

Restructure of Merseyside Chess Proposal

Addendum to July 2025 Proposal which is still valid for these discussions

What have we learned from this season?

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MCA Restructure Agenda

- Today is “Once in a generation opportunity” to improve chess for ALL Merseyside clubs
- Which clubs benefited from Liverpool 2 removal from Division 1 this season and how?
(Liverpool and PKA)
- Which clubs suffering due to allowing 2 teams in Division 1 this season?
(Atticus/Wallasey/Aigburth + Formby/Waterloo/Skem/Ormskirk)
- Which clubs benefitted having only 1 team Div 1 this season? (JLW/Southport)
- Which clubs would benefit in future from only allowing 1 team per club in Div 1?
(All Merseyside clubs would be stronger (including Formby/Waterloo/Skem/Ormskirk))
- Opportunity to make Division 2 Title relevant to clubs strategic ambitions
- Restructure options available for next season or prolong the suffering of most clubs

- **Today is “Once in a generation opportunity” to improve chess for ALL**
- Merseyside league structure hasn’t been reviewed for decades and probably won’t again for many years
- What is best for our ALL clubs and chess players across Merseyside
- Not about what is best for me, my team or even my club
- Take this one-off opportunity to make a significant difference to Merseyside chess!

Which clubs benefited from Liverpool 2 removal from Division 1 this season and how?

- **Liverpool**

- Liverpool 1 top of MCA 1st Division having won every match so far by being able to call upon ALL players in club when needed
- Liverpool 1 now only utilising clubs own committed players rather than bring in ringers like last season to compete for title - better for club players and morale
- Liverpool A (Liverpool 2) top of Wirral league won every match so far as ALL club players rather than fighting to avoid relegation again in MCA Div 1
- Liverpool 3 clear top of Division 3 as can use ALL club players apart from 6 L1 listed players - huge difference in player availability easing pressure on club captains
- Fewer teams in club has reduced pressure on players and captains to play matches and face burnout rather than enjoy more fun casual chess in club

Which clubs benefited from Liverpool 2 removal from Division 1 this season and how?

- **Prescot**

- Prescot already attracting more strong players to club largely an impact of competing in the MCA 1st Division - unlikely if they remained in Div 2
- Prescot 1 2024 top 7 players ranged from 1903 - 1629 Ave grade: 1735
- Prescot 1 2025 top 7 players ranged from 2076 - 1760 Ave grade: 1895
- Prescot 1 - 4 of top 5 players in Prescot 1 are new this year - D Hill 2076, M Ellis 2013, James Friar 1953P and now Robin Makin 1816 (2024 Ron H 1882)
- Prescot 2 will be much stronger next season - current P1 listed players will be available for P2 and P1 teams, maybe a P3 team to be added to league?
- Prestige of the club has been improved, more good and average players, pride and website etc now being created

Which clubs suffering due to allowing 2 teams in Division 1 this season?

- **Atticus (CLUB Top 7 players Grades 2024 total: 2550 - 2084 Average: 2238)**
 - Atticus are by far the strongest club on Merseyside and should be winning the 1st Division most years but splitting 2 teams in Div 1 weakens them.
 - Attitude that because Atticus 2 have been in top flight for decades and should therefore remain benefits just a few long term blinkered Atticus 2 players rather than what is best for the club and all players.
 - Atticus 1 and 2 should be winning the 1st and 2nd Division titles every season instead of both teams now struggling to win the 1st division
 - In addition to split of strength, both Atticus teams playing against each other every season reduces chances of club winning title dramatically.
 - Running 2 independent teams makes life very difficult for captains when trying to field 2 strong teams for every match - simply not necessary

Which clubs suffering due to allowing 2 teams in Division 1 this season?

- **Wallasey (CLUB Top 7 players Grades 2024 total: 2140-2909 Average grade: 1949)**
 - Wallasey are 4th strongest club on Merseyside and Wallasey A are doing well but having 2 teams in Div 1 weakens both teams considerably
 - Although Wallasey have attracted additional strong players this season being in Division 1 their results have likely been negatively impacted by having only 10 of the top 20 club players available to them including only 4 of the top 8 players in the club
 - Wallasey A have fielded 1600+ rated players ranked 25th, 26th and 32nd in grade strength this season due to unavailability of Wallasey B players with likely impact on team results
 - Wallasey B are very limited and much weaker than Wallasey A meaning they lose most games in Div 1 heavily which impacts morale of players
 - Given the growth in numbers and strength at the club, Wallasey A and B should be increasingly competing for the top places in both Division 1 and Division 2 every season
 - Running 2 independent teams makes life very difficult for captains when trying to field 2 strong teams for every match - simply not necessary

Which clubs suffering due to allowing 2 teams in Division 1 this season?

- **Aigburth**

- Aigburth were the 6th strongest graded club on Merseyside last season but were relegated due to Atticus and Liverpool having 2 strong teams in Division 1
- Aigburth have traditionally been one of the top Merseyside Teams competing for many first division titles, now being in Division 2 makes it more difficult for them to attract strong players to the club.
- With Aigburth 1 and Aigburth 2 now splitting their strength in Division 2 their chances of success this season have been severely impacted with Aigburth 1 unlikely to gain promotion against their weaker Division 2 rivals this season and in future seasons whilst this situation remains
- Aigburth 1 have had to field Aigburth 3 players on numerous occasions this season due to Aigburth 2 players being unavailable costing them results.
- Aigburth 2 are very limited and much weaker than Aigburth 1 meaning they lose most games in Div 2 heavily which impacts morale of players
- Aigburth 1 and 2 should be competing for the top-mid table places in both Division 1 and Division 2 every season
- Running 2 independent teams makes life very difficult for captains when trying to field 2 strong teams for every match - simply not necessary

Which clubs benefitted having only 1 team Div 1 this season?

- **John Littlewood**

- John Littlewood are thriving competing for both the 1st division and 2nd division titles strongly ALL players in club may play for JLW 1 and JLW2 is strong team also
- JLW club have attracted strong players from other Merseyside clubs and beyond who want to compete at the highest levels on Merseyside.

- **Southport**

- Southport are doing well in Division 1 and can call on ALL club players for their matches which give their first team strength in depth they would not otherwise have. S2 players have played for S1 - 10 times this season!
- Being in Division 1 will attract strong players to the club - eg Sam Davis

- **Which clubs would benefit in future from only allowing 1 team per club in Div 1?**
- **ALL Merseyside clubs would benefit!!**
- **Formby/Skem/Waterloo/Ormskirk**
 - All of these teams outside Div 1 would either be promoted to Division 1 or find it much more realistic to get into Division 1 and stay there by finishing as highest 1st team in Div 2
 - Less chance than usual of immediate relegation from Div 1 as different clubs in the table rather than just a few mainly top clubs
 - Increases the prestige and morale of their clubs and makes it much easier for them to attract stronger players in the future

- **Division 2 becomes competitive title for club 2nd teams**
- **Div 2 becomes a very competitive and strategic title for clubs every year**
 - Lots of clubs will have strong 2nd teams who would rather fight for an important title than survival each year
 - All 2nd team players could also play for first team also (if listed correctly)
 - Big clubs fight for winning 2 titles each year instead of struggling to win 1 and splitting strength
 - Smaller clubs with first teams stuck in Div 2 and Div 3 for many years will have the realistic chance to get back to the first division by finishing highest 2nd team in Div 2

- **Restructure options available for next season**
- **Options for 26/27 Season**
 - 1) Stay as we are today - allow 2 teams from same club in Div 1
 - 2) Keep 8 teams in Div 1 but only allow 1 team per club (play twice)
 - 3) Expand to 10/11/12 clubs in Div 1 (play once)
- Details of rules surrounding these options would be discussed and confirmed by committee at the end of the 2025/26 season