



# Memo

Date: 31.5.24  
To: NSWTA Affiliates and Regions.  
From: Dean Russell General Manager  
Subject: Vawdon Cup Change

Once again, thank you to the Affiliates who attended and provided feedback at our Zoom session last week to discuss options for the 2024 Vawdon Cup. We also appreciate the Affiliates and individuals who have sent follow-up feedback.

There is certainly a lot to consider, and we appreciate the comments and suggestions provided. It is fair to say they are wide and varied. Many of the suggestions depend on actual team nominations and divisional makeup, which we can only address once nominations are finalised.

We understand that change can be difficult for our community. However, not striving for improvement could also be detrimental.

To clarify, the suggested options still have the majority of the competition occurring within the traditional Vawdon Cup timeframe. We believe some feedback may have confused this point. Only Options 1 and 2 extend beyond the traditional timeframe by one or two weeks, but this will have minimal impact on most participants as it only affects those playing in the finals.

We also recognise that our decision may not be unanimously supported, given the passion for the game, the tradition of the Vawdon Cup, and individual perspectives. However, as an organisation, we strive to provide a product that meets the desires of the majority of our members.

The feedback we received before our recent Affiliate engagement regarding the historical structure and format of the Vawdon Cup consistently highlighted concerns along the following themes.

- The Vawdon Cup is losing its prestige and needs an overhaul.
- The competition runs too long, and there is a desire for a shorter season.
- There is a strong preference to move the Vawdon Cup out of the winter months.
- The current timing leads to losing players to other winter sports.
- Many want the Vawdon Cup to serve as a warm-up for the State Cup.
- There is a demand for more club nights.
- Most 2023 Vawdon Cup survey respondents preferred only one doubleheader on Sunday, with regional responses suggesting more Sundays to reduce weekly travel time.





It is also fair to say that some members hold a more traditionalist view and prefer to maintain the current format. However, in the forefront of our minds is that under the current format, there has been a 23% decline in participation over the last few years, signalling that change should be considered.

Number of teams	Premis	M Div 1-4	W Div 1-4	BYL	GYL	Total
2019	24	40	23	8	19	114
2020	19	39	30	12	15	115
2021	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	17	32	22	9	13	93
2023	16	25	21	10	16	88
Change on 2019	-33%	-38%	-9%	25%	-16%	-23%

% of total	Premis	M Div 1-4	W Div 1-4	BYL	GYL	Total
2019	21%	35%	20%	7%	17%	100%
2020	17%	34%	26%	10%	13%	100%
2021						
2022	18%	34%	24%	10%	14%	100%
2023	18%	28%	24%	11%	18%	100%

By comparison, for the same period, State Cup team numbers have increase from 195 teams to 224 teams.

Additionally, recent feedback from participants, including referees, indicated that with the World Cup approaching, of those attending, many do not want to jump straight into the Vawdon Cup and may not play, coach, or referee this year. While some Affiliate feedback suggests that change should not be made for the some 80 plus players and referees who are affected, and we understand this, we would stress that the World Cup impact is only one element of consideration. It is not the only reason for reviewing our options.

While impossible to achieve all elements provided through feedback and the engagement piece, we believe a change in structure and format will allow us to **revamp and shorten the competition, move it out of the colder months, avoid clashes with winter sports**, and use the event as a warm-up for the State Cup.

This renewed format addresses the feedback provided by participants and received overwhelming support via the engagement with Affiliates. Of the options presented, a clear majority have preferred Option 1. This will also **create an offseason** for players, coaches, referees, and administrators.



Therefore, for the 2024 Vawdon Cup, we will adopt Option 1 and review its success post-event before any decision for future Vawdon Cups is made.

To achieve this, we will adjust the competition structure to reduce game time and the overall length of the competition:

- Games will follow a 30-minute touchdown turnaround format to accommodate a shortened season.
- Potential timeslots: 6:30 pm, 7:05 pm, 7:40 pm, 8:15 pm, 8:50 pm, 9:25 pm.
- Week 1: Double Header for half of the divisions, with the remaining divisions playing 1 competition round. Week 2: Those who played 1 round in Week 1 will play a Double Header, and those who played a Double Header in Week 1 will play 1 round. (Logistics will be governed by team nominations with a maximum of 10 teams per division)
- Triple Header: All teams will play a Triple Header on one Sunday during the competition.

The competition will commence on Friday, October 11, and conclude with the Grand Final on November 17. We will play four consecutive Friday nights and a Sunday triple header to complete the rounds, followed by the final's series.

#### Competition Dates

Week 1 Friday, October 11

Week 2 Friday, October 18

Week 3 Friday, October 25

Week 4 Friday, November 1

Week 5 Sunday, November 3

Semi Final 1 Friday, November 8

Semi Final 2 Sunday, November 10

Grand Final Sunday, November 17

**NB.** *The NSWTA Country Championships are scheduled for October 12th and 13th. It is not unusual for both events to overlap, and we will soon be announcing the venue. To support regional teams that may enter the Vawdon Cup, we are investigating the viability of scheduling games at the venue on Friday, October 11th.*

#### Back up dates

Sunday, October 27

Friday, November 15



As we advised in the ZOOM meeting, we would provide a quick turnaround on the decision following the conclusion of the engagement process. This will allow affiliates, should they need to, the ability to request refunds from LGAs for training facilities.

Now that this decision has been made, we provide the following additional information in relation to some questions that have been asked.

**Affiliate Coordinator:** We strongly suggest that the Affiliate Coordinator for NSWTA events should not be the Affiliate administrator/secretary, but rather someone who can work alongside them to alleviate some pressures. We will also look at consolidating some of the paperwork for State Cup, so affiliates provide update/changed information only to Team Management forms / WWCC / Team Lists etc.

**Player Eligibility:** Eligibility will remain via Season 2, 2023, and Season 1, 2024, and will now extend to Season 2, 2024.

**Finals Eligibility:** A player must have played a minimum of four (4) rounds to be eligible for the Finals Series. Players not meeting this criteria due to extenuating circumstances must submit a written application to the Events Manager for consideration. Given the shorter time frame, **injuries may impact qualification, and medical reports will be considered.**

**Referee Requirement:** There are no changes to the referee requirements under this format. It remains the plus 1 system. i.e. if you have four teams entered, you must register five referees.

Again, thank you to all the Affiliates for participating in this engagement process. While we understand that not everyone will agree with the decision, it is based on the majority of feedback we received. Conditions of Entry will be adjusted and forwarded shortly.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Events team at our office.

Event Manager                      Josh Benham      [josh.benham@nswtouch.com.au](mailto:josh.benham@nswtouch.com.au)

Business Operations Manager    Kylie Hearne      [kylie.hearne@nswtouch.com.au](mailto:kylie.hearne@nswtouch.com.au)

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dean Russell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Dean Russell**  
**General Manager**