

BUCS Wednesday Leagues – Frequently Asked Questions

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Why the change?

The move to Wednesday leagues puts us on a par with other sports in terms of the BUCS points available. We've already seen evidence of a number of additional Universities trying to recruit paid coaches for next year, and we expect that will become even more common once we are established as a league sport. Your second team will also be earning BUCS points, and may also see changes in the way they are viewed. This will vary from institution to institution, but overall we expect the impact on our visibility to be very positive.

From a logistical point of view, outdoor regionals is challenging at that time of year; we often struggle for the best venues and also there have been at least 5 cancellations in the past few years. A cancelled league match is very much easier to rearrange than a regional tournament.

There are plenty of other benefits too – full-length games; the opportunity to adjust tactics/training depending on how it's going rather than have one weekend define your season; less impact if a player is injured/unavailable for one match than if they miss a whole tournament; the chance to build a cohesive 1st team squad that goes on road-trips etc (and ideally a second team squad which is more than 'who is left over' but develops its own identity).

What are the downsides?

It would be foolish to deny some of the risks involved. Some courses (e.g. medicine) do not give their students Wednesday afternoon off for sport. We also lose a regional outdoor tournament (though there is of course nothing to stop someone putting on such an event as a warm-up for Nationals rather than a qualifier).

A team which has an influx of very talented/experienced first years would expect to take a year or more to 'find their level'; similarly a team which graduates its starting line may find it gets thrashed for a year before inevitable relegation. And it would be difficult for a tier 2 team to find their level if they suddenly pick up a talented group of 1-year Masters or JYA students – they would all leave again before they had the chance to enjoy the benefits of their good season. These issues are common to all other sports, of course.

Overall, we believe the expected benefits outweigh these issues, though we do accept that not every player or team will be better off in the short term.

What is affected?

The change only affects Men's Outdoors for now; Indoors is unaffected (other than possibly some date changes). Note that this means your indoor region may not be the same as your outdoor region! We may look to integrate the indoor and outdoor regions more closely in the future, but probably not for 2015-16.

Since Open Outdoors will now be Men's, BUCS are also looking to sanction the Women's Outdoors on the same basis as the 2014 Open (i.e. top 8 get points; both Women's Regionals and Nationals will be official BUCS competitions and may qualify for funding from your University). This is not yet



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signed off by the relevant BUCS committee, but has been agreed in principle, and we have no reason to believe there will be a problem.

We also have every reason to believe that if Women's continues to grow it will also move to a similar league system, though we cannot put a timeline on that.

When does it start?

The leagues will come into effect for the upcoming 2015-16 season. In order to not disrupt recruitment on those early-season Wednesday afternoons, the leagues will not start until November, giving you a chance to introduce new people to the sport and to attend beginner tournaments etc. before the league begins.

How often will we play?

That will depend to some extent on the number of teams in your league. It may be home-and-away, or it may just be one match against each opponent. In short, we can't say for certain yet. A minimum of 5 matches, but possibly quite a few more.

How is it set up?

The league structure is comprised of three tiers. Tier 1 is split into 5 regions with each region limited to 6 teams: Scotland, North, Midlands, West and South-East. Tier 2 is split into 9 regions: Scotland, North (East and West), Midlands (East and West), West (East and West) and South-East (East and West). We expect three regions to have a tier 3 league (West, Midlands and South East) due to the number of teams in these regions – though of course this may change when we see the full list of entered teams.

Championship/Trophy (aka Div 1 and Div 2 Nationals)

16 teams will qualify to the Championship. The top three finishing teams in the each region will automatically qualify through to the Championship. The final position will be awarded to the next best performing team, calculated by the method stated in BUCS general reg. 13.10.2. The remaining teams in tier 1 will qualify to the Trophy, 14 teams in total.

Conference Cup:

Teams in tier 2 (and below) will compete in Conference Cup knock-out matches within their wider region (i.e. the East & West sections), also on a Wednesday single-match basis. The teams that reach the regional final of the conference cup will qualify to compete in the Nationals weekend to determine final placings, 10 teams in total.

Promotion/relegation:

The teams finishing in bottom position in each of the tier 1 leagues will automatically be relegated to tier 2. The teams finishing top of their league in tier 2 will play-off within their region to determine who will be promoted to tier 1. In Scotland, there will be a straight swap between the bottom finishing team in tier 1 and the top finishing team in tier 2.

What tier will we be in next year?

That will depend on your outdoor results this year. For the teams competing at Nationals 2015 (Division 1 or Division 2) the seeding is relatively simple; those teams will have a clear ranking against each other, and will all be ranked ahead of those who did not qualify. Teams moving to new regions causes no problem since they are competing at the same tournament to earn their relative ranking.

Below Nationals level, it is quite possible that two teams with no common opponents (i.e. from different 2014-15 regions) will be in the same region for 2015-16, and we need to rank them. It would obviously be unfair that a team finishing 7th out of 7 would be ahead of one finishing 8th out of 20, so we need to take into account the number of teams as well as the finishing position.

We will take the outdoor regional results, remove the teams that qualified for nationals, and divide each team's net finishing position by the net number of teams at that event.

Worked Example

Team A finish 9th in a region of 18 teams, from which 5 went to Nationals.

Their 'net' finishing position (without the Nationals qualifiers) is 4th of 13, so they score $4/13 = 0.308$

Team B finished 8th in a region of 12 teams, from which 5 went to nationals.

Their net finish is 3rd of 7, scoring $3/7 = 0.428$

Team A would be ranked ahead of Team B.

(But note that 7th in that region of 12 would have earned 0.286 and been ranked ahead of Team A.)

In the event of two teams having an equal score, the higher ranked team will be determined by the following, in this order:

- The team that played at the (net) larger regional tournament (since 6th of 6 scores the same as 18th of 18, but finishing last of 18 is clearly worse)
- The team whose region had the higher average finishing position at nationals (Divisions 1 + 2 combined)
- The team whose region had the higher average finishing position at Division 2 Nationals
- The team whose region had the higher *worst* finishing position at Division 2 Nationals

Using this method we will be able to place the teams into appropriate leagues in their respective regions. The exact number of teams in each league will of course depend on how many teams are entered.

What region will we be in next year?

This is our expectation at the moment – we don't guarantee there are no errors or missing teams, but we need to get this information out ASAP. Get in touch if you're missing from the list, or if you're confused about why you would be in a particular region.

Scotland

Aberdeen



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Dundee
Glasgow
Edinburgh
Heriot-Watt
Strathclyde
Stirling
St Andrews

North

Manchester
Durham
Newcastle
Liverpool
York
Sheffield
Bangor
Leeds
Leeds Met
Keele
Chester
UCLan
Sheffield Hallam
Lancaster

Midlands

Nottingham
Loughborough
Lincoln
Warwick
Oxford
Birmingham
Cambridge
UEA
Leicester
Coventry
Nottingham Trent
Oxford Brookes
Cranfield
Anglia Ruskin

West

Bristol
Bath
Exeter



Cardiff
 Southampton
 Swansea
 Bournemouth
 Plymouth
 Winchester

South East

Sussex
 Imperial
 Surrey
 Kent
 LSE
 Portsmouth
 Brunel
 Chichester
 KCL
 Brighton
 UCL
 Hertfordshire
 Essex
 Roehampton
 Holloway
 Arts

BUCS Points

Insofar as your University values BUCS points (and most do) the change to a Wednesday league will make a huge difference. Currently, finishing 8th in the UK gets 8 points, and no one below that scores anything. In the new system, finishing 6th in Tier 2 (that's 17-18th in your region, so roughly 75th in the country) would give you 11 points even if you don't win a game all season!

From the BUCS proposal:

Tier 1	Tier 2
1st Place – 30 Points	1st Place – 20 Points
2nd Place – 26 Points	2nd Place – 16 Points
3rd Place – 24 Points	3rd Place – 14 Points
4th Place – 23 Points	4th Place – 13 Points
5th Place – 22 Points	5th Place – 12 Points
6th Place – 21 Points	6th Place – 11 Points
	7th Place – 10 Points
	8th Place – 9 Points
	9th Place – 8 Points
	10th Place – 7 Points

And what's more, teams will still have the opportunity to go to Outdoor Nationals and score just the same points as you can now; except that there will also be points available in the Trophy (Div 2) and Shield/Conference Cup (Div 3!).

Championship	Trophy	Shield
<i>Winner – 50 Points</i>	<i>Winner – 30 Points</i>	<i>Winner – 20 Points</i>
<i>Runner Up – 35 Points</i>	<i>Runner Up – 21 Points</i>	<i>Runner Up – 14 Points</i>
<i>3rd Place – 24 Points</i>	<i>3rd Place – 14 Points</i>	<i>3rd Place – 10 Points</i>
<i>4th Place – 16 Points</i>	<i>4th Place – 12 Points</i>	<i>4th Place – 7 Points</i>
<i>5th Place – 14 Points</i>	<i>5th Place – 11 Points</i>	<i>5th Place – 5 Points</i>
<i>6th Place – 12 Points</i>	<i>6th Place – 9 Points</i>	<i>6th Place – 3 Points</i>
<i>7th Place – 10 Points</i>	<i>7th Place – 7 Points</i>	<i>7th Place – 2 Points</i>
<i>8th Place – 8 Points</i>	<i>8th Place – 5 Points</i>	<i>8th Place – 1 Points</i>
<i>9th = Place – 6 Points</i>		

Premier Leagues

Some sports have a Premier League above the Tier 1 leagues, scoring between 30 and 50 league points. We don't believe that Ultimate is ready for the amount of travelling involved in a National Premier League (or even a North and South Premier) in our first season. We expect to revisit this question in a couple of years, depending of course on feedback from the players also.

What do I need to sort out with my University?

Entry

You need your University to enter you through BUCScore (before **30th April 2015**, though there may be some option to enter late as long as you get in touch with us/BUCS as soon as you are able). This is the same closing date as other sports, so they will be expecting it – but we advise you to organise a meeting with them ASAP.

You need to work out how many teams you can field (possibly in conjunction with your AU). Note that, like other sports, there will be limits on how many players you can move up and down between teams, so you will need enough players for a largely separate first and second team squad if you wish to enter two. Take into account the number of people who might miss a game through injury or field trips etc. and make sure you have enough – you (or your AU) may be fined both cash and BUCS points if you forfeit a game. You do have the opportunity to rearrange your fixtures with your opponent, but if you are unable to make that work you will forfeit the game. We have no real idea at this stage what is sensible, but you will certainly need more than you would take to a tournament. (It's also worth noting, if you plan to enter a second team, that you may wish to have enough people on the first team that they can practice together 7-on-7, which realistically means having many more than 14 to cope with injuries and other excuses!)

Transport

You will also need to talk to your AU about transport. Many Unis will fund BUCS transport, and even if they don't fund it fully you may be able to get some assistance.

Pitches

You'll need to talk to them about pitch availability for your home games (and you may also wish to discuss your practice times in light of your new situation).

You will need a 100mx37m pitch for your matches (fully lined, though not necessarily in white if it's a shared pitch of course!), with at least 3m clearance on all sides from any obstacle (e.g. walls, trees, football posts, the ground suddenly sloping sharply away etc. - basically anything that could realistically cause problems for someone who laid out from inside the pitch).

It's also acceptable to use a port-a-pitch method with fabric lines, as long as it's full size and very thoroughly pegged down and safe.

If your university is unable to provide a space like this, do talk to us about the specific situation – we may be able to sanction a fractionally smaller pitch, or allow certain softer obstacles to be nearby, that sort of thing. But we will need to sign off on anything that does not meet the above criteria.

A pitch diagram is included at the end of this document to show to your university.

Academic Flexibility

Many Universities have a system in place where athletes are able to get out of e.g. Wednesday morning lectures if they need to leave early to travel to a match; this might or might not be the case at your University, but it might be worth finding out. (Obviously you will usually need to make up the effort somewhere later on – your university isn't stupid, even if they do choose to support your sporting endeavour!)

UKU Membership

You will need basic UKU membership for every player who plays in the league, and full UKU membership if you go forward to the finals weekend (in any division). You will of course still require basic membership for Indoor Regionals and full for Indoor Nationals, just as you do currently. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that your University will cover this cost though we would expect that to be the exception rather than the rule; that will depend on their policies regarding membership in other sports.

Where can I find the rules?

The sport-specific rules are not yet updated, but the generic BUCS rules (i.e. covering walkovers, team selection etc) can be found here:

<http://www.bucs.org.uk/page.asp?section=17124§ionTitle=Rules+and+Regulations>

Note of course that we expect the Spirit of the Game to apply on and off the field; taking advantage of a loophole to try and field e.g. a strengthened second team would be very much against the ethos of our sport.

How will this impact the rest of the calendar?

The removal of the Outdoor Regionals weekend (for Men) will open up opportunities to space out our Indoor competition. It is possible for example that Men's Indoor Nationals might move after Christmas in 2015-16, and Mixed Indoor Nationals to before Christmas (this also requires that Mixed Indoor Regionals will come before Men's). None of this is set in stone yet, but we do expect to look for opportunities to adjust a very congested indoor season.

What if our Union won't support/fund our entry? Can we still enter?

It would be difficult if your Union were to refuse to enter you, as it needs to be done through BUCSscore which you cannot access. However, that's the case already. If they refuse to fund you, but will enter you, the cost of the programme is £155, including the league AND any Nationals you qualify for (this may increase slightly if BUCS apply an across-the-board inflationary rise for all their sports, but will be about right).

I've still got lots of questions! Who can I speak to?

That is not a surprise! This is a big change.

Many of your questions can be answered by your Athletic Union, or by speaking to people in other sports and asking how they organise themselves. And we'll update this document as we receive more questions too – undoubtedly there will be something we've missed that a lot of people will ask about.

For all enquiries please contact the University Coordinator, Chris Bamford, on unicordinator@ukultimate.com

ULTIMATE PITCH DIMENSIONS

The playing field is a rectangle 100m x 37m with additional internal lines as shown on the diagram.

The goal lines are parallel to the endlines and are set 18m into the field.

The brick marks are crosses marked eighteen (18) metres from each goal line, midway between the sidelines.

The field should be flat, free of obstacles, and of a suitable surface (grass or rubbercrumb – NOT hard court or hockey-style astroturf).

There should be a run-off space of approximately 3m in all directions around the field (i.e. away from trees, football posts, significant downward slopes etc – anything that might cause injury to someone jumping from inside the pitch).

The lines would normally be marked in chalk/paint, but it is possible to use temporary port-a-pitch options (fabric lines stretched tight and pegged down well to avoid creating a trip hazard – see here for example: <http://www.discstore.com/discs/port-field-regular-portable-ultimate-field-lines-goal-lines>) if you lack the space for a dedicated pitch.

Some small changes to these details are possible, but this depends on the details of the situation and must be discussed with UK Ultimate (benji.heywood@ukultimate.com; 07896 919900)

