Mob Match scoring system – amendment made in 2023

The current scoring system (as was in force at the first MM)

Two matches occur together: one for the men and one for the ladies, run as one race overall.

Each match is scored as per cross-country races: the race-winning male and female each record 1 point, 2nd in each race takes 2 points, 3rd takes 3 etc. These are added up across each team for all the scoring places (see next para), with the lowest team total winning that match.

How many runners score points in each team? The concept of mob matches is that the majority of the 'mob' have a direct influence on the outcome; scoring is typically deep into each team. However, it's quite possible one club may struggle to field good numbers, and a format has been chosen not to overly disadvantage that team. The number of scoring runners in each team is thus *three fewer than the smaller team* in each match. The larger team retains an advantage in that its non-scoring athletes may push the opposition's scorers to lower positions.

Mob matches are all about the winning club overall. It's likely that the above format will see each club win one match each (ie one wins the ladies' match, the other wins the men's). In this eventuality, as a 'tiebreak', the points differences of the two victories are taken into account, with the club winning its match by the greater numerical margin being triumphant overall.

The problem

The problem arises if the men's and ladies matches are of markedly different sizes. Put simply, it is *much easier to win a bigger match by a bigger margin* as there are more points on offer. In the event of each club winning one match each, it is then more difficult for the smaller match to exert as much impact on the 'tiebreak' outcome. Thus, through no fault of its own (and quite probably, because their opponents fielded a smaller team, be that deliberate or not), the winning team in that smaller match may not be able to carry an overall win for their club.

As an illustration, KRR men won their 2022 match (in which 15 runners for each team scored) by 50 points (210-260). There were thus 470 points 'in the game'. By contrast, there were only 138 points available in the ladies' match (which KRR won 65-73). It would have been almost numerically impossible for PRR's ladies to have won that match by 50 or more points. Even had they secured a total whitewash – ie taking all 8 top places (scoring 36 points) with KRR taking places 9-16 (scoring 100 points) - the margin would still 'only' have been 72 points.

The proposed solution

This therefore seeks to allow a smaller match to have due/equal influence on the overall outcome and thus the destination of the trophy. However, it still needs to ensure that the overall victory is awarded to the club that wins 'its' match the more emphatically.

It is thus proposed that, in the event of a 1-1 tie in matches, **the overall winning club is the one whose winning team secures the <u>lower proportion </u>of the points scored in its match**.

By way of illustration, we look again at the 2022 result. Although this was not a tie (rather, a 2-0 win for KRR), the point can be shown:

- KRR ladies won their match with 65/138 of the points ie **47.1%.**
- KRR men won with 210/470 of the points ie **44.7%.**

The latter (being a lower %) is thus the more emphatic win, and, in the event of a 1-1 match score, the more emphatic win determines the overall win and trophy destination.

Additional thoughts

The solution isn't perfect. It's not as instantly obvious which team is the winner when the results are declared, instead meaning a calculator is required. There is arguably a tactical incentive for clubs to turn out smaller teams to exploit this mechanism. However, this doesn't look to be a problem in 2023; in future, it may just be necessary to impose a minimum team size if the overall aim of both clubs fielding the largest teams possible is not respected.

The new mechanism does also maintain the incentive for every runner to compete as well as possible. If your team looks to be losing its match, there remains an incentive to keep the margin as low as possible to give your club's other team a chance still to carry an overall win. If you look to be winning, banking the best win you can is also advisable. Non-scorers also raise the number of points 'in the game' whilst not increasing the score of their own team, influencing both the match result and the tiebreak (if needed).

We could proceed without a tiebreak mechanism, and have draws overall. The club currently in possession of the trophy would then retain it (eg Ashes, Ryder Cup) until beaten 2-0. But draws are very likely, and not having a winner is no fun. Hence this adaptation!

Also, clarifications:

A match in which scores finish level (eg a ladies match that finishes 68-68) *is regarded as a tie, and the match 'halved',* the trophy destination hinging entirely on the outcome of the other match (which could also potentially be 'halved' for a true tie overall!). In many XC matches, a tie is resolved by the positions of the first non-scorer on each team, but we are not pursuing this approach.

The number of scoring runners in a match is set by the number of **starters**. In the event that a team sees insufficient runners finish to occupy all the designated scoring places, each missing place will be scored as the position of the last placed runner overall in that race +1.