

**ECF Counties Championships Rules**

**Proposal by the SCCU**

"That the penalty prescribed in County Championship Rule D1.2 be reduced to £25."

At present a fine of £100 is payable in two circumstances.

The second rule, D4.2, covers a situation where a County, having accepted nomination at the start of the Final Stages, subsequently defaults a match. This situation causes considerable difficulty and inconvenience, not just to the team's opponents but potentially also to other teams. In particular, two teams may have played a Preliminary Round match, only to find later that a default occurs in the Quarter Finals. We fully accept that this rule relates to a serious breach of a County's obligations for which a substantial penalty is appropriate.

The first rule, D1.2, covers a much less serious situation which was not considered to require a penalty at all until three or four years ago. It is imposed where a Union finds at the end of the Union stage that it is able to make fewer nominations than earlier expected. This entails a revision of the previously announced preliminary draw, but that is a much lesser inconvenience. In particular the number of Preliminary Round matches needed can only be lower, not higher.

Since the penalty was introduced, some Unions have refrained from making nominations that they would almost certainly have been able to fulfil, owing to the magnitude of the penalty should they be mistaken. As a result the number of teams in the Final Stages has been reduced, leaving the competition the poorer thereby.

Other Unions have continued to make all the nominations to which they are entitled, hoping that everything will turn out all right. This runs the risk of teams being nominated when they are quite likely to default later; the penalty is the same.

We submit that the current level of the penalty is detrimental to the Competition and wholly disproportionate. We propose that it be reduced to a more appropriate sum.

David Sedgwick

On behalf of the SCCU

21st September 2016