



## Proposals for the structure of the League for the 2026 season

### Executive Summary

The LEB has endorsed the proposal of the Senior Section committee to regionalise on a North/South basis Divisions 7, 8 & 9 from the 2026 season onwards. This is to incorporate the influx of Yorkshire & Derbyshire Cricket League clubs with minimal impact on our existing teams and to ensure compliance with the ECB Disparity Policy.

### Background

The Yorkshire Cricket Southern Premier League (YCSPL) had already received five applications from clubs for the 2026 season; four from the Pontefract & District Cricket League (PDCL) and one new team from an existing club. In April 2025, the Yorkshire & Derbyshire Cricket League (YDCL) informed the YCSPL that it would cease to exist at the end of the 2025 season and that 16 teams would be looking to join the YCSPL for the 2026 season. All of these clubs are located in the south of Sheffield, with one located in Baslow and one potentially in Great Longstone, Derbyshire. Both teams located in Derbyshire are made up of players from Sheffield and as such were rejected by the Derbyshire County Cricket League.

For a number of seasons, due to the YCSPL growing, particularly with clubs joining from the PDCL on the northern edge of our catchment area, concerns had been raised within the Senior Section committee that travelling was becoming a more challenging issue in the lowest divisions, where many teams are filled with a combination of junior players and more casual senior players. With this growth at both the northern and southern boundary this issue continues to cause concern.

### Options

- A. Do nothing – create new divisions 10 & 11 (12-team divisions).
- B. Regionalise the lowest two divisions – create 8N, 8S, 9N & 9S (12-team divisions).
- C. Regionalise the lowest three divisions – create 7N, 7S, 8N, 8S, 9N & 9S (10-team divisions).

### Impact of options

Option A would mean significant numbers of existing YCSPL teams being relegated into the newly created 10 & 11. At this stage of the season, the Senior Section committee felt that this was not appropriate.

Option B would have minimal impact on the fate of existing YCSPL teams, however by putting significant numbers of YDCL Division 1 teams in Division 8S, there is a risk that we might be in breach of the ECB Disparity Policy, given the perceived disparity of strengths within this division. 12 team divisions might also increase the chance of 'mismatches', which was a previous criticism from clubs of the previous attempt at regionalisation.

Option C would have minimal impact on the fate of existing YCSPL teams but would allow YDCL teams to be integrated into divisions 7 to 9, based on their performance in the 2025 season. Divisions of 10 teams also reduces the potential for mismatches. This option would be adding new clubs to those existing in Divisions 7-9. This also gives the potential for these divisions to increase to 12 team divisions when new applicants come forward, without impacting significantly on existing YCSPL teams.

Option C was proposed by the Senior Section committee and has been endorsed by the LEB.



## Impact on promotion/relegation of agreed option

The promotion and relegation below is compliant with Competition Rule 29i and therefore no existing YCSPL club is affected by the proposal outside of the existing Competition Rule 29i.

- ECB Premier Division – two teams relegated.
- Championship Division – two teams promoted; two teams relegated.
- Division 1 – two teams promoted; two teams relegated.
- Division 2 – three teams promoted; three teams relegated.
- Division 3 – three teams promoted; three teams relegated.
- Division 4 – three teams promoted; three teams relegated.
- Division 5 – two teams promoted; three teams relegated.
- Division 6 – three teams promoted; three teams relegated.
- Division 7 – two teams promoted; three teams relegated.
- Division 8 – three teams promoted, three teams relegated.
- Division 9 – four teams promoted.

Note – all promotions/relegations are subject to the YCSPL Competition Rule 29.

Note 2 – the placing of West Bretton 1<sup>st</sup> XI & 2<sup>nd</sup> XI, Pledwick 1<sup>st</sup> XI & 2<sup>nd</sup> XI, Tickhill 3<sup>rd</sup> XI, the 16 entrants from the YDCL will be finalised on completion of the 2025 season, taking into account finishing positions in their respective Leagues. There is also the possibility of two new teams from existing clubs within the YCSPL.

The YCSPL Play-Cricket tables have been amended to reflect the above.

## Divisional summary for option C

- ECB Premier Division to Division 5 – 12 teams per division
- Division 6 – 11 teams in the division
- Division 7N, 7S, 8N, 8S, 9N & 9S – 10 teams per division

Within the 10 teams' divisions, there are multiple options to fulfil a 22-week season which will be explored further over the next few months and confirmed to clubs at the end of September, to allow fixture planning to commence.

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