

Eddie Sullivan
Chairman
Fixture Calendar Review Group
Croke Park

25th October 2019

Cc: Bernard Smyth, Fergal McGill, Michael Martin, Kevin O'Donovan, Stephen Barker, John Costello, John Prenty, Ronan Sheehan, Michael Hyland, Seamus Woods, Conor O'Donoghue, John Horan & Tom Ryan

Dear Eddie

We have reviewed the five proposals as emailed by Fergal McGill on October 11. The CPA has taken the following collective position:

- The two concurrent models have the potential to be the best models but without the Taskforce having the time or remit to suggest and enforce the corresponding Governance rules that would absolutely be required (e.g. Player Release protocols), then those two models could potentially be terrible for the club player. We believe the best way to enforce good behaviour is to design a schedule that minimises the opportunity for abuse and manipulation.
- As continuously stated, the Improved Status Quo model is not one we can support because the Status Quo is the very reason the Taskforce was needed. To tweak it further would be disrespectful to our membership.
- We feel there is merit in the 4x8 and Flip Models but with some significant amendments. Please find enclosed two improved alternatives, combining the best of both. We have called them Flip 2.0 and Flip 3.0.

The revised calendars and supporting documentation incorporate feedback from members of the Taskforce at our last meeting and we would ask members of the Taskforce to review the updated documents in advance of the next meeting.

From questions raised previously, please note:

- If the Provincial competitions are to be retained, having equal numbers in the Provincial/Regional competitions is the only way to bring fairness and certainty to competitions. So in each of the updated models there is a need to move counties for the purposes of competition. As Galway and Antrim have been moved to Leinster in hurling, there is a precedent and we propose change be mandated by Croke Park if necessary.
- It was mentioned at the last meeting that you cannot take New York out of the Connaught championship and we respectfully disagree. Any competition must be set up in a way that all participants can progress if successful and this is not the case with New York. It is preposterous that a team that cannot consistently participate in Ireland would be an obstacle to progressive change. As we value the cultural and sporting links between Ireland and New York, we propose that the winners of the Tier 2 football competition play New York annually for a Presidents Cup in New York, which gives New York annual exposure and rewards the Tier 2 winners.

Regarding the hurling suggestions submitted by Ronan Sheehan from the GPA on 9th October our views are:

- We agree that all hurling leagues should have semi-finals but no quarter finals
- We also agree that the proposal to move the hurling groups to six will offer a better opportunity for the so-called weaker counties to develop by not being continually favourites to be relegated the year after they are promoted
- By moving groups to six you can then remove the preliminary quarter final that currently exists.
- If the above proposals were agreed, then the changes to the lower tier hurling makeup should also be incorporated.

For simplicity, we haven't changed the hurling in our two models but that can easily be done if agreed by the Taskforce.

Lastly, we urge the Taskforce to agree the mechanism at the next meeting on how the clubs of the country will be communicated and presented with the options. As discussed previously, it is crucial that clubs are instructed to vote on their preferred model and mandate their county boards to vote accordingly at Congress.

Yours sincerely

Michael Higgins
National Secretary of the Club Players Association