

Proposed rule changes/amendments for 2019/20

2.1 Membership and Affiliation requirements.

- (b)(ii) All clubs shall send annually to the League Administrator a completed Membership List consisting of **first name and surname** ~~names and initials~~ by the 31st October. This list should also identify those who are qualified umpires **together with their England Hockey/Hockey Wales umpire registration number.** ~~and likely to umpire a team within the League.~~ Failure to submit this list may incur a fine and additional penalties may be invoked if information is not forthcoming.
- (e)(i) Any club wishing to withdraw a team from the League shall notify the League Secretary in writing, or by e-mail, no later than the 1st of May otherwise it shall be liable to pay subscriptions for the following season. Any club which withdraws a team from the League ~~later than 2 weeks after the last scheduled League date, as printed in the fixture list~~ **after that date** will not be eligible to enter a new team into the League for two seasons (including the season in which a team has withdrawn) and may be liable to a financial penalty.
- (e)(ii) **Should a club wish to withdraw a team from the League it is expected this will be their lowest ranked team. A request to withdraw any other team will require supporting information to be provided to the League Secretary.**

The amendments tidy up some administration issues and the new (e)(ii) ensures clubs are aware of the information they need to provide when making such a request.

2.2 Tiers and Divisions

Option 1

- f) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Rules, no lower XI shall be placed in the Premiership if **the club has a higher ranked XI** ~~its 1st XI is also in that Division.~~ If **a club has a** lower XI is in the Premiership and **a higher ranked XI** ~~its 1st XI is~~ relegated to it from the National League, the lower XI will be relegated automatically, regardless of its final position in the Premiership.

The changes reflect the change within the English National League whereby 2nd XI's can, under certain circumstances be promoted to the EHL. If this is the preferred option the rule will be moved to sit within 2.3 Promotion & Relegation.

Option 2

- ~~f) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Rules, no lower XI shall be placed in the Premiership if its 1st XI is also in that Division. If a lower XI is in the Premiership and its 1st XI is relegated to it from the National League, the lower XI will be relegated automatically, regardless of its final position in the Premiership.~~

Remove the rule completely and allow teams to participate at whatever level their standard allows. The reason for the rule was for absolute transparency where a club has two teams in this division.

2.3 Teams positions in Divisions

- c) ~~Not less than three times each season, the League Secretary shall circulate to all members of the League tables of the current position in all Divisions. This shall include the circulation of a table of the final positions in all Divisions at the end of the season. This Rule shall be deemed fulfilled by the display of the divisional tables on the League website.~~

No longer required due to information being available on the website.

2.4 Promotion and Relegation

- a) At the end of each season, the winners of the Premiership shall be promoted to the National League, providing the team can prove compliance with the National League regulations in respect of overseas players **whose Home National Association is not England Hockey, Scottish Hockey or Welsh Hockey**. The National League organisers reserve the right to make full enquiries to the Premiership winners to ensure compliance.

Clarifies the National League requirement and that if the Premiership winners not fulfil the requirements of the National League then the next ranked team will take their place.

5.1 Start times **on the website**

All clubs are required to enter the start times of their matches on the League website no later than 21 days before the relevant fixture. Once the time has been entered it can only be amended up to 10 days before the fixture date. After this time the change must be referred to the relevant Area Secretary with confirmation that the away team has been made aware, and accepted, the change of start time.

The addition to the paragraph heading is to clarify its' content.

5.2 Notifying opposition and umpires

~~Clubs must update their match information including start times and venues for all home matches.~~ The home club shall **must** notify its opponents of the location and type of pitch; start time; umpiring arrangements; any special requirements (e.g. security, clash of playing colours) at least 10 days in advance of the match date. Failure to do so may incur penalties. If it fails to do so in time for the away side to make their arrangements, the away team should contact the home side and their Area Secretary. Failure of the away side to try and contact the home side to ascertain fixture arrangements if they are not forthcoming will remove any grounds for subsequently claiming the fixture.

First sentence covered in 5.1, must is stronger than shall.

5.4 Pitch surface requirements

- a) All matches shall be played on artificial turf pitches **that are constructed to meet the requirements of England Hockey Category 2 or above. A club wishing to use a Category 3 pitch must seek the prior approval of their Area Secretary. An explanation of these categories can be found at Appendix 2.** ~~except for those in District Divisions which may be played on hard surface pitches (except tarmac or concrete) and all players must be prepared to play on such surfaces.~~
- b) ~~All matches in the Premiership shall be played on artificial turf pitches approved by the Committee~~

Formalises pitch standards.

6.1 Qualification

- b) Any player who has already played for another club in the League, the National League, ~~or another outdoor regional hockey league~~ **or a club in another country** in the current season may not play for a club in the current League season unless he has transferred in accordance with Rule 6.2. **If playing for a club in another country applies he must also complete any appropriate inter-country transfer process.**

Clarifies the requirement if playing in another country.

6.2 Transfer

- a)(iii) The player will be eligible to play for his new club provided that four scheduled League weekends have passed since his last appearance for his old club. A reduction to this period will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and can only be granted by the Area Secretary after consultation with the League Chairman. A League match is defined as any of the following - West of England & South Wales Men's Hockey League fixture, any other regional League (England & Wales) fixture, ~~and~~ a National League fixture **or a League fixture in another country**. A scheduled League weekend is defined as one of the 22 weeks of published League fixtures.

This amendment follows on from that in 6.1(b) above.

7.3 Playing for more than one team

- c) If any of a club's teams (including National League teams) is not involved in a match within a League Week, the club shall select its League teams as if that team were playing. ~~and shall provide the appropriate area secretary with a notional match card~~ **The appropriate area secretary may request from the club a "notional match card** for that team for that League Week, with the named players deemed ineligible to play in other scheduled matches within that League Week. **Clubs may submit such a list voluntarily at any time.**

A notional match card is very helpful if a higher ranked team has a legitimate postponement and it protects them from any allegations from lower team opposition. It is a useful tool for as area secretary to have when the postponement request is made.

7.4 Clubs with teams playing in the National League

- a) The above Rules covering Team Selection and Player Eligibility (Rule 7.1 to 7.3) shall be applicable in their entirety to clubs with teams playing in the National League. The only exception is that if the National League game is on a Sunday a ~~maximum of two~~ **one** players who participated in a League game on the preceding Saturday **within that League week** may be selected for the National League team **subject to the prior approval of the area secretary in every instance.**

The amendment is to prevent National League teams using the rule to regularly strengthen a 2nd XI but still allow provision for emergency situations where players withdraw from squads at short notice.

- b) **At the mid-season break of the National League every club with team(s) in the National League must submit a notional match card of the 16 players who would normally participate in that League and those players will not be permitted to play in any League fixture during that period. A club with two teams in the National League must submit a list for each team. If a club wishes to reduce the number of named players they must seek the permission of the area secretary. This list must be submitted prior to the first League game of the National League mid-season break.**

This rule removes the need for multiple notional match cards during the season.

7.5 Premiership registration

All clubs with a ~~1st XI~~ **team** in the Premiership are required to submit a list of the players who will be playing in that team during the current season. This is to be in the format required by the League and will specify the name and date of birth for each player and a box to tick to indicate that they conform to the eligibility requirements of the National League. ~~No more than one player ineligible on these criteria may be registered at any stage during the season.~~ The form must be sent to the Premier Area Secretary at least seven days prior to a club's first league game of the season. Additions to the original submitted list, which must be in the same format as the original form, can be made at any time during the season by hard copy or email but they must be received, and receipt acknowledged, by the Premier Area Secretary prior to the player(s) participating in a Premiership game. Deletions from the list can be advised by email at any time.

Failure to do so will be deemed to be a breach of the Rules and will be penalised, as will the provision of incorrect information.

Note: If option 2 in relation to 2.2 above is approved then all references to 'a team' will be amended to 'teams'

Reflects the changes within the National League.

8. UMPIRES

The League is not responsible for appointing umpires to League games. Umpires are appointed to League games wherever possible by umpires' associations, but for other games, particularly in the lower divisions, clubs have to provide their own. **It is the home teams responsibility to ensure umpires are present (this does not exclude asking the opposition to bring an umpire).** No authority exists for umpires to make any decision upon the Rules of the League.

This amendment clarifies the current custom and practice.

8.4

- c) An umpire must not be part of rolling substitutions with players. They must not be replaced at any time by a player who has participated in the game except in emergency circumstances which must be reported to the Area Secretary after the game.

This is to allow for an umpire not being able to continue e.g. injury.

10. POST-MATCH RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1

- a) Following each League match, it is the responsibility of both the home and away team to report the correct result of the match to the League through the online reporting via the website **by no later than 8:00 pm on match day or 3 hours after the start time whichever is the later.**

This clarifies the position when there is an late afternoon or evening start time.

Add:

- 10.4 **The home team is expected to offer post-match hospitality and if it is not able to do so must advise the travelling team when confirming the match details or at the earliest opportunity thereafter.**

This addition is to confirm the expectation that all home teams are expected to provide post match hospitality.

11.1 Postponements

- b) A club may apply to the Area Secretary for postponement of a match involving any of its' league teams playing in the League, if it can be demonstrated that players from the team in question are participating (as players or officials) on a scheduled League weekend in either an Indoor or Outdoor event that, at the time of the request, is ranked as a priority 1 or 2 event in the England Hockey or Hockey Wales fixture list.

If a club has players participating in training weekends at any level then it may apply for a members of the team(s) for which a postponement is requested.

Postponement under Rule 11.1(b) can only be granted by the Area Secretary after consultation with the League Chairman. Application for postponement under this Rule must be made by the club to the Area Secretary immediately its players' involvement is known **but no later than seven days prior to the fixture**. If a club has a player shortage even after a request for postponement under 11.2(b) then they will need to make a further application for postponement under Rule 7.2(d).

To reinforce the fact that Clubs should make the request for a postponement as soon as they know there is a problem.

11.4 Reporting postponement, abandonment or unplayed matches

- a) Unless instructed by the Area Secretary, whenever a match is postponed, abandoned or is not played for any reason, the Home club must immediately inform:
 - (i) the opposition
 - (ii) the umpires
 - (iii) their Area Secretary
- b) Games not played or abandoned must be reported through the online reporting via the website, by ticking the appropriate box, no later than 8:00 pm on match day.**

Confirms the reporting requirements.

14.1 Claiming matches, protests

- a) Any club seeking to claim a match must do so in writing, or by e-mail, to the relevant Area Secretary within 7 days of the scheduled or rearranged date. **This request must be sent by a person registered as a League Liaison Officer of the Club or endorsed by them.**
- c) All protests, complaints of breach of the Rules or questions of interpretation of the Rules shall, in the first instance, be made to the relevant Area **Secretary by a person registered as a League Liaison Officer of the Club or endorsed by them.**

Asking that any contact made is by a proper officer of a club ensures that the communication is supported by the club.

APPENDIX 2

From the 1st August 2009 England Hockey introduced a system of pitch categorisation which will clearly identify three levels within the current FIH testing parameters. The categories identify the pitches that are suitable for hockey playing and specific levels of competition.

The following categories only will apply:

EH Category 1	Water based and sand-dressed surfaces approved within the FIH Global/National parameters.
EH Category 2	Sand-filled (sand-based) surfaces within the FIH National parameter.
EH Category 3	Long pile (3G) surfaces that are categorised by FIH as satisfying their 'National' performance parameter. Such approved by the FIH. The certification shall be based on on-site testing.

- England Hockey will from 1st August 2009 permit the use of EH Category 1 surfaces for all levels of competition inclusive of international training and matches.
- England Hockey will from 1st August 2009 permit the use of EH Category 2 surfaces for all levels of competition excepting international training and matches.
- England Hockey will from 1st August 2009 permit the use of EH Category 3 surfaces for local and regional league competition (excepting regional premierships—e.g. the division that directly feed the national league) however it should be noted that the playing surface is characterised by a slower surface speed, poor and sometimes unpredictable levels of consistency and modern hockey skills are much more difficult to execute.

It should be noted that it is strongly recommended that England Hockey League Premier Division fixtures are played on Category 1 pitches.

Category 3 pitches cannot be used for any England Hockey Knock-Out Competition, international training and matches, the England Hockey League (all Divisions), Regional Premier Division, BUCS premier league, matches and all Single System activity from and including JDC level upwards for U18s and SRPC level for over 18s.

For clarity Hockey Wales operate under the same pitch categorisation as England Hockey.