

## South Central Adult Leagues Management Committee (ALMC)

### Welcome Letter for 25/26 season



Welcome to the fifth season of the SC Adult leagues. The ALMC look forward to working with all clubs and teams for the new season. Particularly, we welcome Aldershot and Farnham HC into South Central (from the Southeast Area), with their 4 Men's and 4 Women's teams, who have been slotted into the league at the appropriate levels. Also, several clubs have expanded, and an additional 9 Women's and 8 Men's teams have joined the lowest leagues, and they are most welcome.

You will see from the [grade diagram](#), we also have the pleasure of welcoming a new divisional secretary, Adrian Potter, who will handle Open/Men's Cherwell. A list of divisional responsibilities is provided at [this link](#).

### Checklist for 2025/26

Please see [this link](#) for a checklist of requirements for clubs/teams to complete before or during the new season. The immediate items we need you to attend to are:

- Check your GMS Contacts (club and team admins) are up to date **and visible** to enable communication between clubs/teams and with your Divisional Secretary (DS);
- Add start times and venue to all home matches on GMS for pre-Christmas matches by 8<sup>th</sup> Sep;
- University teams wishing to move games out of term time must gain agreement for the changes with their opponents and their DS by 8<sup>th</sup> Sep;
- Ensure all club umpires are members of EHO and registered on GMS, so they can be recorded on the Team Sheet.

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.

### League Structure Changes

There are some slight changes to the League Structure this season. We have comprised as many divisions as possible with 12 teams, creating a common promotion and relegation process throughout the chain. Two new Open/Men's Divisions have been created - North 6 and South 6 – at Grade 4. The new divisional structure will be on the SC website at [this link](#).

The ALMC have decided to promote 3 teams to a higher division when fed from two divisions below. To determine the third promotion, the ALMC will hold a play-off day in April, between the second-placed teams in the feeder divisions (Reg 4.5.4). Correspondingly, three teams will be relegated from the higher divisions concerned to accommodate the third promotion from the feeder leagues. Further details (date, location, start times, etc) will follow when the arrangements for the play-off day are finalised. These are the divisions which will be involved/affected:

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 <sup>nd</sup> in Solent Open/Men's Div 1 v Forest Open/Men's Div 1	Open/Men's South Div 6
2 <sup>nd</sup> in North Women's Div 1 v 2 <sup>nd</sup> in South Women's Div 1	Women's Premier Div 2
2 <sup>nd</sup> in Thames Women's Div 1 v 2 <sup>nd</sup> in Cherwell Women's Div 1	Women's North Div 3
2 <sup>nd</sup> in Solent Women's Div 1 v 2 <sup>nd</sup> in Forest Women's Div 1	Women's South Div 3

The expanded Women's Premier 2 and Women's South 2 to 13 teams (this season only to accommodate the A&F teams) means there will be an **additional** relegation from these divisions at the end of the 2025/26 season to bring them back to 12 teams, which will have a knock-on effect on lower divisions. There is always the possibility that four teams could be relegated from the Conference Divisions into Open/Men's Premier 1, and three 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 would have a significant knock-on effect on lower divisions.

Other things to note are that the EH competitions have been renamed Open/Men's and Women's for the coming season, in accordance with the EH Trans and Non-Binary Policy, at [this link](#).

As in previous years, the ALMC has maintained the policy not to permit “Development” teams in South-Central (Reg 3.3.9), 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.

### 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. I have highlighted the most important changes:

- ALL home teams must comply with the new regulation 5.2.4 and contact their opposition between 10 and 21 days before the fixture.
- In the Premier Divisions only: home teams may choose to play Quarters or Halves and MUST state their intention for Quarters or Halves in the pre-match Reg 5.2.4 communication to their opposition.
- ALL teams, regardless of grade, must complete the Team Sheet by 5 minutes before the official pushback time for the game on GMS (Reg 9.4.1), and the Match Sheet by 20:00 on the day of the match (Reg 9.4.4), with times of goals/cards as well as the score.
- Reg 13.2.2 clarifies that if a match is abandoned/cancelled/postponed at the last minute, the DS must be informed by 20:00 on the day of the match – this update on GMS has to be done by the DS.
- In Appendix 5, the “penalties for breaches” section, note that in Section 7, only Grade 5 Clubs can plead maladministration for failures/omissions on the Team Sheet before the match, so all clubs should encourage their team captains to make sure the Team Sheet is as accurate as possible and report any problems to the DS as soon as possible (and before 20:00 the same day).
- The term “falsifying” in Section 9 caused some angst last season, as it implies cheating. However, this has been re-defined in Appendix 5, Section 9 of the regulations as incorrectly recording or omitting information on the Match Sheet after the match.

There is an EH summary of the regulation changes at [this link](#). The ALMC has had 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.

### 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 ALDS 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 ALDS 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.

### Selection Exemption Passes (SXPs)

As mentioned in the end-of-season letter for 2024/25, 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 a 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 normally be submitted by 21:00 on the Wednesday before the first match 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 all clubs to ensure fair competition, and that 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 2025-26 season, and if you have any questions, please contact your ALDS, who are more than willing to help.

Best wishes,  
Richard Wood, Chairman ALMC