

Hash barred due to beer virus



Hashing has been suspended in Newcastle until further notice with local r*nnng clubs and social clubs also postponing training sessions

Whilst there had been discussion among Newcastle Hash House Harriers Mismanagement about whether to continue in light of the government's first social distancing measures, this week's hash (R*n 1609) at George Stephenson Inn in Longbenton was all set to go ahead with the kennel looking forward to the return of Woof Woof after her recent self-isolation.

This is a rapidly-changing situation and before many hashers had the chance to take in the hare's morning email, they had received another that cast doubt over the upcoming hash. With all the authority of a former headmistress, the hare branded any hash activity as "irresponsible". Pop was the next respected – respected as much as any hasher could ever be – statesman of the Hash to suggest a suspension of activity. Inncontinence then called Mismanagement out seeking clarification whilst also raising the possibility of r*nnng under a non-Hash banner. Once Pimp had shaved the hareline, Newcastle hashers could be in no doubt as to what message was coming from our dear Grand Masters, Totem Pole and Slippery When Wet.

“It is with great regret that we have decided to cease official

*Hash r*ns for the foreseeable future.”*

What does this mean for the rest of the Hash calendar?

Unquestionably, any delay in the Hash calendar will throw kennels into limbo. UKH3 has declared the “priority if possible is to get the domestic league finished.” Hashing will resume from the week of 6th April subject to “conditions at the time”. However, hashing pre-Easter seems wildly optimistic given the extraordinary circumstances we are now in.

Several options are on the table as to how the NH3 season might proceed from here but one thing is clear: this beer virus is going to cause NH3 Mismanagement a headache bigger than any amount of Corona could induce. Finding the fairest solution that will satisfy everyone seems a nigh-on impossible task.

Suspend the season and resume it at a later date

The general consensus is that this suspension will be temporary and that the Hash will resume in a few months’ time. The reality, however, is that no one can accurately say how long this suspension will last. Could it extend into summer? No cut-off date has been given for when the season must resume by but one must assume that the season would need to restart before June for the current season to be completed. Any resumption from June would surely threaten the *Come As You Please Weekend* in Whores on 5th–7th June as priority would have to be given to the completion of the regular season.

It has been suggested that the kennel could hash twice a week to reduce the backlog. For such a young and sprightly pack of hashers, this should be no issue. Depending on the length of the suspension, hashers may need some warm-up events before hashing recommences. How well the hashers will be able to look after themselves during the suspension is, naturally, of great concern. There is a fear that they may allow themselves to get out of shape. The hope is that they will stock up with a plentiful supply of beer in order to train alone at home. Thankfully, in today’s digital world there are online platforms such as Zoom to ensure that hashers need not always train alone.

Limiting the movement of the hashers across Tyneside by staging multiple hashes in one day all from the same A point is another possibility. Whilst extreme measures to lessen the social interaction of the Hash by removing circles and the On-Inn cannot be ruled out, such a move would be fiercely resisted by purists.

End the season with current standings

The season is barely halfway through – T.W.A.T. has only just been decided after all. What’s more, it is simply far too close at the top for a champion to be declared now. This season’s title race is not the usual two-way tussle between Counterfit (now stranded on 1099 r*ns) and Inncontinence (a recent member of the 800 Club) as

Chafing Bollocks has hopped in the bed to make it a threesome at the top of the table. Just three r*ns separate the top three with Counterfit doggedly clinging on to top spot ahead of Chafing. One feels declaring a champion now would forever leave them with an asterisk against their name for the 2019/20 season.

Then there is the chasing pack of 5 Kuai Head, Frogsporn and Slippery When Wet who are all locked in the race for Europe and the right to represent NH3 in next season's Euro Hash in Prague. So many hashers in with a shout of the title and Europe is unprecedented and it just goes to show how – contrary to the Hash spirit – competitive NH3 is becoming.

We cannot look at the top of the table without also looking at the bottom where there are some big names – Watsarong, Grasshopper and Babe Magnet to name three – battling relegation and nervously sweating over any future decision. If current places are upheld then relegated hashers will surely open legal proceedings against Mismanagement. Yet those hashers just above the relegation zone could justifiably argue that hashing is an all-year activity and not solely restricted to the warmer, drier summer months that some hashers appear to have been waiting for. What is clear though is that no one wants to be relegated to Sperm Whale's Monkey Hangers H3 in Hartlepool.

Down-downs to decide the end of year positions

Although many mid-table hashers may have something to say, what is of paramount importance to the Hash is finding a worthy champion and deciding on European qualification and relegation.

A ra*e would go against everything the Hash stands for whereas down-downs are much more in line with the Hash ethos. Chafing Bollocks would undeniably be the main beneficiary of this scenario but the annual Beer Mile offers an obvious compromise. On top of that, a well-organised and well-attended event would provide a much-needed boost to the coffers of the Hash particularly if the sponsorship of local breweries could be secured.

Declare the season null and void

Initially ridiculed when first proposed by a southern GM, abandoning the season is bound to gain more and more credence as people start to face up to the seriousness of this enforced lockdown.

Abandonment would be the least complicated of the solutions. Cancel the season and start again after summer as usual. No relegation would see a few hashers breathing a big sigh of relief as they would be spared the gallows of Hartlepool. On the other hand, no champion for the season would leave a bitter taste in the mouths of those hashers locked in a battle for top spot as well as fans.

The financial implications of a suspension of hashing cannot be overlooked. A loss of ra*ce day income is sure to hit the finances of all kennels hard. NH3 seems better placed to cope than most with Hash Cash totalling over £2,000 at the end of the last financial year. This year, the gate receipts have remained high even through the winter months. It seems the Mismanagement of NH3 may have played a blinder in increasing the price of ra*ce day tickets when they did.

Privately, senior members of Mismanagement across the country admit that a return to Hash any time soon is inconceivable. There is hope that Euro Hashes this summer will be cancelled to free up space in the calendar. Even if that were so, the virus is expected to peak in May and June and the fear for Mismanagement is that there will come a point when the suspension to the current season cannot keep being extended and that the season will have to be abandoned and declared void. A nightmare no kennel wants to see.

In the meantime, let us all pull together and do our bit:

#StopTheSpread

NH3



DRINK

Beer

INSTEAD