

## 2025-26 BUCS COMPETITIONS GROUP - MEETING 1 - MINUTES

**Date** Tuesday 30 September 2025  
**Time** 10:00-15:00  
**Location** Microsoft Teams

### ATTENDEES

Anna Russell (AR)  
Harriet Broadway (HB)  
Ffion Hewlett (FH)  
Ed Baker (EB)  
Sophie Dunning (SDU)  
Chris Purdie (CP)  
Sam Johnson (SJ)  
Josh Darley (JD)  
Victoria Carnall (VC)  
Laura Hockaday (LH)  
Alison Davidson (AD)  
Scott Dale (SD)  
Alice Wilkie (AW)  
Nick Burley (NB)  
Max Bergin (MB)  
Tonye Dokubo (TD)  
Maddi Canell (MC)  
Tanyel Mustafa (TM)  
Jodie Lawrence (JL)

### ORGANISATION

Chair  
York – Yorkshire  
Cardiff - Wales  
Lancaster – North West  
Nottingham Trent – East Midlands  
SSS - Scotland  
UCL - London  
Liverpool John Moores – Student Officers  
Group Rep  
Exeter – South West  
Sunderland – North East  
Exeter – Senior Managers Network Rep  
Canterbury CC – South East  
BUCS  
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### APOLOGIES

Marcus Henson  
Neal Kington  
Dan Roberts

### ORGANISATION

Warwick – West Midlands  
BUCS  
BUCS

Item	Action
<p><b>1. Apologies / Welcome</b></p> <p>Welcome to their first National Competitions Group meeting to:</p> <p>Ffion Hewlett          Harriet Broadway          Laura Hockaday          Sophie Dunning          Josh Darley</p> <p>A congratulatory “welcome” to Anna Russell as she steps into her new role as chair.</p> <p>Apologies from Marcus Henson, Neal Kington, and Dan Roberts.</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes and Matters Arising (Meeting ‘4’ 2024-25)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BUCS to review National Leagues (promotion/relegation)</li> <li>- Independent Panels and selection process</li> </ul> <p>MV – On the above there aren’t any major updates, both are still under review. With the amount of feedback we got and the attention they need, with the changeover of the NCM we’d be more looking towards a longer term update (with a tentative aim to update in March).</p>	
<p><b>3. UEA – Travel Equity Request</b></p> <p>TD introducing alternatives for the process in American Football for deciding league alignments/clusters. UEA have raised that with the current logic some institutions will always have a higher travel burden (i.e. teams that sit on the outside of those created boundaries).</p> <p>The changes proposed would be different makeup of teams in each league with the aim of creating an even travel distribution, rather than a lower mean travel distribution but with greater travel for outliers.</p> <p>Two options presented in the paper and to NCG; the current provisional leagues and the leagues reworked with the method that most equitably spreads travel across the teams.</p> <p>EB – You can do this across every sport and every region where a handful of teams, or handful of institutions have more travel based on being an institution with a worse travel geography for the entries BUCS receive. Feels there isn’t a massive issue with the current system of prioritising lower travel distances, especially with the current costs.</p> <p>SJ – Looking at the presented options, the travel distances for just the AMF example aren’t massive, but if we make a change in one programme of BUCS it would have to look to be the process across the rest of BUCS, which would just increase costs a lot. Whilst there’s a recognition that some institutions will have worse travel obligations the proposed change doesn’t really seem to make much difference.</p> <p>SD – Southeast do already look at lowering travel distances in the region, but there are some institutions that travel is just more of a burden even when deliberately attempting to reduce travel.</p>	

<p>SDU – UEA were looking at the idea of flipping between option A and B year on year. But within the regional meetings there's already efforts to lower the travel to UEA by putting them in leagues with teams from the East Midlands as much as possible.</p> <p>NB – AMF is different to our other weekly programs in that there isn't the 5-conference model (Scotland, Northern, Midlands etc...). Instead, the geographical makeup and conferences naming of the leagues is variable based on the entries that are received. This comes with some major considerations, but there are many other sports where teams must travel large distances, when the sport has a smaller pool of teams, due to being the only team in their nearby geography.</p> <p>CP – Doesn't affect Scottish institutions but looking at the changes, they seem minimal in this scenario, if we opened this up across sports there could be some major changes to travel looking at other sports/leagues. There are many examples of teams being in leagues where they just have much greater travel requirements than those around them, but there's not much that can be done to avoid these.</p> <p>AR – The consensus in the room is that there isn't a huge desire to change the process for league alignment as any changes seemed minimal and would be moving away from the wider BUCS offer. Instead, this is something that can be put back onto institutions as something to come together within that sport and find those agreements themselves, rather than have it be mandated wider by BUCS.</p> <p><b><u>NCG does not recommend implementation</u></b></p>	
<p><b>4. Competition Format – Notice of Change – AMF – Flag Football</b></p> <p>TD introducing the introduction of Flag Football through option 4 of the BUCS Competitions Framework. Looking to build upon the rising popularity and success of flag football, especially with the Olympics adopting it as a sport in the next cycle. Trial events have been run already through LUSL as a great proof of concept with teams outside London travelling down to compete and the events running with positive feedback.</p> <p>This will run as a third party event, run by NFL UK.</p> <p>Will be happening on the same day as NFL school events but will not be running at the same time, likely that the school events will run earlier in the day, with the BUCS events running later.</p> <p>Requirement for teams to bring their own qualified referee, who will be paid to referee during the school events. The officials would need to have completed BAFA 'Flag Football Officiating Course'. All teams will receive 1 funded place on this course as part of the entry fee they pay to enter into the event.</p> <p>SD – Is there anything happening before these third party delivered events to help bring them up to standard with the rest of the BUCS delivered events.</p> <p>TD – Feedback from other 3<sup>rd</sup> party delivered events is being reviewed and will be taken to BAFA to help ensure that we can implement the strengths and avoid the weaknesses as much as possible. And they can hold that</p> <p>MC – A webinar is being hosted on 3<sup>rd</sup> October to explain the outcomes and changes based on the event review that has been made into event delivery, especially 3<sup>rd</sup> part event delivery.</p> <p>SD – Team type make up will be Men's, Open, and Women's?</p> <p>TD – Exactly.</p>	

<p>SD – Can we get clarification on the coaching qualification requirements?          TD – The level 1 coaching qualification should satisfy the requirements set out.</p> <p>EB – Following the 2028 Olympics, are we looking at a situation where, following the Olympics, will we see a slow or rapid withdrawal of the resources being put in leaving the competition without the resource needed to maintain the quality of delivery?          TD – The understanding is NFL are not looking at flag football being a flash in the pan sport, their aims are to push the sport and try to grow it well into the 2030's. As such, from our end we're not currently concerned with their commitment. Even if they drop out and the delivery of future events is not NFL, we know BAFA are also interested in this discipline so there's strong possibility to move to a different 3<sup>rd</sup> part delivery if needs be. Additionally, should it turn out that the delivery isn't up to standard, we have the review matrix and our processes to remove the event.</p>	
<p><b>5. Competition Format – Notice of Change – Rugby Union – RUU 7.4.3</b></p> <p>NB introducing the regulation change. Desire from DR and the BUCS office to be transparent about the changes.</p> <p>Regulation exists because teams in the league requested for it to be implemented, and it passed through the standard SAG – NCG process. The number is so low as we want players to be active participants in BUCS before qualifying to play in the National Championships, but there is an understanding that a lot of high-level players have caveats as to why they may not be able to compete as regularly but are a part of their universities team and want to represent their universities.</p> <p>AR – Whilst there are some concerns regarding player welfare, the feeling is that this has gone through the LMC, SAG and is probably the best fit for the league.</p>	
<p><b>6. Competition Format – Notice of Change – Indoor Rowing Trial Event – 250m Sprint</b></p> <p>JL introducing a new category through option 3 of the BUCS Competitions Framework. This has been confirmed in the LA 2028 Olympics. There's no need for additional BUCS resources to run this event and often this event is already run unofficially by the clubs. As a trial event there wouldn't be BUCS points for the first year, but should it pass the review process then points would look to be added going forward.</p> <p>AR – Tracker in support and no further comments from NCG.</p>	
<p><b>7. Competition Format – Notice of Change – Rifle (Long Range)</b></p> <p>JL Introducing the paper focused on amending the BUCS points structure of the event.</p> <p>AR – Is the change just to bring this in line with the rest of the BUCS competitions and BUCS points?          JL – Yes.</p> <p>EB – How is this different to Boxing etc... with team categories?</p> <p>NB – In rifle, one participant would enter all the categories, turn up, and only shoot once as part of the individual category but be awarded multiple categories of BUCS points for that one performance. This change brings it in line with those extracted team categories in other competitions, where there is still some duplication of</p>	

<p>points at the team level but they are not being awarded multiple times over for one performance.</p>	
<p><b>8. Competition Format – Notice of Change – Cycling Trial Event – Criterium Race</b></p> <p>MC introducing the papers for the cycling trial events. For context, a lot of the cycling events didn't seem to be fit for purpose and so a review of the offers was needed, especially when looking ahead at the demands of the current 14-17 year age bracket and the events they're looking to enter. As such the changes do seem quite sweeping but likely are going to provide a better more appropriate offer for the student body.</p> <p>8 is coming through Option 3 of the framework. Criterium race was trialled last season but was not brought through NCG properly and so the paper is being more formally introduced via this paper.</p> <p>AR – So is crit not a new discipline alongside road cycling?        MC – No, it's a standalone event under the same umbrella, but to support with the crossover of participants the events for crit and road race are held over the same weekend.</p> <p>AR – How many cycling events are there now?        MC – Currently 10 cycling events, but looking at the review process the likelihood is not all 10 will be delivered.</p> <p>No further comments from NCG.</p> <p>CP – Dundee rejection rescinded due to submission error.</p>	
<p><b>9. Competition Format – Notice of Change – Cycling Trial Event – BMX Racing</b></p> <p>British Cycling have wanted to run a BMX event with BUCS for a while. This is another event through Option 3 so will not have BUCS points and will be reviewed at the end of the season.</p>	
<p><b>10. Competition Format – Notice of Change – Cycling Trial Event – Enduro Race</b></p> <p>Coming through as an option 3.</p> <p>No further comments.</p>	
<p><b>11. Competition Format – Notice of Change – Cycling Trial Event – Cross Country Mountain Bike Race</b></p> <p>Particularly strong piece of feedback from students is that there isn't a wide offer for the mountain bike athletes. Low uptake in prior mountain bike events has been feedback that it is due to the high costs, these changes should offer a lower cost variant that sees more students take part.</p>	
<p><b>12. Competition Format – Notice of Change – Cycling Trial Event – Cyclocross Race</b></p> <p>No further comments</p> <p>VC – In cycling, there's an event issue raised that accommodation was very unclear for the event. In future could BUCS share recommended accommodation for events?</p>	

<p>MC – Yes, happy to do so, there was a specific issue last season with the expected accommodation not being available at short notice, which hopefully won't be an issue again.</p>	
<p><b>13. Competition Format – Notice of Change – Modern Biathlon &amp; Pentathlon Trial Event – OCR Racing</b></p> <p>MC introducing the paper. OCR is replacing the equestrian element of the competition.</p> <p>SDU – There aren't any training facilities for OCR in the country, which doesn't seem very inclusive or accessible.</p> <p>MC – That's correct, there hasn't been enough time for change from the governing body to react to the sweeping changes made by the international federation. Reassurances are that more facilities should pop up as the sport adjusts and the changes grow.</p> <p>FH – Concerns raised over the sustainability of events continuing to being added and the BUCS resource and institution resource to be able to be make these events a success and keep them sustainable year on year.</p> <p>MC – Yep, there's an awareness of this within the BUCS office and that was the purpose of the events matrix, is to ensure that as we near that capacity we stay dynamic and aware of the events and the quality of them.</p>	
<p><b>14. Competition Format – Notice of Change – Snowsports Trial Event – Snowboard Cross</b></p> <p>TM introducing the paper.</p> <p>SDU – Concerns around the ability of a dry slope being able to run this style of snowboard event successfully.</p> <p>TM – Happy to take that feedback on board and with it being a trial event it can be reviewed.</p> <p>AR – When does the event entry close and do they need to be entering other snowboard events to compete?</p> <p>TM – Individual Entries close on Tuesday 21 October. Students do not need to have entered either Snowboard Race or Freestyle to enter Snowboard Cross.</p>	
<p><b>15. Competition Format – Notice of Change – Athletics Cross Country</b></p> <p>MC introducing the paper on changes of team sizes to mirror national and international competitions.</p> <p>NCG – No comments</p>	
<p><b>16. Competition Format – Notice of Change – Golf Trial Event – Regional Event</b></p> <p>MC introducing an option 3 paper. This paper is different to other notices, in that it is not looking to move towards gaining BUCS points. The regional events are looking to be aimed at higher handicap (lower ability) golfers to offer a better fit event for their ability and development.</p>	

<p>AR – From a Cardiff perspective feel it's a positive, only concern is whether students competing in the weekly competition will be able to make both their weekly sport and this event.</p> <p>MC – We have placed the event outside of weekly Golf dates in appendix 2a as we don't want to limit accessibility to any sport.</p>	
<p><b>17. BREAK</b></p>	
<p><b>18. Competition Format – Proposal for Change – Rowing – BUCS Head</b></p> <p>JL introducing paper proposing the addition of racing categories to the programme at the BUCS 4s and 8s Head</p> <p>BUCS don't have the resources to make this a standalone event. Following feedback and demand to add these categories back into our program (as they've been in appendix 1 but not running in recent years) this is being proposed as the solution.</p> <p>The scheduling to add this in isn't too tight, however weather is a big factor in how well these events can run to schedule. If weather is bad, then we always try to prioritise the championships and rearrange other races in where we can so that no-one misses out on any racing.</p> <p>AR – Positive feedback on tracker. Concern is that regatta has already been extended, so worries are that the rowing events could continue to grow beyond sustainability.</p> <p>JL – This event is a lot smaller than the regatta so we're not currently worried about the expansion, but should we start to see that we can bring in similar measures as with the regatta (such as limiting entries per institution) to ensure the event can continue to run in a sustainable, accessible and fair way.</p> <p><b><u>NCG Recommends implementation.</u></b></p>	
<p><b>19. Competition Format – Proposal for Change – Clay Pigeon Shooting</b></p> <p>MC introducing implementation of a novice category. Clay Pigeon Shooting has gone through a large review, and one of the big themes brought up is that the time of year the event is held is not good due to the lack of light.</p> <p>Roughly 250 athletes compete year on year in Clay Pigeon Shooting.</p> <p>To keep the event safe with a novice category, we are being advised by the Governing body (who also operate as our Tournament Director for the events). As such there shouldn't be any need for concern around safety, and licensing.</p> <p>FH – Why is novice participation being implemented at a National event rather than in a different offer?</p> <p>MC – In events where numbers don't lend themselves to a regional offer there is a precedent and success in BUCS events to having those novice categories (or comparable) at the National event instead.</p> <p>NB – Echo that there are other national events where there are wide abilities and it is something for BUCS to monitor whether events are providing a good experience across those ability levels.</p>	

<p>AR – Will this event extend the competition length?</p> <p>AW – It shouldn't extend the number of days. Dates are being looked at further towards March in order to find days with longer daylight hours as well as supporting with being further aware from start of academic year for students getting into the sport at university.</p> <p>MV – No rejections on the tracker.</p> <p><b><u>NCG Recommends implementation.</u></b></p>	
<p><b>20.</b> Competition Format – Proposal for Change – Modern Biathlon &amp; Pentathlon – Introduction of Para categories</p> <p>MC introducing a move to align the event with national governing body categories to support with the running of para events.</p> <p>No further NCG comments.</p> <p>MV – No rejections on the tracker.</p> <p><b><u>NCG recommends Implementation.</u></b></p>	<p>JO'L</p>
<p><b>21.</b> Rules &amp; Regulations Updates</p> <p>REG 5 updated</p> <p>REG 15 updated to streamline administration for match appeal through an online form. Full/Final appeal will still be the old process.</p> <p>Sport Specific Regulations, the majority are out for weekly sports, and will be updated for events as we get closer to those events.</p> <p>Regulation change document for general regulations is also up and is something to make sure that it is shared around and digested.</p> <p>A cancelled regulation change REG 11.2.2 is that the percentage change will now not be going through following the low level of feedback and the concerns raised during the NCG.</p> <p>Will be looking going forward at how we can use NCG to drive team selection regulation changes.</p> <p>Lacrosse Regulations are worth highlighting as the line measurements have changed.</p> <p>Volleyball Prem qualifications for officials has changed to grade 3 but neutrality has been removed.</p> <p>Gender eligibility changes are leading to delays in getting updates out as we are working through everything to make sure they are aligned. However, changes are still coming in and so we will be trying to update things as quickly as we can when those amendments come through to us from NGBs.</p> <p>EB – Will BUCS be needing to adjust gender eligibility mid-season?</p> <p>NB – Yes this might be the case. As soon as we are aware of changes from NGBs we will be chasing up with the NGB whether BUCS have to make those changes immediately, as our preference is strongly not to make changes mid-season. However, should their response be this is a mandated change (e.g. not just a change to wording) to team type content, then we may have to change eligibility mid-season.</p>	



<p>LH – Had concerns around Basketball England and PlayHQ regarding individual player registrations. Are you aware/have an update?</p> <p>NB – Not aware of anything specifically relating to player registration issues. If institutions are struggling with this, we recommend contacting <a href="mailto:discipline@bucs.org.uk">discipline@bucs.org.uk</a> with the steps being taken and the issues that are coming up so we can support as much as possible and void any fines.</p> <p>LH – As the university, they used to register and pay for the student affiliation on their behalf. But with the new system they don't have the ability to do that on their behalf, so it needs to be carried out by the students.</p> <p><b>Action: MV/NB</b> – Reach out to BE to raise the concerns and see if there's anything we can do going forward. Also, will question if there's a way for BE to update their system to help universities support their students – either by doing it for them through the system or by BE providing better signposting and education.</p>	MV/NB
<p><b>22. Standing Item #1 – Sport Review Implementation Group Update</b></p> <p>Finished recruitment for vacant positions.</p> <p>First meeting on 22 October. Will come together to review previous actions and looking to press forward with 2 project areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BUCS Points – Individual Events</li> <li>- League and Knockout Review Creation</li> </ul> <p>Women's Rugby League 9s paper is currently out for consultation, looking for implementation towards the end of Term 2 if successful.</p>	
<p><b>23. Standing Item #2 – Events Update</b></p> <p>AW to update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event Calendar fully updated on the website, making very good progress with the events for this upcoming season, endeavour to get dates as a minimum up as soon as we get the confirmed.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Event Allocation</a></li> <li>• BUCS Nationals: Confirmed as 13-15 February 2026 in Sheffield – will comprise of Athletics, Badminton, Climbing, Fencing, Swimming and Karate</li> <li>• BUCS Big Wednesday: Confirmed as 24-25 March in Loughborough. Key schedule updates we want to communicate as early as possible. Only change that is looking to happen is the addition of Tennis Vase.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>24. Standing Item #3 – International Update</b></p> <p>No update provided.</p>	
<p><b>25. A.O.B.</b></p> <p>1. In-person meetings for 2025-26</p> <p>AR – Previous in person meetings have been valuable. Also, last season the idea of moving to two in person meetings was floated.</p> <p>MV – Previous seasons we've only done 1 in person as that is the budget BUCS have for travel expenses. If we moved to 2 BUCS wouldn't be able to cover the expenses for that second meeting.</p>	

<p>EB – Would be lovely to have 2 in person meetings. A December meeting would be an issue as a day out of the office for an in-person meeting would be problematic during the BUCS season, especially as the meetings are usually on a Tuesday/Thursday. Would be better to have the in-person meetings outside the regular season.</p> <p>CP – Echo that in person meetings are hugely beneficial but see the issues with it being during the season and so would probably settle on just the one meeting around the summer.</p> <p>SD – Would prefer to meet twice if possible.</p> <p>AR – Is there any reason that meetings are on a Tuesday/Thursday?</p> <p>MV – Not aware of any set reason other than best fit/precedent.</p> <p>AR – Sounds like there is appetite for the potential of a second meeting, however if the only time that fits are the meetings close together in the Summer then probably doesn't make sense.</p> <p><b>ACTION: REPS</b> – Could Reps go back to their institutions and bring to the next meeting if they would be able to budget for a second meeting.</p>	REPS
<p>2. Walkover drop down options on BUCS Play</p> <p>Current dropdown options don't cover the entire range of reasons that IA's will claim a walkover. Would there be a demand to increase the number of options to be represent the claims.</p> <p>SD – As an IA it doesn't make a huge difference as usually, they are aware internally and there's not disputes over the what's put down on BUCS Play.</p> <p>SJ – Actually more of an issue for LUSL where walkover will be put down and then just listed as 'Other' without any explanation. For LUSL IAs it can cause a lot of issues with chasing this up.</p> <p>FH – When claiming a walkover you need to send the reason over anyway to your opposition, so is there a huge need for BUCS Play to replicate that admin.</p> <p>NB – Yeah that form exists but only when claiming a walkover and not conceding a walkover which doesn't require the reason to be stated.</p> <p>FH – With the form could it be uploaded to BUCS Play if that's beneficial?</p> <p>NB – There is the match card option to upload files onto BUCS Play result cards. There are examples of sports using walkover data to identify where they could target development.</p> <p><b>Action: MV</b> – Will take back whether we can upload those forms to BUCS Play. And check the costs associated with expanding a list of options.</p> <p>CP – Having accurate walkover data could be useful to really help with identifying and targeting where there's a specific issue with a sport (e.g. a lack of venues). However, this really depends on the cost.</p> <p>HB – With a lot of teams being student lead, there are examples of teams having an institution that they aren't interested/able to afford to travel to and so are conceding walkovers to them instead.</p> <p>NB – And that would be a good example of a place where the reason is hidden beneath the low detail that we offer through the current set of options. We can go about it in other ways to gather that information, but it would help BUCS to identify where those issues are.</p> <p>3. Engagement with feedback tracker</p> <p>AR – Feels like the engagement is currently very low with the tracker. But as an action to all REPS please do promote and encourage engagement with the tracker. AR and the BUCS team are already looking to review the tracker and</p>	MV



Meeting 5 – Tuesday 21 July – 10:00 – 15:00

[Competitions Group Feedback Tracker](#)