**The Nationals**

**2020 and Beyond**

sity Basketball League

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# 1 Introduction

UniSport recently submitted a paper to members evaluating the process to the development of Nationals product and the subsequent implementation over two years. Following this a round of forums were run with CEO’s of SDA’s to discuss a way forward for the Nationals product. UniSport provided feedback from their opinion that a great deal had been achieved from the original objectives. This included:

1. Improve the sporting quality
2. Change the culture of the event to a sporting event
3. Attempt to make the university sport system more relevant
4. Reduce critical incidents to students and impact on university brands

The final piece of the puzzle was to ensure the events are financially viable for UniSport. The recommendation put forward to the members was that the events be combined into one event held in September.

# 2 Member feedback

Without oversimplifying the considerable feedback that was received from members on the concept it can be broadly summarised into two categories:

1. Universities that are very supportive for the following reasons:
   1. Increased participation opportunities for more students
   2. Reduced costs for universities in attending single event
   3. More attractive to the student from the multi sport event perspective
2. Universities that are supportive – However, the maintenance of a quality Div 1 is of the highest priority. Generally, this tended to be some of the larger universities or those focused on only bringing highly competitive teams. Some key points included:
   1. Must avoid blow out matches
   2. Div 1 competition to remain a highly competitive competition
   3. Avoid at all cost a return to party culture

# 3 Format 2020

Whilst there is still considerable work to do UniSport can officially advise that the Nationals Div 1 and Div 2 will be conducted as a single event in 2020 and beyond. Included with this document is a preliminary draft schedule. As discussed, it is a condition of our funding agreement with the Western Australian Tourism Commission that the event be delivered over 7 days. Despite this due to the significant indoor space requirements it is necessary to start martial arts and a number of other events on the weekend prior.

Div 1 and Div 2

Whilst all members agreed that we needed to maintain the Div 1 and Div 2 competitions in the single event, there were quite differing opinions in how this should be done. There was some support for open competitions to be implemented with a reclassification system being implemented to separate the two competitions part way through the week. Others thought it was best to just separate them using last year’s results and go back to promotion being for the following year.

Following the East forum a model was suggested where a set number of teams (potentially 6 or 8) is quarantined in Div 1 from previous results, however allowing maybe 2 teams from Div 2 to earn promotion into the Div 1 competition mid way through the week. This received positive feedback from other regions and will be investigated, along with other models discussed here, and put out for member consultation.

Schedule

Of note is the decision to run sport for the time required. Therefore, if a sport’s competition can be conducted over 3-4 days it will be. Placing them at the beginning of the week will mean that only the large team sports will still be playing on the Friday. This will allow universities to manage their gradual departure of teams. Also included is the option to run Beach Volleyball over the weekend and first couple of days of the competition to allow some of the players to also play indoor volleyball.

The list of standalone events has been confirmed. Members wishing to submit applications to host will be invited to in the coming weeks when the bid information is distributed.

# 5 Other Implications

A number of other items were discussed in relation to the management of the Nationals. These included:

1. Regional intervarsity event program

It will be the responsibility of Relationship Managers to work with their members to develop a range of intervarsity opportunities for their members. Some key points include:

1. Opportunity for universities to host events
2. Low cost
3. Allow multiple team participation
4. Significant opportunity during a range of dates in July holidays
5. Multi team participation

Whist this was not unanimous there was a strong feeling that multiple team participation should be left to regional participation and that resorting back to a single team per university per competition should be reconsidered.

UniSport will retain the option to address multiple team entries on a sport by sport basis, only where it may add value or significantly enhance the coemption structure.

1. Point score

Members agreed to keep the Pennant system in place

1. International participation

This was quite a contentious topic with many members believing that international participation would strengthen the competition and make it a more attractive event for students. However, there is still a number of universities concerned with the impact international universities can have from a results perspective.

The final position was that UniSport will trial international team participation in sports where there is only a single division competition and where numbers are low that these teams will add positively to the competition.

1. Opening Ceremony

Members had varying thoughts on this aspect. The common theme was that if UniSport did look to instigate a ceremony it had to have the students at heart. There is no need for speeches from stakeholders. This could be a good concept to engage the student leader group from last year’s conference to develop an appropriate format.

1. Student engagement plan

Members were unanimous that Unisport’s focus is on the sporting program and implementing the best event it can. It should continue to provide engagement chill out zones at sporting venues, however, anything after hours should be left with members to manage their teams.

# 6 UniSport Pathway

The diagram below articulates the UniSport pathway. At this stage this is a moving piece of work. Recently we have seen the development of World Cup events in 3x3 and Football which provides the opportunities for universities to represent UniSport and the university internationally. FISU have indicated that this will continue to grow in future years. This may provide more opportunities for universities that are successful at Div 1 events the opportunity to participate at World University Championships. Also to be considered in this space is the strong relation UniSport has with many NSO’s who see the FISU program as integral to their athlete development pathway. This will continue to develop overtime, however with a number of differing agendas in play it is expected to move slowly.

