to comply with them.
13. New teams registering to enter the leagues for the first time shall be added to the lowest league tier in their Conference.
14. If a new or existing team feels that there are special circumstances which would warrant entering such team into a higher league tier, they should submit their application to the BBF presenting clear evidence of such special circumstances. The BBF's decision on such applications shall be final.
15. The BBF may realign the leagues by increasing or reducing the number of teams in a specific league or pool. This may be achieved by increasing or reducing the number of promotion places in the lower league and/or reducing or increasing the number of relegation places in the higher league. In special circumstances when the BBF needs to realign the number of teams in a particular league urgently, the BBF may invite the highest ranked team(s) from a lower league to join a higher league before the start of the next season.
16. If the system of promotion and relegation is deemed to be unsuitable for a specific league tier or conference, the BBF may decide not to adopt that system in such league/conference.

Note: See next pages for an example of the Promotion and Relegation format and schedule

Example of Promotion and Relegation Playoffs

The table below is a random example of the final standings in the 2018 Regular Season. Alphabetical order has been applied to determine the standings just for the purpose of this example. Teams in red are in the Relegation Playoffs. Teams in green are in the Promotion Playoffs.



Promotion/Relegation Playoffs Schedule (Example)

NBL Promotion/Relegation Playoff

1 September 2019

Southampton Mustangs 3 London Mets 5

(Mets avoid relegation)

15 September 2019

Essex Redbacks 6 Southampton Mustangs 2

(Mustangs relegated to Triple-A, Redbacks promoted to NBL)

Triple-A Promotion/Relegation Playoff

1 September 2019

Taunton Tigers 7 Richmond Knights 8

(Knights avoid relegation)

15 September 2019

Bournemouth Bears 3 Taunton Tigers 1

(Tigers relegated to Double-A, Bears promoted to Triple-A)

Double-A Relegation/Promotion Playoff

Central

1 September 2019

Stourbridge Titans 1 Leicester Blue Sox 2

(Blue Sox avoid relegation)

17 September 2019

Birmingham Outlaws 10 Stourbridge Titans 11

(Stourbridge Titans avoid relegation)

South Pool A

1 September 2019

Sidewinders 4 London Marauders 5

(Marauders avoid relegation)

1 September 2019

Norwich Iceni 7 MK Bucks 9

(Bucks avoid relegation)

15 September 2019

Bracknell Phoenix 4 Sidewinders 3

(Sidewinders relegated to Single-A, Phoenix promoted to Double-A)

15 September 2019

Guildford Millers 6 Norwich Iceni 7

(Iceni avoid relegation)

South Pool B

1 September 2019

Richmond Dragons 6 Richmond Barons 8
(Barons avoid relegation)

15 September 2019

Brighton Jets 6 Richmond Dragons 9
(Dragons avoid relegation)

DRAFT