*Background information: Email and phone discussions between committee members had taken place during August and September about possible scenarios for the season. We identified 4 options for consideration:*

*Option 1 was our best case scenario. It was for the normal 2 round home and away season commencing in mid-October and finishing before the March long-weekend.*

*Options 2-4 were the fall-back positions. Option 2 was for a 2 round season commencing in early November and finishing at the end of March. Option 3 was for a 1 round season starting in mid-January with no promotion/relegation for season 2020-21. Option 4 was the worst case scenario and that was for the season to be cancelled altogether.*

*Case numbers in Melbourne and in some regions of rural Victoria indicated that we had little hope of commencing in mid-October, so we agreed on Option2 with an early November start as our best case scenario. Matches of 21 ends with no break were also agreed upon. This was communicated to all clubs in mid-September.*

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Ovens & Murray Pennant Committee: meeting notes

Meeting held at the Rutherglen Bowling Club at 1:00 pm, Friday October 2nd

Attendance: Ian Bilney, Paul Davies, Fran Don, Noel Murrell, Ross Rankin, Bev Reichman, Bryan Smith.

Business:

The meeting unanimously ratified Noel’s decision to decline a request from Corowa RSL to enter a team in the A3 midweek division. The rules are clear and unequivocal, teams play in the A divisions on the basis of promotion and relegation and not by request.

There was also unanimous approval to ratify decisions made by email in the past few months that all pennant competitions for season 2020-21 would be of 21 ends with no break in play. (If both managers agree, a short break may be taken if conditions require it.) Both these decisions are based on the recommended COVID-19 guidelines from Bowls Vic.

The implications of the current *border bubble* restrictions were discussed at length. There are two clubs outside the bubble; Mansfield and Swanpool. This means that if people who live in the *bubble* travel to these two clubs that are outside the *bubble* they cannot enter NSW unless they quarantine for two weeks. Mansfield and Swanpool will not be allowed entry into NSW as they are outside the *bubble*. Noel is to contact these clubs and explain the situation re pennant to them. Until the *border bubble* is extended to include Mansfield or Swanpool, or relaxed and hopefully removed altogether, these clubs cannot play pennant at their home venue, nor at the home venue of any club located in NSW. The clubs involved will be required to find an available venue to play these matches. Noel has agreed to help in this task if necessary. We didn’t discuss any sanctions if this doesn’t happen as Noel is confident that alternative venues will be found.

Noel presented the proposed divisions and the draws for the 2020-21 pennant seasons. The committee thanked him for his work and there was no debate as to the draws as presented. Discussion took place in relation to the provision of a back-up day for a round lost to inclement weather or extreme heat. The Saturday of the Victorian long-weekend in March has been allocated for this purpose. It was agreed to schedule this in the draw although there were reservations that some clubs would not play on this weekend. Discussion also took place about using Saturday, January 9th as another back-up day, and for a home and away round if there are any divisions of 6 that require 15 rounds to be played.

The Committee examined rule changes for season 2020-21. Most of the rule changes discussed were in relation to the reduced number of ends and no break in play. Noel will post updated rules on the O&M web site and communicate same to all clubs. It was agreed that fines for noncompliance with a number of our rules for competition would be scrapped and replaced with a warning and then a deduction of 2 premiership points for further indiscretions.

The implications of COVID-19 guidelines as they relate to pennant were discussed at length. It was agreed that the home club is responsible for implementing the guidelines issued by either Bowls Vic or the relevant government agencies. It was suggested that Victorian clubs have facemasks available to any player from NSW who forgets to bring one. It was also suggested that clubs appoint a COVID-19 safety officer or warden to ensure that COVID-19 guidelines are adhered to. It was agreed that clubs should consider arranging for staggered starts for pennant to alleviate the problem of having large numbers of players milling around at the end of play. It was also agreed that the home club should remind all players of their obligations before the start of play. Clubs will be reminded that when they are the away team they are guests of the host club and must adhere to the rules as applied by that club in much the same way as they would for smoking rules. We believe that the application of these rules should be at the behest of the host club and the team managers and not an additional task for the umpire of the day.

It was agreed that we suggest to the O&M Region’s Board that they also advise clubs and players of their responsibilities as outlined above so as to reinforce the position that the Pennant Committee has adopted.

Next meeting scheduled for Monday, November 23rd at Rutherglen at 1:00 pm.

Ross Rankin

Chairman