

GUIDANCE NOTES ON THE RULES 2016-17

These notes are intended to offer practical guidance on what needs to be done, but neither replace nor supersede the Rules themselves, particularly as they do not address some topics e.g. transfers, abandoned games, re-arranged games, at all. Clubs must still be prepared to study the Rules, and to appreciate them in context.

Ignorance of the Rules is no defence, and will neither justify failure to comply, nor relieve liability to penalties for breach.

1. Before the start of the league season, each club must check their details in the handbook, and notify the League Secretary, Divisional Secretary, Umpires Appointment Secretary, Web Site and appropriate officers in other Clubs of any errors.
2. Before any game the home Club must:-
 - a) Ensure Start Time and Venue are recorded on the website and if changed within 8 days of the fixture, confirm the change by speaking on the telephone. Text messages and emails may also be used but ensure these are acknowledged. If unable to confirm changes, this should be reported to the Divisional Secretary, but it is not an excuse for failing to confirm details of any change.
 - b) For 1st XI fixtures confirm with both Umpires not earlier than 8 days, but not later than 6 days, before the fixture by speaking on the telephone. Text messages and emails may also be used but ensure these are acknowledged.
 - c) Immediately notify both the opposition and the Umpires of any changes to the original arrangements, including postponements and cancellations, by speaking on the telephone. Text messages and emails may also be used but ensure these are acknowledged.
 - d) For 1st XI league matches (only) advise the Divisional Secretary in writing no later than the Tuesday before the game if the result is not going to be capable of being reported on time due to a late start i.e. 3.30pm or later.
 - e) Ensure that the pitch and other facilities are satisfactory. This obligation applies even where the facilities may be outside the immediate control of the Club, whether because they are shared with another Club, rented from the local Council, or for any other reason.
3. At every game,
 - a) the away team must complete their team sheet and the home team complete the match sheet before the start of the game. Both teams must then hand their completed sheets to the umpires before the game starts. The home Club will ultimately be responsible that both sheets are sent to the Divisional Secretary after the game. Any alteration to the team sheet after it has been handed in must be counter-signed by the opposing captain.
 - b) complete the team/match sheets properly. In particular, each sheet must show the first and last name of every member of the squad in full. Reference to players by surnames only, surnames and initials or nicknames is not acceptable. By placing a name on the sheet, the Club confirms that the individual concerned is correctly identified, and that he is eligible to play for that team. Any Club fielding a player under a false name, or who is not eligible to play (whether because of suspension, failure to comply with the transfer rules, or for any other reason) must expect to be penalised very heavily indeed.
 - c) make every effort to record scorers on the team sheet.
 - d) sign the sheet at the end of the game. This confirms your agreement with the facts recorded by the Umpires e.g. the score, details of cards issued etc.
4. After every home game the home Club must:-
 - a) In 1st XI League telephone Russells Newsagency (0116 233 2200) immediately. This must be done no later than 4.30pm for Midlands Premier and Division I Clubs, and no later than 5.00pm for all the other Divisions (Note this obligation does not apply in 2nd XI League & below).
 - b) In all leagues send the signed match/team sheets to their Divisional Secretary. This should be done either electronically or by first class post at the Divisional Secretary's preference. The electronic version (e.g. scans or phone photos) must be received by Tuesday or any envelope must be post-marked no later than midnight Monday, otherwise a penalty will be incurred. Clubs are now also required to take copies of both sheets so that a duplicate record will be available if, for some reason, the originals do not reach their Divisional Secretary. Should an electronic version (scans/

- phone photos) be supplied to the Divisional Secretary, the onus is on the home team to provide legible/readable versions. The Divisional Secretary will usually provide guidance as to what is acceptable and has the right to refuse/reject electronic versions that do not meet his requirements. Continued non-compliance by a club/team with his requirements may well result in a penalty.
- c) In the 2nd, 3rd and Central Leagues send the result by text as soon as possible and within 60 minutes of the game having finished to (+44) 7624 811625. For details, please see the section on submitting match results by text message elsewhere in the handbook.
 - d) The home club is expected to provide "teas" or suitable refreshment for the visiting side. It is advisable to let the visiting team know, when confirming the fixture, the venue for the "teas" and the arrangements, so that the opposition can confirm whether their players will be available to take "tea" – and if the visiting team is for any reason unable to accept the offer of "tea", or if not all of the players can stay, then the visitors can notify in advance and any waste of food and costs can be avoided.
5. During the season and before the season starts, every Club must notify the Honorary League Secretary, their Divisional Secretary and the Web Site of any changes of Club officials or new addresses, telephone numbers etc.
 6. Corporate/individual responsibility – Responsibility for complying with the Rules lies with the Club. This means it cannot be a defence for anyone to say "X should have done this, or Y should have done that." Equally, if someone in a position of responsibility cannot do their job for any reason, it is for the Club to make sure that any replacement knows the Rules and complies with them.
 7. Communication generally
 - a) Any Club which cannot understand the Rules, or is not sure what to do in any given situation should seek clarification from the Divisional Secretary. This means that no Club should ever – under any circumstances – fail to tell their Divisional Secretary immediately if a game has not taken place or if there have been any problems. (If the Divisional Secretary is not available, then speak to one of their colleagues.)
 - b) Clubs which leave messages on an answerphone, send text messages and/or emails but fail to speak directly by phone to the people concerned do so at their own risk, as it cannot be guaranteed that they will be received in time.
 8. Discipline – The primary responsibility for maintaining discipline (whether in respect of players, officials or supporters) rests with the Club. Clubs with disciplinary records significantly worse than others in the same Division are at risk of having sanctions imposed (including the loss of league points). In some cases, it is just two or three players who acquire a disproportionately high number of yellow and red cards. Clubs which continue to select such players must be prepared to accept the consequences.
9. Miscellaneous
 - a) From time to time, the Committee needs to consider whether a Club has put out something other than its "normal" side in a match (particularly in 2nd, 3rd or Central League), particularly where it is suggested that a promotion/ relegation issue has been affected.
 - b) Players must be brought up from their lower teams (but not down from the higher teams) to make up numbers. This means that a club should never cancel (say) a 3rd XI fixture and still play its 6th XI fixture. If necessary, lower fixture(s) should be cancelled if this is the only way to ensure that the higher level fixture(s) are played on the scheduled dates. If a club finds itself in a position where this is not possible and it has to cancel the higher team fixture then the League expects the lower team(s) fixture to be honoured in the usual way with "bona fide" team selection. However in the case of a higher team fixture being cancelled then the lower team(s) who do play would not be eligible for any point(s) they were to gain that day (i.e. if they were to win or draw).

If a club finds itself short of players on a given weekend then the club is strongly advised to contact the appropriate Divisional/League Secretary to seek advice and guidance. Solutions may be available that the club had not considered although the responsibility for completing the fixture still remains with the club(s).
 - c) A player should play only one league fixture on any one day and this includes a player playing out of his normal position e.g. a proposal to play a goalkeeper as an outfield player.
 - d) The rules have now been revised to give the League Committee explicit power to impose penalties not only against clubs, but also against individual players. Penalties can either be implemented with immediate effect or carried over to the next season.
 - e) **Clubs are expected to have read the Rules.**
If in doubt, ask your Divisional Secretary for a ruling at the earliest opportunity!
 10. Umpire Report

After a league game to which Association umpires have been appointed, both clubs must complete the umpire report details as found on the mrhua.org.uk website under Club administration by the end of Wednesday following the game, Rule 17.2 applies.

Clubs are advised to ensure that an appropriate person connected with the 1st XI - captain, coach or manager - is provided with the club's password to the MRHUA system.