

West of England & South Wales Hockey League Rules 2020-2021

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APPENDIX 1- League structure for season 2020/21

1. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

1.1 Abbreviations

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| ASC | - Appeals Sub-Committee |
| RSC | - Rules Sub-Committee |
| SWHU | - Hockey Wales South Region |
| SWHUA | - South Wales Region of the Welsh Hockey Umpires Association |
| WHA | - West Hockey Association. |
| HW | - Hockey Wales |
| WHUC | - West Hockey Umpires Committee. |

1.2 Definitions

| | |
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| “The League” | Shall mean the League formed by the Rules. It shall be called “The West of England & South Wales Men’s Hockey League” or by such title as may be deemed appropriate by the Committee to reflect sponsorship of the League. |
| “The National League” | Shall mean the League organised by England Hockey. |
| “The Rules” | Shall mean the rules of the League. |
| “The Committee” | Shall mean the committee created by the Rules to administer the League. |
| “The RSC” | Shall mean the Rules Sub Committee created by the Rules to adjudicate on match decisions |
| “The ASC” | Shall mean the Appeals Sub Committee created by the Rules to hear appeals on RSC decisions. |
| “The Council” | Shall mean the Council of the WHA. |
| “Participating County” | Shall mean any County Hockey Association affiliated to the WHA, provided there is at least one team in the League which is affiliated to that County Association. |
| “The League Secretary” | Shall mean the Secretary of the Committee. |
| “The Premier Area Secretary” | Shall mean the person responsible for the administration of the Premiership, Championship & Conference Divisions |
| “The Area Secretary” | Shall mean the Premier Area Secretary, the De Cymru & The Marches Area Secretary, the Central Area Secretary or the South Area Secretary as appropriate. |
| “The Match Card Secretary” | Shall mean the person who is appointed by the Committee to receive all match cards and ensure they are properly completed. |
| “The Results and Distribution Administrator” | Shall mean the person who is appointed by the Committee to receive results of League matches and to distribute them to the Committee, media and other appropriate persons and to maintain the results and League division tables on the League website. |
| “District Division” | Shall mean the Divisions in Tiers designated as such by the Committee. |
| “Lower XI” | Shall mean a team which is not a 1 st XI. |
| “Club” | Shall mean any club which has at least one team participating in the League, except where the context requires otherwise. |
| “League Week” | Shall be defined as the Wednesday before the scheduled game to the following Tuesday. |

Throughout the Rules, any reference to a governing body of hockey shall be taken to mean it or its’ successor in function.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE LEAGUE

The League is fully integrated and, providing the teams keep within the Rules, decided on playing merit. However, clubs must remember that teams relegated from the National League could have an impact on team placements; hence the League may place teams at its own discretion.

2.1 Membership and Affiliation requirements.

- a) All teams participating in the League must be affiliated to the appropriate County, Regional and National Hockey Associations. Any team which is debarred from playing against other teams by reason of disaffiliation may be suspended from the League.
- b)

- (i) All teams shall pay an annual subscription in respect of each team participating in the League. This shall be paid to the League Treasurer before the 31st October. Failure to pay by the 31st October shall incur a fine; failure to pay by the 1st December shall incur such additional penalties under Rule 15.1 as the Committee may decide.
 - (ii) All clubs shall send annually to the League Administrator a completed Membership List consisting of first name and surname by the 31st October. This list should also identify those who are qualified umpires together with their England Hockey/Hockey Wales umpire registration number. Failure to submit this list may incur a fine and additional penalties may be invoked if information is not forthcoming.
- c) The members of the League will be:
- (i) All teams which were members of the League in the previous season except any team which has gained admission to the National League and any team which withdrew or has been suspended or expelled from the League;
 - (ii) All teams whose application for admission has been accepted by the Committee;
 - (iii) Any appropriate team which has been relegated from the National League.
- d)
- (i) Any club affiliated to the WHA or the SWHU may apply to enter a team in the League, save any school or club whose membership is substantially composed of members of another club. No club may enter a lower XI in the League if its 1st XI is not a member of the League or the National League.
 - (ii) A club not currently participating in the League wishing to enter a team must play their home games on a pitch within the geographical area covered by WHA or SWHU and be on the mainland.
 - (iii) Any application to enter a new team in the League must be sent to the League Secretary no later than 30th April in the form prescribed by the League. The Committee shall determine whether to accept any such application. Where the application is from a new club to the League only a single team application will be considered.
 - (iv) A new team will always be placed in the lowest available tier of the League.
- 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 1st May otherwise it shall be liable to pay subscriptions for the following season. Any club which withdraws a team from the League 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.
 - (ii) Should a club wish to withdraw a team from the League this must be their lowest team save in exceptional circumstances which must be fully advised, in writing, to the League Secretary. If the League permits a higher ranked team to be withdrawn the club should be aware that penalties by way of a points deduction may be imposed against their lower teams.
- f)
- (i) The League Committee reserves the right to share club data with any bona-fide UK hockey governing body in the course of running the league and/or helping the game be governed. Should a club wish to opt out of their data being shared in any given season they must inform the League Secretary in writing prior to the clubs first League fixture each season.
 - (ii) Where a club is formally affiliated to the armed forces and/or the police service Rule 2.1(f)(i) will not apply. Data from these clubs will never be shared. Clubs have a responsibility to inform the League Secretary if they deem themselves to be affiliated to one of the above professions.

2.2 Tiers and Divisions

- a) The League shall comprise of Tiers. Tiers 1 & 2 will encompass teams from the whole of the League. Tier 3 and below will comprise of divisions that reflect the geographical positions of those teams promoted and relegated to each Tier. The Committee shall decide into which Division a team shall be placed and may transfer any team between Divisions within a Tier with effect from the beginning of the following season.
- b) The League shall comprise Tiers & Divisions as shown in Appendix 1. The Committee shall have the power to alter the divisional structure of the League and shall give not less than three months' notice of its intention to exercise this power. The Committee shall have the power to increase or decrease the number of Tiers before the 1st July preceding any season and the exercise of that power shall not constitute alteration of the divisional structure within the Rules.
- c) The allocation of teams to Tiers at the start of each season shall be determined by:
 - (i) Any team which was a member of the League in the previous season will be placed in the same Tier unless it was promoted or transferred or relegated in accordance with Rule 2.4;
 - (ii) Any team admitted in accordance with Rule 2.1(c)(ii) will be placed in the appropriate lowest ranked Tier.
 - (iii) Any team relegated from the National League will be placed in the Premiership.
- d) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Rules, the Committee may in its' sole discretion before the first match of the season, vary the teams in any Divisions.

- e) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Rules, the Committee may in its' sole discretion before the first match of the season, transfer a team from one Division to another in the same Tier
- 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 in that Division. If a club has a lower XI in the Premiership and a higher ranked XI is relegated to it from the National League, the lower XI will be relegated automatically, regardless of its final position in the Premiership.

2.3 Teams' positions in Divisions

- a) Points shall be awarded for each completed League match, with teams scoring three points for each match won and one point for each match drawn.
- b) The position of teams in each Division shall be determined by:
Points, then
Goal Difference, then
Goals Scored in descending order of priority.
If two or more teams are equal and it is necessary to distinguish between them for promotion or relegation, the Area Secretary shall arrange a play-off.

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 all National League regulations including in respect of 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.
- b) At the end of each season the winner and 2nd-placed team in each Division will be promoted to the next higher Tier.
- c) At the end of each season, the two bottom placed sides of each Division shall be relegated to the appropriate lower Tier, with the exception of Tier 2 where the four bottom teams will be relegated, Tier 3 where the three bottom teams will be relegated and Tier 5 where the four bottom teams will be relegated. All placements for the next season are subject to ratification by the Committee.

Clubs must remember that teams relegated from the National League may result in additional relegations whilst no relegations from the National League may result in less.

3. League Administration

3.1 Committee

- a) The control of the League shall be vested jointly in the West Council (WHA) and Hockey Wales South Region (SWHU) subject to the delegation of their powers to the Committee. Should any disagreement arise between these two bodies, it should be referred to England Hockey and Hockey Wales.
- b) All changes to the Rules must be approved by the WHA and the SWHU.
- c) The Committee shall consist of:
 - One representative of each English Participating County (nominated by the respective county).
 - Two members appointed by the Hockey Wales South Region.
 - One member appointed by WHUC.
 - One member appointed by SWHUA.
 - Area Secretaries and any appointees under Rule 3.1(d).
- d) The Committee may co-opt up to three additional members.
- e) The Committee shall meet in May, prior to the Annual General Meeting of the WHA, and shall elect a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and a Website and Results Officer from among its members at that meeting.

- f) An “Administrator and Treasurer” position shall exist on the Committee; the role shall be considered requiring ‘specialist knowledge’ and as such shall not be counted as one of the co-opted members listed in Rule 3.1(d). The Committee shall advertise this post when required.
- g) No voting rights exist for the Administrator and Treasurer role, any position which is co-opted onto Committee or they attend in an ex-officio capacity on behalf of WHA or SWHU.
- h) In default of members of the Committee willing or able to fulfil the posts, the Committee shall appoint such persons as it deems appropriate to the posts of Chairman, Secretary, Administrator / Treasurer and Website and Results Officer (save for compliance with Rule 3.1(d).
- i) The Committee position held by a newly elected Chairman can be backfilled if the new post-holder so wishes. Upon standing down/not being re-elected as Chairman the individual shall leave the Committee unless they subsequently fulfil the criteria in Rule 3.1(c).
- j) The Committee may also meet at other times as may be necessary. At least fourteen days’ notice shall be given to members of the Committee.
- k) At the May meeting the Committee shall ratify, from nominations received at the Area meetings or from individuals, all Area Secretaries positions. If there have been more nominations than posts available then the League Secretary, in conjunction with the League Chairman, will make recommendations based on a selection procedure driven by them.
- l) All votes in Committee shall be decided by simple majority but, if voting is equal on any matter, the Chairman shall have a second and casting vote. The quorum at a Committee meeting shall be five voting members.
- m) The Committee shall have the power to set up sub-committees. The Chairman of any such sub-committee shall be a member of the Committee.
- n) Clubs wishing to have any general matters brought before the Committee should contact their County Representative on the League Committee.
- o) Should the committee become aware that a fellow member has become unable to fulfil their duties through incapacitation, or the League Secretary, in consultation with the League Chairman, deems their behaviour to be contrary to rule 12 and/or general acceptable standards - then the Committee may vote by simple majority to expel the individual and transfer their powers to another nominated individual of the Committee until a replacement is found.
- p) Should the committee become aware that the League Secretary's behaviour be deemed to be contrary to rule 12 and/or general acceptable standards the Premier Area Secretary shall consult with the League Chairman. Likewise should the League Chairman’s behaviour be deemed to be contrary to rule 12 and/or general acceptable standards the Premier Area Secretary shall consult with the League Secretary.
- q) Should the Committee become aware that an Area Secretary is no longer able to fulfil their duties through incapacitation, or the League Secretary, in consultation with the League Chairman, deems they are not properly acting in accordance with one or both of rules 13.1 and 12 and/or their behaviour is contrary to acceptable standards - then the Committee may vote by simple majority to expel that individual and transfer their powers to the Premier Area Secretary until the next area meeting when a replacement shall be elected.
- r) Where an individual is expelled and that person had been nominated by an external organisation (as per rule 3.1c) then the League Chairman shall inform the Chair of the relevant organisation of the decision and the rationale and ask for a new representative to be nominated.

3.2 Area Meetings

- a) Area Meetings shall be held in the North, South and South Wales in April or May prior to the Committee meeting detailed in Rule 3.1(e).
- b) At least 14 days before the first area meeting the Committee should seek nominations to all Area Secretary positions. An individual may express an interest directly to the League Secretary outside of the Area Meetings but must do so before the date of the final Area Meeting of the season.
- c) Area Meetings may also be held at other times as necessary. At least fourteen days’ notice of Area Meetings shall be given to clubs.

- (i) Area Meetings will be chaired by the League Chairman or, in their absence, another member of the Committee. Every club must send an appointed representative, who must be a bona fide member of that club, to one of the three Area Meetings.
- (ii) Clubs which fail to attend an Area Meeting will be liable to penalties as determined by the Committee.
- (iii) Teams which have won their Division shall attend their Area Meeting to collect their trophy. Failure to do so will attract penalties as determined by the Committee and the trophy shall be collected at that team's club's expense.
- d) Any votes in the Area Meeting shall be decided by a collective simple majority across all area meetings. If voting is equal on any matter, the Chairman shall have a second and casting vote.
- e) There shall be no quorate for each individual meeting with the exception that the League Chairman (or a nominated deputy) must be present.
- f) The aggregated quorum across all Area Meetings for a vote to be valid must be at least 75% of all member clubs (in line with Rule 3.2(c)(i)) having attended a meeting.
- g) Decisions made by any Area Meeting shall not be binding upon the Committee. Where a decision of Committee goes against a vote of the Area Meetings clubs shall be informed via a notice on the League website.

3.3 Finance

- a) All clubs shall pay an annual subscription in respect of each of its teams which is participating in the League. Payment shall be made in accordance with Rule 2.1(b). The amount of the subscription shall be determined by the Committee.
- b) The accounts of the League shall be verified as directed by the Council and the SWHU.

3.4 League Website

- a) Each club shall maintain their club details on the League website system and keep them up to date as and when officers in the club shall change. All League communication shall be sent to personnel in each club listed as Liaison Officer.
- c) Following the verification of accounts as directed in Rule 3.3(b) they shall be placed on the League website within 21 days.
- d) The League Secretary (or a nominated deputy) shall ensure the papers and minutes of all 'open' sections of League committee meetings are made available on the website.

4. FIXTURES.

- 4.1 All League matches must be played.
- 4.2 All League matches shall be arranged to take place on such dates, which may include Sundays, as shall be determined by the Committee. The League Secretary shall send to each club details of their opponents for League matches by the 1st July in each year.
- 4.3 All fixtures must be completed no later than 22 days after the last scheduled League date, as printed in the fixture list, unless with the express permission of the appropriate Area Secretary, only after consultation with the League Chairman.

5. MATCH ARRANGEMENTS.

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.

5.2 Notifying opposition and umpires

- a) The home club 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.
- b) The home club shall notify any umpires appointed from outside its club of the match details at least 5 days in advance of the match date. Failure to do so may incur penalties.

5.3 Start times and playing under floodlights

- a) Start times of matches shall be as follows:
 - i. Between 12:00 and 14:30 hours for weekend matches in Tiers 1 & 2
 - ii. Between 12:00 and 16:00 hours for weekend matches in Tiers 3 & 4
 - iii. Between 11:00 and 17:00 hours for weekend matches in all other Tiers.
 - iv. Between 18:30 and 20:00 hours for any match on a weekday regardless of Tier unless with the permission of the Area Secretary.
- b) Home clubs wishing to start matches outside of the time specified in a) above must give at least three weeks notice in writing, or by e-mail, to the away team who have the right to raise an objection if they consider this to be unreasonable given the distance and travelling time. The home team must receive positive confirmation that the start time has been accepted prior to updating the website. Failure to comply with these requirements may incur penalties
- c) If a game is to be played under artificial light the minimum light level at any point must be not less than 200 Lux and the average reading must not be less than 250 Lux. Clubs will be required to provide an annual statement, via email or letter, from their pitch landlord indicating whether or not their floodlights provide this standard.
- d) If a pitch does not have floodlights, or the information required at 5.3(c) is either not acceptable or has not been provided, midweek matches may not be played at the venue and weekend games must start no later than:
 - i. 14:00 hours in December/January
 - ii. 14:30 hours in November/February
 - iii. 15:00 hours in all other months
- e) Matches may, with the agreement of both clubs and the appropriate area secretary, be played on any evening within the original scheduled League week.
- f) Re-arranged games may be played on any day provided agreement has been reached between the clubs and the appropriate Area Secretary. Such matches must remain compliant with Rule 5.3(a) to (d). For the purposes of team selection and player eligibility (Rules 6 & 7) the match shall be adjudicated based on the League Week in which the match is played.

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.

5.5 Pitch restrictions

- a) Studded astro-turf boots have been banned from some pitches. Visiting teams must comply with these restrictions and will not be allowed to postpone a game if some of their players do not have allowable boots.
- b) Some clubs play on pitches within military establishments and visiting teams will have to comply with security requirements. Failure to comply with security requirements will not be accepted as a reason for postponing a game.

In both instances, the home club should contact the visiting club at least 10 days in advance to advise what the restrictions and/or requirements will be.

6. PLAYER QUALIFICATION AND TRANSFERS

6.1 Qualification

- a) Only bona fide male members of a club may play for that club in League matches.
- b) Any player who has already played for another club in the League, the National League, 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.

NOTE NOT FORMING PART OF THE RULES:

All Clubs should be aware that no one under the age of 13 is permitted to play in a senior League.

6.2 Transfer

A player may transfer to a new club subject to the following conditions:

- a) A written request is made to the Area Secretary by his new club in the form prescribed by the League - a transfer request form (which is available for download from the League website).
- b) The player shall have paid up to date any subscriptions or fees properly due to his former and new clubs for the season and both clubs shall confirm the same in writing in the form prescribed by the League. The club making the request shall ensure that all the relevant information has been completed in full and signed by all the relevant parties involved before sending it to the appropriate Area Secretary.
- c) The player will be eligible to play for his new club provided that four scheduled League weekends have passed since the last league match he played 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, a National League fixture or a League fixture in another country. A scheduled League weekend is defined as one of the published League fixtures.
- d) A transferring player registered with the National League must be de-registered before the transfer can be agreed.

7. TEAM SELECTION AND PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

7.1 Suspended players

No team shall contain a player who is suspended in accordance with the disciplinary code of England Hockey or Hockey Wales.

7.2 Selection

- a) All clubs must select their teams so that the strongest available team is put out at each level, commencing with the 1st team.
- b) Clubs should not move more than two players from a higher team to any lower team for just one week, without first consulting with their Area Secretary who may, or may not, give approval depending on individual circumstances. It is expected that such movement will only be to the team immediately below that from which the players are coming. Any movement that is not to the team immediately below may be subject to scrutiny.
- c) If a club has a deficiency of players, it shall cancel its lowest team(s)'s match(es) first.
- d) Where a game has been rearranged following a proper postponement request, or because of adverse weather, there must be a minimum of 7 regular players from that team participating in the rearranged fixture. The remaining members of the team should come from players of lower ranked teams. If the fixture concerns the lowest ranked team of a club no more than 4 players should come from the immediate team above. The selection of players from this higher ranked team is permitted so as to bring the available players to 12. Additional players from the higher ranked team cannot be selected so as to create a squad.

If a club has difficulties with this they must seek clearance from their Area Secretary to reduce this number prior to the match taking place.

Some clubs run squad systems for some of their teams. The League do not want to restrict clubs from making the best use of their players within the context of "strongest 1st team downwards", but have to ensure that the rules are followed. If a squad is being reduced in size as a policy decision, the club should notify the appropriate Area Secretary in advance. This is especially important as the season progresses and promotion/relegation issues become clearer. If more than two players from a higher team appear for any lower team for just one week and then return to the higher team without prior discussion with the relevant Area Secretary, it will be taken as evidence of "loading" a side for that match. Area Secretaries will need a lot of persuading otherwise. If a club has a crisis of player numbers, necessitating reduction of squads to fulfil fixtures, it should notify the appropriate Area Secretary in advance if it is only expected to last a week and might otherwise look like "loading".

7.3 Playing for more than one team

- a) No player may play in more than one scheduled WSWHL or EHL match in the same League Week regardless of the day of the match save as provided in Rule 7.4.
- b) Players may compete in an additional match re-scheduled from a different League Week (such as re-scheduled postponed matches) provided there is compliance with 7.2(d).
- c) If any of a club's teams (including National League teams) is not involved in a scheduled match within a League Week, the club shall select its League teams as if that team were playing. A notional match card for that team that reflects the usual squad number must be sent to the appropriate area secretary no later than 48 hours prior to the next League game and the named players deemed ineligible to play in other scheduled matches within that League Week. The only exception is when it is the lowest ranked team that is not playing.
- d) Notional match cards submitted in respect of National League team(s) are expected to reflect the number of players that have appeared on the Match Report Form in previous games.
- e) If a notional match card is not received the players named on the match card/team sheet for that teams last game will be treated as is they appear on the notional match card and so will be deemed ineligible to play in other scheduled matches within that League Week.

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 players who have already participated in a League game within that League week may be selected for the National League team subject to the prior approval of the area secretary in every instance.
- b) During 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 their area secretary.

Clubs should also refer to Rule 7.3(e) as to the implications if a notional match card is not submitted.

- c) If requested by an Area Secretary the club shall provide a copy of any EHL match sheet.

7.5 Premiership registration

All clubs with a 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. 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.

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.

8.1 Qualified umpires

- a) No League match shall be played without two qualified umpires (qualified meaning umpire is Level 1 assessed or above), save as provided in Rule 8.1(b).
- b) Umpires must be qualified to at least Level 1 assessed except at Tier 5 where one umpire can be Level 1 (unassessed) if the match is being used for their assessment game, and at Tier 6 and below where one umpire can be Level 1 unassessed.

8.2 Appointed umpires

- a) An “appointed” umpire is an umpire appointed to a League match by the WHUC, the SWHUA or a County HUA.
- b) It is the responsibility of clubs to request appointments of the appropriate body, notify appointed umpires of the match arrangements under Rule 5.2(b) and make payment of any fees for appointed umpires.
- c) Where the appropriate Regional or County Umpires' Association is able to provide appointed umpires, clubs must accept the appointments.

8.3 Where not both umpires are appointed, the following shall apply:

- a) 1 appointed umpire: Home club provides the other qualified umpire.
- b) No appointed umpire: Home club provides two qualified umpires unless, at least 7 days’ prior to the match, agreement has been reached with the away side that they will provide one or both qualified umpires. The away club may also elect to provide one qualified umpire provided it gives the Home side at least 7 days’ notice

8.4 If an appointed or club umpire fails to arrive by the start time or a club umpire is not provided under Rule 8.3 the following shall apply:

- a) Appointed umpire is absent Start may be delayed by 15 minutes; if still absent, a “temporary” umpire qualified to at least Level 1 may take his place with the agreement of the other umpire and the two captains. If no such agreement is possible or no suitably qualified person available, the match shall not count as a League match. If a “temporary” umpire is a player from one of the teams, which thereby reduces the number of players available to it on the pitch, the other team shall withdraw one of its own players from the pitch, otherwise the player shall withdraw from the squad. Both the “temporary” umpire and withdrawn player may resume playing at the same time as soon as the absent umpire arrives and takes over from the “temporary” umpire.
- b) Club umpire is absent The absent umpire’s club’s team shall withdraw a player who is qualified within Rule 8.1 to act as “temporary” umpire. The opposing team shall not have to withdraw a player. The “temporary” umpire may resume playing as soon as the absent umpire arrives and takes over from him.
- 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.

8.5 Penalties for breach of Rule 8

- a) The lack of an appointed, or club, umpire is not grounds for postponement. Clubs are expected to have sufficient umpires to support their teams. If appointed umpires are withdrawn at short notice, then the Area Secretary **MUST** be consulted immediately if this causes a problem.
- b) If a match is not played for lack of an appointed or club umpire and either club is found to be at fault, the RSC may, inter alia, impose a fine, award the match, deduct points or order the match replayed under such conditions as they may deem appropriate.
- c) If a match is played with a “temporary” umpire and either club is found at fault for the absence of an appointed or club umpire, the Area Secretary may impose a fine on the offending club.

9. CONDITIONS OF PLAY

9.1 Rules of Hockey

All League matches shall be played in accordance with the Rules of Hockey. The introduction of any experimental rule shall be subject to the agreement of England Hockey and Hockey Wales.

9.2 Numbered shirts

In any League match, all players shall wear shirts bearing different numbers of at least 9" in height in the centre of the back of the shirt and of contrasting colour from the shirt.

9.3 Clash of playing colours

If two teams have the same or similar playing colours, the away team shall change its playing strip to a contrasting colour.

9.4 Pitch and equipment

The home team captain shall be responsible for ensuring:

- a) The pitch is fit for purpose with clear line markings, free of debris and the goals and nets are in good repair.
- b) An adequate supply of match balls

9.5 Late starts and uncompleted matches

- a) Both teams must be ready to start at the time notified by the Home club in compliance with Rule 5.1(a).
- b) If a full match cannot be completed because of the lateness of one or other team, the RSC may impose a fine, deduct points, award the match, reverse the result or order the match to be replayed under such conditions as they deem appropriate.
- c) A result shall stand if at least 60 minutes' play has taken place. If not, the Area Secretary may decide that the score at early termination of a match shall stand.

9.6 Authority of umpires

As soon as a League match commences, the captains of both teams shall be deemed to have passed all authority for completion of the match to the umpires, which includes the suitability of the floodlighting if the game does not start/cannot be completed under natural light. No authority exists for umpires to make any decision upon the Rules of the League.

9.7 Club Sponsors

Sponsors' advertisements are allowed on clothing, shoes, tracksuits and sports bags but not on players' sticks or goalkeeper's pads other than the manufacturer's logo. Three sponsor's advertisements are allowed up to a maximum of 600 sq. cm and no individual advertisement shall exceed 450 sq. cm. In televised matches those participating will be required to comply with the requirement of the television company concerned.

No club shall change its name nor incorporate any part of the name of a sponsor in its title without the prior approval of the League and the appropriate County and Regional bodies.

10. POST-MATCH RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1 Reporting of results

- 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 8:00 pm on match day or 3 hours after the start time whichever is the later.
- b) If a match is abandoned or not commenced for any reason, that information must be provided to the appropriate Area Secretary. 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.

Matches cannot be claimed through online reporting - all such claims must be made to the relevant Area Secretary in writing.

10.2 Match Cards

The Home team captain must complete the match details to include Division, Match Number, Date, Venue, Home Team and Away team and ensure that:

- a) Both captains shall fill in the names and the shirt numbers of all their players, including substitutes. All players named will be deemed to have participated. Failure to do so may incur a penalty (see Rule 10.3(b)).
- b) The score is clearly recorded and both captains shall ensure they enter their names and sign the match card at the completion of the game to confirm the score.
- c) Both umpires' names are clearly printed, with their EH or WHUA number.
- d) The card is received electronically by the Match Card Secretary within 48 hours of the match date. The original card must be retained for the remainder of the season in case of query.

10.3 Penalties for breach of Rule 10 and/or Rule 9.5

A first offence of:

- a) Not/late reporting of result may attract a fine
- b) Late match card - may attract a fine and further financial penalties (including points deductions) until the match card information is received.
- c) Incomplete/incorrect match card – may attract a fine and/or a points deduction dependent upon the reason.

Subsequent result or match card offences will be greater than the rate of the first offence. Clubs which fail to pay their fines will find that additional administration charges will be levied. **Clubs should note that persistent offenders may be liable to additional penalties which again can include the deduction of points.**

- 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. Similarly, the travelling team should advise the home team at the earliest opportunity if they are not staying after the match but in any case no later than 48 hours before the match day.

11. POSTPONEMENTS, ABANDONMENTS AND UNPLAYED MATCHES

11.1 Postponements

- a) Only the Area Secretary may authorise postponement of a match for any reason, save if the pitch is unplayable due to weather conditions, when the Home club has the sole right to determine if the pitch is unplayable (and see Rule 11.2). It is expected that unless there are severe weather conditions, such a decision will not be made more than 24 hours before the scheduled start time.

If the away team feel that the travelling conditions are unsafe, including the return journey, which is supported by the Met Office (www.metoffice.gov.uk) and/or the Police, then they have the sole right to refuse to travel. It is expected however, they will make the home team and their Area Secretary aware of their concerns as early as possible and monitor the situation before a decision is made.

It is the anticipation of the League that games which have been granted a postponement by the Area Secretary for whatever reason will be played within a timescale of no later than 22 days (which includes Sundays) from the original date of playing. The express permission of the Area Secretary will be requested for any times outside of this limit.

- 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 postponement in respect of match(es) involving any team if it can be shown that these players are regular 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 7 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).

- c) Applications for postponement for any other reason must be made to the Area Secretary as soon as the circumstances are known. However, unless there are exceptional circumstances it is unlikely the request will be granted for any team other than the lowest within the Club as to do so would disadvantage other teams.
- d) In Tier 4 and below a University/College is entitled to postpone any fixture which is scheduled for outside the advertised term start/finish date for that university/college. An assessment period is deemed to be part of term time. Only a recognised University/College may request a postponement. Clubs which are affiliated to a University/College do not qualify.
- e) A recognised University/College shall be one that is affiliated to UCAS (University and College Administration Service)

Note: Postponements are unlikely to be granted for such reasons as: players on holiday, weddings, university exams, International Rugby weekends and reasons of personal choice making players unavailable. Delay in applying for postponements is likely to result in refusal.

11.2 Bad Weather Procedure

The home team should follow the following procedure.

- a) The home liaison officer should ascertain from the visiting team the latest time of notification of cancellation, i.e. when the visiting team intends to depart for the pitch venue. If it is clear earlier than the above time that the pitch will be unfit due to weather, the visiting side and umpires should be informed immediately.
- b) It is the responsibility of the home team to inspect the pitch prior to the above mentioned departure time. The liaison officer and/or a representative of the home side should do this. A realistic view must be taken at this stage. If the pitch is unfit and is likely to remain so, the game should be postponed and reported as such under Rule 11.4(a).

11.3 Abandonments

A match, once commenced, may only be abandoned by the decision of the umpires. The result will stand if at least 60 minutes' play has taken place (subject to Rule 9.6(a), (b)), but otherwise at the discretion of the Area Secretary.

11.4 Reporting postponed 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) In addition, if there is any dispute over the circumstances, both clubs must report the circumstances in writing, or by e-mail, to the Area Secretary within 7 days of the scheduled date of the match.
- c) Games not played must be reported through the online reporting via the website, by ticking the appropriate box, no later than 8:00 pm on match day or 3 hours after the start time whichever is the later

11.5 Re-scheduling postponed, abandoned or unplayed matches

If clubs cannot, within 7 days of a game being postponed, abandoned or not played, agree a re-arranged date the Area Secretary may dictate the date and venue for it to be played. of the original scheduled, or re-scheduled, date agree a date to play a postponed, abandoned or unplayed match, the Area Secretary may dictate the date and venue for it to be played.

11.6 Area Secretaries' powers

If a match which has not been properly postponed under Rule 11.1:

- a) does not take place or
- b) is not completed or
- c) if a match is abandoned before 60 minutes' play has been completed,

the Area Secretary shall make a decision as to the outcome and, if appropriate, refer the matter to the RSC for ratification

12. MISCONDUCT

- a) Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their players, officials and supporters and any conduct, on or off the pitch, which is liable to bring the League into disrepute may be penalised under Rule 15.1. This includes any written or electronic communications published in newspapers, newsletters and websites.
- b) Members of the Committee are responsible for their own conduct. Any conduct (which includes written or electronic communications) that is liable to bring the League into disrepute may see the League Secretary, in consultation with the League Chairman, bring the matter to the attention of the Committee who in turn may vote by simple majority to expel that individual and transfer their powers to another nominated individual of the committee until a replacement is found.
- c) Should the League Secretary's conduct be seen to be bringing the League into disrepute, the Premier Area Secretary shall consult with the League Chairman. Likewise should the League Chairman's conduct be seen to be bringing the League into disrepute, the Premier Area Secretary shall consult with the League Secretary.
- d) Where an individual is expelled and that person had been nominated by an external organisation (as per rule 3.1c) then the League Chairman shall inform the Chair of the relevant organisation of the decision and the rationale and ask for a new representative to be nominated.

13. ENFORCEMENT AND INTERPRETATION

13.1 Area Secretary powers

The Committee hereby delegates to the Area Secretaries, in addition to any specific provision in the Rules, the following powers to exercise on its behalf:

- a) to make decisions as to interpretation of the League Rules insofar as they relate to the playing of matches and to impose such conditions as they may deem appropriate to ensure fulfilment of fixtures within the Rules and
- b) to impose penalties for breach of the Rules by way of fines and to make recommendations to the RSC as to deduction of points, awarding of matches, reversal of results and ordering payment of expenses by one club to another.

If a club is unhappy with the decision made by their Area Secretary they can ask for the matter to be referred to the RSC. Such a request must be made within 7 days of the original decision being notified to them.

13.2 Rules Sub-Committee

- a) The Committee shall, each September, appoint from its members a Rules Sub-Committee (RSC) and delegates to the RSC the following powers to exercise on its behalf:
 - (i) to ratify, amend or reverse decisions of Area Secretaries, including the power to increase or add penalties (but not to include suspension or expulsion from the League) and
 - (ii) to review and prepare changes to the Rules for consideration by the Committee.
- b) Decisions of the RSC shall be by simple majority.

13.3 Appeals Sub-Committee

- a) The Committee may, as necessary, set up an Appeals Sub-Committee of between 3 and 5 of its members (none of whom shall be the Area Secretary who made the original decision or a member of the RSC), and appoint one of them to act as Chairman, to hear appeals from decisions of the RSC. The ASC shall have the full powers of the Committee under Rule 15.1 to dispose of any appeal.

- b) Decisions of the ASC shall be by simple majority but, in the event of voting being equal, the Chairman of the ASC shall have a second and casting vote.

14. CLAIMING MATCHES, PROTESTS, RATIFICATION AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

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.
- b) Clubs seeking to claim a match, with or without opponent's agreement, must indicate to the Area Secretary why the match cannot be considered as a postponed fixture (rule 11).
- 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 or endorsed by them.
- d) The Area Secretary shall, after making such enquiries as he/she deems appropriate, advise the RSC of his/her recommended decision. The RSC will reach a final decision by majority vote and the Chairman of the RSC will advise the League Liaison Officer/s of the club/s involved of the decision by letter or e mail, copying the Area Secretary, League Administrator (if a fine has been awarded) and (if a result is to be altered or a match awarded) the Results and Distribution Administrator, who will post the result and amend the tables on the League website.

14.2 Appeal against RSC decisions

- a) A right of appeal to the Committee exists for either of the clubs whose teams were the opposing teams in a match in respect of which a decision has been made under Rule 14.1.
- b) An appeal from a decision of the RSC shall be made within 14 days of notification of the RSC decision to the clubs and shall be sent by e-mail to the League Administrator. The full grounds for the appeal, together with the appeal fee of £75 must be received by the League Administrator within the same 14 days or the appeal shall be invalid.
- c) Upon receipt of a valid appeal, the League Administrator shall inform the League Chairman, who shall consult with the Committee and decide if an ASC is to be set up to hear the appeal or if the matter will be dealt with by the Committee.
- d) Within 21 days of the receipt of a valid appeal, the League Administrator shall advise the clubs whether the appeal will be by way of electronic communication or a personal hearing. If the appeal is a personal hearing, then the League Administrator shall advise the clubs of the date (which shall be at least 14 days thereafter) and location of the appeal hearing and whether it is to be heard by the Committee or ASC. The clubs may be represented at the hearing or send written representations via their League Liaison Officer to the League Administrator. The outcome of the appeal shall be confirmed in writing, or by e-mail, within 7 days of the hearing to the clubs involved in the match in question and those who made written representations under Rule 14.3(b).
- e) An appeal can be made by the club the RSC has ruled in favour of, e.g. against the level of penalty imposed on their opposition. If the appeal is allowed by the ASC then the club receiving the amended penalty shall then have the right of further appeal against the amended penalty.
- f) An appeal under Rule 14(e) shall be made within 14 days of notification of the ASC decision to the clubs and shall be sent by e-mail to the League Administrator. The full grounds for the appeal, together with the appeal fee of £75, must be received by the League Administrator within the same 14 days or the appeal shall be invalid. The process at Rule 14(d) above then applies.
- g) Once this appeal is determined there shall be no further right of appeal by either club.
- h) A decision of the Committee or the ASC, save for the circumstances outlined in Rule 14(e), on its' behalf shall be final and binding.

15 COMMITTEE POWERS AND BINDING FORCE OF RULES

15.1 Committee powers

The Committee shall have the power to impose such penalty for breach of the Rules as it may deem appropriate, including (but not limited to) expulsion of a club or team, suspension of a club for up to three years, relegating a team to a lower Division, deduction of points and imposition of fines.

15.2 Binding force of Rules

Each club by its entry into the League shall be deemed to have given its consent to the Rules and to any amendments which may from time to time be adopted in proper form.

16 DISSOLUTION

Should the West of England & South Wales Men's Hockey League be dissolved, all monies remaining after settlement of liabilities shall be returned to member clubs, on a pro rata basis calculated on the number of teams, at the time of dissolution.

Appendix 1 - The structure of the Verde Recreo Hockey League

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TIER | | | | | | |
| 1 | Premiership | | | | | |
| 2 | Championship | | | | | |
| 3 | Conference North | | | Conference South | | |
| 4 | De Cymru & The Marches 1 | | Central 1 | | Southern 1 | |
| 5 | De Cymru & The Marches 2 | | Central 2 | | Southern 2 | |
| 6 | De Cymru 1 | The Marches 1 | West Central 1 | East Central 1 | South West 1 | South East 1 |
| 7 | De Cymru 2 | The Marches 2 | West Central 2 | East Central 2 | South West 2 | South East 2 |

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 divisions— 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.