

During the season just gone I have been engaged in various conversations, which prompted further discussions, including with those players who regularly enter the county championships. Their contributions primarily suggested that changes to the way the county championships are played should be considered. Other counties have also been consulted for their thoughts on this subject. The views and comments gathered have prompted a more in-depth consideration of the methodology behind the way we run our championships.

As you know, in previous years the championship schedule provides for fixed dates on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Junior championships are "no later than dates" and will remain so. The current system means that should a player progress he could be expected to be available every weekday evening from 1st June through to 17th July.

I have taken considered advice from several experienced competitive players and have concluded, with their agreement, that the time is right to revise the championship schedule. So, in 2027, the county championships will be played off in blocks, with each championship being played over 2 weeks, other than the Pairs and Senior Fours whose duration is slightly extended because the county is obliged by Bowls England to keep 19/6 - 27/6 free due to the home international series being played that week.

This revised format has a numbers of advantages:

- it frees up days/weeks in bowler's calendars
- it allows bowlers to take holidays during the summer, only missing selected championships
- it allows free dates for other (Bowls England, LSCBA, LPBA, Group and Area) competitions
- the quarter finals will not be played during one week, spreading the load on the presidential team or other officials

Evidence shows that in counties where the 'block' system is employed more favourable feedback is received from participants.

Furthermore, as a direct consequence of scheduling problems with the programming of the 2026 semi-finals and finals, going forward these will be programmed over weekends, with participants expected to be available on both days.

Amendments will be required to the competition regulations to facilitate these changes. Work is in hand with this to ensure compliance before the start of season 2027.

North / South Essex Fours will be fixed dates and will commence AFTER the ECBA Finals weekend
Junior competitions, Benevolent, Secretaries, Unbadged Singles, Double Fours, Shield will remain 'No later than'

We reserve the right to change these dates if circumstances dictate