

# Shorter Season for 2009

Monday 13 July 2009

2009 will see the introduction of a shorter season, with the competition now being played over a 12 week period instead of the usual 17. Problems surrounding the past few seasons in the area of game cancellations due to heat and the loss of players not returning after the Christmas new year period, persuaded the league to look at alternate arrangements to resolve these issues. After discussions at a board level, it was decided to move the season to an earlier start date which will commence the first weekend in October and finish the weekend prior to Christmas.

In the past, any game cancellations usually occurred after the new year break when the weather really starts to heat up. The heat has always been an issue for a game where you are wearing a few kiloís of body armour, but with climate changes in the last few years, cancellation of games has become more common. Player welfare is always a concern and when the mercury hits 38 degrees or higher, its usually game over for that week. In a game where every point counts, the cancellation of a game affects the allocation of competition points and can be the catalyst to a team not making the finals or not taking the all important number 1 spot on the ladder.

The other major issue for teams is injuries and this is no more evident for teams with smaller rosters. While teams with large numbers such as the Eagles and the Razorbacks usually have sufficient players to cover injury losses, other teams with lower player numbers can be crippled in the event of a few injuries occurring. A shorter season should see less injuries and therefore will be a major benefit to all teams concerned.

At the end of the 2009 Season the league will review the changes and then the board can determine if the shorter season has a future. Season 2009 commences October 3 at 5pm.