



## Hadrian Golf League

## Newcastle & District Golf League

Potential League Merger

## Background & Purpose

The Hadrian Golf League and the Newcastle and District Golf League have been in existence for 50 and 74 years respectively and have served the golf clubs of South Northumberland and northern clubs of Durham in providing competitive scratch golf on weekday evenings throughout the summer.

At present, a total of 24 clubs are represented across both leagues, with some clubs fielding teams in both the Hadrian and N&D Leagues. The purpose of this document and any activities that may follow is to explore whether there is appetite from the key stakeholders (the clubs) to look at a potential merger of the two leagues.

Over the last few years, there have been comments and suggestions from various parties that two leagues may be unsustainable going forward for a number of reasons, such as, but not limited to:

- Clubs being unable to financially sustain having two teams in separate leagues (in some cases), and multiple teams across club leagues (Men's, ladies, juniors, seniors)
- Few players being interested in league golf
- Scratch golf, or even golf in general, is objectively not in as strong a position as it was 10-years ago

Given the questions that have been asked in the past about the future of the leagues, representatives from both leagues have had discussions about any potential changes.

The purpose of this document is to explore and outline what a potential league merger may look like and to start involving the clubs. The clubs are the key stakeholders of each of the leagues, and the committees and administrators of each are merely custodians.

For clarity, the following clubs are members of each league, with those clubs being members of both highlighted:

<b>Hadrian Golf League</b>	<b>Newcastle &amp; District Golf League</b>
Bedlingtonshire	Arcot Hall
Bellingham	Backworth
Close House	Blyth
Hexham	City of Newcastle
High Gosforth Park	Gosforth
Longhirst Hall	Morpeth
Matfen Hall	Newbiggin
Newcastle United	Newcastle United
Northumberland	Northumberland
Ponteland	Ponteland
Prudhoe	Prudhoe
Slaley Hall	Tynemouth
Stocksfield	Tyneside
Tyneside	Westerhope
Westerhope	Whitley Bay

## League Format

There could be a number of options considered and proposed should a merger go ahead, and these will ultimately be decided by member clubs, but two possible options could be as follows:

### League Model 1

Create three leagues consisting of 8 clubs in the same way that the N&D League is currently structured, with each club playing 14 matches, home and away, with promotion and relegation being implemented at the end of the season.

### League Model 2

One of the potential downsides of a ‘divisional’ model, is that clubs may never have the opportunity to play each other if both consistently remain in separate divisions. To address this issue, a model which is adopted in major football could be used. This would consist of the following:

- Clubs are drawn into 4 pots of 6 clubs
- Each club plays all other teams, home and away, making 10 matches for each
- The top 2 clubs from each pot advance to the quarter final stages, and then subsequently onto the semi-finals and final, with knockouts on neutral courses
- A draw could be made each year at the annual dinner for the following years pots, with the four semi-finalists seeded into separate pots

## Format

The current format of 6 player teams, playing off scratch over 18-holes is one that is considered to work well and may not require change.

## Benefits to Clubs

There are a number of perceived benefits that could be considered by clubs:

- N&D clubs will be eligible to play in the Davison Cup
- Cost savings for those clubs with two teams (reduced kit, meals, travel, league subscriptions and only one presentation dinner)
- Matches would be played on one night rather than a mixture
- A potentially stronger league, with a more secure future

## Next Steps

As detailed previously in this document, the current administrators of the leagues do not have the power to implement changes, these decisions fall to the clubs involved. The next stages would require each club to participate in discussions around the structure and adoption of a new league with a potential start in the 2027 season.

It should be noted that Captains, VC's and Club Managers should discuss extensively with players to ensure a collective vote is made by their club when the time comes.