



INFORMATION DOCUMENT REGARDING COMPETITION SET-UP BALV 13 MARCH 2025

BACKGROUND FOR REVIEW

***T20 is becoming more important**

As you've probably noticed, T20 cricket is growing in importance worldwide. The KNCB wants to align with this trend by giving T20 the same priority as 50-over cricket. Currently, we play a round-robin T20 format (each team will play the others once), but to give T20 more significance, we need to adjust our schedule—meaning fewer 50-over games.

***Challenges with the current 50-over format**

Right now, our 50-over competition starts with a round-robin phase (each team will play the others once), followed by a split into a top and bottom group. The top group plays another round-robin (each team will play the others once), while the bottom group plays a double round-robin (each team will play the others twice, home and away). This structure creates several challenges:

- Uncertain scheduling – Clubs can't plan their events in advance because they don't know their full home schedule.
- Mid-season rescheduling – The competition format requires adjustments during the season, which then affects lower-league fixtures and disrupts planning.

***Short cricket season & scheduling limitations**

- The cricket season (late April to mid-September) is already tight. With only 22 playing days available (including two extra holiday days and one cricket-free weekend), field availability is a major issue, especially at the beginning and end of the season.

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- With nearly 2,000 matches to schedule, double weekends aren't a feasible option for many clubs. Looking ahead to 2025, we are already struggling to fit 5% of games into available slots.

***Weather & rescheduling issues**

- Last season, 8% of THE (Top/Hoofd/Eerste Klassen) matches had to be rescheduled due to ground/weather/light conditions, and in lower leagues, this percentage was nearly double.
- When THE matches are rescheduled, lower-league matches on those same weekends often get postponed as well, creating a chain reaction of scheduling issues.

THE PROCES

At the BALV of last year the board committed to conducting a comprehensive study of the competition structure and formed a working group to investigate all aspects.

A Taskforce was formed with, next to KNCB representatives Reinout Scholte (Baordmember and facilitator) and Adriaan van der Dries (Porojectlead), the following clubs:

Ajax Leiden

Hermes DVS

HTCECA

Kampong

Punjab CCR

Salland

VCC

The taskforce was asked to velop a futureproof domestic competition format and the Taskforce members invested significant time in the research. This time, the review went far beyond just determining who plays where it examined all aspects of the competition, including:

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- Developments in the cricket in general
- How it fits into our short season
- The availability of fields
- Ensuring, where possible, the presence of the right umpires

The plan was to present the committee's findings and recommendations at the ALV in December, but due to a packed agenda, the results were instead shared in January via an online meeting. After that meeting, we shared the presentation and other relevant documents in the online meeting of January.

DECISIONS TAKEN

The Solution for THE: 8-Team Poules

By shifting to 8-team poules, we can:

- Play a double round-robin for both 50-over and T20 formats (14 games each). Schedule T20 double-headers, making it 21 playing days in total.
- Dedicate 3 days for T20 finals, bringing the total to 24 playing days.
- Keep the Topklasse 50-over championship ("het landskampioenschap"), which will have 4 additional playing days reserved.

This structure ensures a more balanced, predictable, and efficient competition while giving both T20 and 50-over cricket the space they need to develop.

Currently, the THE competition ladder consists of three poules of 10 teams:

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1. Topklasse – 10 teams
2. Hoofdklasse – 10 teams
3. Eerste Klasse – 10 teams

At this level, all teams play 50-over cricket under Dutch-adapted international rules. The expectations for clubs at this level—especially regarding fields and facilities—are higher compared to the lower leagues. Additionally, the match format is longer than the 40-over cricket played in the divisions below.

Since 8-team poules solve the scheduling and competition challenges mentioned earlier, we decided to add a second poule in the Eerste Klasse. This ensures that all teams currently playing at this level can continue competing at the same standard.

By expanding from 30 to 32 teams, we are:

- Creating space for two additional teams to participate in 50-over cricket.
- Making the competition structure more compact and manageable.

The New THE Competition Ladder (32 Teams)

1. Topklasse – 8 teams
2. Hoofdklasse – 8 teams
3. Eerste Klasse – 2 x 8 teams

This new structure maintains the competitive integrity of 50-over cricket while offering a more balanced and efficient format for all participating teams.

IMPACT 2025

The working group explored multiple scenarios to transition the THE competition to 8-team poules. Extending the transition over multiple years

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would require different competition formats each season, leading to inconsistent structures and additional relegations or promotions in the future.

Since the THE will expand from 30 to 32 teams, the new format will create a more balanced, predictable, and efficient competition, allowing both T20 and 50-over cricket the space they need to grow. Based on this, the working group recommended a one-season transition ("big bang") rather than a gradual shift. The promotion system details can be found in Attachment 1.

IMPACT 2026

Under the new structure, promotion to higher levels will become increasingly competitive as teams progress.

This set-up ensures a clear and fair pathway while maintaining competitiveness. The reasoning is straightforward: the higher the level, the harder it should be to earn promotion and compete successfully. This approach guarantees that only the strongest teams advance to the top levels of Dutch cricket while maintaining the integrity of the competition.

Decisions for the lower classes

2nd, 3rd and 4th classes

- Min. 8 teams per pool
- Double round robin
- Regional pools as much as possible
- Preferred no 2 teams of same club
- Promotion and relegation

Zomi

- More teams per club possible
- Recreational
- Double round robin
- Regional pools as much as possible

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- No promotion or relegation

Zami and Ladies

No changes were proposed

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