

GUIDANCE NOTES ON THE RULES 2019-20

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 and appropriate officers in other Clubs of any errors.
 2. Before any game the home Club must:-
 - a) Confirm fixture details, by 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.
 - b) Confirm with both Umpires not earlier than 13 days, but not later than 6 days, before the fixture by speaking on the phone. 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 by speaking on the phone. Text messages and emails may also be used but ensure these are acknowledged. Posting the new date/start time and venue on the MRHA League website
 - d) 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. 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) 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.
- N.B. Any alterations to the home/away sheet must be initialised by the opposition captain/manager. Also ensure Goals Scored column is completed
4. After every home game the home Club must:-
 - a) In all Tiers, send the result by text as soon as possible and within 60 minutes of the game having finished to (+44) 7860 020620. For details, please see the section on submitting match results by text message elsewhere in the handbook.
 - 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) 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 MUST 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 of any changes of Club officials or new addresses, phone 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. In deciding whether a team's disciplinary record is/is not acceptable the Committee will take account of the number of yellow and red cards/ MMOs and assess these against the number of games played with each yellow card effectively scoring 1. The penalty for Red Cards will reflect the severity of the individual offence at each discipline review.

9. Transfers - For a player who has played league hockey anywhere in the current or previous season.

1. Download the Part A and B transfer forms from the MRHA website.
2. The player moving clubs needs to complete the first part of Part A and Part B. Part A then goes to his new club and Part B goes to his old club. All sections of the form must be completed and signed by a club official. Names need to be printed and the office they hold filled in. Part A needs two officials to sign, Part B only needs one official but that official must be in a position to confirm the player is free from any suspension and debt to the club. Both forms must then be sent with a £5 fee to the Transfer Secretary.

For any new player to a club who has not played league hockey anywhere in either in the current season or previous season. This includes players who have been playing outside the UK or playing at University or have been out of the game for more than a season.

3. The player needs to download the Part A (Club attachment) form from the MRHA website.
4. The player then completes the first part of Part A and the new club completes the form with two officials signing, printing their name and office they hold. This form is then sent to the Transfer Secretary. No Part B form or fee is required for this.

All documents can be sent by post or email. If by email the forms must be sent as attachments and not embedded in the emails.

NO PLAYER is eligible to play for his new club until the club receives a Part C form from the Transfer Secretary confirming his eligibility and the date from which he is able to play.

All queries regarding Transfers should be directed at the Transfers Secretary.

10. 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 where it is suggested that a promotion/ relegation issue has been affected.
- b) To assist with the interpretation of Rule 7.8, a "regular team" is judged by reference to the number of times that a player has appeared for a particular team in a club in the current season. The relevant number will vary according to the stage of the season (and whether one is looking at a proposed move for week 4 or for week 14). In general terms it will be considered relevant if the player has played for a higher team in over 50% of the league matches played by the higher team during that season). The decision remains at the discretion of the Divisional Secretary.
- c) 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/Tier 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).

- d) 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.
- e) 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.
- f) **Clubs are expected to have read the Rules. If in doubt, ask your Divisional Secretary for a ruling at the earliest opportunity!**

11. Umpire Report

- a) 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.