

# London Hockey League – Club FAQ (Season 2026-27)

**A quick reference for clubs and team captains. If your situation isn't covered, contact the committee.**

**About this guide:** The answers below are plain-English guidance. Each answer points to the relevant part of the Area Adult League Regulations by section, so the pointers stay valid even when the detailed clause numbers change. Where this guide and the current Regulations differ, the Regulations prevail. Key dates, fees and deadlines are collected at the end.

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## Registration and transfers

What's the registration deadline, and does a player have to be in GMS to play?

A new player must be correctly registered in GMS before the match to be eligible and must be registered by the season's final registration deadline (see Key dates and figures). If a player is registered before the deadline, they're eligible even if they haven't played yet. A player who isn't correctly registered in GMS can't play. See the registration regulations (Regulation 7).

Do junior players need to be registered in GMS?

Yes. A junior must be registered in GMS, linked to a parent's account. A parent being registered doesn't make the child eligible; the junior can't play until they're registered properly. See the registration regulations (Regulation 7). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

How does a player transfer between clubs, and how often can they?

Transfers go through GMS, and both clubs must approve online. If a club hasn't approved it within 10 days of the request, ask the committee to decide (the transfer can be approved automatically). A player can transfer between league clubs once per season; any late or extra transfer is at the committee's discretion (see Key dates and figures). It's the club's job to register players correctly, including checking whether a transfer is needed. See the registration regulations (Regulation 7).

A player signed up as a "new member" instead of transferring – can they play? And can someone play for two clubs?

If a player should have transferred but signed up as new, they aren't eligible until a proper GMS transfer is completed. A player can only be registered with one club at a time for Adult League competition; changing club means a transfer. (Cross-Area dual registration is different – see the dual-registration answer below.) See the registration regulations (Regulation 7).

## Why won't a transfer "back" to a former club go through in GMS?

When a player transfers back to a club they've already played for that season, GMS needs an extra step done by GMS Support, so you'll have to wait for them to action it. (There's no limit beyond the once-per-season transfer rule.) See the registration regulations (Regulation 7). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

## A player is moving between National League clubs – whose rules apply?

Transfers between National League (EHL) clubs are handled by England Hockey (the England Hockey Competitions Department) under the separate National League regulations, not by the London ALMC. Use the current EHL deadline for that season and division. See the National League regulations issued by England Hockey (not the Area regulations).

## Can a student or someone living away part of the time play for two clubs?

Dual registration is allowed only at Grade 3 and below, only where the two clubs are in different League Areas, and only with committee approval. The player can play for just one club per Matchweek, and you nominate a Primary Club (first call on selection) and a Secondary Club. It isn't allowed in a team's final four matches. See the registration regulations (Regulation 7).

## Gender categories

### Can a woman play in the men's/open league, and can a player switch categories mid-season?

Yes – a player can play in either the Women's (Female) category or the Open category. But once they start the season in one category, they're tied to it for the whole season. The only exception: a player who becomes ineligible for the Female category partway through the season can move from Female to Open. (This follows the England Hockey Trans and Non-Binary Participation Policy.) See the registration regulations (Regulation 7).

## Player eligibility, playing up/down and doubling up

### How many teams can a player drop down, and does moving within the same grade count?

Fair Selection lets you move players down a limited number of teams. At Grades 3–5 a player can drop a maximum of two teams; at Grades 1–2, a maximum of one. Two teams in the same grade or division still count as one step down. There's no limit on selecting a player up to a higher team. The key rule: never drop a player to strengthen a lower team – and one team down is preferred. See the team-selection regulations (Regulation 8).

How does the committee decide which team a player really belongs to, and when do I stop needing an SXP?

The committee looks at the player's GMS appearance record for the season. The team they've played for most recently and most often is their "Regular Team". A player must have played at least 50% of their appearances for a team (or a lower one) to be picked there when a higher team isn't playing that week (this includes National League/EHL breaks), when a team has two fixtures or a rearranged game, or in a team's final four matches. Once a player has played enough games for the lower team to pass the 50% mark, you no longer need an SXP. The committee will refuse an SXP to drop a player who is clearly a higher-team player, because it would strengthen the lower team – instead, bring a player up from a lower team. See the team-selection regulations (Regulation 8).

When can players "double up" (play for two of our teams on the same day)?

Doubling up is allowed at Grades 4 and 5 only, as a last resort to cover a player shortage. It's for your lowest or second-lowest team only, and the player can be no more than two teams below their Regular Team. A maximum squad size applies to the lower team, only a limited number of players may double up (including the goalkeeper), and each plays a capped number of games per match day, assessed over the whole Matchweek; the current limits are in Key dates and figures. A Grade 2 player can't double up into a Grade 3 team without an approved SXP. See the team-selection regulations (Regulation 8).

Can a goalkeeper double up between teams?

Yes, under the same doubling-up rules. A goalkeeper who is a regular player of the lower team can double up into a higher team. A goalkeeper who is clearly the regular higher-team keeper can't double down into a lower team, because that strengthens it – instead, bring up a keeper from a lower team. If a lower-team keeper wants to double up into a Grade 1 / National League (EHL) fixture, that's a decision for the England Hockey Competitions Department, not the ALMC. See the team-selection regulations (Regulation 8).

If an opponent forfeits, or we promote players late, do those players still need to meet the selection rules?

Yes. Players you move up after an opponent concedes, or select late for any reason, still have to meet the selection rules and hold any SXP they need – that's exactly what the SXP is for. Don't play higher-team players down to cover. See the team-selection regulations (Regulation 8).

Our 2s and 3s are in the same division – can players move freely between them?

Pick both squads on playing strength; even two teams in one division are expected to differ in strength. Moving a lower-team player up is fine; a regular higher-team player rotating down needs an SXP. If in doubt, submit one. Doubling up is still capped at the doubling-up squad maximum for the lower team. See the team-selection regulations (Regulation 8).

## Selection Exemption Passes (SXPs)

### What is an SXP and how do I request one?

An SXP (Selection Exemption Pass) lets the ALMC (Area League Management Committee) exempt a player from specific team-selection rules for a set period. To request one, fill in the official SXP form and give a clear, detailed explanation of your circumstances. The committee reviews every request and, if it approves, grants the exemption for a stated period. Requests must be for genuine situations. There's a weekly deadline each season (see Key dates and figures), so send yours in early. The committee won't tell you whether you need an SXP; if you think you might, submit one. See the team-selection regulations (Regulation 8) and the player-selection guidance (Appendix 4).

### Will the committee accept a late SXP, or bend the deadline?

Usually not. The weekly deadline (see Key dates and figures) is applied to be fair to every club. Very occasionally the committee has made a one-off exception at the end of the season, where nothing important was at stake and no further players cascaded down – but the club still had to complete the reopened form for the record. See the team-selection regulations (Regulation 8). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

### Can I get an SXP after the game, or for a last-minute emergency?

Yes. In exceptional or emergency cases – for example a player injured in the warm-up, or a goalkeeper who drops out ill on the morning of the match – an SXP can be granted after the event. You still record it on the SXP form afterwards. See the team-selection regulations (Regulation 8) and the player-selection guidance (Appendix 4).

### If the committee approves dropping a player down a team, what condition comes with it?

When the committee approves a drop-down SXP, it normally requires the team(s) above to field a full squad of 16 for their own fixtures that day. Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

### If I don't strictly need an SXP, can I still ask the committee to approve my selection?

Yes. If a player is eligible without an SXP, you can still ask the committee to approve the selection for peace of mind, and it can say yes. Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

## Promotion and relegation

How are final positions worked out when teams have played different numbers of games?

When teams have played different numbers of games – especially across Parallel Divisions – positions for promotion, relegation or reprieve are ranked by Points Per Match (PPM), which is total points divided by matches played, worked out to two decimal places. If two teams have the same PPM, the usual tie-breakers apply (goal difference, then goals scored). See the competition regulations (Regulation 4).

How many teams go up and down, and do second-placed teams get promoted?

Division winners are promoted. Second-placed teams may be promoted but aren't guaranteed to be – for example, from Grade 4's parallel divisions only the single best runner-up across those divisions goes up, ranked on PPM (Points Per Match). Bottom teams are relegated. At Grades 4 and 5 the numbers can change depending on how many teams enter for the next season. See the competition regulations (Regulation 4).

How do England Hockey Conference East results affect our relegations?

Relegation numbers at Grades 2 and 3 depend on how many London teams drop out of the England Hockey Conference East (the Conference East division holds only 10 teams, and some aren't London clubs – for example Tunbridge Wells and Brighton). A team relegated from Conference East might drop into a different Area rather than London, which changes how many London Premier teams go down. See the competition regulations (Regulation 4).

Why can't promotion and relegation be confirmed earlier, and are the GMS "red lines" final?

Promotion and relegation often can't be confirmed until the last matches of the season and until next season's team entries are in, because the outcome depends on Conference East results and on entries (especially at Grades 4 and 5). The red lines shown in GMS league tables are not official – they aren't kept up to date through the season and don't appear on the LH website. Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

## Entering teams and withdrawing teams

When's the deadline to enter teams for next season, and what does the form ask for?

Enter your London Men's/Women's League teams by the entry deadline (see Key dates and figures). Missing it can mean your club is left out of league hockey. The form asks for your total number of teams; your team numbers/names in order from highest to lowest (including any EHL teams in Grade 1); any new teams; any teams not continuing; any teams in the EHL or another

Area; and any special fixture requests. Your entry only counts once you click submit. Entries drive the league structure and fixtures (the aim is to finalise fixtures by early July). See the entry regulations (Regulation 3). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

### Can we enter a new team, enter late, or enter and then withdraw?

You can add a new team, and the committee decides its division and any promotion. Short extensions are sometimes given, but late entries can't be fitted in once fixtures are generated – unless a team at the same level withdraws afterwards. Please don't enter a team only to pull it out. See the entry regulations (Regulation 3). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

### How do we enter knockout cups, National League teams, and Masters/Vets teams?

Knockout and championship cups are run by England Hockey, not the ALMC – check the England Hockey website. National League (EHL) entries are confirmed by England Hockey; on the London form you enter your London teams below the EHL team. Masters/Vets teams are a separate competition run on their own and don't go on the London League entry form (EHL, Masters and Juniors are all entered separately). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

### Our club has teams in more than one Area – how does that work?

A club can run teams in different Areas. Fixtures across Areas are coordinated to balance home and away games. (The finer cross-Area eligibility rules aren't set out here.) See the entry regulations (Regulation 3). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

### Can we ask for our fixtures to be scheduled a certain way?

Yes. Put fixture-scheduling requests – such as matched home/away weeks for particular teams, or coordinating shared pitches or umpires – in Section 8 of the entry form. You can revise them later by email and they'll be added to your entry. They can't be guaranteed, because of scheduling constraints. See the fixtures regulations (Regulation 5). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

### What happens to a team's results if we withdraw it mid-season?

The team you withdraw must be your lowest-ranked in the league, unless the committee agrees otherwise. A withdrawn team stays in the tables with all its matches void, taking the lowest places, and usually rejoins in the bottom division the next season. Teams in your club below the withdrawn team may lose their promotion eligibility, at the committee's discretion. See the entry and withdrawal regulations (Regulation 3).

## Postponing, rearranging and starting fixtures

When can a match be postponed, and do we have to agree if the opposition asks?

A match can be postponed only if both the ALMC and the opposition agree – and you're under no obligation to agree. (Postponement for reasons other than weather or pitch really only applies at lower grades, where the priority is getting games played.) If you can't accommodate a request, the match may be forfeited instead. Just before or during a match, an accredited umpire – or, with unassessed umpires, either captain judging the pitch unsafe – can postpone or abandon on safety grounds. See the postponement regulations (Regulation 13).

Who decides on a weather or travel postponement, and by when must we replay?

A match can only be postponed for pitch, weather or travel problems, or a higher-priority fixture. The home team checks the pitch (using the Met Office) before the away team sets off; the away team can inspect at its own cost; for travel, the away team checks the Met Office and Highways 24–48 hours ahead. A postponed match must be played on the next League Reserve (slip) date unless one of the teams already has a fixture that day, and you must agree the new details within 10 days. See the postponement regulations (Regulation 13).

How do we actually rearrange a fixture, and who updates GMS?

Rearranging is led by the clubs: the two teams agree a new date between themselves (using the designated slip/Reserve dates where possible), and then the ALMC or your Divisional Secretary updates GMS. If the two teams can't agree a date by the cut-off, the committee will set a reasonable date; not playing on that date is treated as failing to honour the fixture. See the postponement regulations (Regulation 13).

A postponed match was never played – do we get any points?

No. A match that's never played is voided rather than counted as a draw: it's recorded as 0-0 with a one-point deduction for both teams to cancel it out. The committee would rather you played it while there's still time. Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

If our match is postponed, can our players drop down to a lower team that day?

No. If a match is postponed, a player who normally plays for the affected team can't instead drop to a lower team that weekend to strengthen it. See the team-selection regulations (Regulation 8).

How early can a match start, and can we be made to start early?

Each grade has an earliest and latest permitted start time, and these can be moved only by agreement. You can ask for an earlier start, but it can't be forced on the opposition; if they don't

agree the earlier time, move the match to later in the day. See the matchday regulations (Regulation 6).

## Walkovers and forfeited fixtures

We can't field a team – what's the penalty, which team forfeits, who records it?

The standard penalty is a 5-0 loss for the forfeiting team plus a one-point deduction (Grades 2–4; Grade 5 is similar, at the committee's discretion), and it's doubled in the last four fixtures. If a higher team forfeits while one of your lower teams still plays that day, that lower team keeps its result but also takes the same points deduction as the forfeiting team, plus one further point. Forfeit your lowest team and bring players up – don't play higher-team players down to cover. Tell the relevant Divisional Secretary (ALDS) by the scheduled kick-off time; teams do not enter the result themselves – the league admins log it in GMS. The team that didn't forfeit should still submit its intended team sheet to keep appearance stats right. See the forfeiture regulations (Regulation 14) and the penalty tariffs (Appendix 5).

What if we forfeit more than the allowed number of fixtures, especially at Grade 2?

A team that fails to fulfil more than the allowed number of matches can be withdrawn from the league, with all its previous results voided. Grade 2 is the strictest: only one walkover or forfeit is allowed. Going beyond the limit can bring a points deduction, decided case by case and setting no precedent. See the competition regulations (Regulation 4) and the forfeiture regulations (Regulation 14).

## Match sheets and match-day admin

Do we have to submit our result and match sheet every week, and by when?

Yes. The team sheet (your players) and the match sheet (goals and cards) must be completed in GMS by the match-day deadline (see Key dates and figures); tick "finalise" to submit. If you don't submit the result or match sheet, you'll get warnings and a fine for repeated failures (see Key dates and figures). A missing lower-team sheet matters because it stops the committee checking eligibility for related higher-team games. You can't edit the team sheet once the match sheet is finalised, so add umpires and details before you finalise. Any injury needing hospital treatment must be reported by the match-sheet deadline. See the match-sheet regulations (Regulation 9).

What's the fine for not entering our home fixture's time and venue in GMS?

There's a fine per fixture for not entering the time and venue of a home fixture in GMS (see Key dates and figures). Home fixture times and venues must be entered by the committee's deadlines (see Key dates and figures). See the fixtures regulations (Regulation 5). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

The opposition changed their team sheet after the game – is that allowed?  
What if we made an admin slip?

A genuine after-the-match correction – where players really were selected but got left off GMS by mistake – is treated as acceptable rather than a breach, especially if the club owns up and fixes it quickly. The team sheet must accurately show who played. There's no set rule for this; it reflects how the committee has handled it, case by case. Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

## Discipline and cards

Do two yellow cards mean an automatic red, and what about suspensions?

No. Two yellow cards for different offences do not automatically make a red card. A "Minor-Offence" red (another offence after a yellow) is recorded in GMS as two yellows plus one red. Four yellow cards in a season lead to a one-match suspension. See the discipline regulations (Regulation 12).

What happens if a team walks off the pitch, or accuses the umpire of cheating?

Both are treated as bringing the game into disrepute. Walking a team off gives the opposition a 5-0 walkover plus a one-point deduction. Accusing an umpire of cheating or bias should be dealt with during the game (a red card) or through the Match Misconduct Order (MMO) process afterwards. See the discipline regulations (Regulation 12). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

Can a team be relegated for bad discipline?

There's no regulation that relegates a team for poor discipline. Individual card offences are dealt with through the disciplinary process, not by relegating the team. Note, though, that there is a team-level yellow-card penalty for clubs that accumulate cards. See the discipline regulations (Regulation 12). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

## Ineligible players

What's the penalty for playing an ineligible player, and can it be reduced?

The match is recorded as a 5-0 loss (or a higher score if decided), a fine applies (tiers in Key dates and figures), and one point is deducted for each ineligible player (where the club was negligent, e.g. no approved transfer). Falsifying the match sheet is a separate, more serious breach – the match is recorded as a 5-0 loss, plus a fine and a point deduction, and the committee may decide on end-of-season relegation. The committee can raise or lower a sanction depending on the circumstances. Not knowing the rules is no defence. See the penalty tariffs (Appendix 5).

We think the opposition played an ineligible player – will the committee act on our suspicion?

The committee needs clear proof, not just suspicion or unverifiable evidence (for example an unidentifiable photo from someone who isn't independent), before it can sanction an alleged ineligible player. Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

How can we check the opposition fielded eligible players?

The committee pays close attention to eligibility in games that affect promotion or relegation late in the season and will confirm on request that a team's players were eligible (through their appearance history or an approved SXP). Raise any specific concern with your Divisional Secretary. Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

## Umpiring

Can we complain about or appeal an umpire's decisions?

No. The committee won't review or overturn decisions made by umpires during a match, and there's no appeal or complaint against an umpire's on-field decision (or non-decision). If you're concerned about an umpire's conduct or standard, use the London Hockey Officiating (LHO) feedback form – that's not the same as appealing a match. See the umpiring regulations (Regulations 2 and 11).

What's the minimum umpire standard, and how do we report poor or unsafe umpiring?

Each grade sets a minimum umpire accreditation level, rising with the grade; the current levels are in the umpiring regulations. To report poor or unsafe umpiring by an opponent's umpires, use the LHO (London Hockey Officiating) club-umpiring feedback form; LHO decides how to follow up with the appointing club. Developing and maintaining club-umpire standards is LHO's job, not the committee's. See the umpiring regulations (Regulation 11).

We only have one assessed umpire this week – can we get a waiver?

The committee has given one-off umpiring waivers when a club couldn't field two assessed umpires, on the basis that you use the best umpire you have and that any stand-in starts working towards the umpiring qualification. See the umpiring regulations (Regulation 11). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

Who handles umpire appointments and removals?

Umpire appointments and removals are handled by the LHO (London Hockey Officiating) Appointments team, not the committee – the League Committee has no say over appointments. The Area only appoints umpires to the higher divisions; lower divisions use club umpires. See the umpiring regulations (Regulation 11).

## Complaints about a match

What should we do about a match-day problem – player conduct or an umpiring decision?

Sort minor match-day issues out there and then – the captains and umpires present are responsible (under the FIH Rules, captains are responsible for their team's behaviour). The committee wasn't at the match, so it can't rule on subjective incidents, and it won't overturn umpiring decisions. For something serious that needs formal action, write it down promptly, submit a report through England Hockey's Misconduct Complaint process, and tell your Divisional Secretary. Report a breach of the regulations to your ALDS (Divisional Secretary) within 7 days. See the umpiring regulations (Regulations 2 and 11) and the breach-reporting regulations (Regulation 15).

## Appeals

How do we appeal an ALMC decision or penalty?

Submit an Appeal Notice (the form is in Appendix 6 of the Area Adult League Regulations) with the required deposit, refunded in whole or part if your appeal succeeds. The notice goes to the ALC (Area League Chair); the notice and deposit deadlines are in Key dates and figures. The grounds are an error of fact, a procedural error, or an unreasonable sanction (plus significant new evidence). You can appeal further to the England Hockey panel. See the appeals regulations (Regulation 16) and the appeal procedure (Appendix 6).

How do we appeal a confirmed relegation?

Appeal a confirmed relegation using the Appeal Notice form, addressed to the Area Appeal Panel, and quoting the promotion/relegation appeal ground. The committee will reply setting out its position and will flag Governance in case it turns into a formal appeal. See the competition regulations (Regulation 4) and the appeal procedure (Appendix 6). Based on a past ALMC ruling; if your situation differs, check with the committee.

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## Note

The dates, deadlines, fees and squad limits that change from season to season are collected in **Key dates and figures** below and are confirmed by the committee each season; the rest of the guide should hold from year to year. Verified against the Area Adult League Regulations 2026-27; reviewed 13 July 2026.

## Key dates and figures (2026-27)

| Item                                           | Current value                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>New-player registration deadline</b>        | 23:59 on 31 January                                                                                                              |
| <b>Transfers</b>                               | one per season, up to 31 January (late/extra at committee discretion)                                                            |
| <b>Team entry / withdrawal deadline</b>        | 1 May                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Home fixture time &amp; venue in GMS</b>    | pre-Christmas fixtures by 8 September; post-Christmas by 1 December                                                              |
| <b>Match sheet in GMS (team, goals, cards)</b> | by 20:00 on match day                                                                                                            |
| <b>SXP weekly deadline</b>                     | set by the committee each season (recently midday Friday)                                                                        |
| <b>Doubling up (Grades 4–5)</b>                | lower-team squad of at most 12; at most 3 players double up (including the goalkeeper); each plays at most 2 games per match day |
| <b>Fines</b>                                   | Tier 1 £25 · Tier 2 £50 · Tier 3 £100                                                                                            |
| <b>Appeal of an ALMC decision</b>              | £100 deposit; Appeal Notice within 5 days of notification; deposit within 7 days                                                 |
| <b>Further appeal</b>                          | request within 5 days of the panel's decision                                                                                    |
| <b>Promotion / relegation appeal</b>           | within 5 days of provisional notification                                                                                        |

## Changes for 2026-27

- New-player registration deadline moved to 31 January (from 1 February).
- Doubling up: maximum lower-team squad is now 12 (was 13); eligibility is assessed over the whole Matchweek; and the limit is measured as two teams below the player's Regular Team.
- Dual registration overhauled: nominate a Primary Club and a Secondary Club (the Primary Club has first call on selection); not allowed in a team's final four matches.
- A postponed match now defaults to the next League Reserve (slip) date, unless a team already has a fixture that day.
- The 20:00 match-sheet deadline now covers goals and cards; any injury needing hospital treatment must be reported by the same deadline.
- A new team-level yellow-card penalty has been introduced, and the recording of a Minor-Offence red card is now set out.
- Promotion/relegation and further-appeal deadlines are now 5 days; the Appeal Notice now goes to the Area League Chair.
- The team-withdrawal rule has been renumbered (the rule itself is unchanged).