

Summary of Changes to the 2026–27 Area League Regulations

The 2026–27 regulations contain a number of revisions, which are covered in the following tables. A short summary:

- **Player eligibility** sees a notable addition: **Non-UK Passport Holders section** (Regulation 7.5), who must comply with “EH Participation in Hockey for non-UK Passport Holders” policy referenced in Appendix 2 (a UK Government requirement). The old **No Objection Certificate (NOC) regime has been removed entirely** and replaced by this framework – the NOC definition has also been deleted from the Glossary.
- **Dual Registration** is expanded and tightened. Players must nominate a Primary Club and a Secondary Club, with the Primary Club retaining selection priority. Dual Registration is now not permitted in a team's final 4 matches, a transfer is required to change Primary Club, and ALMC approval does not persist beyond the end of the season.
- **Regulation 8 Player Eligibility – Team Selection** has a number of changes:
 - The Doubling Up definition has shifted from "same match day" to "**same Matchweek**" – broadening the window over which eligibility is assessed.
 - 8.3 Movement Of Players has been revised – e.g., 8.3.4 "When a Higher-Ranked Team has no Fixture or Does Not Play its Scheduled Fixture", plus a clarification that prior-season data may be used in Week 1.
 - 8.4 Doubling Up has been tightened, with a number of modifications. For example, the doubling-up squad cap is reduced from 13 to 12 players. Note the checklist for circumstances that permit doubling up.
 - Regulation 8.4.1 revised: When considering eligibility of a player to double up the player is considered to have been selected to play for the **higher** team and is doubling up to play for the **lower** team.
 - 8.5 Player Eligibility For Doubling Up includes a revised table (8.5.4 Doubling Up Summary)
- Regulation 9: match-sheet confirmation now explicitly covers **goals and cards** (not just the score), and hospital-treatment injuries must be reported by the match-sheet deadline.
- 12.2 Yellow/Red Cards introduces a **new team-level yellow-card penalty regime** (Regulation 12.2.1(b)).
- Regulation 14 (Failure to Honour) is restructured with a grade-by-grade penalty matrix, including a cascade penalty for clubs whose lower teams also forfeit.
- **Half-time is 5 minutes** across Grades 2–5 unless agreed before the match commences, and the playing quarters format becomes the default for Premier Divisions unless the home team advises otherwise (i.e., the notification direction has been inverted compared with 2025–26).
- **Appeal deadlines tightened:** Promotion/relegation appeal window reduced from 7 to 5 days (4.5.10(b)); Further-Appeal Request window reduced from 14 to 5 days (Appendix 6, 6.1.2).

Main Changes – Regulations

Reg #	Regulation	Comment / Nature of Change
Glossary	Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NEW terms added: "ALCC" (Adult League Competitions Committee), "Dual Registration", "Primary Club", "Secondary Club" – REMOVED: "NOC (No Objection Certificate)" (consistent with deletion of old 7.5) – REVISED: "Doubling Up" redefined from "same match day" to "same Matchweek" – REVISED: "Ineligible Player" broadened ("due to these Regulations or the EH Disciplinary Regulations") – Existing definitions updated for consistency with the ALCC/ALMC governance structure
1	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No substantive changes
2	Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – REVISED qualifier at 2.9: umpires may adjudicate on Regulations "as required to make match day decisions, e.g. under Regulation 13.2" – REVISED 2.11: A wording clarification for Grade 5 designation
3	Entry into the League	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – REVISED: dedicated 3.4 Team Withdrawal; development team requests must now use "the process specified by the ALMC" (3.3.6); and consent under 3.1.2 now expressly incorporates all EH Policies – REVISED: Liaison Officer details to be advised to ALM "by the date specified"
4	The Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Changes to an Area League pyramid will be agreed by the AMC (previously ALMC) – Any significant changes to Area League pyramids or the Grades of Divisions will be reviewed and agreed by the ALWG – REVISED 4.1: New section headings: Responsibility, Shape and Grading. No substantive changes – REVISED 4.5.8: vacancy-filling priority reordered: Promotion now ranks ABOVE Reprieve (was below previously) – REVISED 4.5.10(b): promotion/relegation appeal window reduced from 7 to 5 calendar days
5	Fixtures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – REVISED 5.1.4: only University Clubs may request reschedules for fixtures outside term time (was "Clubs"); weekends immediately before/after term now explicitly count as part of term – REVISED 5.2.2: opposition must be informed before GMS is changed (was "as soon as GMS is changed") – NEW 5.2.3 trigger: agreement required to change details after the ALDS has locked the fixture (in addition to the 21-day window) – REVISED 5.2.4(c) / Appendix 3 Rule 5.1: Premier Division matches now played as four quarters unless the home team advises otherwise (direction reversed from 2025-26) – Minor wording updates elsewhere
6	Matchday Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NEW 6.3.4: Clubs must supply "appropriate illumination certification" on request to use the floodlight late-start allowance
7	Player Eligibility – Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NEW section 7.5 "Non-UK Passport Holders" must comply with the EH Participation in Hockey for non-UK Passport Holders policy (Appendix 2) – REMOVED: Old 7.5 "No Objection Certificate (NOC)" section has been deleted entirely – NOC regime no longer exists – REVISED 7.1(a): "New Player" test changed from "has not played for another club in a League match in England" to "has not previously registered on GMS" – NEW 7.2.3: explicit one-club-at-a-time rule for Adult League; players whose last game was outside England & Wales must satisfy both transfer and registration requirements – 7.2.4 Multiple Registrations: Expanded dual registration rules: player must nominate a Primary Club and a Secondary Club; Primary Club retains selection priority. Additional tightening: not permitted in a team's final 4 matches; a transfer is required to change Primary Club; ALMC approval does not last beyond end of season

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NEW 7.4 fallback: a player who becomes ineligible for the female category mid-season may move to the Open/Men's category – 7.3 Age Requirements: Players must be aged 13 or above on the day of the fixture unless ALMC has approved players aged 12 in Development Team matches only [wording tidied; substantive rule carried forward from 2025-26] – Registration deadline moved from 1st February to 23:59 on 31st January (7.6.2) – NEW 7.7.1: explicit ALMC arbitration role for transfer refusals (in addition to the existing appeal route)
8	Player Eligibility – Team Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NEW 8.2.2(c): "Clubs are expected to pull players up from lower teams before requesting a double up" – NEW 8.3.2(d): second teams of clubs whose first teams play in the EHL Premier Division may play SXP-approved players in line with EHL Regulation 8.3.5 – NEW 8.3.4(c): data from the prior season may be used to determine eligibility in the first week of the season – REVISED section 8.4.1: When considering eligibility of a player to double up the player is considered to have been selected to play for the HIGHER team and is doubling up to play for the LOWER team – REVISED 8.4.2(b) reference point: "no more than two teams apart in the Club's hierarchy" is now "no more than two teams below the player's Regular Team" – REVISED Doubling-up conditions; note the checklist conditions – NEW 8.4.3(c): Regulation 8.3.6 (final-four 50% appearances rule) now applies to both teams in a doubling-up scenario – Maximum squad size when doubling up is reduced from 13 to 12 players (8.4.2(c)) – REVISED 8.5.1(a): "previous match day" changed to "previous Matchweek" – wider restriction on higher-team players doubling up for a lower team – NEW 8.5.1(c): regular outfield players explicitly allowed to play once as GK and once as outfield on the same match day (previously only stated for regular GKs). – Refer to the detailed Doubling Up Summary table (8.5.4)
9	Team Sheets, Scores & Match Sheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – REVISED: Match-sheet completion deadline is 20:00 on the day of the match for all grades – NEW: Team officials listed on the match sheet must be aged 16 or over (9.3.2) – REVISED 9.4.3: the 20:00 confirmation now covers goals AND cards, not just the score – REVISED: 9.4.4 now states "colour of card & recipient," "type of goal & scorer," and use of "estimated times (not 0)" where exact times not recorded – NEW 9.4.5: injuries requiring hospital treatment must be reported by the match-sheet deadline
10	Dress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No substantive changes – A reminder that shirt numbers are mandatory
11	Umpires & Match Officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NEW: EHO (England Hockey Officiating) membership suspensions now explicitly recognised; a suspended EHO umpire may not officiate at any grade (11.4.2) – NEW 11.5.3: on EHO notification, the ALMC may temporarily or permanently suspend an umpire from League competition – REVISED 11.8.2: EHO added as a valid channel for umpire-conduct issues – REVISED 11.8.3: umpire report deadline moved from Wednesday to Monday after the match (and two days after a non-Saturday fixture) – Minimum accreditation requirements unchanged from 2025–26
12	Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NEW: Team penalty for accumulating yellow cards (12.2.1(b)); penalties are listed in Appendix 5 – Player suspensions: Clubs must inform ALDS of pending suspensions and their duration (12.2.6) – 12.2.3 Red Cards: Note proper recording of a Minor Offences red card (i.e., two yellows plus one red to be recorded in GMS)

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13	Postponement or Abandonment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – REVISED 13.1: "Venue" added as a permissible reason for postponement – NEW default at 13.3.1(a): Postponed/abandoned matches must be played on the next League Reserve date unless a team already has a fixture then (stronger default than the previous "agreed within 10 days using a Reserve date if possible") – Rearrangement deadlines and other procedures largely unchanged
14	Failure to Honour a Fixture or Forfeiture of a Match	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NEW: Failure to honour a fixture in the last four scheduled fixtures of the season: all deducted penalty points are doubled (Appendix 5) – Note the grade-by-grade penalty matrix in Appendix 5 (Grade 2, 3–4, 5) – NEW: Forfeiting team to notify ALDS, at the time of the forfeiture decision and no later than the scheduled time of the match (14.3) – NEW 14.2.3: "A team cannot elect not to continue the match" – REVISED: Forfeiting team to notify ALDS, at the time of the forfeiture decision and no later than the scheduled time of the match (14.3)
15	Breach of Regulations & Penalties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – REVISED 15.3: Any club or team that believes that there has been a breach of the regulations in a match has 7 days from that match to report it to their relevant ALDS – Penalty tariffs revised in Appendix 5 (see Appendix 5 entry below)
16	Appeals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Grounds for appeal reorganised: 16.1.3 lists three grounds (error of fact, procedural error, unreasonable sanction) – NEW: Separate clause for new evidence (16.1.4): evidence that could not reasonably have been obtained earlier and may have caused a materially different decision – REVISED 16.3.2: Further-Appeal grounds changed from two grounds + "reasonable prospect of success" test to three standalone grounds (error of fact, procedural irregularity, manifestly unreasonable); the "reasonable prospect of success" filter has been dropped – Detailed procedures and timelines remain in Appendix 6 (note new 5-day Further-Appeal window – see Appendix 6) – Appeal deposit remains at £100

8. Player Eligibility – Team Selection

Element	2026–27 Position	Change Type & Impact
Aims (8.1)	Aims substantively unchanged; emphasis on avoiding "unselectable" players retained	Clarification only
Pull-up Expectation (8.2.2(c))	NEW: clubs expected to pull players up from lower teams before requesting a double up	New expectation on club selection practice
EHL Premier 2nd teams (8.3.2(d))	NEW: second teams of EHL Premier clubs may play SXP-approved players per EHL Reg 8.3.5	Clarification
Prior-Season Data (8.3.4(c))	NEW: prior-season data may be used to determine eligibility in Week 1	Resolves ambiguity at the start of a new season
Doubling-up Conditions (8.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Max squad size when doubling up reduced from 13 to 12 players (8.4.2(c)) – Per-player limit of two games per match-day – Reference point shifts to "two teams below player's Regular Team" (8.4.2(b)) – Final-four 50% rule now applies to BOTH teams (8.4.3(c)) – Conditions now presented as checklist items 8.4.3(a)–(d) 	Tighter squad cap; broader eligibility scope

Appendices

Appx #	Title	What changed & why it matters
1	League Titles & Divisions	(Unchanged)
2	England Hockey Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NEW: Non-UK Visa Eligibility added "EH Participation in Hockey for non-UK Passport Holders", cross-referenced from Regulation 7.5 – Existing EH policy list updated for current framework
3	Variations to FIH Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Half-time interval will be 5 minutes, unless agreed before the match starts – Quarters format is the default for Premier Division unless varied by the home team (was optional in 2025–26). Four quarters of 17½ minutes – NEW Rule 8.2: "Time is not to be stopped after a goal is awarded"; this is a distinct new rule variance – No time stoppage for penalty corners – Suspension-timing clauses unchanged from 2025–26
4	Player Selection Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – REVISED: "General Principles" section added – Doubling-up conditions, GK rules and SXP triggers for each grade – Practical scenario examples expanded from the previous narrative-style guidance notes
5	Standard Penalties & Fines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Penalty tables revised – NEW: Team yellow-card penalties added (12.2.1(b)) – NEW 6.1.5: "Unauthorised personnel in the team's designated bench area" (warning → T1 fine → T1 + 1 point) – REVISED 7 (fielding ineligible player at Grade 5): now split into "administrative error" vs "negligent" with different tariffs – REVISED 7.7 (Transfer/registration breach): suspension now capped at max 3 games (or until registration corrected, whichever is longer) – REVISED 11 (Failure to supply umpire): now split into two offences – "failure to supply umpire or match official" and "failure to supply properly qualified umpire or competent & equipped match official"; Grade 3-4 penalties now include 1-point deductions at Stage 2 – NEW 12.2.6(b): "Failure to inform ALDS of length of player's suspension" (T1/T2/T3 escalator) – REVISED 14 (Failure to Honour cascade): result stands but same point deduction +1 additional point applied to the lower team – NEW 14.2.2: "Failure to complete a fixture" added as a distinct offence separate from Failure to Honour – Regulation 13 penalties: 13.2.2 (not informing ALDS by deadline) and 13.3.1 rearrangement penalties now included

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6	Appeal Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – REVISED 1.1.2 / 1.1.3: Appeal Notice now addressed to the ALC (Area League Chair), not the ALMC – REVISED 1.2.3: Deposit refund extended to AAP discretion – NEW 2.2.4: Respondent duty to attend oral hearings – REVISED 4.1.1: AAP outcomes restructured from 4 to 5, splitting "dismiss for failing eligibility criteria" from "dismiss and uphold" – REVISED 6.1.2: Further-Appeal Request window reduced from 14 days to 5 days – REVISED 6.2: Document bundle to EHCD can now be hard copy OR electronic (2025-26 required both) – REVISED 6.3.3: Further-Appeal deposit refund now includes EHAP Chair discretion – NEW 6.4.1(d): on granting permission, the EHAP Chair may stay all or part of the sanction pending the appeal – REVISED 6.6.1: EHAP outcomes restructured from 3 to 5 (mirrors 4.1.1) – NEW section 6.7 "Sanctions on Further Appeal": explicit power to impose, increase or decrease sanctions, and to order costs
7	Duties of Appointed Match Officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Restructured with new sub-headings: 1 Appointment, 2.1 Before The Match, 2.2 During The Match, 2.3 After The Match – Updated cross-reference to Regulations 12.2.3 and 12.2.5 (permanent suspension rules)