



ADULT DEVELOPMENT TEAM
GUIDANCE NOTES 2026-27
Updated 26-Jul-26

1 OVERVIEW

The West Hockey League (“WHL”) allows Clubs to register a team in the lowest divisions as an Adult Development Team. The intention is to help encourage participation and provide experience of League hockey.

The WHL considers Development team status to be temporary, with clubs aspiring to establish a the Development team as a “Full” or “Non-Dev” league team by their third season.

Development teams should provide club members with the experience of playing League hockey, and facilitate learning of the administrative requirements to operate a team. The intention is to provide a means to play hockey with in a structured way with regular fixtures, whilst assisting with the development of young or returning players and support their transition to adult league hockey.

Clubs must re-apply each season to operate their lowest team as a Development team.

2 INCLUSION OF DEVELOPMENT TEAMS

- a) Development teams can only play in the lowest ranked regional divisions within the West Hockey League.
- b) Requests for Development teams must be made with clubs’ regular application to the league in May of each season.
- c) Approval will be dependent on league structures for the upcoming season
- d) The status of Development Team is for the full season. Clubs cannot switch to Development status mid-season

3 APPLICATION/VARIATION OF LEAGUE REGULATIONS

3.1 Accumulation of Points and Divisional Standings

- a) Results of matches involving development teams should be recorded as for regular fixtures.
- b) Whist the season is underway league tables will be presented inclusive of matches involving development teams.
- c) At the conclusion of the season, all matches involving development teams will be removed from league tables, and final standing will be presented **excluding** any development team results for the purpose of determining Division champions and promotion.
- d) Where a team is entirely comprised of Development teams, the final standings will remain and a Divisional champion will be recognised.
- e) Development teams are not eligible for promotion in any circumstance.

3.2 Matchday Administration

- a) All Team sheets and match sheets should be recorded for the match. This includes goalscorers, umpires and cards.
- b) Failure to complete match sheets will be monitored and will be taken into account for future applications for Development teams and also may result in penalties for repeated failure to complete match sheets

3.3 Player Selection and Eligibility

- a) All players taking part in the match must be a minimum 13 years old
- b) A Development Team must have a minimum of six (6) core players who have not played for another team in the league on that day.
- c) Development teams must have a minimum of seven (7) players for matches to be able to go ahead.

Note: If a team does not expect to be able to meet these two criteria (b) and (c) for the majority of matches, participation is NOT recommended.

- a) Development team squads may be supplemented as follows:
 - a. Players of any standard may “double up” and/or “play down” from other teams within the club
 - b. Development teams may loan players from the opposing team for a particular fixture in order to allow the match to be played. Matches may be reduced to 9 v 9 (or similar) with the agreement of both teams.

Note: Whilst “doubling up” and “playing down” are permissible, players should be selected on appropriate playing standard and availability, and it is expected that all players taking part in the matches involving Development teams will play in the “spirit of development” and maintain a friendly competitive environment.

3.4 Postponements and Un-played Matches

- a) Development teams may cancel fixtures without penalty if they are unable to field a side. Standard match cancellation regulations must be followed.
- b) If a Development team fails to fulfil half their fixtures in any four week period the ALMC reserve the right to withdraw them from the League
- c) Development teams who forfeit four or more games will be subject to penalties of a £100 fine

- d) Non-Development teams who cancel fixtures against a Development team will be penalised as per Regulation *"APPENDIX 6 - STANDARD PENALTIES & TARIFFS OF FINES"* (i.e., points deduction)

Note: It is advised that clubs seek advice from their Divisional Secretary prior to matches if there is doubt. The ALMC reserves the right to exclude any Dev teams that abuse any element of this flexibility.

4 REQUIREMENTS & ADVICE FOR REGULAR TEAMS PLAYING DEV TEAMS

The following information is presented as best-practice for Non-Dev teams playing matches against Dev teams:

- a) All Team sheets and match sheets should be recorded for the match. This includes goalscorers, umpires and cards.
- b) Players of any standard may "double up" and/or "play down" from other teams within the Non-Dev club against the Dev team.
- c) Failure to fulfil the fixture will result in penalties being applied as per a regular league fixture.

Note: As for the Dev teams, players should be selected on appropriate playing standard and availability, and it is expected that all players taking part in the matches involving Development teams will play in the "spirit of development" and maintain a friendly competitive environment.