



2026 Norwich Bar Billiards AGM

Wednesday 18th March 2025, 20:00

Venue: Norwich VR

Singles Tournament

- Dave, on behalf of the committee, opened the AGM with an update on the 2026 Singles Tournament. At the time, the tournament had reached the semi-final stage with a deadline of 25th March for those matches to be played by. It has been pleasing to see a similar level of takeup to the previous edition and it has operated smoothly overall.
- The competition continues to raise money towards our charitable efforts for the Big C, a Norfolk-based charity who provide vital support, information and resources to sufferers of cancer and their loved ones. More information on the Big C can be found at <https://www.big-c.co.uk/> and the link to the Norwich Bar Billiards JustGiving page can be found at <https://justgiving.com/page/norwich-bar-billiards-2025>. We estimate that around £180 will be contributed as a consequence of the Singles Tournament this year.

Team Registration

- Representatives from 14 of the 16 teams who participated in the 2025 season were present on the evening. All of these teams had pre-registered for the 2026 season. Of the missing two representatives:
 - **Golden Stars** will participate in the 2026 season, but did not attend the meeting as they got muddled up.
 - **Flamers** have elected to take a hiatus for the 2026 season.
- One new team, the **Red Lion**, requested to join the League. Tom (formally of the Vikings) is to be their captain and they are to be based at the pub of the same name in Coltishall, a few miles outside of Norwich. Tom described how the landlord of the pub fell in love with the game on a Christmas night out and so decided to acquire a table. It is a 1950s table and has been completely refurbished. They have a regular group of six players practicing on Wednesdays with a few more players available throughout the season. There was acknowledgement that this is the second venue outside of Norwich itself, but a feeling that as a League we are keen to continue to expand.
 - **The vote to admit the Red Lion to the League was passed 14-0.**

- This means that there are 16 teams participating in the 2026 season. In alphabetical order, for completeness, these are as follows: **Artichoke Hearts, Black Stars, Coach & Horses, Cottagecore, Dad's Army, Disasterfarians, Golden Stars, International Brigade, King's Head, Lionhearts, Norwich VR, Red Lion, Rose, Serengeti, Vikings, White Lions.**

League Format

- Confirmation that per the 2025 final standings, the following team movements apply:
 - **Coach & Horses** and **International Brigade** are relegated to Division 2
 - **Lionhearts** and **Norwich VR** are promoted to Division 1
- The teams in each division are laid out as below:

Division 1	Division 2
Dad's Army	Artichoke Hearts
Golden Stars	Black Stars
King's Head	Coach & Horses
Lionhearts	Cottagecore
Norwich VR	Disasterfarians
The Rose	International Brigade
The Vikings	Red Lion
White Lions	Serengeti

- **Dad's Army** have looked to relocate to the Gibraltar Gardens for the 2026 season. Their captain, Adam, noted that the table has now been sold from their previous venue, and they looked for a new pub which had a suitable space to play from both sides and where both teams can sit together on a match night. The table has been refurbished.
 - **A vote was passed 15-0 to allow the Dad's Army to relocate to the Gibraltar Gardens.**

- The play-off system in Division 2 was introduced for the first time last year. A brief discussion was had on whether we wished to keep this going forward. There was widespread agreement that this had been an excellent development for the league, adding jeopardy and excitement. **As such, the play-off structure will continue.**
- Noting the size of the League as the largest in the country, there was discussion around if and when we would need to move to having three divisions. A wide array of suggestions were heard, including that fixture congestion could be an issue with the current April-December season if we allow divisions to become too large. Equally, if they become too small then we have to look at ways to fill the gaps either through an expanded cup or with supplementary tournaments. Different formats were also put forward, including adopting a Scottish Football League style where teams play each other more than twice across the season.
 - No vote was called, but this informs proposals for following years.

Cup Format

- As we continue to have 16 teams, it was proposed that we continue with a straight knockout format for the Cup as before. There were no objections to this.
- Last season, the first round draw used a seeding system, whereby a Division 1 team would be randomly drawn to play an away match against a Division 2 team. A vote was held to determine whether this format should remain, or we should revert to a purely random draw. **The vote was 8-5 in favour of the seeding system, which remains for the 2026 Cup.**

Rules

- At the 2025 AGM, guidelines were set around the provision of food on a match night. Unfortunately over the course of the season, this seemed to cause as many issues as it solved and so it warranted discussion here. The committee's proposal for this year is that the home team should arrange with their venue as to whether there will be food, and if their venue requires a contribution towards it. They should then communicate this to the away team in advance, and the away team will not be expected to contribute nor have a say as to the arrangement.
 - Adam (Dad's Army) had been directly affected by the food issue last year. He explained that at their new venue of the Gibraltar Gardens, they will not be providing food for away teams. Instead their kitchen will be open as normal until 8pm should opposing players wish to eat there. He suggested that either the food situation should go back to how it was in 2024 and prior; there should be no food provision at all; or each captain arranges with their home venue directly.
 - Ceinwen (International Brigade) said that if there is no food at all, matches might finish on time.
 - Sharpie (White Lions) was surprised this was an issue, and said that those who do not want food should not be in a position to block it for those who do
 - Rory (Cottagecore) said that the food is one of the nicest aspects of the League, and gives teams a chance to engage with each other.

- Tom (Red Lion) believes it should be up to individual pubs to decide, not the League.
 - Zak (Norwich VR) said that if a venue puts on food, both team should contribute.
- A vote was held at this point, to ascertain **whether a blanket ruling of ‘no food’ should be adopted. This was voted against by 4 votes to 11.**
 - Cal (Artichoke) took an informal vote and found that only 3 of the 11 venues in the league normally have a food service on a Wednesday evening. As such, food is being put on especially which incurs high costs for the pub.
 - Nathan (Lionhearts) said that we either need a blanket rule, or we allow venues to decide on a case-by-case basis.
- After some more protracted discussions, **a vote was finally held and it was decided that it should be left to venues to arrange with their teams around the provision of food.**
- The 3-shots-in-a-row rule (3bi) was last discussed at the 2023 AGM. Unfortunately, this was before the committee got somebody competent to write up the notes properly, and so Dave lost his notes from that AGM and thus the verdict. **However, a brief discussion followed where it was agreed that rule 3bi applies only to the break-off.**
- Some clarity was needed around rule 2f which concerns balls falling in a hole without being hit. Currently there is a ‘5 second rule’ for determining whether a ball has dropped as a continuation of the prior shot or whether it is a separate action. This has been deemed as potentially ambiguous.
 - Rory (Cottagecore) was unaware of the ‘5 second rule’ existing
 - Oscar (Lionhearts) asked if the cue ball is rolling towards an object ball, and the object ball drops prior to contact, is this a foul? It was confirmed that it is
 - Adam (Dad’s Army) said that the end of turn should occur when a player steps away from the table
 - Phil (Black Stars) asked what would happen if the played cue ball blocks the replacement of the dropped object ball?
 - Broomie (White Lions) asked what happens if a ball which has not made contact with any other drops. Confirmed that it is replaced and not scored
- It was reiterated that the end-game scenario is a continuation of break not only from a scoring perspective, but also in terms of the table. As such, any pegs which have deviated from their standard position should not be reset for the first end-game attempt if it follows on from a legal shot. They are then reset ahead of the second player’s go if that shot did not pot, but also did not foul.
- As a League, we allow for players to use their own cues and chalk if desired. But recently teams have provided sets of match balls and pegs. Do we need to make a ruling on this?
 - Adam (Dad’s Army) said that they provided match balls last year as the balls at their previous venue were of poor condition. He felt it made little difference to the integrity of things.
 - Sharpie (White Lions) felt that the home team should have the right to present their table as they see fit.
 - Zak (Norwich VR) said it was nice to have to adapt to different tables and their nuances.

- Fraser (Lionhearts) said that earlier in the evening we voted the Red Lion were voted in and asked what would be the point of that if the table can be changed by the home team. He added that we should play the table as it is presented by the venue, not how it is preferred by the home team.
- **It was decided by a vote of 8-3 (with 4 abstentions) that match balls and pegs are banned.**
 - *It was noted after the conclusion of the meeting by a number of people that their main issue was with the replacement of pegs for matches, rather than balls. The distinction may be picked up in future.*
- It was reaffirmed that for the purposes of the League and Cup, the alternative baulk lines found on some tables should be ignored.

AOB

- Nathan explained that as we are a large League running multiple competitions year-round, we have a lot to deal with and as such have had to organise better recently. We do all get together and discuss issues which come up, but he detailed the roles by which the committee now broadly operates:
 - Dave remains the primary point of contact for teams and individuals in terms of seeking clarifications, submitting results and resolving disputes. He is the de facto Chair of Norwich Bar Billiards.
 - Phil is primarily responsible for the website and social media presence, ensuring that these are correctly updated and also keep the billiards community informed of goings-on.
 - Nathan handles the Singles Tournament while it's in flight. He also interacts with the national billiards scene, organising players to events such as the World Championships in Sudbury as well as having an eye towards reviving the East Anglia Open. He has adopted the self-important moniker of 'Outreach Officer'.
 - Fraser offers technical support, particularly with the Singles Tournament and fixes all of the things that get broken elsewhere. A very busy job.
- A call was put out for anybody else to get involved with the running of Norwich Bar Billiards.
- Dave briefly summarised some separate work by members of the Lionhearts and Norwich VR where they have developed apps which can be used for scoring a billiards game. It is hoped that they can be used throughout the year by referees or separate scorers. Rory (Cottagecore) asked if they would help with administration of the League, which it is hoped they could do in the long-run and allow for more statistics.
- Sharpie (White Lions) asked for the return of the statistics pamphlet which was made available in some previous years. Fraser has agreed to look at it to see what he can do.

- A query was made as to why the Singles Tournament final is not played over 7 frames. Nathan said that this is a possibility for next year, though it may potentially be more than some people would wish to play in one go.
- Tom (Red Lion) noted that he pays a fee every year to contribute towards running costs, and that he believes this should be mandatory for all teams. **This motion was passed unanimously.** Dave said that he couldn't provide an accurate figure of annual expenditure at this point but he would look into it and then get a relevant fee from all teams.
- Adam (Dad's Army) said that to prevent issues next season, captains should only speak to other captains regarding issues, not landlords of venues.

Trophies

There have been some issues with engraving this year and so the Plate and Division 2 trophies have got a temporary label on instead of engraved team names. This may be a good time to refresh the trophies anyway as some of them are looking a little tired. Still, they carry a huge amount of glory and they were presented to the following teams for winning the relevant competitions in the 2025 season:

- Plate – King's Head
- Cup – Norwich VR
- Division 2 – Lionhearts
- Division 1 – Golden Star