

PBA Home-and-Away Domestic Format - Explainer

Currently, the PBA domestic competition is venue-based: clubs enter teams into competitions that are fixtured to play all their games at a specific venue.

For the Winter Domestic season 2024 and beyond, the Perth Basketball Association will move to a home-and-away format for all domestic competition.

This change will see fixtures that are club-determined (specifically, the home club of that fixture), rather than being venue-based.

How will it work?

- Clubs will be allocated to a particular venue, based on their traditional catchment region.
- Clubs will nominate teams into grades (based on age) and divisions (based on talent).
- All home games for that team will be played at the allocated home venue of the club.
- All away games will be played at the allocated home venue of the opposition club (this may or may not be the same location as the away club).
- Semi-finals and finals will be prioritised towards the allocated home venue of the higher-finishing team, but not guaranteed.

Example:

- Mount Hawthorn's Year 5/6 Boys Team 2 plays in the PBA Year 5/6 Boys Division 2 competition along with seven other teams (Leederville, North Perth, Manning, South Perth, Hoopers, Kings, Belmont)
- Mount Hawthorn's Year 5/6 Boys Team 2 will play ALL their home games (50%) at Loftus.
- Their away games against Leederville and North Perth games will also be played at Loftus (as Loftus is the home venue for Leederville and North Perth).
- They will play their away games versus Manning, South Perth and Hoopers at Victoria Park Leisurelife (as this is the home venue for those clubs).
- They will play their away games versus Kings and Belmont at Belmont Oasis (as this is the home venue for those clubs).

What are the benefits of this change?

1. Fixturing

The current process of allocating teams is determined by a percentage of total game time slots available to PBA, divided up amongst clubs based on previous season ratios. This does not mirror venue availability, nor take into account the significant growth in our southern corridor. A home and away format ensures venues are appropriately fixtured while providing an opportunity for all our clubs to sustain/grow.

2. Grading movements

Moving teams between divisions can be extremely difficult for two reasons:

- Two different grades may be playing at different primary venues
- Teams are reticent to move grades to have to play all games at a new venue

Moving to a home and away format resolves this issue - a divisional change will still see that team retain their home game timeslot allocation (albeit in another division)

3. Variation in competition

Location-dependent divisions tend to be dominated by the demographically closest clubs - resulting in players playing the same opponents throughout the season (and their entire basketball journey).

A home-and-away format provides an opportunity for more opponents, improving their enjoyment and development within basketball.

4. Reduces conflict

Playing the same players and coaches tends to lead to escalated conflict born from over-familiarity. A home-and-away format mitigates this conflict.

What are some of the challenges to this format and what will PBA do to mitigate these challenges?

1. Player travel demands

A home-and-away format will increase travel for players and parents for half (or less) of all games. PBA does benefit from relatively close domestic locations (<20 min travel) but do understand that this presents a challenge for families (particularly with multiple participants).

2. Domestic club player and coach development

Some clubs provide volunteer coach and player development based on the primary usage of one venue. With support from other clubs, PBA would consider fixture manipulation so that a home club could have a heavier domestic home day fixture; providing an opportunity for domestic development in that week.

3. Volunteering

Some clubs rely on coaches for multiple teams, whether they are paid or volunteer - this becomes progressively harder with a home-and-away format. There is some manual manipulation that the Competition's department can provide to mitigate.

How many teams will each club have?

Operationally, there are 97 game timeslots (194 teams) able to be utilised on any given Saturday. PBA is committed to reducing the number of competition byes, and therefore we

will be setting our total team allotment at 200. This provides the following team allocations to clubs:

This gives the following club ratios:

- North Perth (Loftus): 27 teams
- Leederville (Loftus): 27 teams
- Mount Hawthorn (Loftus): 27 teams
- South Perth (Vic Park): 22 teams
- Manning (Vic Park): 22 teams
- Hoopers (Vic Park): 22 teams
- Belmont (Belmont): 24 teams
- West Coast Kings (Belmont): 24 teams

Can our club request additional teams?

If a club does not utilise their allotment of teams in a season, there is the opportunity to fill this team slot. If a slot becomes available, clubs nominated to the same location as the spare team slot will have first priority. If a club from a venue does not need the additional team slot, PBA will approach other clubs for their consideration, with preference given to clubs committed to governance improvements within their structures.