



Press Release

University sport spearheads innovation in development of sport delivery

BUCS' innovative Sport Review has given the green light for nine pioneering proposals across eight sports, transforming the student-athlete experience.

The ongoing process, officially started in May 2018, has reached the end of Cycle One and after an extensive consultation, a variety of new programmes have been approved to move forwards.

Proposals to change the student-athlete offer in hockey, rugby union, golf (tour), lacrosse, taekwondo, fencing, table tennis and ultimate will now move forward to implementation for the 2019-20 season.

A ninth sport, handball, has been asked to deliver a successful pilot of its proposal with a view to initiating implementation for the 2020-21 season.

Commenting on the new strategic for university sport, BUCS CEO Vince Mayne said: "Each year BUCS sport programmes impacts some 125,000 students across the UK. The way students engage in sport and their university studies is ever changing - it is important that we remain at the forefront of innovation and continue to meet their needs.

"The new programmes will develop and enhance various sports at all levels of the sporting spectrum - from grassroots to performance level - ultimately, creating an inclusive sporting environment that lives up to BUCS' mission of the best university sport experience in the world."

BUCS – celebrating 100 years of British University Sport in 2019 – have been consulting National Governing Bodies, its members and representatives from universities across the UK.

Over 80 sports attended a Briefing Day in May 2018 which outlined a new opportunity to propose changes or additions to the BUCS Competitions Programme.

The plans were reviewed and put forward for implementation after a successful meeting of the BUCS National Competitions Group on Tuesday 26 February.

These changes are proposed to come into effect from September, the start of the 2019-20 student sport season.

Ross Simpson, Chair of BUCS National Competitions Group, said: "From a National Competitions group prospective, Cycle one of the sports review has been a great success. The engagement from SAGs, Governing Bodies and most importantly the membership has allowed for the process to run very smoothly.

"The work that the BUCS office and particularly Jenny Morris has put in to make this happen is due a lot of praise. We now look forward to cycle two and further improving the BUCS programme."

Specific proposals for individual sports are as follows:

- Fencing: to develop regional inter-university competitions in partnership with British Fencing
- Golf (Tour): to open up the BUCS Golf Tour Championship to individual guest entries from elite non-student golfers
- Hockey: to introduce a National League for the men's and women's programmes
- Lacrosse: to introduce a second layer within the existing Premier Tier of women's lacrosse
- Rugby Union: to introduce a National League for the women's programme and improve the competitive offer in the lower tiers of the men's programme
- Taekwondo: to adopt Taekwondo as a new sport within the BUCS competition structure
- Table Tennis: to introduce a Premier Tier into the women's programme
- Ultimate: to restructure the women's offer to reflect the growth of the sport

BUCS Head of Sport Delivery and Performance, Jenny Morris, is pleased to see the new programmes launched into the sector and is now looking ahead to Cycle Two of the Sport Review.

"The Sport Review provides a solid foundation from which to continue developing our offer for all types of student-athletes within Higher Education. It is a robust framework through which BUCS can advance its agenda to provide the best university sport experience, by ensuring that our sport offer is modernised, sustainable, and most importantly student centric.

"The learning we take from each cycle as we move through future seasons will continue to refine and improve the process. As the Sport Review embeds itself within the organisation, our hope is that it will become synonymous with sport development across the sector."

All of the proposals are designed to cater for the wide range of student-athletes engaged by BUCS, from social participants to elite athletes, and a number focus solely on female sport offers.

The changes coincide with the conclusion of BUCS Inclusion Week and through alterations to BUCS competitions hope to enshrine the values celebrated over the last seven days.

Another four sports were also a part of Cycle One, however at this stage these proposals will not be moving forwards to implementation. Instead, basketball, baseball & softball, golf (league) and tennis will work with BUCS to analyse the feedback received and agree how proposals can best move forwards.

Cycle Two, set to open in April 2019, will highlight possible changes or additions to the programme for the 2020-21 season.

For more information on the Sport Review, [visit the strategy section of the BUCS website](#)

BUCS to launch National Leagues for men's and women's hockey, following sport review

British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) will move to implement a National League for men's and women's hockey under plans drawn up by its innovative Sport Review.

The ongoing process, officially launched in May 2018, has reached the end of Cycle One and after an extensive consultation, a variety of new programmes have been approved to move forwards.

The hockey proposal, given the green light for into implementation from September, focuses on providing the best possible competitive experience through consistent standards of delivery.

From Dan Tilley, Chair of the BUCS Hockey SAG:

'The British Universities and Colleges programme has traditionally attracted a high calibre of athlete, and with the growing investment into University Hockey it seemed appropriate to review the leagues to ensure they were still fit for purpose. The review revealed the value of the current BUCS programme and the regard it had amongst student athletes, but there were also concerns about player load, umpiring standards and maintaining a consistently high standard of performance at the top end of the competition. As a consequence the BUCS member institutions supported the introduction of a new single national league structure with a reduction in overall fixtures to help address the concerns highlighted whilst still maintaining the integrity of the current competition. The sector has seen the success of the BUCS Super Rugby programme and it is hoped that hockey can reap similar benefits from its restructure.'

From Heather Williams, GB Hockey Head of Elite Talent Development:

"We are delighted that the hockey proposal has been accepted. Bringing together the top teams in a national league will enable higher quality best v best competition on a weekly basis increasing both the competition experience and excitement for players and spectators. Raising the standard of our domestic game is a key priority for England Hockey and the changes to the BUCS programme are a significant step towards this. We have been working closely with BUCS for the last 12 months to develop this proposal and our thanks to the BUCS staff and especially Dan Tilley, Director of Sport at Nottingham University and Chair of the Hockey SAG, for their significant work in getting to this point"

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The plans were reviewed and put forward for implementation after a successful meeting of the BUCS National Competitions Group on Tuesday 26 February.

The new format would see the top tier of each competition compete nationally during both the league and knockout stages.

Hockey are the first sport to look at a national league model for both the men's and women's offers concurrently within the same proposal.

The changes coincide with the conclusion of BUCS Inclusion Week and through alterations to BUCS competitions hope to enshrine the values celebrated over the last seven days.

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