



Patron: His Grace the Duke of Richmond & Gordon
SUSSEX HOCKEY ASSOCIATION
Founded 2001



SUSSEX MEN'S OPEN HOCKEY LEAGUE: 2017 - 2018
Rules

1. Sussex Men's Open Hockey League

- a) The league shall be known as the Sussex Men's Open Hockey League (the League) and will be administered by the **League Secretary, with a League sub-committee comprising an Assistant League Secretary, plus up to two other persons co-opted by the Secretary.**
- b) **The League consists of Division 1, which is controlled by the South Hockey League and Divisions 2 and below, which are controlled by the Sussex Hockey Association (SHA).**
- c) The objective of the League is to provide safe, fair and competitive hockey for teams and players within the County.
- d) Any club's men's teams apply to join the League, providing they are affiliated to the Sussex Hockey Association (SHA). Normally, new entrants shall join in the lowest division. The League sub-committee shall determine the number of new entrants accepted.
- e) Teams wishing to either join or withdraw from the League must give notice in writing of such intention to the League Secretary by 1 May in any year. Joining or withdrawal will then take effect for the next season. Any team withdrawing from the League after that date may be subject to a fine up to the maximum allowed under the Rules of the South Hockey League (SHL).
- f) All teams participating in the League shall pay an annual fee, as directed by the Treasurer of the SHA. which will be included as part of the main club affiliation.
- g) The fees should be paid in full by the appointed date as specified on the invoice from the SHA. Any club failing to pay by this date may be fined and further action may be taken as deemed appropriate.
- h) All fees will be reviewed annually, and agreed at the SHA Annual General Meeting.
- i) Communication by acknowledged email is acceptable to the League.

2. Application of the Rules

- a) The SHA has adopted for the League, so far as it is logical and practical, the SHL Rules. The guidance below represents the SHL Rules where they are either most applicable to the League or have been modified or added to reflect local requirements. **For the avoidance of doubt, except where stated below, teams in Division 1 are controlled by the SHL rules.**
- b) The League expects all clubs and players not only to abide by the letter of written regulations, but also to behave in the spirit of them. It follows, therefore, that in reading **these and the SHL Rules**, and applying them to the League, some common sense and flexibility is required.
- c) The full SHL Rules are shown on the SHL website. All clubs must ensure their team captains are aware of the SHL Rules.

3. Fixtures

- a) The League Secretary shall arrange and administer fixtures for the League. The League Secretary shall send to each club details of the fixtures for the next season by 1st July.
- b) The structure of the League, number of divisions and number of teams per division will be decided by the League sub-committee to provide safe, fair and competitive hockey for all League teams.
- c) A club may play, as many teams as it likes in the League, but the teams are not interchangeable for match purposes. A club may not have more than two teams in any one division of the League. Where applicable, the numbering of teams will be sequential through the Leagues and at the start of any season the priority of teams within a club will be established with the League. This will be the team order for subsequent League decisions.
- d) At the end of the season there will be relegation and promotion between divisions as arranged by the League Secretary.

4. Matches and Conditions of Play

- a) All matches shall be arranged to take place on Saturday, as directed by the League Secretary. However, in exceptional circumstances clubs may, with the knowledge of the League Secretary, agree to reverse home and away fixtures to reduce congestion on pitches. Any changes should be agreed and confirmed in writing by the relevant officials of clubs involved.
- b) All matches should be played on acceptable synthetic turf pitches.
- c) A team playing at home may if necessary require the visiting team to start a League match at any time between 10.00 am and 4.30 p.m., provided that:
- d) An away team is not required, without agreement, to leave its home area before 9.00 am or to return home after 7.30 pm, after adding thirty minutes to the estimated normal travelling time.
- e) At least ten days notice is given to the relevant official of the visiting team.
- f) Relevant floodlighting if needed is acceptable to the umpires.
- g) Teams may mutually agree times outside these limits. Agreement should be in writing and completed at least 10 days prior to the game and notified to the League Secretary..
- h) Games shall have a duration of thirty five minutes in each half but if for good reason time is restricted, teams may agree a shortened playing time period for a game. Matches should be of at least 50 minutes duration to constitute a league match. However, under normal circumstances the length of the game should be agreed, in advance, between the Captains and accepted by the umpires. Where a match is abandoned after 50 minutes due to unforeseen reasons, then the game would constitute a completed league match if both captains agree. If there is not unanimous agreement, then the match must be replayed.
- i) Matches should be commenced within 15 minutes of the agreed start time.
- j) The minimum number of players to start or continue a game shall be eight. Players injured or suspended during a game shall be counted as part of that number.
- k) Away teams are responsible for kit changes in the event of colour clashes.
- l) Teams are strongly advised to make contact with each other during the week preceding their encounter so as to arrange a telephone contact.

5. Abandoned and Postponed Matches

- a) A match may only be abandoned once it has commenced by the unanimous decision of the umpires, and the captains of both teams shall be deemed to have transferred their powers in this respect to the umpires jointly. If the umpires do not agree to abandon the match then the match must continue
- b) In the event of adverse weather or pitch conditions, a League match may be postponed without the prior agreement of the league Secretary. Postponed matches are to be re-arranged with the minimum of delay.

- c) Postponement for reasons other than pitch conditions or weather conditions will not be permitted without the prior agreement of the League Secretary and then only in exceptional circumstances. Postponement will not be considered if requested within 10 days of the date the match is due to be played.
- d) In **all divisions**, in the event of a match being postponed or abandoned, the home team must notify the League Secretary no later than **8pm on** the Saturday night of the official date of the match. Teams failing to do this will be fined at an appropriate level.
- e) Where possible all re-arranged matches shall be completed by Easter weekend. Abandoned or postponed matches should be rearranged on the first available league spare date, or if no such dates are available to a date, not necessarily a Saturday, within this time limit. The home team will be responsible for notifying the League Secretary of the rearranged date. **In division 2 and below, any outstanding matches at a date to be confirmed by the League Secretary, may be recorded as 0 – 0, with no points awarded to either team. This will be at the direction and discretion of the League Secretary.**
- f) **Clubs must specify the playing order of all adult teams within the club before the date of the first league fixture.**
- g) All clubs are expected to field their strongest teams and to play their League matches at the highest level, if necessary at the expense of their lowest League matches, during that weekend.
- h) No team shall play a League match whilst its club for no acceptable reason the same day cancels or does not play a scheduled match of a team placed in a higher league. Forfeiting higher league fixtures, whilst playing lower fixtures is unacceptable and punitive fines and disciplinary action will be taken should this offence occur.
- i) **In division 1, the penalties are set by the SHL rules.**
- j) **In divisions 2 and below, any team failing to honour a fixture without due reason shall forfeit the game 0 – 3, and their club shall be fined up to £250. In addition and for all Divisions, the matches of all lower teams of the offending club will also be awarded to their oppositions 0-3.**
- k) Should any single team forfeit three or more matches in any one season then, save in exceptional circumstances, their results shall be expunged and the team withdrawn from the League. The team will only be re-admitted to the League the following season if satisfactory assurances are given that they will be able to fulfil their League commitments.

6. Players and Player Eligibility

- a) The most difficult issue is player eligibility, because of the natural movement of players between a club's elevens, but in the case of lower teams, the team selected shall comprise the best male bona fide members of their club, having had their thirteenth birthday, available for the particular match on the relevant day after assuming the higher teams within the club have already been selected on this basis, whether or not such higher teams have fixtures.
- b) **No player may be a bona fide member of two or more league clubs anywhere at the same time. Any movement between league clubs is covered under the requirements for player transfer.**
- c) No player shall play in the same weekend in more than one **adult** league match in any **adult** league at any level, unless it be for the same team playing twice or, **for divisions 2 and below**, in special circumstances where players from the lower divisional teams **may play** at a higher level within **those divisions**, and with the prior agreement of the opposition captain and with the knowledge of the match umpires.

Should a team play an ineligible or suspended player, then for the purposes of the Rules, a person playing first for a higher placed team shall have breached the rules in only the second match but a person playing first for a lower placed team shall have breached the rule in both matches and penalties will apply for both matches.

- d) In the event of a selected goalkeeper, without prior knowledge or warning, becoming unavailable or incapacitated on the day of the match another goalkeeper may play two league matches on the same day.
- e) A person who has played outdoor weekend league hockey anywhere, including the Sussex Open League, may play League hockey for a second club in the same season provided:
 - 1) He changes clubs and becomes a bona fide member of the second club on or before 1st February in the relevant season.
 - 2) He has not played any league match for his first club on or after 1st February in the relevant season.
 - 3) He does not revert to playing league hockey again for his first club during the same season.
 - 4) Any such change should be notified to the League secretary.
- f) No player may play league hockey for a third club at any level in the same season.
- g) If a match is completed but a team is subsequently found to have played an ineligible or suspended player **then in division 1 that team will face disciplinary action under SHL rules and in division 2 and below** that team shall suffer a mandatory loss by 0 – 5 or the actual score if a higher goal difference. Additional financial penalties will normally be imposed.

7. Results

- a) The home team must advise the League Secretary of the result of the match (including postponements or forfeits) by no later than 8.00pm on the day of the match. Teams may **advise** their results direct to the FixturesLive/South League results service, as appropriate or email the League Secretary.
- b) All teams are obliged to fill in a Match Record Sheet (MRS) for each League game.
- c) The MRS is to be provided by the home team, which should be completed by each team before the start of the match and be handed to the umpires for the duration of the game.
- d) Only players named in the MRS shall participate in the game.
- e) At the end of the game the umpires shall record the half time score and the full time score, personal penalties (adding any comments they wish), and then enter their names and sign the MRS, before returning the MRS to the home team. The team captains may also enter any comments on the game to the MRS as appropriate.
- f) The home team is responsible for returning the completed sheet to the Assistant League Secretary no later than the Friday following the fixture.
- g) Any home team failing to return completed MRS in accordance to rule 7 (f) will be fined at least £5 for the first offence, increasing to £10 for the second and each subsequent offence. In addition to the financial penalty, **where team sheets are still missing 10 days after the end of each half of the season**, one (1) point will be deducted from the offending team for **the second and all subsequent offences, within that half of the season**, such deduction (s) being made at the end of each half of the season.

8. Umpires

- a) Teams must provide an umpire of acceptable standard for all League matches.
 - 1) Division 1; Clubs with teams in this division follow SHL rules. However, if umpires cannot be appointed then Clubs are responsible for providing umpires with minimum qualifications of Club umpire Assessed (Level 1);
 - 2) Divisions 2 and below; Clubs with teams in these divisions are responsible for providing umpires for all their League matches. Minimum qualifications are as follows;
 - i. Divisions 2: Club umpire Assessed (Level 1).
 - ii. Divisions 3: Club umpire Unassessed (Level 1) or Level 1 candidate.
 - iii. Divisions 4 and below: Appropriately qualified Club umpire; preferably at the above level and experience

- b) **All umpires provided by clubs to League matches must be, at least, associate members of the Sussex Hockey Umpires Association.**
- c) Where necessary, a team without an umpire must use a player who can umpire at an acceptable standard, as defined by Rule 8a, and who may not participate as a player.
- d) Neither umpire may be changed during the game except in the event of illness or injury to the umpire.
- e) A team, while providing an umpire for Division two and three matches, but fails to provide an umpire of acceptable standard for these matches (Rule 8a) or who change an umpire during a match for unacceptable reasons (Rule 8c) will be fined.
- f) A team failing to provide an umpire shall be deemed to have lost the relevant game 0-5 and the club will be fined.
- g) Each club represented in Division One will nominate to the League pool by 01 September at least one umpire for each participating team who holds as a minimum, the club umpire assessed (level 1) umpiring qualification and who has been approved by the Appointments Officer as having the appropriate experience and expertise. The nominated umpire(s) must, between them, be able to cover the whole season's league matches. Any club failing to provide the required umpire(s) for 6 matches, in a season, (regardless of whether or not the games take place) will be fined.

9. Protests and Appeals

- a) In the event of any misconduct by a club or team affecting the operation of the League, the League Secretary may apply an appropriate fine/penalty.
- b) Each team, by its entry into the League, will be deemed to have consented to the rules of the League and have agreed to abide by the decisions of the League Secretary.
- c) Protests or objections to the League Secretary must be lodged, in writing by a club official, within seven days of either the relevant match, incident or the time when the circumstances became known to the complainant.
- d) Generally, the League Secretary, with the support of the League sub-committee will be expected to solve problems as they arise. The League Secretary shall advise the decision of the league to complainant with 14 days of receipt of the complaint.
- e) However, in the event that the League cannot resolve a problem, or a club feels dissatisfied with a decision advised by the League Secretary, **the club may, for teams in division 1 appeal to the South League Committee Secretary as directed by the SHL rules; and for divisions 2 and below may appeal**, in writing, through the SHA Secretary, to the Sussex Hockey Association, within fourteen days of notification of the decision. A deposit of £100 payable to the Sussex Hockey Association must be made to the SHA Secretary at the same time as the appeal, which may be returned in whole or in part at the discretion of the SHA. The appeal then will be considered by at least three other members of the SHA Management Committee. The decision of the SHA Management Committee will be notified to the club, copy to the League Secretary, within 28 days of the appeal. Any such decision notified by the SHA Secretary will be final.
- f) The League Secretary reserves the right to investigate any possible infringement of **these and SHL** rules and take any necessary action in consultation with the League sub-committee to resolve such infringements.

10. EH Regulations for the Enforcement of Discipline

- a) All persons participating in the League are reminded that the above remains in force. It is the responsibility of the clubs to ensure that good manners and courtesy prevail towards the opposition, umpires and other officials, during and after the game. All club officials and players are directed to the South's Guidance Notes for Pitch-side Conduct and Important Notes for Clubs, which supplement the SHL Rules for further details on these issues. These notes are also available on the SHA website.