



EAST OF SCOTLAND
CRICKET
ASSOCIATION

THE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF CRICKET IN THE EAST OF SCOTLAND – PLAYER SURVEY



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Contents

Executive Summary	3
Background	4
Current ESCA Structure and Current Challenges	4
The Survey.....	5
Survey Results	6
Format of the Results.....	6
Q1 - How many years have you been involved with cricket (not just in the East of Scotland)?	6
Q2 - What is your current level of playing involvement in cricket in the East of Scotland?.....	7
Q3 - On average, how many games of Saturday league cricket (18 week season) are you able / available to play in a typical year?	8
Q4 - Have you stopped (or considered stopping) playing Saturday cricket?.....	9
Q5 - Outside of cricket, do you actively engage in any other sport/leisure activities on a more regular basis than cricket?	12
Q6 - What do you believe to be the biggest challenges to sustainability of cricket in the East of Scotland in the next 5 to 10 years?.....	13
Q7 - Please provide your views on the following statements:	15
Q8 - How do you think the experience and interest in the game would change if any of the following measures were implemented in the East of Scotland?	17
Q9 - If a Saturday T20 league were to be implemented in parallel to the existing leagues run by ESCA, would you be... ..	19
Q10 – Anything else to add?	20
Response Differences for New Players	22
Response Differences for Players Playing 0 to 5 league games per season	24
Summary & the Next Step	26
Summary	26
Meeting the Clubs & Next Steps	26

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Rev 0 – Issued to clubs on 17th September 2017

Executive Summary

ESCA conducted a short survey at the end of August 2017 to investigate the opinion of current and former players, enthusiasts and potential newcomers to the sport on the current structure, format and appetite for the game. Respondents were also asked to provide opinion on potential future structure and improvements.

There were 439 responses to the survey with a broad mix of cricket experience, but predominantly league playing. It was disappointing to note that only 2.5% of people who responded are what would be considered to be 'brand new to the game'. Given that nearly 50% of respondents have over 20 years+ of experience, the majority of responses are therefore likely to reflect an older playing demographic, rather than those considered to be involved at a youth/junior level.

There is a desire from current players to play more cricket and for traditional Saturday League Cricket to be retained as the prominent competition format. It was interesting to note that although current players wanted to play longer form cricket themselves, they recognised that this may not align with what was best for the game going forward (56% of respondents would prefer to play in 40 or 50 overs on a Saturday than 20 or 30 overs, but 52% felt positively that a new weekend T20 competition would help improve wider experience and interest in the game).

There was a common theme of respondents acknowledging that change/evolution of cricket needs to be considered and potentially implemented to increase participation. A quote from one respondent on what measures they could suggest to get back involved with the game specifically stated: "None really, but recognize need for change".

A significant proportion of respondents would like to see steps taken to shorten the time commitment given over to games, but the suggested solutions varied. T20, shortening the numbers of overs and regionalisation in the lower leagues all featured. The one thing that stood out as a preferred solution to two thirds of respondents was earlier start times, albeit acknowledging that this comes with challenges. Other, non-structural, solutions such as increased use of neutral umpires, review of poor sportsmanship particularly when juniors are present, sharing of coaching efforts and improved marketing of the game were also suggested to help improve wider experience and interest in the game.

There were some differences in views between sub-sets of the overall respondents. For example 49% of people who only play between 0 and 5 league games per year would prefer to play a parallel T20 league on a Saturday, citing time as a key factor in their existing level of commitment. The fact that there are significant differences in subsets of respondents means that it is likely that ESCA will need to undertake further engagement with existing youth/junior players to gauge opinion to any planned changes. The importance of engaging with junior/youth players was shared by a number of respondents.

No formal recommendations are made as part of this report as the findings will be discussed in detail at the clubs forum on 21st September 2017. It is clear that cricket in the East will have to adapt to meet the needs of an evolving and diverse player base. It is also clear that longer form cricket (40 and 50 over cricket) is still popular, but rules may have to be adapted to suit preferences for a quicker game, or parallel shorter form competitions may have to be considered.

Whatever the final solutions are, self-interest will need to be put aside in favour of looking at what is best for cricket in the East of Scotland and it may be that a collective leap of faith is required to be taken by all members for the good of the game.

Background

Current ESCA Structure and Current Challenges

Albeit that participation in cricket overall has increased, participation in traditional Saturday cricket has been falling in Scotland, particularly at a senior level. In the East of Scotland a number of teams have withdrawn from the league structure and clubs have folded, with very few new teams or clubs coming in to take their place.

With many things competing for time in private lives, it may be that cricket is a lesser priority or that the traditional form/structure of the game needs to evolve and adapt to the changing needs/wants of those who play it.

The existing structure consists of 9 ESCA leagues below the Eastern Premier; ESCA Championship through to division 8. Currently 50 overs a side are played in the top two divisions, with 40 overs played in all others. A Development League was started in 2017 season, predominantly aimed at improving participation, but was set up as a parallel structure with 30 over games played on a Sunday.

The table below shows each league for the 2017 structure, the number of teams in each league at the start of the season, the number that ended the season, and the number of defaulted matches.

League	# of teams at season start	# of teams at season end	# of defaults (excluding withdrawn teams)
Championship	10	10	0
1	10	10	1
2	10	10	2
3	10	10	3
4	10	9	3
5	10	10	5
6	10	9	2
7	8	7	10
8	8	8	12

Although 1 defaulted game out of 64 games (1.56%) would appear to be small, it should not be dismissed as insignificant that default of games starts in the second highest level of cricket in the East. It is very much more significant where 12 out of 44 games (27.27%) were defaulted in the lowest division and 88 games defaulted in total when also considering the withdrawn teams. It is also known that a number of other clubs have avoided defaulted games due to poor weather through the season – meaning the potential number of defaults crept towards three figures. Whilst weather can be cited for some loss of player enthusiasm as the season wore on, it is not solely accountable.

When previous years are reviewed the trendlines become more concerning:

Year	# of defaults (excluding withdrawn teams)	Highest league with a default & quantity
2014*	31	Div 2 & 2
2015*	32	Div 1 & 2*
2016	32	Div 1 & 2*
2017	38	Div 1 & 1

*Includes Eastern Knights

Whilst some clubs have been able to field additional sides in the lower divisions (2016 saw a number of 3s, 4s and even a 5th XI added) there have been clubs going the other way. A number of clubs have folded entirely along the way, most recently Teuchters CC; a side that for a number of years were very successful, earning a string of promotions.

The table below shows the number of withdrawn and new sides since 2009.

Year	# of teams joined	# of teams at withdrawn	Nett increase in teams
2009	1	1	0
2010	2	2	0
2011	4	3	1
2012	1	1	0
2013	4	3	1
2014	1	2	-1
2015	1	3	-2
2016	3	4	-1
2017	0	3	-3
Total	17	22	-5

The cause of this is unlikely to be singular in number, but observational evidence appears to be a smaller playing population for traditional Saturday cricket, with a greater number of people leaving the game or at the very least reducing their commitment over a season.

A number of clubs, particularly within Edinburgh, have relied on transient type players over the years to bolster playing numbers. These are players that may only be in Edinburgh for part of a season or a single season, due to short term work commitments or University. Whilst there is no issue with clubs employing this approach, it can be a risk if the main source of jobs takes cost cutting measures, as former league side Cask and Barrel CC found with RBS in 2009. Clubs need to ensure that there is a strong core to club management to be sustainable and must give consideration to succession planning – something that has not been apparent in some cases.

The Survey

Whilst there was observational evidence, it was decided by the ESCA committee that a better understanding was required, to tackle any fundamental root causes of the problem and seek ideas to help provide a more enjoyable, engaging and ultimately sustainable game for everyone. Engagement with and gaining opinion from current and former players, enthusiasts and potential newcomers to the sport on the current structure, format and appetite for the game was determined to be key. A short survey of 10 questions was launched at the end of August 2017 to do this. Running for a month, the survey tested opinion on possible solutions to improve engagement and offered the chance for people to voice their own suggestions.

The results of the survey are presented in this report and will be made public prior to the clubs forum (a further chance for ESCA to engage with its members) on 21st September 2017. The findings will be discussed and solutions explored with a view to any preferred solution(s) for the 2018 season being discussed by ESCA committee and ratified at the AGM in November as necessary.

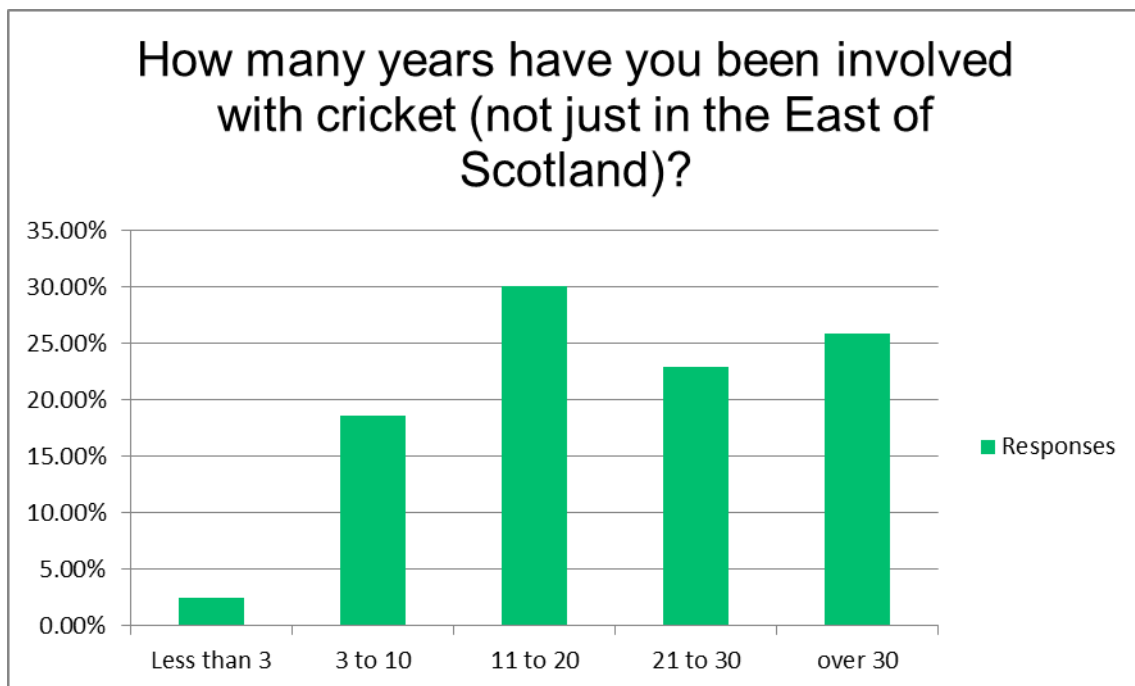
Survey Results

Format of the Results

The results in the following section have been taken from the survey and represented in graphical form where possible. Each question asked will be shown, complete with the number of respondents. Context and interpretation of the results has been provided objectively and where possible we have looked at what differences exist between those respondents new to the game and those who have a long-standing relationship with it. Where open ended responses were allowed, a word cloud has been used to show the correlation key words and phrases and frequency they occur. A sample of quotes from the responses has been given. All responses will be treated as anonymous for the purposes of this report.

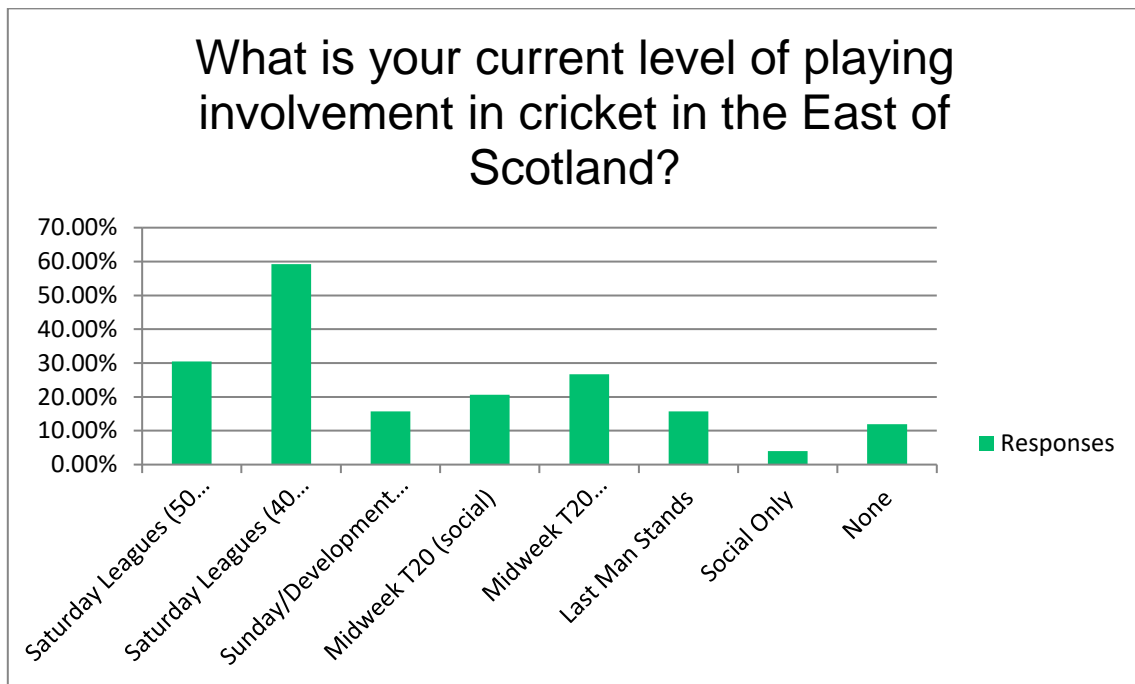
Q1 - How many years have you been involved with cricket (not just in the East of Scotland)?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 3	2.51%	11
3 to 10	18.49%	81
11 to 20	30.37%	133
21 to 30	22.83%	100
over 30	25.80%	113
	Answered	438
	Skipped	1



Q2 - What is your current level of playing involvement in cricket in the East of Scotland?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Saturday Leagues (50 Overs)	30.30%	130
Saturday Leagues (40 Overs)	58.97%	253
Sunday/Development Leagues	15.62%	67
Midweek T20 (social)	20.51%	88
Midweek T20 (competitive)	26.57%	114
Last Man Stands	15.62%	67
Social Only	4.20%	18
None	12.12%	52
Other (please specify)		33
	Answered	429
	Skipped	10

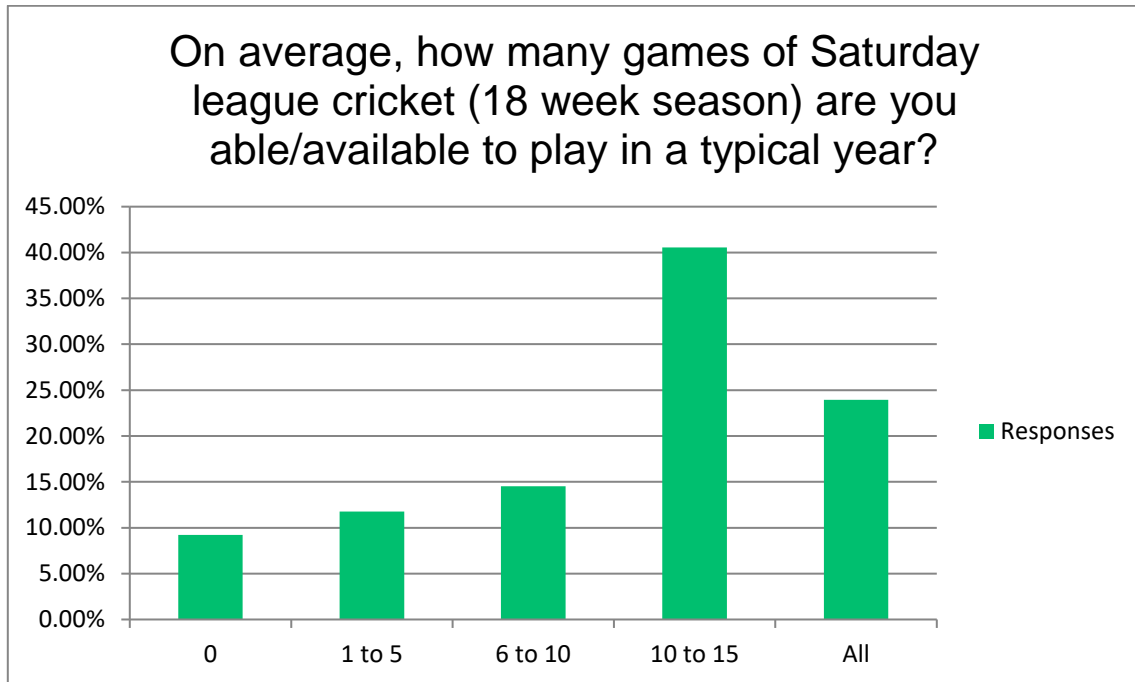


Of those that responded 'Other', there were a number of responses including:

- Spectator,
- umpire,
- administrator,
- members of other affiliated bodies incl women's cricket,
- not involved but interested in starting,
- coach,
- retired,
- parent of junior cricketer,
- Forty Club,
- indoor 6s only.

Q3 - On average, how many games of Saturday league cricket (18 week season) are you able / available to play in a typical year?

Answer Choices	Responses	
0	9.17%	40
1 to 5	11.93%	52
6 to 10	14.45%	63
10 to 15	40.60%	177
All	23.85%	104
	Answered	436
	Skipped	3



Answer Choices	Responses	
When did you stop/consider stopping playing?	95.45%	315
Primary reason for stopping playing?	84.85%	280
What would bring you (or brought you) back to playing on a Saturday?	80.91%	267
	Answered	330
	Skipped	109

Primary reason for stopping playing?



The word cloud highlights that the main reasons for stopping playing are predominantly due to other commitments in their life becoming more of a priority, such as family and work, and therefore time is a major factor. A number of individuals note that injury and 'getting old' are factors, but a worrying number state that player behaviours (particularly players umpiring), poor sportsmanship and club politics are reasons. Poor weather and poor facilities were also noted. Very few players stated that cost, travel or standard of play was a factor.

- “Takes too long...family comes first”.
- “Work and social life commitments”.
- “Game takes too long, not sure when finishes and family commitments”.
- “Getting older & increased frequency of injuries; marked increase in bad behaviour & disrespect by opposition teams”
- “Time commitment, umpiring and too many late cancellation of games”
- “Lack of time. Level of involvement in matches.”
- “Work commitments on a Saturday and lack of club flexibility”.
- “Cancellation of games due to lack of players”.
- “Attitude of some of the opposition in regards to the spirit of the game”
- “Several things: I was involved in the running of my club, which became increasingly burdensome and difficult to step back from. The behaviour some opposing clubs was also a major factor - most opponents are lovely, but a couple of really unpleasant, aggressive teams soured the experience for me.”

What would bring you (or brought you) back to playing on a Saturday?



The word cloud highlights that the main considerations in a return to the game (whether already returned or potential return) would relate to shortening the length of time a game goes on for, with an emphasis on an early finish. Suggestions include a new, shorter format or a shorter season, but the main suggestion was fewer overs (mix of suggestions from 40 overs to 20 overs). A flexible approach to the game was suggested on a number of occasions in relation to start time, ability to reschedule and time limits on bowling overs. A number of individuals stated that they had returned to the game through social cricket or T20 and 'got the bug back'.

Family and work were noted again, with some individuals stating that they would return once family had grown up or once family were old enough to play too.

Improved sportsmanship and a 'shift from win at all costs mentality' was raised a number of times.

Below are some quotes and sound bites that reflect typical responses to this question:

- "Different club with more relaxed attitude, plus changes in work pattern with more Saturdays free".
- "Play into September. Reduce to 30 overs per side. More time commitment is hard for a lot of guys"
- "Flexible approach to the game - If weekend games are not playable, opportunity to reschedule at a mutually agreed date, time & location. May be an evening T20 during weekday".
- "Social child minding on the grounds...with children whose parents are also playing".
- "Games should be of 40 overs and need to start early, say around 10am. This will give at least the evening for other personal life commitments".
- "The enjoyment of playing competitive cricket with friends against equally competitive opponents who play for the love of the game as opposed to the overriding need to win at all costs."
- "If there was less time pressure and games were played at a better time of day. Another option than playing 50 overs that start at 13.00 and not having to travel so far. More family inclusivity. Less disparity between the usual "big clubs" and not having to play pointless games against or with Pro's and OA's".
- "Nothing, happy playing social Sunday cricket".
- "None really, but recognize need for change".
- "Started playing midweek last year and I got the bug back and wanted to play more"
- "When my son reaches an age to play senior cricket".
- "A T20 league that would start about 2 & be finished by 5:30-6:00"
- "Shorter games, shorter journeys"
- "Quicker games. No tea in middle of innings?? Have it at end when it can all be more sociable?"
- "Short format - I can give up 3 hours in the afternoon for a T20 for example but just can't do a whole day".
- "12 starts. Maximum time limits for bowling allocated overs."
- "Shorter version of the game. 35 over an innings".
- "An earlier start would help. Starting at 1 means not enough time in the morning to do anything and not getting home until 7/8 means the night is gone as well".
- "I do help out a development team at my club when required and enjoy passing on experiences but the higher leagues need to address the win at all costs approach to ensure the game is played in the correct manner. I should point out that my bad experiences are limited to one or two clubs and on the whole the rest if the clubs do play a competitive yet fair brand of cricket."



Below are some quotes and sound bites that reflect typical responses to this question:

- “Ensuring the spirit of the game is preserved...”
- “Travel makes the game a whole day event. Sometimes travelling to the Borders or Edinburgh only for the game to be rained off.”
- “Rugby and football seasons getting longer and longer encroaching on the cricket season.”
- “Youth development and support pathways are not competitively structured compared with other popular sport programmes in both schools and colleges or universities. There is a need to address and support the older players in sustaining their interest through club participation in a non-competitive pathway, similar to rugby, tennis, golf etc.”

- “Lack of training facilities and poor cricket pitches lack of covers and side screens on grounds. Overs are too long in top leagues.”
- “Lack of flexibility. 40 and 50 over games take up a lot of time on a Saturday. The weather (and the Scottish-culture of playing in the wet) can sometimes make for poor quality games. Similarly the lack of umpires (and their often poor standard) can ruin an enjoyable game.”
- “With work and family commitments, I suspect I will stop playing and move to play golf in the next 5 years.”
- “Modern culture everything fast and quick e.g. Short time factor.”
- “Youth Cricket - more kids to come through the ranks. Cricket Scotland should invest money and resources in infrastructure development especially grass root cricket.”
- “Aging population and lack of 18-25 yr olds willing to take on the mantle.”
- “Lack of funds available to smaller clubs and small catchment area leading to lack of player attraction.”
- “Enough volunteers willing to organise it. Playing formats can always be adapted to meet current trends.”
- “Encouraging grassroots cricket across all clubs, not just the historical strong clubs -a healthy youth sections attract parents and parents will then play in the 2nd's, 3rds etc and boost playing numbers.”
- “...generation in the UK growing up without cricket on free-to-air TV will, I think, have serious long term consequences, and limit the sport to minority pursuit - perhaps with participation numbers similar to hockey, say.”
- “With a few 'Super Clubs' who are doing a great job of coaching juniors, the problem is if you have 200 kids at under 10 level but only 1 under 15 team where do the rest of the kids go at 15 years of age? Currently they are being lost to the game.”
- “No Change. We need to move with the times. "Because we've always done it that way" is the current attitude.”
- “Greater distribution of wealth and funding to clubs that need their facilities developed. Greater marketing and awareness of league cricket in Scotland, with an emphasis on participation and fun. ESCA should spread its focus across to women's and junior development. A huge demographic seems to be being ignored.”

Q7 - Please provide your views on the following statements:

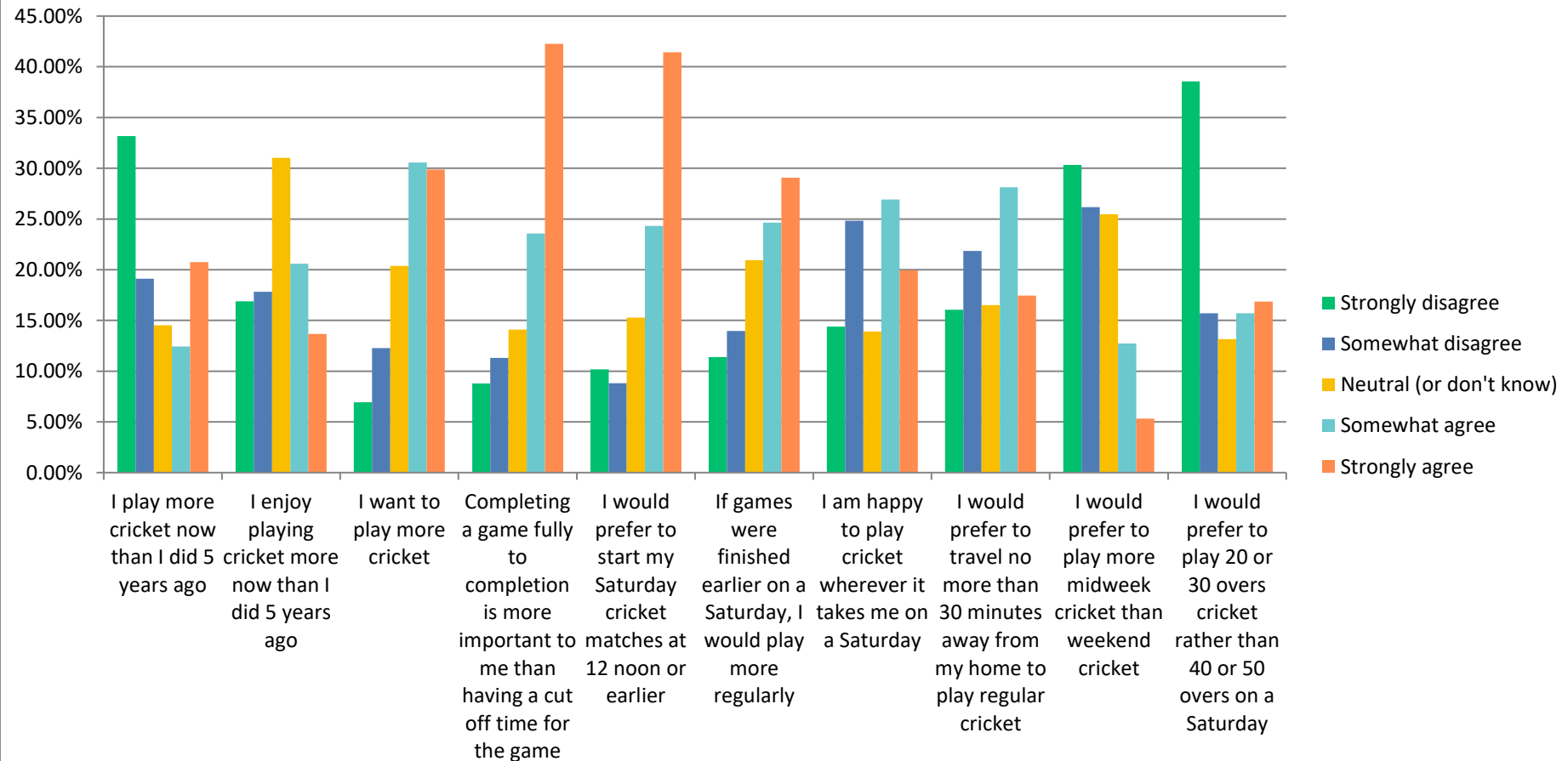
	Strongly disagree		Somewhat disagree		Neutral (or don't know)		Somewhat agree		Strongly agree		Total
I play more cricket now than I did 5 years ago	33.49%	146	19.04%	83	14.45%	63	12.39%	54	20.64%	90	436
I enjoy playing cricket more now than I did 5 years ago	16.82%	73	17.97%	78	30.88%	134	20.74%	90	13.59%	59	434
I want to play more cricket	6.91%	30	12.21%	53	20.28%	88	30.65%	133	29.95%	130	434
Completing a game fully to completion is more important to me than having a cut off time for the game	8.74%	38	11.26%	49	14.02%	61	23.45%	102	42.53%	185	435
I would prefer to start my Saturday cricket matches at 12 noon or earlier	10.14%	44	8.76%	38	15.21%	66	24.19%	105	41.71%	181	434
If games were finished earlier on a Saturday, I would play more regularly	11.34%	49	13.89%	60	20.83%	90	24.54%	106	29.40%	127	432
I am happy to play cricket wherever it takes me on a Saturday	14.58%	63	24.77%	107	13.89%	60	26.85%	116	19.91%	86	432
I would prefer to travel no more than 30 minutes away from my home to play regular cricket	15.97%	69	21.76%	94	16.67%	72	28.01%	121	17.59%	76	432
I would prefer to play more midweek cricket than weekend cricket	30.18%	131	26.04%	113	25.81%	112	12.67%	55	5.30%	23	434
I would prefer to play 20 or 30 overs cricket rather than 40 or 50 overs on a Saturday	38.62%	168	15.63%	68	13.10%	57	15.86%	69	16.78%	73	435
									Answered		436
									Skipped		3

Respondents suggested that they felt they were playing less cricket, but more positively 60% would like to play more if it were possible and a very strong majority would prefer this to be longer form, weekend cricket.

A significant majority of respondents noted that they would prefer an earlier start time, though it is acknowledged that this is not always possible given ground sharing, particularly where school cricket is played in the morning. A little under half preferred an earlier finish time but would not want a game to have an enforced finish time if it meant the game was 'unfinished'.

45% of respondents have no problem travelling to play their cricket, but a similar number would prefer to play closer to home.

Please provide your views on the following statements:



Q8 - How do you think the experience and interest in the game would change if any of the following measures were implemented in the East of Scotland?

	Decrease		Stay the Same		Increase		Total
Regionalisation	16.06%	62	46.89%	181	37.05%	143	386
Shorter games (reduce number of overs in current weekend structure)	24.42%	106	30.18%	131	45.39%	197	434
Shorter games (implementation of new weekend T20 or equivalent competition)	23.67%	102	24.59%	106	51.74%	223	431
Starting games earlier in the day	11.26%	49	30.34%	132	58.39%	254	435
Implementation of rules aimed at speeding up the game (removal of drinks interval, bowling blocks of overs from same end, etc)	30.88%	134	37.10%	161	32.03%	139	434
Other (please specify)							65
					Answered		435
					Skipped		3

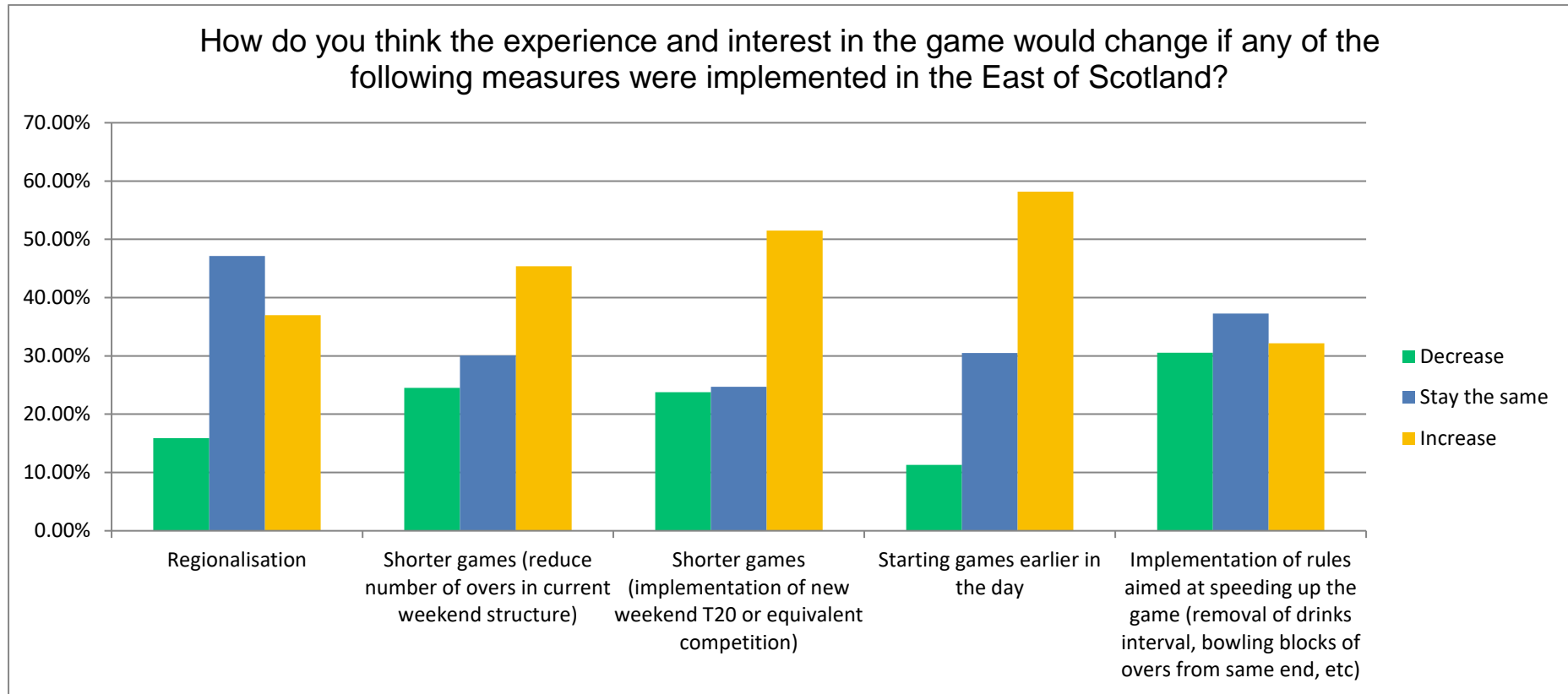
This question was asked to gauge reaction to potential measures to benefit the overall game, as opposed to personal playing preferences in question 7. The responses are interesting in that a large number of the respondents feel that 4 of the 5 measure suggested would have a positive impact on the game, contrary to their own opinions voiced previously.

As an example, 52% of respondents to question 8 had the perception that a T20 competition on a Saturday would have a positive effect on the experience of cricket and interest in the game, where as 54% in question 7 and 59% in question 9 said that they would prefer to play in a 40 or 50 over competition. It does seem that players do consider that if changes are made to the current structure/format it would better for cricket in the East of Scotland, although a number of the same people would still prefer to take part in traditional Saturday cricket.

It was noted that only a small number of respondents answered with anything in the 'other' box. A number of those responses though were very open ended or rhetorical and did not provide much guidance (e.g. 'we need to improve what we have, not reinvent the wheel'), suggesting that they did not really know what may be able to work. Others did have strong opinions and some of the alternate suggestions are below.

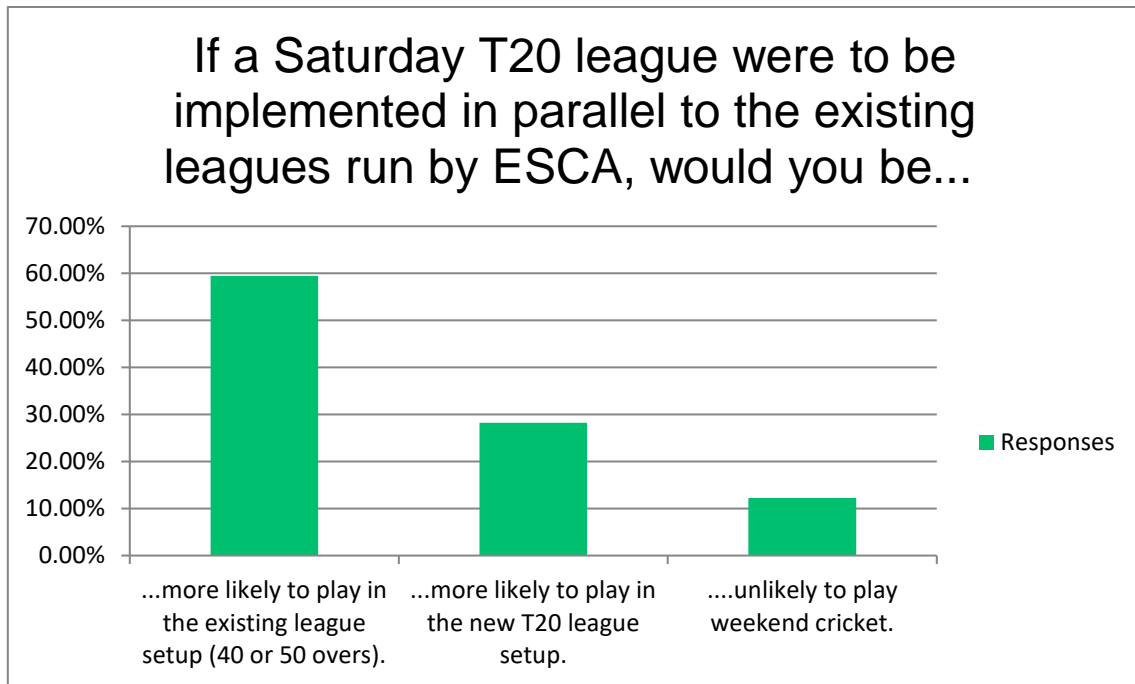
- Enforcing bowling of overs more quickly / time limits on innings
- Increased use of neutral umpires
- Performance rankings for players and teams (enhanced statistics)
- Enforcing clubs to have junior player quotas
- Greater emphasis on friendly cricket/development structure
- Player 'loan' system
- Larger number of promotion and relegation places to give teams something to play for, for longer and give greater variety to fixtures year-on-year
- Greater dual registration of players in lower leagues
- Implementing current ICC ODI rules to Saturday cricket (field restrictions, bouncer restrictions, changing to white ball)

- Get clubs to be more realistic about number of teams/players they have at the start of a season to aim to reduce defaults and get everyone scheduled to play every week (weather permitting)
- Take action on poor sportsmanship and repeat offenders
- Summer break to play cup competitions
- Bring back the winning and losing draw
- Winning bonus points
- Retain longer format to ensure that a greater number of players are 'involved in a game'. T20 format would provide less opportunity for lesser skilled players and dominated by biggest hitters and best bowlers.
- Regionalisation, but at lower levels only
- Fewer clubs with more support - limit number of clubs / teams would suggest mergers?



Q9 - If a Saturday T20 league were to be implemented in parallel to the existing leagues run by ESCA, would you be...

Answer Choices	Responses	
...more likely to play in the existing league setup (40 or 50 overs).	59.22%	257
...more likely to play in the new T20 league setup.	28.57%	124
....unlikely to play weekend cricket.	12.21%	53
	Answered	434
	Skipped	5



Q10 – Anything else to add?

Similar to the 'Other' option in question 8, it was noted that only a little over a third of respondents answered with anything in the 'anything else to add' box. Again a number of respondents went with very open ended or rhetorical statements that did not provide much assistance on direction or solutions. Others did have strong opinions, observations or asked valid questions, some of which will have more straightforward answers and others will likely generate discussion with differing views. Some of these are below, split (broadly) into topic:

League Structure & Fixtures

- "Fundamentally the numbers in the game are dropping due older players leaving the game and not being backfilled by juniors at the other end. Whatever we decide to do, it must adhere to creating a strong pathway for our future players to play at the highest level and to stay engaged in the game. (Unfortunately) T20 cricket is now the premier focus for our top players in the country as it makes them the most money, therefore we have a responsibility to provide both a pathway for this format and the longer form of the game - perhaps leagues 4-9 play Saturday T20 or 30 over cricket and the remainder play 50 over cricket?"
- "I would propose a reorganisation of the leagues (top end) to change them to 8 team leagues (removing a number of meaningless games) and review promotion/relegation accordingly. With the remaining 4-5 weeks, create a competitive Saturday t20 competition to take place in a block in June/July with a group stage and Finals day which is open to all ESCA teams. Match this with a tier 2 and tier 3 comp (cup/plate/bowl) and play 3 group games, semi-final and final."
- "Please do not leave weekends without fixtures in divisions with less team. Instead aim for 3 games per team if div only has for instance 6 teams to ensure good quantity of regular cricket."
- "The Cricket League Season should start in the first week of April and end in mid-September as weather patterns are changing with wetter weather now present in July."
- "The problem is not the format of the game it's the quality of the experience..."
- "I'd regret the passing of the 40 / 50 over leagues, if it was decided to concentrate on short forms of cricket to keep youngsters interested. Whilst that might be successful, I'm sure the pool of people able to grow into top level players would very soon wither."
- "The Sunday development league it a good idea in that respect, and to be commended in its introduction."
- "I strongly feel that competitive T20 matches should be played during the week and not replace 50 over matches. I know a lot of people who feel that playing a competitive T20 game would benefit player development more than practice. The remodelling of the Masterton T20 (to include more fixtures) is a strong first step in the right direction."

Length of games & Start time

- "Shortening the game from 50/45 to 40 hasn't helped, so why should more shortening work?"
- "Games should start earlier. People would rather wake up a few hours earlier if it meant they still got their Saturday evenings to themselves. Playing a 40/50 game of cricket starting at 12 or 1 and not finishing till 7 or 8 is a real turn off for young people."

Umpiring & Rules

- "Introduce an entry level umpiring grade. Could be an online module & test, to encourage take up."
- "Abolish profile wides, coloured clothing & play proper ODI rules. Keep the rules simple as possible."
- "More common sense on wet days, if rain is forecast more flexibility from umpires to reduce to 30 or 20 overs before the start to try and complete full game. Encourage lower leagues to reduce overs on wet days for same reason."

Juniors

- “While some of the big clubs with junior sections are doing well at the moment (with waiting lists, etc), the smaller clubs (I think) are really struggling for sustainability. ESCA facilitating partnerships between big and small clubs may help sustain some of the smaller clubs.”
- “The future of ESCA depends on today’s teenagers and young adults - those who currently play and those that don’t. Develop your proposals on what they think.”
- “It’s not just a case of trying to get adults to stay in the game but to get juniors to transition. The development league has worked but adult behaviour at lower levels on a Saturday is not likely to encourage youngsters.”
- “...You need a focus on getting everyone playing not just youngsters.”

Participation Playing and Managing)

- “Women’s cricket important for future numbers”.
- “Cricket is an unusual game, in that it’s a team game played by 11 individuals, all of whom will want the chance to take some part in a game. Changes a few years ago to reduce the number of overs a bowler could bowl have had a positive impact; and at the lower league levels it’s normal now to have 6 or more different players bowling in an innings. But those who are batters only can feel left out a bit: if they’re out in the opening overs of a match they’ve a long afternoon ahead if they don’t much like fielding!”
- “...it’s not uncommon, particularly when bringing a junior into the side, for them to be batting down the order, and for their bowling opportunities to be limited (this can also happen to an adult joining a side). A T20 competition will result in shorter games but, if anything, increases the likelihood that someone low down the order won’t bat. The solution used in junior cricket is Pairs cricket, where a pair of batsmen bat for a set number of overs, and loss of a wicket results in a loss of runs. This wouldn’t be an appropriate solution for the upper divisions, and would doubtless be seen by some (or many) as a significant break from traditional cricket.”
- “Would be good if lower league clubs were allowed to utilise other players from other clubs should they need to fulfil a fixture. Gala & Hawick both have a joint second team which gives both clubs a way of encouraging more players game time. For example Dunfermline 2s and Broomhall 2s have struggled some weeks - perhaps if crossover was allowed in certain leagues this would allow more fixtures to be completed. I would only recommend this for Div 6-8.”
- “It is not just playing that needs to be looked at. Volunteers for positions on Committee, looking after ground etc also need some thought.”

Facilities

- “Encourage larger clubs to share training facilities (nets) with smaller clubs, allows more clubs to train, generates inter-club relationships, allows smaller clubs to train, creates larger cricket networks to keep players in the game rather than dropping cricket altogether.”
- “We need more people interested in the game; having less cricket won’t help. Nor does shortening games necessarily make it easier for people to commit to cricket. I suspect many clubs need to do more to make their home grounds family-friendly so that wives, kids etc can have a happy afternoon at the cricket too.”
- “I think better preparation of pitches and cricket fields would go a far way to enticing players to play more cricket - it is demoralising turning up for a game to play on a thick outfield and muddy/wet pitch.”
- “ESCA needs to come up with cricket opportunities in the winter to keep cricket going all year around, cost of booking grounds and practice facilities also needs to be looked at as this is increasing every year.”

Response Differences for New Players

It was felt that it was important to understand whether there were any significant variations in responses for respondents who had noted they were new to the game (between 0 and 10 years of cricket experience). The variations in response are looked at for questions 2, 3, 8 and 9.

Number of respondents with between 0 and 10 years of cricket experience: 92

Q2 - What is your current level of playing involvement in cricket in the East of Scotland?

It was found that those with 0 to 10 years of cricket experience played more 40 over cricket, development league and Midweek T20/LMS.

Answer Choices	All Responses		<10 years playing	
Saturday Leagues (50 Overs)	30.30%	130	31.52%	29
Saturday Leagues (40 Overs)	58.97%	253	68.48%	63
Sunday/Development Leagues	15.62%	67	22.83%	21
Midweek T20 (social)	20.51%	88	29.35%	27
Midweek T20 (competitive)	26.57%	114	32.61%	30
Last Man Stands	15.62%	67	21.74%	20
Social Only	4.20%	18	3.26%	3
None	12.12%	52	6.52%	6
Other (please specify)		33		4
	Answered	429		92
	Skipped	10		0

Q3 - On average, how many games of Saturday league cricket (18 week season) are you able / available to play in a typical year?

It was found that those with 0 to 10 years of cricket generally played more games, particularly in the 6 to 10 game region.

Answer Choices	All Responses		<10 years playing	
0	9.17%	40	3.26%	3
1 to 5	11.93%	52	8.70%	8
6 to 10	14.45%	63	25.00%	23
10 to 15	40.60%	177	41.30%	38
All	23.85%	104	21.74%	20
	Answered	436		92
	Skipped	3		0

Q8 - How do you think the experience and interest in the game would change if any of the following measures were implemented in the East of Scotland?

It was found that those with 0 to 10 years of cricket were less in favour of regionalisation and rules aimed at speeding the games up. They were slightly more in favour of shorter games and starting earlier, but less in favour of weekend T20 format.

	Decrease		Stay the same		Increase	
Regionalisation	22.89%	19	46.99%	39	30.12%	25
Shorter games (reduce number of overs in current weekend structure)	20.88%	19	32.97%	30	46.15%	42
Shorter games (implementation of new weekend T20 or equivalent competition)	18.68%	17	25.27%	23	56.04%	51
Starting games earlier in the day	8.79%	8	32.97%	30	58.24%	53
Implementation of rules aimed at speeding up the game (removal of drinks interval, bowling blocks of overs from same end, etc)	31.87%	29	37.36%	34	30.77%	28
Answered						91
Skipped						1

Q9 - If a Saturday T20 league were to be implemented in parallel to the existing leagues run by ESCA, would you be...

It was found that those with 0 to 10 years of cricket were more likely to play in general, with the corresponding increase in preference for longer or shorter from, favouring 40 or 50 overs slightly more.

Answer Choices	All Responses		<10 years playing	
...more likely to play in the existing league setup (40 or 50 overs).	59.22%	257	64.84%	59
...more likely to play in the new T20 league setup.	28.57%	124	31.87%	29
....unlikely to play weekend cricket.	12.21%	53	3.30%	3
	Answered	434		91
	Skipped	5		1

Response Differences for Players Playing 0 to 5 league games per season

It was felt that it was important to understand whether there were any significant variations in responses for respondents who had noted they only played a limited number of Saturday league fixtures each season (between 0 and 5 games). The variations in response are looked at for questions 1, 2, 8 and 9.

Number of respondents playing between 0 and 5 league games per season: 92

Q1 - How many years have you been involved with cricket (not just in the East of Scotland)?

It was found that the majority of those playing only 0 to 5 league games per season have over 20 years of experience in the game (22% increase in relation to all respondents).

Answer Choices	All Responses		0-5 games played	
Less than 3	2.51%	11	4.35%	4
3 to 10	18.49%	81	7.61%	7
11 to 20	30.37%	133	18.48%	17
21 to 30	22.83%	100	27.17%	25
over 30	25.80%	113	42.39%	39
	Answered	438		92
	Skipped	1		0

Q2 - What is your current level of playing involvement in cricket in the East of Scotland?

It was found that the majority of those playing only 0 to 5 league games per season lean towards not playing at all. Of those who do, it is a mix of format being played, but a greater emphasis on social cricket.

Answer Choices	All Responses		0-5 games played	
Saturday Leagues (50 Overs)	30.30%	130	9.09%	8
Saturday Leagues (40 Overs)	58.97%	253	27.27%	24
Sunday/Development Leagues	15.62%	67	13.64%	12
Midweek T20 (social)	20.51%	88	13.64%	12
Midweek T20 (competitive)	26.57%	114	9.09%	8
Last Man Stands	15.62%	67	6.82%	6
Social Only	4.20%	18	14.77%	13
None	12.12%	52	44.32%	39
	Answered	429		88
	Skipped	10		0

Q8 - How do you think the experience and interest in the game would change if any of the following measures were implemented in the East of Scotland?

It was found that the majority of those playing only 0 to 5 league games per season were slightly more in favour of regionalisation and rules aimed at speeding the games up. They were slightly less in favour of starting earlier, but significantly more favour of weekend T20 format and shorter games (increase of 21% and 23% respectively).

	Decrease		Stay the same		Increase	
Regionalisation	12.66%	10	45.57%	36	41.77%	33
Shorter games (reduce number of overs in current weekend structure)	14.29%	13	17.58%	16	68.13%	62
Shorter games (implementation of new weekend T20 or equivalent competition)	16.67%	15	11.11%	10	72.22%	65
Starting games earlier in the day	12.22%	11	37.78%	34	50.00%	45
Implementation of rules aimed at speeding up the game (removal of drinks interval, bowling blocks of overs from same end, etc)	28.89%	26	34.44%	31	36.67%	33
Answered						90
Skipped						2

Q9 - If a Saturday T20 league were to be implemented in parallel to the existing leagues run by ESCA, would you be...

It was found that the majority of those playing only 0 to 5 league games per season were significantly more in favour of a T20 league setup, albeit that there was also an increase in not playing at all.

Answer Choices	All Responses		0-5 games played	
...more likely to play in the existing league setup (40 or 50 overs).	59.22%	257	23.91%	22
...more likely to play in the new T20 league setup.	28.57%	124	48.91%	45
....unlikely to play weekend cricket.	12.21%	53	27.17%	25
	Answered	434		91
	Skipped	5		1

Summary & the Next Step

Summary

The results of the survey are summarised as follows:

- There were 439 valid responses
- Spread of respondents gave pretty broad representation of cricket experience, however only 2.5% of people responding are what would be considered to be 'brand new to the game'.
- Of those who responded, 30% play 50 over cricket and 59% play 40 over cricket.
- 27% play competitive midweek T20 (excluding LMS) and 21% play social midweek (there will be an overlap between the competitive and non-competitive).
- Over 64% of respondents have played 10 or more games in a league season. Only 9% didn't play any.
- 53% of people disagree that they play more cricket now than they did 5 years ago and 35% say they don't enjoy it as much.
- 61% of people say they'd like to play more.
- 54% of people said that if games finished earlier they would play more regularly and over 58% of people felt it would help improve experience and interest in the game
- 45% of people felt that shorter games would help improve wider experience and interest in the game (slightly at odds with previous as only 25% didn't think it would provide a benefit).
- 56% of people would prefer to play in 40 or 50 overs on a Saturday than 20 or 30 overs.
- However 52% of people felt that new weekend T20 would help improve wider experience and interest in the game.
- Only 18% of people would rather play midweek than weekend cricket
- 66% of people want to play a game to a conclusion rather than have a cut off time.
- 66% of people prefer a 12 noon or earlier start.
- Slight preference to play more locally but only 37% of people thought it would actively help interest in the game.
- It was a fair split of opinion on implementation of other rules to shorten the game
- Those 'new to the game' are likely to favour 40 or 50 over cricket, though would consider earlier start times.
- 49% of people who only play between 0 and 5 league games per year would prefer to play a parallel T20 league on a Saturday.

Meeting the Clubs & Next Steps

It is key to note that no recommendations will be made as part of this report to allow clubs and individuals to review the survey findings and derive their own preferred conclusions and solutions for discussion in detail at the clubs' forum on 21st September 2017. This is an opportunity for clubs and individuals to develop the debate about what is best for cricket in the East of Scotland.

Once ideas have been put forward, the ESCA committee will take these away for further review at the October committee meeting, with a view to presenting proposals to be discussed and voted upon at the AGM in November.