

ACCSO AGM 2025 - Proposal to Change the ACCSO Fixture List

Summary

The 2025 ACCSO fixture list offered too little cricket. It became focused on “equity” in trying to ensure each club gets the opportunity to play the same number of matches as each other, and that all matches were played in each competition offered. The result was that the ACCSO fixture list guaranteed a minimum of just 8 days cricket and a maximum of 13 for the most successful team, from the 21 Sundays within the current ACCSO season.

Instead, ACCSO should be looking at the length of the cricket season and trying to ensure each Club is offered cricket on as many Sundays as possible. The only reasons ACCSO fixtures cricket should not be offered to each constituent Club is if there are an odd number of teams or events on the day prevent it.

This can be done by an expansion of League fixtures and reversion to one division. Cup and T20 fixtures and finals days may require the opportunity to reschedule, if weather conditions cause a postponement. Also, clubs should recognise that the idea that all clubs play the same number of matches is a drag on those in the centre of the region who may have the fortunate ability to play more often.

As a rough marker, a good fixtures calendar should offer at least 12 League fixtures.

The paper is presented in the format of a discussion paper highlighting the issues and the trade-offs involved.

We are recommending Option 3 **create a one division league on a Merit table basis** and proposing its adoption at the forth coming AGM. Option 3 is presented in two formats:

3a. ALL teams play each other twice, home and away, except that Eyliac, Eymet and Damazan do not play Nîmes, due to the distance involved.

3b. All teams play each other twice, home and away, except that Eyliac, Eymet and Damazan do not play Nîmes, due to the distance involved. In addition, Eyliac and Eymet only play a Toulouse team once at home and once away, again distance being the problem. Spare weekends are filled with Clubs arranging more fixtures against local opponents up to 4 times in total.

The proposal we have recommend effectively allows Clubs to decide for themselves how much cricket they want and who they play against.

Where are we now

This is an extract from the ACCSO Constitution, setting out those purposes which have a bearing on this proposal. Nothing in the following proposal contravenes these purposes.

Article 2: Purpose

The purpose of this Association is to promote and to develop the sport of cricket in the greater south-west of France and in particular by:

2.1. Co-ordinating the activities of existing clubs.

2.2. Encouraging and helping the development of new clubs within the region.

2.3. Organising the clubs into groupings or divisions to reflect the geographical spread of the sport.

2.4. Organising and managing competitions among the clubs, defining and regulating such competitions and qualifying those who participate therein.

The current fixture list is summarised in this table.

Total Cricket Days	North Pool Teams		South Pool Teams	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
League	6	7	6	7
Cup	1	3	1	3
T20	1	2	1	3
Days with ACCSO matches	8	12	8	13
Days (ACCSO calendar)	21	21	21	21
Days (Total)	23	23	23	23
Cricket offered by ACCSO	38%	57%	38%	62%
Cricket offered in total	35%	52%	35%	57%

To explain it a little further.

There are three teams in the North pool, four in the South

North – Eyliac, Eymet, Damazan

South – Catus, Nîmes, Toulouse Bears, Toulouse Wolves

In the League, each team will play six matches, the North teams play each other three times, and the South teams play each other twice. The winners of each pool meet in a League final.

The Cup has only six entrants, necessitating two quarter finals, two semi-finals and a final. Two teams have a bye to the semi-finals. Therefore, teams are guaranteed a minimum of one match and a maximum of three.

The T20 competition guarantees 2 fixtures for each team. In the North, the three teams all play each other in three matches on one day. In the South, the four teams split into two and play

each other twice on one day. The two winning teams then play each other at a later date (again twice on the same day), before North and South pools combine in two finals (winners and runners up from each pool).

From an equity viewpoint, this looks fine as each team is guaranteed a minimum of 8 days cricket and a maximum of 12 or 13 if they are successful in each competition.

However, the length of the season is 23 weekends (20 April to 21 September, or 21 weekends under the ACCSO calendar, which finishes on 7 September. So, teams will only play anywhere between a minimum of 35% and 57% of weekends with an ACCSO fixture.

Arguments in favour of the present Fixture List, and counter arguments.

1. Fixtures are heavily loaded towards the early part of the season when the weather is likely to be cooler. Rules are in place to protect players if the temperature rises above 35 degrees, more likely during June, July and August. However, equally, there may be more chance of rain disrupting fixtures in April and May. In short, weather can cause a match not to be played at any time during the season.
2. Clubs have their own fixture lists including friendly matches, usually against touring teams. That may be so, but where is the evidence? Eymet's touring fixtures for 2025 are one in June, one in September. Damazan in 2024, had one in August, then four Saturdays from mid-September. This season, many fixtures have been postponed and rearranged on reserve days. This suggests that non ACCSO cricket does not feature strongly in the early or middle parts of the season.
3. Teams should be guaranteed as much as possible to play the same number of fixtures as their opponents in their pool and to ensure that all fixtures go ahead, if not on the original date, then on a reserve date. However, the result is a lack of fixtures. Reserve days are built into the schedule. 8 reserve days that affect all teams, with an additional 1 for the South pool. The North has hidden reserve days because for each League fixture, one team will not be playing – it takes 9 weekends to complete the North pool, each team will miss 3 weekends. It is already demonstrated that more cricket is played by some teams than others, just because of the imbalance between the number of teams taking part in each Pool.
4. It is too complicated and not enough weekends available to increase the number of fixtures. If true, that is due to the desire to ensure all fixtures are played either on the designated, or on a reserve, date. There is no reason why all League fixtures need to be played. If a match cannot go ahead on a specific date due to bad weather, nothing can compensate for the loss of a cricket match. Adding reserve dates to a League fixture list perpetuates less cricket. Cup and T20 fixtures, however, may need a limited number of reserve dates.
5. Geographical constraints necessitate the creation of two pools. This is true if we run a League where all teams must play each other twice, home and away. Whichever way the split is made, pools mean fixtures are played between very limited subsets, leading to staleness and a lack of variety. Other options are available.

Increasing the amount of Cricket Played

Option 1 – increase the number of Clubs playing cricket within ACCSO.

In recent years Bordeaux has dropped out of ACCSO competitions and play a limited number of friendlies. Mansle seems to be defunct. Montpellier played ACCSO competitions until 2024 but have dropped out.

More positively, in Eyliac there is potential for another team to be formed. If this does happen one option would be to continue with two pools but each will have 4 teams. On that basis, no team will have an enforced layoff without cricket. Fixtures could be expanded from the current 6 to 9 (play each other 3 times) or 12 (play each other 4 times). This would meet the criteria of offering more cricket but does not address the lack of variety. To meet this option is something that is outside ACCSO's immediate control, however it is worth analysis.

If teams played each other 4 times, could look like this.

Total Matches	North Pool Teams		South Pool Teams	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
League	12	13	12	13
Cup	1	3	1	3
T20	1	3	1	3
Days with ACCSO matches	14	19	14	19
Days (ACCSO calendar)	21	21	21	21
Days (Total)	23	23	23	23

Option 2 – create a one division league.

All Clubs would be required to play each other, home and away. 7 teams means that each team plays 12 fixtures. 8 teams would mean 14 fixtures. This addresses the question of variety, but the furthest distance travelled +500km each way, makes this impractical. Of course, fixtures could be arranged and automatically a walk over awarded to the home team, but that means some teams are without a fixture on certain weekends. With 7 teams, fixtures could look like this. This option will involve too much travel and should be discounted.

Total Matches	All Teams	
	Minimum	Maximum
League	12	12
Cup	1	3
T20	1	3
Days with ACCSO matches	14	18
Days (ACCSO calendar)	21	21
Days (Total)	23	23

Option 3 – create a one division league on a Merit table basis.

- League points – needs to be designed to encourage teams to play each other, perhaps 3 points per win, 1 point per rained off, 0 points per defeat.
- The winner of the League will be the team with the highest average points per fixture.

This would be similar to that used by the English Rugby union in the 1970s and 1980s prior to the game becoming professional. Each Club designates the other teams they are prepared to travel to, and a fixture list is created with as many games as possible being put on. Travel time / distance will be the only criteria that can be used to refuse a fixture. This may mean that teams in the centre of the region play more games than those on the periphery, or have a wider fixture base, but if all teams play more cricket, then a purpose is served. Where teams find they have gaps in their fixture list, they can request more fixtures are put on with other teams that also have gaps.

Who wins the League will be determined not by the most wins or points, but the best average of wins or points per match. So, a team that wins 8 out of 10 fixtures will finish ahead of a team that wins 9 out of 12.

Under this option, two different possible scenarios are shown, as examples of how it could work.

Scenario 3a. ALL teams play each other twice, home and away, except that Eyliac, Eymet and Damazan do not play Nîmes, due to the distance involved.

This allows a maximum of 12 fixtures (Catus and both TCC), followed by the three northern teams with 10 fixtures, however Nîmes are no better off than now, with just 6 league fixtures. With minimal cup runs this offers just 38% fixtures to Nîmes, but 57% or 67% to other clubs.

	Away Team	Eyliac	Eymet	Damazan	Catus	TCC Bears	TCC Wolves	Nîmes
Home Team								
Eyliac			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Eymet	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Damazan	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Catus	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes
TCC Bears	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes
TCC Wolves	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes
Nîmes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Sub Total League Matches		10	10	10	12	12	12	6
Cup Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
T20 Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Min Days with ACCSO Matches		12	12	12	14	14	14	8
Cup Maximum		3	3	3	3	3	3	3
T20 Maximum		3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Max Days with ACCSO Matches		16	16	16	18	18	18	12

Days (ACCSO calendar)	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
Days (Total)	23	23	23	23	23	23	23

Scenario 3b. All team play each other twice, home and away, except that Eyliac, Eymet and Damazan do not play Nîmes, due to the distance involved. In addition, Eyliac and Eymet only play a Toulouse team once at home and once away, again distance being the problem. Spare weekends are filled with Clubs arranging more fixtures against local opponents up to 4 times in total. Clubs will have a different number of fixtures from each other. The winner of the League will be the one with the highest percentage share of points compared to the maximum number they could achieve. The example given offers just 1 reserve day for the Cup and T20 competitions.

With a minimum of 12 League fixtures each for each team, plus 1 T20 and 1 Cup fixture, ACCSO would now be offering a minimum of 67% cricket days, and a maximum of 95%.

	Away Team	Eyliac	Eymet	Damazan	Catus	TCC Bears	TCC Wolves	Nîmes
Home Team								
Eyliac			Yes 2	Yes 2	Yes	No	Yes	No
Eymet		Yes 2		Yes 2	Yes	Yes	No	No
Damazan		Yes 2	Yes 2		Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Catus		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
TCC Bears		Yes	No	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes 3
TCC Wolves		No	Yes	Yes	Yes 2	Yes		Yes 2
Nîmes		No	No	No	Yes 2	Yes 2	Yes 2	
Sub Total League Matches		12	12	14	14	13	13	12
Cup Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
T20 Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Min Days with ACCSO								
Matches		14	14	16	16	15	15	14
Cup Maximum		3	3	3	3	3	3	3
T20 Maximum		3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Max Days with ACCSO								
Matches		18	18	20	20	19	19	18
Days (ACCSO calendar)		21	21	21	21	21	21	21
Days (Total)		23	23	23	23	23	23	23

Further matters requiring further consideration and ratification.

- Proposal 3 requires all club members to undertake scenarios evaluation and tested to “destruction” to evaluate how it would work for them in practice.
- Are there suitable dates to fit all matches in?
- Will there be fixture clashes at Toulouse, where two teams share a ground?
- What happens if the T20 and Cup have weather disasters?
- Can players cope with more cricket without larger squads?
- Mass forfeiture by one team. If a team decides part way through the season that it cannot fulfil its fixtures, should all their results be expunged from the League Table for the whole season?

Colin Goodall for and on behalf of Eymet CC.

October 2025.