

MIDLANDS HOCKEY LEAGUE RULES 2017-2018

1. Structure of Divisions and Clubs Obligation

The League shall be open to teams of bona fide Saturday clubs affiliated to County Associations within the Midlands Region and approved by the League Committee. Any new team to join the League, post the 2018/19 season, will join at the lowest level. The League will consist of the following Divisions:

Tier 1

Midlands Premier, Midlands 1, Midlands 2, Midlands 3

Tier 2

West Midlands Premier, East Midlands Premier, West Midlands 1, East Midlands 1

Tier 3

North West Premier, South West Premier, North East Premier, South East Premier

North West 1, South West 1, North East 1, South East 1

North West 2, South West 2, North East 2, South East 2

North West 3, South West 3, North East 3, South East 3

North West 4, South West 4, North East 4, South East 4, Central 4

MIDS PREM				
MIDS 1				Tier 1
MIDS 2				
MIDS 3				
WEST MIDS PREM EAST MIDS PREM				
WEST MIDS 1		EAST MIDS 1		Tier 2
NWP	SWP	NEP	SEP	
NW1	SW1	NE1	SE1	Tier 3
NW2	SW2	NE2	SE2	
NW3	SW3	NE3	SE3	
NW4	SW4	Central 4	NE4	
			SE4	

NOTE: - The diagram above is for illustration only and Clubs are advised that the Committee reserves the right to revise any structure in its absolute discretion and in particular- but not exclusively-to reflect the number, location and perceived ability of participating teams from time to time.

Each team by its entry into the League is deemed to have consented to and be bound by the Rules in force from time to time for the League. Furthermore entry to or participation in the League by any club shall constitute acceptance of and submission to the authority of the League by that club and team and its players and officials in all matters of discipline or otherwise and shall signify agreement that the League and/or the MRHA shall have all necessary powers to deal with any matters howsoever arising out of the conduct of that club its players officials and any spectators at any match organised by such club. It shall further constitute acceptance by that club of the League's right to impose penalties of whatever nature in its absolute discretion without any right of appeal save as set out in these League Rules.

Offences committed on the field of play and covered by the England Hockey Disciplinary Code or any additional Disciplinary Provisions of MRHA will remain subject to and continue to be dealt with under the terms of those Codes.

Any club failing to fulfil their financial obligation to the League, England Hockey, their

Regional or County association will in the first instance be suspended from the League and further failure to comply will result in expulsion from the League.

2. Fixtures

Each team will play each other twice (Home and Away). The games are to be played in accordance with the fixture list prepared and published by the League Committee.

Any Midlands league match, at any level (including a rescheduled match) must take precedence over any non-Midland League fixture unless that match has a higher priority in the England Hockey fixture list.

3. Award of Points

Points for each game will be awarded as follows:

WIN: 3 points **DRAW:** 1 point **LOSS:** no points

In the event of two teams having an equal number of points, league positions shall be decided by goal difference or if this is equal by goals scored and if this too is equal by the number of matches won and in the event of this being equal by the results of the matches between the two teams and if these fail to produce a winner then by a playoff between the teams concerned may be directed by the League Committee.

4. Promotion, Relegation and Transfer

- 4.1 The winner of Midlands Premier Division will be promoted to the EHL subject always to that team satisfying the entry qualifications for the EHL as set out in its Rules in force from time to time. If the winner of Midlands Premier Division does NOT satisfy the entry qualifications, then the second placed team will be promoted subject to the same criteria and so on.

Depending on how many Midlands teams are relegated from EHL there may be variable promotion and relegation.

Promotion and relegation generally will be two up and two down except where two divisions feed into a single division - where there will normally be a single promotion.

- 4.2 The League Committee shall have power to decide, in its sole discretion, to which Division a team shall be allocated and shall play and shall have power at the end of each season to transfer any team to a different Division. This will also apply to the allocation of places for new teams joining the league.
- 4.3 Where the number of teams competing in the League is not an exact multiple of 12 (as required for complete divisions) the League Committee reserves the right in its absolute discretion to organise/rearrange the Tiers, both in numbers and location, to achieve what it sees as delivering the maximum benefit for all participating Clubs consistent with the principle of trying to offer a full fixture programme of competitive hockey. From a practical point of view this may involve variations to the "normal provisions for promotion and/ or relegation and additional/less relegations or promotions may be required to balance numbers.
- 4.4 A maximum of two teams from any one club will be allowed in a single division.
- 4.5 Any Club which is expelled from the League for any reason or which fails to secure re-election at the end of any season may within 14 days of receiving notice of the decision of the League Committee appeal to the Council of the Midlands Region Hockey Association who will then resolve the matter. The club seeking to appeal must deposit £150 earnest money (See Rule 22.2).
- 4.6 For the 2018/19 season only, due to the increase from 48 to 60 teams in the England Hockey League from the 2019-20 season, four teams will be invited, from the Midlands Premier Division, to join the EHL with no relegations into the Regional Leagues. This will obviously affect Promotions/Relegations, so the following will be in effect:

**Tier 1: Premier/1/2/3 Divisions -
4 Promotions and 0 Relegations**

**Tier 2: Premier Divisions:
2 Promotions and 0 Relegations**

**Tier 2: East/West 1 Divisions:
2 Promotions and 2 Relegations**

**Tier 3: All Premier/Level 1/Level 2 Divisions:
2 Promotions and 1 Relegation**

**Tier 3: All Level 3 Divisions:
2 Promotions and 1 Relegations plus further 2 worst teams.**

**Tier 3: All Level 4 Divisions:
2 Promotions**

Additional/less relegations or promotions may be required to balance numbers in the lower divisions of Tier 3.

5. Dress

- 5.1 Visiting teams will play in white shirts and white socks. Goalkeepers shall wear a top of a colour which will distinguish them both from their own team and their opponents.
- 5.2 All teams shall wear shirts each bearing in the centre of the back a different number of at least 9" in height and contrasting colour to the shirts.

6. Substitutes and Team Officials

- 6.1 Teams shall be allowed to make substitutions during a match in accordance with Rules of Hockey. The names of any substitutes must appear on the official match return sheets prior to the start of the match.
The name of any manager, and/or coach, and/or physio must also appear on the match return.
- 6.2 Substitutes, managers, coaches and physios shall be always under the control of the umpires and shall remain on the side of the pitch agreed with or designated by the umpires and between the 23 metre lines.
- 6.3 The umpires shall, prior to the start of the match, designate one side of the pitch (or one area) as the team bench/technical area and shall inform the team captains. Only players and team management named on the team sheet shall be permitted to use the bench/technical area. Spectators shall be outside of the playing and technical areas as may be designated by the umpires.
- 6.4 The players and team management are the responsibility of the captain. Umpires have the authority to temporarily or permanently suspend (yellow card or red card) any player or official from the team bench for indiscipline. This will require the relevant team to withdraw a player from the pitch for the duration of a yellow card suspension and for the remainder of the game for a red card suspension.

7. Eligibility of Players

- 7.1 Only bona fide male members of a League Club shall be entitled to play for a team of that club in a League match.
- 7.2 No player under 13 years of age may play in any League match.

- 7.3 A player must have attained the age of 15 to be eligible to play in the Midlands Premier Division of the League.
- 7.4 A Midlands Premier or Midlands Division 1 League team (including all the squad for a match) shall not include more than one player who does not:
- i) Have eligibility to hold a European Union Passport, or
 - ii) Have a permanent right of abode as defined by Section 1 and 2 of the Immigration Act 1971 (Further information regarding "Right of Abode" may be found on the Home Office website www.ind.Homeoffice.gov.uk and search for right of abode) or
 - iii) Hold a current work permit, as defined by the Immigration Act 1971, as a hockey player or player coach in the United Kingdom and hold a passport for a country with which the European Union has an agreement containing provisions prohibiting discrimination in employment.
 - iv) Players from the Isle of Man, Channel Islands and Gibraltar together with those holding dual passport eligibility where one such eligibility is that of a European Union member state will be considered to have no limitation as to their ability to play under this rule.
- 7.5 Before the commencement of each League match each team MUST complete their match sheet with a list of players and their shirt numbers. This MUST be handed to the Umpires BEFORE the start of the match and it must be indicated on the match sheet that this has been done.
- The list must sufficiently identify the players concerned by giving their first and last names in full and their shirt number. Players named on the match return sheets will be deemed to have participated in the match. Any alterations and deletions of the names of players on the match return sheets must be counter-signed by the captain of the opposition team.
- 7.6 So that the League may have a proper record of the players appearing for each team, in the event of a match not being played for any reason (whether because there are an uneven number of teams in a Division, or because of a postponement), then the teams(s) who should have been playing in that match or on that day, must submit to their Divisional Secretary a team sheet showing the players who were selected to play in the team on that day, except where it is the lowest team that a club has in the league.
- 7.7 If, in the opinion of the Committee, any club shall play a non-bona fide member of that club in a league match or shall field a team which is not a genuine team for the Division in question, applying the spirit of the league and the maxim of "fair play" then the League shall have the right to impose such penalty (including the deduction of league points) as the League shall think fit. Such penalties may be applied to the "donor" team as well as the "donee" team (e.g. the 1st XI or 2nd XI may be penalised if their players are considered to have played for the 3rd XI in contravention of this rule).
- 7.8 Where a player wishes to play, or is selected to play, for a lower team than his regular team then the club must obtain the prior approval of the Divisional Secretary of the team for whom he is to play. In the event of permission not being obtained the player will be deemed to be ineligible and penalties will be issued if they play.
- 7.9 The aim is to select players for all teams based on merit. In the case of shortage of regular players for a team, then players should be promoted from lower teams.
- Putting a player in from a higher-ranking team will not be regarded as "balancing" but as "strengthening" for the purpose of this rule.
- 7.10 "Doubling-up" of players (i.e. playing in two league matches on the same day) is prohibited except where this has been sanctioned in advance by the Divisional Secretary of the lower team concerned. This prohibition also applies where the player in question may be playing out of his normal position e.g. a goalkeeper appearing as an outfield player.

8. Rules of the Game

All matches shall be played in accordance with the Rules of Hockey or as laid down by England Hockey.

The Midland League has no rule requiring a minimum number of players to be on the field of play for each team for a match to start/continue.

9. Transfers

- 9.1 A player may not play in a League Match without written confirmation from the Transfers Secretary that the circumstances of his transfer have been approved if he has at any time during the current season or during the previous season played in a league game (including an EHL game) for another club anywhere.

Applications for transfer must be made to the Transfers Secretary by the player's new club by submission of the form prescribed by the League and must be accompanied by a transfer administration fee of £5.00 per transfer.

Any new player to the club who has not played in a league game (including an EHL game) for another club anywhere in either the current or previous season must complete the Part A form but not Part B and there will be no transfer fee.

- 9.2 If a player plays in a league match anywhere in the current season then he shall not be eligible to play in a MRHA League match during the same season until:
- a) he has gone through the transfer procedure set out at 9.1 above; and
 - b) Two League Saturday's have passed since he last played for his previous club in a league match

9.3 Provided always in the case of a League club which is attached to a university or similar educational establishment Rule 9.1 shall not apply in respect of any player who is a registered student at that educational establishment (unless he has played in a MRHA League match during the current season for another club) then it shall be sufficient for the university club simply to give notice in writing to the Transfers Secretary to reach him before the first league game in which it is proposed that the student shall play, listing the new players and the clubs they previously played for.

(Note: The dispensation is provided only for the benefit of university clubs. It in no way relieves the obligations of an "ordinary" club in relation to transfer requirements if a player has previously played for a university club in the league. Nor does it relieve the university club if the player has already played league hockey during the current season, then the player will go through the transfer process as outlined in Rule 9.1)

9.4 No transfer application under 9.1 will be permitted (other than in the most exceptional circumstances) for the current season after 31st January in that season. After 31st January in any season it is illegal to play any player who was not a genuine member of the club before that date and who had played for them before 31st January. (In other words, regardless of the transfer rules, no new player may be signed to play for a club in February, March and April who were not already playing members of that club on 31st January, regardless of where in the world they had previously played.)

Any transfer approved after April, is effective for league matches after 1st September of that year.

9.5 If a club plays an ineligible player in contravention of this rule (or of rule 7) the Committee after considering the circumstances may impose such penalty as may be appropriate including a fine and/or the deduction of League points and/or relegation of that team within the league. In the case of Midlands clubs such penalties may be applied to the "donor" team as well as the "donee" team (so that a team who allows one of its players to play in a league match for another club or for another team within the club, may also be penalised). The League may also take action (including suspension) against the individual player.

9.6 In any case where a player transfers clubs, the onus is on the new club to ensure that the provisions of Rule 9 have been fully complied with.

10. Subscription

10.1 Each League club shall receive an annual Invoice which shall be paid to the League Secretary. This invoice shall contain: the amount of annual League subscriptions determined by the League Committee and approved by the MRHA; charge for League Handbooks (as part of their obligations as league members, clubs must purchase (at the discounted

price) a minimum number of league handbooks, as determined by the League Committee); any outstanding fines from the previous season.

10.2 Any fine outstanding from a previous season and not paid before the first league match of the new season shall render the club liable to the following further penalties. No League points will be awarded to the defaulting club in respect of any matches played before any fine(s) is paid (if and when such fines are paid points will NOT be restored retrospectively in respect of matches played before the date of payment).

10.3 If by the 1st June prior to the commencement of the season the League Secretary shall not have received from any League club the payment of the annual League Invoice required under Rule 10.1 OR the League Secretary shall not have received from a League club the completed proforma containing details of the club for insertion in the League Handbook for the following season, the defaulting League club shall pay a fine of £50.

If such Invoice is not paid OR the proforma not returned by 20th June, the defaulting League club shall pay a fine of £100.

These penalties shall apply regardless of whether the league club has received from the league a request for payment or for information. The onus is on the Club Secretary to ensure they have received the above Invoice by the 1st June.

11. Playing Surfaces, Postponements and Disagreements

11.1 All league matches shall be played on approved artificial grass pitches.

11.2 The umpires may postpone a match if a pitch is not of such standard as to allow the game to be played as a League game. Umpires should use their discretion in cases such as the absence of flags or minor irregularities in marking and should consider reporting the matter to the League Committee rather than postponing the game. (The length and width of the pitch in regular use for League games shall not be deemed grounds for objection under this rule but reports of undersized pitches may be submitted to the League for long term consideration.)

11.3 If either Captain considers that owing to the state of the pitch or the markings the match should not be played as a League game, he must bring this to the attention of both umpires and the opposing Captain before the game commences. The match should then be played as a league match (unless postponed by the umpires under 11.2),

11.4 If a game must be postponed the Home club shall notify immediately by telephone, the umpires and the opposition and the Divisional Secretary. Failure to comply will result in a penalty under Rule 18.4.

11.5 If an Away club cries off or fails to fulfil a fixture and as

a result the Home club is unable to cancel the pitch booking or to “fill the slot” with another match, then the defaulting club shall reimburse the Home club the cost of the pitch booking and any other irrevocable expenses (i.e. after match teas). The onus is on the cancelling team to ensure the opposition confirms they have received notification of any cancellation in sufficient time to cancel any pitch booking. This is without prejudice to any penalty which may be imposed by the Rules or by the League for such default.

11.6 Note on Postponements Generally.

The League expects clubs to make every effort to play matches. Where any match is threatened with postponement, the League would expect that if necessary the Home team should concede ground advantage. Similarly, if the Home team does not have a pitch/facilities available on the rearrangement date listed in this handbook for a postponed fixture then it is expected to concede Home advantage.

11.7 In the case of Bad weather (or “doubtful” weather) the Home team must follow the following procedure: The Home team liaison officer or captain must ascertain the Away teams proposed departure time from its own base. The Home team liaison or captain must inspect the pitch before this departure time. A realistic view must be taken at this stage including travel conditions. Clubs should check the local weather forecast to confirm weather conditions for the next 24 or 48 hours. If the pitch is unfit and is likely to remain unfit the match should be postponed and the travelling team and umpires informed before their departure time.

11.8 An Away team, in the event of the Home team wishing to postpone a match, shall have the right to inspect the ground prior to a decision being reached. In the event of the Away team exercising this right it shall be responsible for its own costs, any umpiring costs and any costs being incurred by the Home team as a result of any delay in the postponement

12. Starting Times

12.1 For matches in Midland Premier or Midland 1 the start time is within the period 11.30am to 2.30pm and for matches in other divisions within the period 11.00am to 4.30pm (“The Window”). If a Home team wishes the match to start at a time outside the “window” then it must confirm details of the proposed start time at least 14 days before the fixture is due to be played and seek the agreement in writing (acknowledged email) of the opposing team. (Normal confirmation under 16.1 is still required.)

12.2 In the event of no agreement, the Divisional Secretary shall make a ruling which shall be binding on both clubs.

12.3 A dispensation from the Divisional Secretary is required for any variation of start time outside “The Window”. In the case of Midland Premier and Midland

1 matches this dispensation can only be given in respect of an earlier start (not for after 2.30pm), unless if it is a re-arranged match, when full account of the impact on the umpires of a late start should be considered.

12.4 All fixtures for which permission is given to start outside “The Window” must be notified by the Home team as soon as possible in advance and in writing to the appropriate Umpires’ Appointment Secretary for teams in Tier 1 and Tier 2

12.5 When allocating early or late start times clubs/teams must have regard to the travelling distance and travel time of the opposition.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT BOTH TEAMS ARRIVE AT THE VENUE AT LEAST 30 MINUTES BEFORE THE SCHEDULED START TIME OF THE MATCH

13. Matches which are forfeited, abandoned or not completed

The decision to abandon a match will rest solely with the umpires. Thereafter it is for the Divisional Secretary to decide whether the result at the time of abandonment will stand or whether the match will be rearranged in accordance with Rule 14.

Where a match is not completed as a result of a team “walking off” and refusing to continue with the match then the circumstances will be referred to the Divisional Secretary, who shall decide the result of the match and what penalties should be imposed. (In addition to losing the match, the offending team must expect to be penalised severely through the deduction of points).

14. Rearranged Matches (Please read the whole of this rule)

14.1 It is the responsibility of both clubs concerned to communicate as soon as possible after a postponement (and in any case within 3 days) to ascertain the first available date as defined in this rule and then to notify in accordance with Rule 14.4 below. If in any doubt as to which is the first available date or in the case of any dispute, clubs should notify the Divisional Secretary immediately.

14.2 Published dates for rearranged matches are MANDATORY and not advisory/negotiable. A match postponed under Rule 11 (or abandoned under Rule 13, if the Divisional Secretary so orders) must be played on or before the date shown in Fixtures Schedule (provided that if both clubs agree they may play at an EARLIER date by mutual agreement between those clubs and any Umpire Appointments Secretary involved). Only the League can authorise a change of date.

14.3 A team is deemed to be available UNLESS:

- It already has a rearranged League game on that date.
- It is engaged in a fixture which has higher priority

in the EH Fixture Priority List or it has four or more regular players, in that team, involved in a higher priority fixture.

- (c) It receives a special dispensation in writing from the Divisional Secretary or League Secretary allowing it to decline to play a rearranged League fixture on that date.

14.4 Details of rearranged matches must be notified immediately, by email or answered telephone call, to reach the Divisional Secretary and any Secretary responsible for the appointment of umpires within three days of the postponement. For non-compliance with this rule as certified by the Divisional Secretary or Appointments Secretary, clubs shall incur a fine of £10 for the first offence, which fine will be increased to £20 for each subsequent failure in the same season. For persistent breaches of this rule the League is empowered to deduct league points.

14.5 The League may, in order to expedite or facilitate the completion of the League programme, give any directions it considers necessary as to the day, date, time and venue for the playing of any rearranged League game.

15. Forfeiture and Failure to honour Fixtures

15.1 Where a team shall fail to honour a fixture or shall forfeit a game then a minimum of 3 points shall be deducted from their total of league points and they shall be deemed to have lost 0-3 and the opposing team shall be awarded 3 points and be deemed to have won the game 3-0. In addition, the offending team will be fined £10.

This is without prejudice to any further penalty or remission which the League may see fit to impose. (And see rule 7.9 and the duty of clubs who find themselves short of players to "promote up" i.e. to move players up the teams so that, if a club is unable, for a particular day, to field all the teams which it has in the League then it is the club's lowest ranked team which does not play.) Any club which does not "promote up" as required by rule 7.8 should expect a more severe penalty for failure to honour a fixture, with the specific prospect of points being deducted for the start of the following season and/or a heavy fine.

15.2 If a team fails to fulfil a fixture, but the club has lower teams which do play, then those lower teams will be at risk of forfeiting any points gained from their matches.

15.3 If a team fails to fulfil a league fixture then in addition to any penalties which may follow under these rules or be imposed by the League the defaulting club shall be liable to reimburse the irrecoverable costs of the opposing team arising from such default.

16. Confirmation to Opposition and Umpires and management of start times/venues

16.1 Confirmation of fixture details is by the Home clubs

posting the start time and venue on the MRHA League website no later than 14 days before date of the fixture. Failure to comply with this rule will attract a fine.

16.2 If either the start time or venue are changed within 8 days of the fixture date this must be communicated AND confirmed in writing (acknowledged email) with the opposition. The Divisional Secretary must also be notified in writing (acknowledged email). Failure to comply with this rule will attract a fine.

16.3 For all matches in Tier 1 and Tier 2 the Away club must be told, no later than 8 days before the fixture if it is to provide an umpire under 17.3. Details must also be confirmed to any appointed Association Umpires no later than 6 days and no earlier than 8 days before the fixture; any subsequent changes to the time or venue must be notified AND confirmed immediately they are known. Failure to comply with this rule will attract a fine.

16.4 Each club is obliged to identify a single individual (as a match/fixture secretary) who is their contact point for the confirmation of changes to matches, failing which that contact point shall be deemed to be the club secretary.

16.5 Confirmation to opposition, Umpires' Association and website updated equally for all re-arranged games.

17. Umpires – Tier 1 and 2

17.1 For all matches in Tier 1 and Tier 2, each club must, at least 8 Days before the season starts, provide the relevant match information required by MRHUA/BCHUA/EMHUA to its website so that the appropriate Umpires Association are able to appoint umpires.

17.2 Where Association umpires are appointed, clubs must complete the feedback information requested by MRHUA/BCHUA/EMHUA on its website by 23.59 on the Wednesday after the match.

17.3 Where the appropriate Umpire Association is unable to appoint umpires to a Tier 1 or Tier 2 League match the Home club shall be responsible for the provision of two umpires. However, the Away club is entitled to provide an umpire. If they wish to do so, then they must notify the Home club in writing (acknowledged email) within 8 days of the date of the match, that they will bring an umpire. Having so notified, that "away" umpire shall be entitled to umpire the match. In the absence of any such notification the Home club should provide two umpires. Both umpires MUST be Qualified and Assessed level.

17.4 Where a club is required to appoint a Qualified and Assessed umpire to a match then it must give on the team sheet both the name and Registration Number of that umpire. Failure to do so will lead to fines and / or other penalties.

17.5 If at any match, whether through non-availability or nonappearance of an appointed Association Umpire, there are not two umpires available to officiate then

the game may only be played as a League game if both Captains so agree. (Note that 17.5 only applies to matches to which Association Umpires have been appointed.)

- 17.6 If at any match there is an umpire short, whether through no appointment or non-availability or nonappearance, every effort must be made by both clubs (and especially the Home club) to provide a competent umpire who should ideally be qualified to at least Qualified and Assessed level
- 17.7 Umpires - Tier 3: For all Tier 3 matches umpires should be Qualified and Assessed level. For each match the Home club shall be responsible for the provision of two umpires. However, the Away club is entitled to provide an umpire. If they wish to do so then they must notify the Home club in writing (acknowledged email) within 8 days of the date of the match, that they will bring an umpire. Having so notified, that "Away" umpire shall be entitled to umpire the match. In the absence of any such notification the Home club should provide two umpires.
- 17.8 Clubs must endeavour to use a club umpire before the use of players, but in the absence of any one, or both, club umpires, the club which has not provided an umpire in accordance with its obligations under this rule shall withdraw one player from their side and that player shall act as umpire for the ENTIRE match. (It follows that the lack of an umpire or umpires can never be a reason for the postponement of a match.)
- 17.9 Clubs and teams and their players and officials are required to treat umpires at all times with the respect to which they are entitled. The League may impose such penalties as it thinks fit (including the suspension of individual players, the deduction of points, and/ or relegation) in respect of any instances of abuse of umpires or failure to behave properly towards umpires.
- 17.10 There can be no appeal or complaint against any decision (or non-decision) of an umpire on the field of play during a match.

18 Filing of Results

- 18.1 The Home club must ensure that a correctly completed (See Rule 7.5) official Match Return, signed by both captains and by both umpires, together with the Away Team Sheet are submitted electronically to arrive with the Divisional Secretary by the Tuesday after the match. Failure to comply will render the club liable to penalties as set out in 18.4.
- 18.2 Any alterations to the Match Return or Away Team Sheet, made subsequent to it being handed to the umpires/opposition, must be countersigned by the opposing captain.
- 18.3 All results must be notified by text messaging (by the Home team). The text message must be sent directly to the website using the dedicated MRHA Results number +447860 020 620. The result must be entered in the correct format, as soon as possible after the

match and always on the same day as the match.

The exception is for rearranged matches – for which no result should be sent directly to the website as the site does not contain details of the agreed/actual rearrangement date. (See handbook for text messaging details).

- 18.4 Failure by the Home club to text the result on the same day of the match and/or failure to complete and return the Match Return and Away Team Sheet in the timescales as directed in Rule 18.1 and 18.3 and failure to comply with Rule 16 (Confirmations) will incur a fine on the Home club of £10 for the first failure, which fine will be increased to £20 for each subsequent failure (of whatever kind) in the same season. For persistent breaches of this Rule the League is empowered to deduct League points.

Generally

Clubs in all Leagues and all divisions are required to take photocopies/scans of their Match Return/Away Team Sheets and retain these master sheets until 1st September following the current season in case of query or demand from the League.

19. Fines

- 19.1 For any breaches of these rules clubs may be fined.
- 19.2 If any fine is unpaid for a period longer than two months from the date of issue and if it remains unpaid by 31st March then an 'overdue fine penalty' of 10% per month from the date of issue will be payable.
- 19.3 If any fines remain unpaid at the beginning of the next season then no league points will be awarded to the defaulting club in respect of any matches played before the fine(s) is paid (and when such fines are subsequently paid points will not be restored retrospectively in respect of matches played before the date of payment).

20. Discipline

Clubs have the primary responsibility for the discipline of their players, officials and supporters and are required to demonstrate compliance at all times with the EH Code of Ethics and Behaviour.

The England Hockey Disciplinary Code shall apply to all league matches, notwithstanding that one of the umpires for the match is not a "recognised umpire" within the definition of that Code.

The League reserves the right to impose further penalties upon clubs who receive Red Cards. Matchday Misconduct Offences or Disrepute Rulings (see also Rule 23).

During the season the League will perform reviews of Red/Yellow cards issued and may issue warnings and impose further penalties based on relative performance to other teams in a team's Division.

21. Emergency Powers

Should any matter require an immediate decision which has not been delegated to officials, such as

Divisional Secretaries, and which cannot be deferred until the next meeting of the League Committee, then the decision may be made on behalf of that Committee by three members of the League Committee, at least one of whom must be the League Chairman or the League Secretary.

The decision will be reported to the next formal meeting of the League Committee.

22. Appeals

22.1 Any club which considers it has been fined or penalised unfairly or considers that any matters not covered in the rules should be brought to the League Committee's attention has the right of appeal by writing to the League Secretary requesting that the facts be placed before the League Committee or a Panel appointed by the League Committee whose decision shall be final.

22.2 Any club seeking to lodge an appeal under this rule or under Rule 4.3 must do so by the Club Secretary sending full written details of the appeal (including details of under which provision(s) of the Rules they have been penalised and a copy of the letter from the League notifying them of the decision or penalty against which they wish to appeal) to reach the League Secretary within 16 days of the date of the letter (or email) from the League notifying them of the decision or penalty.

On the lodging of an appeal or as soon as practicable thereafter the club shall also deposit with the League Secretary the sum of £150 as earnest money. The Appeal Panel may in their absolute discretion order the refund of all or part of the earnest money.

For the avoidance of doubt, a club may not appeal

- i. Against any decision or non-decision of an umpire on the field of play during a match
- ii. In respect of a decision which has an impact on that club only indirectly. In particular, a club may not appeal against the consequences of a decision to impose/not impose a penalty on another club, or the resolution of any issues involving other clubs.

22.3 The club making the appeal may be ordered to pay the expenses involved in administering and hearing the appeal.

22.4 The League Committee will appoint an Appeal Panel, consisting of a Chairman and a minimum of two and maximum of four other members (who may be, but need not be, members of the League Committee and will be independent of parties involved in the appeal). The League may refer to an Appeal Panel any disciplinary complaint, dispute or appeal.

The Chairman of the Panel shall have power to call for written evidence, other documents or representations and shall have power to make any procedural order in respect of the proceedings before the Panel.

The lodging of an appeal shall not have the effect of suspending any decision of the League Committee or of the League Secretary or of a Divisional Secretary. The Chairman of the Appeal Panel shall have the power, upon receipt of a reasoned request, to grant any stay of execution of such decision which may, in his discretion, be considered appropriate.

23. General

23.1 Any club which wishes to complain of, or to report, an alleged breach of the Rules by another club, in any league match, must report the matter to the Divisional Secretary within 14 days of that match being played. This does not however preclude the right of the Divisional Secretary or the League Committee to investigate alleged breaches of the rules which may come to their attention outside of this time if they are satisfied (for whatever reason) that the allegation should be investigated.

23.2 The League shall have the power to make decisions on such matters as are not covered by these rules. Decisions on the interpretation of these rules are delegated to the Divisional Secretaries who shall have the full authority to make rulings as required. The decision of the Divisional Secretary shall be final, subject to the right of appeal set out in Rule 22 above.

23.3 The League shall have power to impose such penalties as it thinks fit in respect of any breaches of these rules or any breaches of discipline by individuals or by league clubs, including suspension and/ or the deduction of points and/ or relegation, and/or expulsion from the league. Any suspension and/ or the deduction of points may be carried over to the start of the next season.