



South Central Adult Leagues Management Committee (ALMC)

Welcome Letter for 2026/2027 season

Welcome to another season of the SC Adult leagues. The ALMC look forward to working with all clubs and teams for the new season. Also, several clubs have expanded, and an additional 8 Women's and 5 Open/Men's teams have joined the lowest leagues, and they are most welcome. For your diaries, please note that there will be an online briefing session, that representatives of every SC club are expected to attend, at 19:00 on 1 September 2026, via [this link](#).

The list of divisional responsibilities is provided at [this link](#). Jo Copsey has taken over from Emma O'Neill the role of Women's North Divisional Secretary (DS).

Checklist for 2026/2027

Please see [this link](#) for a checklist of requirements for clubs/teams to complete before or during the new season.

Fixture Planning

Clubs and teams are reminded to check Regulation 6.3.1 (match start times) when planning the start and finish of their "hockey day" and to consider travelling distance for their opposition (including to/from IoW as necessary), so as not to overburden teams with very early starts, or late finishes. You are allowed to bring matches forward in the season to convenient days with the opposition and DS agreement, but you cannot move them into a League Reserve Day; The South Central (SC) Calendar, including League Reserve Dates, is at [this link](#). Please note that there is a League Reserve Day on SUNDAY 13 December 2026. **The last league day of the season is 10 April 2027, with NO league matches after this date, except the Play-offs on 24 April 2027.**

League Structure Changes

There are some changes to the League Structure this season. Due to an increase of teams, we have had to increase the size of some divisions to 13/14, which negated our ultimate aim of having 12-team divisions. **However, we still plan to achieve this in 2027/28 with additional relegations as necessary.** The divisional structure for 2026/27 is on the SC website at [this link](#).

The ALMC have agreed to continue to promote 3 teams to a higher division when fed from two divisions below. The play-off day proved very successful this year, and will be continued in next year, at Aldershot on 24 April 2027

Play-off Match	Winner Promoted to
2nd in North Open/Men's Div 1 v 2nd in South Open/Men's Div 1	Open/Men's Premier Div 2
2nd in Thames Open/Men's Div 1 v 2nd in Cherwell Open/Men's Div 1	Open/Men's North Div 6
2 nd in Solent Open/Men's Div 1 v Forest Open/Men's Div 1	Open/Men's South Div 6
2 nd in North Women's Div 1 v 2 nd in South Women's Div 1	Women's Premier Div 2
2 nd in Thames Women's Div 1 v 2 nd in Cherwell Women's Div 1	Women's North Div 3
2 nd in Solent Women's Div 1 v 2 nd in Forest Women's Div 1	Women's South Div 3

There is the possibility that four teams could be relegated from the Conference Divisions into Open/Men's Premier 1, and two teams from the Conference Divisions into Women's Premier 1; albeit this would be a worst-case scenario (we very much hope South Central Clubs in the Conference Divisions all have successful seasons), such relegations will have a significant knock-on effect on lower divisions.

As in previous years, the ALMC has maintained the policy not to permit "Development" teams in South-Central (Reg 3.3.6/7.3.2), so this term has been removed from all team names for the forthcoming season to ensure clarity, as the word "development" implies the application of the "Development" team regulations. It has been agreed that the ALMC will consult with the clubs



regarding “Development Teams” for season 27/28. A consultation document along with the proposed development regulations will be distributed in due course, but this will not be discussed at the Briefing Evening.

Adult League Regulations (ALR) Changes

The ALR have undergone the customary annual review across all 8 areas, and there have been several changes that affect clubs and teams. You will find the new ALR at [this link](#) on the South-Central Website. I strongly urge you to read the new document.

There is an EH summary of the regulation changes at [this link](#), but all clubs/teams will be briefed on how the ALMC intends to apply the new regulations, at the meeting on 1 September. The ALMC has already held a meeting with the SC Governance Director, reading through the new regulations, and we aim to provide a clear and consistent process should any penalty notices be required. The Chair South Central Officiating will attend the briefing to answer any club questions on the Rules of Hockey. Umpires will be briefed separately.

There have been some GMS Changes to support the ALR changes, found at [this link](#).

Penalty Notice Process

The process for Penalty Notices will be very similar to last year, with some small updates to the form. The procedure will remain that the DS will check GMS and determine if any errors or breaches of the regulations seem to have occurred. Most penalties will be raised within a few days of the match, but some take longer to investigate by the DS and, therefore, will be delayed. Some errors/breaches will be handled with a “Formal Warning” in the first instance, as a learning process. The penalties are laid down in Appendix 5 of the ALR, and the ALMC has agreed a standard response to each breach with the SC Governance Director. The “Date of Decision” is the starting date for appeal requests, which must be made within five days of that date, and the appeal fee must be paid within seven days of that date. If you believe that the opposition has contravened the regulations, the limit for reporting this is 7 days after the match (Reg 15.3), and **historical reports will not be entertained**.

Selection Exemption Passes (SXPs)

As mentioned in the end-of-season letter for 2025/26 there were a considerable number of applications for Selection Exemption Passes, especially in the last few weeks of the season. Many were turned down due to the Section 8 “playing down” regulation, which is very specific, especially the count-back of games played for teams. There will be an even more automated system this season, taking advantage of MS Forms to capture and collate requests to give the SXP group a quicker opportunity to review them and communicate the outcome. You will find the new SXP [form link](#) on the South-Central Website and are reminded that this must be submitted by 21:00 on the Tuesday before the first match (max of 2 Matchweeks) of the requested SXP. More details will be shared with clubs before the start of the season.

As an ALMC, we aim to ensure the regulations are followed consistently by both the ALMC and all clubs to ensure fair competition, and where an exemption or exception is requested, the outcome is fair to all the clubs affected by the decision.

We wish you well for the 2026-2027 season, and if you have any questions, please contact your DS, who will be more than willing to help.

Best wishes,
Richard Wood,
Chair ALMC