

## CHESHIRE SHIELD 2024

The number of entries for the Cheshire Shield has been declining in recent seasons with only 18 entries in 2023. The competition is open to First X1 Cheshire clubs in Division 2 and below of the Cheshire County League and other leagues. However only 3 Cheshire League clubs entered in 2023. There has been a request from a senior club in the Cheshire County League to enter an Under 21 team as they have a lot of non First X1 young players who would benefit from the experience of playing in the Shield Competition in addition to their 1<sup>st</sup> X1 who take part in the Cheshire Cup.

Whilst the Competition is currently only open to 1<sup>st</sup> X1's, the shortage of entries and the request to enter an U21 team (non 1<sup>st</sup> X1 players) raises the question of whether the Competition could be opened up to non 1<sup>st</sup> X1 teams of clubs who currently enter the Cup– either U21 or Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> X1.

Any club which currently enters the Cheshire Cup that may be interested in entering a 2<sup>nd</sup> X1 or U21 team in the Shield for 2024 should contact me to express an interest. Player eligibility would need carefully defining and for this reason it is likely that entry would be restricted to clubs who have more than two teams playing on a Saturday to avoid impacting the Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> X1 competitions. However I am keen to see whether this is of any interest as a way of increasing the number of entries in the Shield and making the Competition more worthwhile.

A decision whether to open up the Shield to non 1<sup>st</sup> X1 teams will be taken by the 4C's Committee which runs the Competition based on the interest shown and consideration of player eligibility criteria.

If this does not generate more entries I fear that this will be the final year of the Competition.

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