

# Youth a priority for British speedway

British Speedway will launch a new programme for youth development in 2024 as part of a concerted effort to bring through the next generation of the sport's stars.

All Premiership and Championship clubs have signed up to the new three-tier structure following discussions at this week's annual general meeting.

This will involve each club either competing in the National Development League (NDL) or staging events in a new National Individual series or taking part in a youth programme to be run in second halves following senior meeting and it is now compulsory for each club to take one of those options.

Six clubs have already stated their intention to take part in the NDL next season and further details will be available in the coming weeks.

Premiership will welcome two new clubs in 2024 as Birmingham and Oxford step up to join the top-flight but Peterborough and Wolverhampton will not run next season due to their ongoing stadium issues. Both clubs' licences have been put on ice.

Meanwhile Leicester will be under new ownership in 2024 with the club takeover now ratified.

The Premiership points limit has been raised to 40 (for six riders) with teams to be completed by a Rising Star and the league will continue to stage the KO Cup competition plus an unchanged play-off format.

In addition, there will now be no restrictions on the number of riders from the Polish Ekstraliga who can be signed by any one club. PREMIERSHIP 2024: Belle Vue, Birmingham, Ipswich,

King's Lynn, Leicester, Oxford, Sheffield.

The Championship welcome Workington back into senior racing for the first time since 2018 after the success of their opening season in the NDL at Northside. We can also confirm that Oxford will continue to operate at this level.

The points limit has been set at 38 (for seven riders) and the KO Cup and BSN Series competitions will feature once more, with draws and group structures to follow.

The Championship play-off format has been revised and will now match the Premiership, with the top four clubs qualifying for the semi-finals, rather than the previous group format involving the top six. CHAMPIONSHIP 2024: Berwick, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Oxford, Plymouth, Poole, Redcar, Scunthorpe, Workington.

Other matters decided at the AGM:

\*PREMIERSHIP CEO: Phil Morris

\*STARTS: All British Speedway tracks will bring in the random electronic starting procedure as seen in the Grand Prix series.

\*FACILITIES: Where a club has one absent rider in their top five, they now have the option to use a guest or rider replacement in any of those positions. Previously one absent rider fourth or fifth in the team order had to be covered by the rider replacement facility.

\*HEAT 15: Any rider in a team is now eligible for Heat 15, regardless of points scored to that stage or their position in the team.

\*EIGHT-DAY RULE: The eight-day rule for guests will not apply during the play-offs, meaning a club would be able to utilise the same guest were they to stage home play-off fixtures in successive weeks.

\*GUESTS: A rider may only guest for one team throughout the play-offs, or indeed a Cup semi-final and/or Final. This is in addition to the regulation that a rider cannot guest for

another team in the play-offs if his own team is also involved.

\*TRANSFER WINDOW: The traditional end-of-August transfer cut-off has been replaced by a transfer window, which will close when a club has completed 75 per cent of their regular league matches.

\*TESTIMONIALS: Four riders have been granted Testimonials in respect of their long service to British Speedway. These are Thomas Jorgensen, Kyle Newman, Charles Wright and Kyle Howarth.

\*FIXTURES: Fixtures for both the Premiership and Championship leagues are being compiled and will be available over the coming weeks.