

Bowls Alberta Survey on Proposed Changes to 2024 BCB National Championships

May 8, 2023

On April 3, 2023, Bowls Canada Boulingrin (BCB) released proposed changes to the 2024 National Championships to address challenges related to funding, hosting, and participation, with the goal of making the nationals more sustainable and marketable.

On April 24, 2023, Bowls Alberta (BA) circulated a survey to all of its members, in order to gauge the level of support for the proposed changes and understand any related questions and concerns. The survey was open until May 7, 2023. BA will be providing feedback to BCB based on the results of the survey and further discussions at the board level.

This report summarizes the survey responses, and is prepared for the use of the Board of Bowls Alberta. The report consists of the following sections:

- Analysis of responses – page 1
- Summary of respondent comments – page 3
- Full text of respondent comments – Appendix A
- Data integrity - Appendix B

If this report is subsequently circulated beyond the board level, Appendix A, which contains the full text of respondent comments, should be severed in order to maintain respondent confidentiality.

Analysis of responses

All responses

Sixty-two (62) responses to the survey were received. The respondents answered the question “please rate your overall level of support for the proposed changes” as follows:

		strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
all responses	62	23%	18%	21%	16%	23%

When all responses are considered, 41% of respondents agree with the proposed changes, 39% disagree, 21% are neutral. Many respondents have a firm opinion on the issue, as 46% of respondents either strongly agree or strongly disagree with the proposed changes.

Breakdown based on participation in provincial / national championships

Respondents were asked (a) whether they competed in a Provincial Championship, and (b) whether they competed in a National Championship, during the years 2018 to 2022. When the responses are grouped by participation in a provincial championship, support for the proposed changes is as follows¹:

		strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
did not compete in provincials or nationals	22	18%	41%	36%	0%	5%
competed in provincials	39	23%	5%	13%	26%	33%

Respondents who did not compete in a provincial championship generally support the proposed changes (59%) or have a neutral view of the proposed changes (36%). Only 23% of respondents held a strong opinion on the issue.

Of the respondents who did compete in a provincial championship, 59% disagree or strongly disagree with the proposed changes, while 28% agree or strongly agree with the proposed changes. Views were more entrenched, with 56% of respondents either strongly disagreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposed changes.

Of the respondents who competed in provincials, they can be grouped into competitors that did or did not successfully advance to nationals:

		strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
competed in provincials but not nationals	10	0%	10%	10%	40%	40%
competed in provincials and nationals	29	31%	3%	14%	21%	31%

Of the respondents who competed in a provincial championship but did not advance to a national championship, 80% disagree with the proposed changes while 10% agree with the proposed changes. Of the respondents who competed in a provincial championship and successfully advanced to a national championship, 52% disagree with the proposed changes while 34% agree with the proposed changes.

Breakdown by club

Respondents were asked to indicate club affiliation. Support for the proposed changes based on club affiliation is as follows²:

		strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
Royal	7	29%	29%	14%	14%	14%
Bow Valley	8	0%	43%	57%	0%	0%
Highlands	11	27%	9%	27%	18%	18%
Edmonton Indoor	10	40%	10%	0%	20%	30%
Commonwealth	13	31%	15%	0%	15%	38%

¹ One respondent did not fit within these categories.

² Number of responses is greater than 62 as some members are affiliated with more than one club.

Calgary Lawn	22	27%	5%	18%	18%	32%
Stanley Park	15	20%	20%	7%	33%	20%
Medicine Hat	0					
Rotary Park	0					

Members of the Royal and Bow Valley were generally in agreement with (50%) or neutral (36%) towards the proposed changes.

Members of the Highlands and Edmonton Indoor were split evenly between supporting and opposing the proposed changes, while members of Commonwealth were slightly opposed to the proposed changes. Members from the Highlands are more likely to hold a neutral view on the issue (27%), whereas the members from Edmonton Indoor and Commonwealth have more strongly-held views with 69% of their respective membership either strongly agreeing or strongly disagreeing with the proposed changes.

Members of the two Calgary clubs that responded to the survey (Calgary Lawn and Stanley Park) were more likely to disagree (52%) than to agree (35%) with the proposed changes.

We reached out to both Medicine Hat and Rotary Park during the period the survey was open. No responses were received from either club.

Summary of respondent comments

This section summarizes the respondent comments. The full text of all respondent comments is reproduced in Appendix A.

What aspects of the proposed changes do you agree with and why?

- Reduce costs to the NSO, PSOs and the competitors
- More exciting and marketable format – increase team spirit - bring new people to the game
- One national championship creates a more prestigious event
- Increased support for the host club
- Opens up the provincial calendar for more local and regional events
- The “Bowl for Life” stream of player development (i.e. Senior Triples and Mixed Pairs) can be fulfilled with regional events at a lower cost

What aspects of the proposed changes do you disagree with and why?

- Reduction of competitive opportunities – elimination of events and “B” teams - detrimental to player development in Alberta
- A small group of the same competitors will represent Alberta every year – participation in Alberta Championships will decrease – clubs may no longer join the PSO as their members no longer enter provincial championships

- Elimination of Senior Triples / Mixed Pairs – seniors are the backbone of many clubs and to eliminate the Canadian Senior Triples Championship is wrong – disrespects the core principal that lawn bowling is a sport for life
- Elimination of Canadian Outdoor Singles Championship, by merging it into another event – not all players eligible to compete – winner determined by strength of team they are on – not a true singles event
- Elimination of Canadian Indoor Singles Championship – Canada’s representative will now be selected instead of playing for the right to represent the country
- Proposed 5-a-side format with two five end sets and a one end tiebreak is too short of a format for a national championship and will lead to outcomes determined by luck rather than skill – quality of competition at nationals will be reduced
- Lack of consultation prior to announcement of the changes
- Smaller clubs will no longer be able to host a national championship
- Para competition should be open as it is an event we are trying to get off the ground
- BCB will dictate format for provincial championships

What specific actions could be taken by BA or BCB to alleviate your concerns, if any?

- Retain Canadian Senior Triples Championship
- Retain Canadian Outdoor Singles Championship
- Retain Canadian Indoor Singles Championship, with the winner representing Canada
- Increase number of ends played per game to make it a meaningful competition
- Postpone implementation of changes – more broad-based consultation is required - find a balance between reducing costs and providing meaningful competitive experiences
- Roll out local and regional events prior to eliminating national championships – NSO should partner with PSOs to develop local and regional events
- Create a Canadian Open event
- Create a regional event, similar to the Atlantic Bowl
- Do not try to use numbers to justify the decision – costs could be reduced (umpires, BCB delegates) - entry fees could be increased
- Provide flexibility in how a province determines its 5-a-side team e.g. singles event and pairs event with top two pairs teams to determine provincial representatives
- Create a ranking system for elite national competitors and an age restricted division (55+) open only to players who are not part of the ranking system – need a national championship for the “non-elite” competitor
- Be more transparent – present findings on the new model to all members

Additional comments or questions:

- This survey is a positive sign that BA will consult with its membership
- Changes put the emphasis on the PSO to support the clubs in attracting and retaining members
- Make it easier for clubs to host national championships e.g. one green clubs

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