



## Welcome to the March 2026 Newsletter

This issue of the South Central Hockey Newsletter contains updates from:

- AGM Date
- State Schools
- Funding Support
- England Hockey Awards
- League Playoffs
- Promotion & Relegation
- SXP in the last weeks

## South Central AGM

**SOUTH CENTRAL HOCKEY**

### AGM

Thursday 16th July 2026  
Online link will be sent to all who pre-register before  
Monday 13th July



In order for us to help you we would like to remind you all to please keep all your contact details up-to-date on [GMS](#) and for those who are committee members through the [England Hockey Club portal](#). It is this method that allows us to communicate information to you.

**Save the date which is**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July at 19:30**

The Articles of Association require that the membership have to vote on who they wish to hold leadership roles in their organisation. This includes the Directors and Chairs of each committee.

The current incumbents have agreed to carry on in post. However two Directors are required to stand for election each season.

We are therefore seeking expressions of interest for the roles below. These should be emailed to [operations@southcentral.hockey](mailto:operations@southcentral.hockey)  
Job descriptions are on the website.

[Chair](#) and [Finance Director](#)

# Junior Hockey

## State Schools Hockey

South Central Hockey, under the guidance of England Hockey, is pleased to announce the 2026 State Schools Hockey Tournament. This year's competition is a tiered competition aimed at both schools that are new to hockey and schools that are strong at hockey. This will truly be a festival of hockey for everyone! The tournament will be split into two tiers with a 7-a-side competition with goalkeeper for Tier 1 and a 6-a-side competition without goal keeper for Tier 2. Eligible players will be in school years 7, 8 & 9 (U 14s ).

Tier 1 squads will have a maximum of 10 players with a fully kitted goalkeeper. Tier 2 squads will have a maximum of 9 players. Boys and girls will play separate competitions. Full rules will be provided at the tournament.

To help introduce schools to hockey, South Central aims to help organise training sessions by asking local clubs to help with some coaching sessions. Please let us know if this is of interest to you.

Entry is at a cost of £15 per team for administration. Closing date for entries is 10th March.

More details and entry link:

<https://southcentral.englandhockey.co.uk/state-schools-tournament-2026>



**SOUTH CENTRAL HOCKEY** **South Central Hockey** **ENGLAND HOCKEY**  
**State School Competition 2026**

**Reading Hockey Club, Sonning Lane, Sonning,  
Reading, RG4 6ST**  
**Tuesday, 17th March 2026 - 10am to 4.30pm**

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Follow this link to enter:  
<https://forms.gle/FvuaePUx7hS7LMsg8>

# Junior Hockey

## State School programmes – Area funding support

South Central Hockey supports **state school engagement** through the Junior Hockey Framework, through delivery of our annual State School tournament.

By providing an opportunity to play hockey and delivering free/subsidised hockey through outreach programmes focusing on inclusion in underserved areas; the aim is to get more kids playing hockey in schools. Akin to this, England Hockey offer teacher training and tailored programs to increase participation, particularly in primary schools.



We are keen to support club links into state schools to deliver local hockey by providing funding and support for equipment to reduce barriers for schools. By making hockey easier to deliver, providing targeted support, and ensuring engaging and fun experiences, our aim is to increase participation in state schools in our area.

We have already provided funding to three clubs in our area to purchase equipment to enable them to continue their work through their outreach programmes into state schools. Requests for funding should be sent to [operations@southcentral.hockey](mailto:operations@southcentral.hockey) briefly describing the initiative for which you are seeking support.



Details and event dates are on our website:

<https://southcentral.englishockey.co.uk/junior-hockey-in-the-south-central-area/schools-competitions>

## England Hockey Awards

Has someone made a real difference to you this season? Do



you want to celebrate someone who has achieved great things? Nominate them for The England Hockey Awards - Celebrating the Spirit of Hockey.

### Discover the 18 prestigious awards being presented at the England Hockey Awards 2026

Nominations are now open for this year's awards and close on **Sunday 12 April 23:59**.

The England Hockey Awards will be held on **Saturday, 6 June 2026** at the Athena in Leicester. This is where we will recognise the outstanding achievements of individuals and clubs across the hockey community to celebrate the Spirit of Hockey.

To make a nomination, please complete the form [here](#)

[More details are on our website](#)

## Updated Rules of Hockey

Many of you will know that FIH has issued an updated set of the rules of hockey, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

England Hockey has yet to decide how and when it will adopt these new rules so, until you hear from England Hockey, or from South Central Officiating, the rules of hockey for games played under England Hockey remain unchanged.

If you have any questions about this please contact the Area Officiating Committee ([chair.officiating@outhcentral.hockey](mailto:chair.officiating@outhcentral.hockey)).

## League Play-Offs

The decision has been made to promote three teams to a higher division when fed from two divisions below.

To determine the third promotion, the Adult League Management Committee will hold a play-off day on Saturday, 18 April 2026, at Aldershot Garrison, between the second-placed teams in the feeder divisions (Reg 4.5.4).



Correspondingly, at least three teams will be relegated from the higher divisions to accommodate the third promotion from the feeder leagues, depending on relegations from the National League. Further details will follow when the arrangements for the play-off day are finalised.

[Details can be found on our website](#)

## Promotion & Relegation

As we are now entering the final six weeks of the season, we thought it was time to give guidance on promotion and relegation this season. This will be similar to previous seasons, but with an additional factor - the play-offs between the second-place teams in the North/South Div 1; Thames/Cherwell Div 1 and Solent/Forest Div 1s. Play-off will take place on the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at Aldershot. The play-offs have been established as a result of club feedback requesting more promotions.

## Promotion



As in previous seasons, promotion will be for the top two in most South Central Divisions. But, there are some exceptions:

- In Premier 1, only the 1<sup>st</sup> placed team will be promoted to the National League.
- In North 1 and South 1, only the first placed team will receive automatic promotion. As mentioned above the two second placed teams will play-off for the final place in Premier 2.

Cherwell 1, Thames 1, Solent 1 and Forest 1 will similarly have only one automatic promotion, with the second placed teams going forward to a play-off.

## Relegation

All teams relegated will return to the Area/Sub-area to which their club “belongs”. This means Relegation may impact some sub areas more than others, if the sub area receives multiple teams. In this case this will result in more or less relegations to enable the Divisions to remain at 12 teams for next season.

For example, Men and Women’s Premier 1s will “lose” one promoted team to the National League, but looking at the Conference Leagues (for both men and women) it is likely that only a side from the women’s will be relegated. There will be an extra relegation from Premier 2 women, to enable Premier 2 to return to a 12-team division.

As this is a complex situation, promotion and relegation lines are NOT planned to be added to GMS or the website currently.

[More Details:](#)

## SXP’s in the final weeks of the season

The ALMC have decided that, in the last 4 weeks of the season, if a team wants to play a player down to a lower team, because of the 50% rule, and they are not sure if the player can play for a particular team, they have to submit an SXP.

They can ask their ALDS for help on match numbers, but the SXP Committee has the final decision. SXPs must be submitted by 21:00 on the Tuesday prior to the match, to ensure every situation gets a fair assessment.

[More details:](#)