

OBL – Letter to Clubs – September 2020

Thank you to clubs for sending a representative to the OBL AGM on 12 August. The Committee appreciated people attending the virtual AGM and relieved that the technology worked. Congratulations were expressed to the 2019/20 division winners who then received a virtual trophy. With almost every club represented this enabled us all to listen to views from a wide range of clubs (expressing both club and individual views).

This letter confirms the decision that was taken at the AGM about the 20/21 season and provides some of the information mentioned to clubs during the discussions. Minutes from the AGM are not yet available but will be published on the OBL website, probably in several weeks.

Due to the ongoing and evolving impact of Covid-19, the consequential uncertainty for the majority of clubs about the availability of venues, the duty of care of any organising body for participants and the potential decisions of individual players regarding competitive play, **it was agreed that the 2020/21 league season will not start in October 2020 but that this decision will be reconsidered at a later date.** There was no commitment to a date but it was anticipated that a review would take place later in 2020. Depending on prevailing circumstances this would be by the Committee or at an EGM, so that clubs would again have the opportunity to contribute their views on potentially playing a non standard season. Various formats were suggested and these could be discussed.

The BE website advises that the government announcement on 25 September does not prevent badminton continuing to be played in line with stage 3 of their Roadmap for the Return to Badminton. Therefore groups of up to six may play together as long as the approved BE guidance is adhered to. BE also has some initiatives that may assist clubs so please view their website for more details. These include:

Membership – freezing membership prices for this season, providing a 25% price reduction in recognition of the reduced playing time (alternatively this reduction can be donated back to BE) and extending the payment date by two months to 1 January 2021.

(See www.badmintonengland.co.uk/return-to-play/membership-2021/your-club-membership-for-2021/)

Hardship fund – there are details on the BE website about applying for funds so please do look at this to see if your club could benefit. (See www.badmintonengland.co.uk/return-to-play/covid-19-hardship-fund/)

During the AGM, questions were asked about the insurance included within BE Membership. At the meeting, the OBL Chair mentioned that OBA may have more information about how the unusual circumstances of this season might impact clubs and individuals but, as the circumstances of each of the OBL clubs differ, we now ask that clubs use the BE Insurance contact details to discuss their unique circumstances direct.

A few clubs advised that they hoped to resume club play in September/October (subject to risk assessments) and that there might be scope for visitors to come along. If clubs are in this position then please would they display details on their websites so that visitors know who to contact and what restrictions/requirements are in place to ensure that government, venue and BE guidelines are adhered to.

We are aware that some clubs have restarted, some have been told a not before date (eg currently not before Easter for users of St Helens school in Abingdon) whilst others are waiting to hear from leisure centres and schools. Until all hirers have reviewed their operations you may not know but it would be appreciated if clubs could update OBL by 31 October to advise us with the latest on when they are likely to be able to use their venues (either Rosie as OBL Fixtures Secretary (fixtures@oxfordshirebadmintonleague.co.uk) or myself).

On behalf of the OBL Committee, thank you again for your input.

Janet Atkins, OBL League Secretary
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28 September 2020