



Welcome to the September 2023 Newsletter (Start of Season Edition)

Welcome

The new league season is nearly upon us and judging by all the Social media posts we see, clubs the length and breadth of the South Central Hockey area are well prepared for the matches ahead.

Club days and mini tournaments took place weekend of 3rd and 4th September. For many this was their first games since April/ May this year. Old acquaintances and new signing all are finding their places in the squads and building up match fitness.

Umpires too have been busy in the close season and keeping fit to keep up with the games.

Further in this bumper Newsletter you will find updates on the GMS, website and the new Regulations for the Adult and Junior leagues.

Also 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.

Good luck to all for the new season.



Finance Update



Another season upon us !

The Membership and League fees invoice will be done as normal in October.

Please pay on receipt or let the Finance Director know of any issues.

Umpire's please feel free to claim your expenses as many times as you wish during the season.

Club Treasurer please make sure you are using a generic address (e.g. treasurer@hockeyclub.com) or make sure you update the Finance Director if you pass on the role to a new volunteer.

Good luck for the season and please make the Finance job easy by paying your bills on time !

Thank you. Finance@southcentral.hockey



Officiating

Monday Mixers

These popular discussion forums will be returning from Monday 11th September. The link is always available on the umpiredev.co.uk website (top right hand corner).

For those of you new to South Central, these are weekly Zoom sessions at 7.30pm on a Monday evening, open to ALL umpires. Everyone is invited to bring discussion points to the meeting for a group chat – it could be an incident from your game, a hypothetical you want to talk through or something you've seen elsewhere. There's no judgement! Just a safe space to discuss umpiring and make sure we're all moving in the same direction.

Umpire Wishes

As per the last couple of seasons, we are once again inviting umpires who take (or aspire to take) neutral appointments with South Central to indicate what support they would like from the Development team.

We operate a three-tier scheme and other than requiring commitment on your part, there are no restrictions for who is 'allowed' to be in which tier:

Development Group: for umpires at any level who want support to gain promotion (this could be within their current panel*, going up a level from 1 to 2, or aiming higher to NPUA). This group requires the most commitment from umpires as this is where we concentrate our Development (coaching and assessing) resources.

Maintenance Group: for umpires at any level who want support to maintain their skills at the level they are at. This doesn't mean you will be ignored from a coaching point of view, but we will work with you to effectively stay sharp where you are. You are our safe pairs of hands!

Alternative Involvement: for umpires who want to maintain their involvement in our sport, but are open to occasionally putting the whistle down in favour of a notepad and pen! If you would like to be considered for a coaching or assessing role on the Development team, then this is for you. You don't have to give up umpiring completely (unless you want to) and you will be given full training on what a good developer needs to know and do. It can be incredibly rewarding and a great way to stay involved if the legs/knees/hips/lungs are protesting a little too much these days! Please [head here to register](#) what you'd like to do this season, so I can make sure we give you the support you need.

Panels

Ah yes, that old chestnut. We are in the process of sorting out a page on umpiredev.co.uk, where you will be able to see your panel and the panel of your colleagues but we also appreciate that there is confusion over what the panels are and what they mean. Here's a quick guide:



Level 1 Assessed and taking neutral appointments – movement through the panels is usually decided by one or two Above Panel (score of 10) assessments. Usually one at C and two at B.

C2: new to appointments, inexperienced with games at any level

C1: experienced with games, but not at the neutral appointment level

B2: experienced with neutral appointments at Div 2 and possibly some Div 1

B1: experienced at Div 1 with possibly some Prem 2 appointments

B*: on course for assessments to achieve Level 2 soon

Level 2 – usually achieved by a minimum of two assessments on games of a suitable standard, scoring 10 (Above Panel) on each. Movement through the panels also requires a minimum of two

Above Panel assessments.

A2: mainly Prem 2 with some Prem 1 appointments

A1: mainly Prem 1 appointment

A*: mainly highest level/stakes Prem 1 with a view to achieving L3 nomination soon

Level 3 nomination (to NPUA or NPDP) – usually achieved by a minimum of three assessments on games of a suitable standard, scoring 10 (Above Panel) on each

Assessment scores have a 'shelf life' of around 12 months.

Umpires are assessed separately for women's and men's panels, so an A2 umpire on the men's panel is not necessarily an A2 umpire on the women's panel. Some umpires are better suited to women's or men's hockey. Any L3 will tell you that having skills to effectively umpire both genders stands you in much better stead for higher level matches.

Your assessment team is skilled at recognising umpires that have potential, so we may fast-track some umpires if they are showing the necessary skills – we are not in the business of holding Anyone back.

The above is guidance for where you are within each Level and what is required to gain promotion.

Generally we would expect a newly qualified Level 1 umpire to need at least two or three seasons at Level 1 standard before they are ready for assessment to Level 2. There are, of course, always exceptions to the rule here, but you would definitely not go from Level 1 C2 to a Level 2 umpire in one season!

GMS Update

With the season fast approaching we wanted to update you on current progress with [GMS](#) and what to expect over the coming weeks.

England Hockey are busy preparing the platform, testing processes, and taking as much positive action as they can to cope with the significant traffic and demand that will be placed on GMS in the first few weeks of the season. They've been making improvements all summer but have now paused any new developments to focus on season readiness and try to offer some consistency from the end of last season.

The adult fixtures have been loaded onto [GMS](#) – and are now ready for club/competition administrators to make edits/amendments/appointments. These fixtures are also to be seen on our website, offering visibility to your players and officials.

Date	Time	Home Team	Away Team
SAT 23 SEPT	11:30	Slough	Haslemere 1
SAT 30 SEPT	13:30	Staines 1	South Berkshire 1
SAT 07 OCT	13:30	Oxford Hawks 2	Henley
SAT 14 OCT	14:30	Oxford University 1	Trojans
SAT 21 OCT	15:00	Bournemouth	Oxford OBU 1
SAT 28 OCT	16:30	Marlow 1	Reading 2

A number of improvements you will see in the coming weeks include a more intuitive fixture and results ticker on South Central Area website, head-to-head comparisons based on previous fixtures.

Thame 1	Aylesbury 1
Played: 0	Drawn: 0
Won: 0	Lost: 0
Historic Goals: 0	Historic Goals: 0

Note: Only showing matches recorded in the GMS

England Hockey are continuing to work on the addition of match sheets with scorer and appearance data and these will be phased in throughout the season and feature on the South Central Website.

For GDPR purposes, individuals will have to consent for this to happen – which they will be able to do through their GMS profile. England Hockey will soon be emailing you and your players/officials to let you know how and when to do this.

On top of these developments, the GMS platform and websites will be closely monitored through all peak times. Every effort will be made to keep GMS working effectively and ensure that results are fed to the South Central website as quickly as possible. If volume of traffic starts to impact performance, we'll do everything we can to resolve in a timely manner. In the event of any significant issues or scenarios – they will be communicated immediately and brought back up to usual working order as quickly as possible.

Any communications required during game days will go to club and competition administrators directly, and messages will also appear on the website, GMS and social media.

As we keep you up-to-date with progress, we ask for your support and look to kick-off what will be an exciting and enjoyable 2023/24 season. If you have any issues, please email gms.support@englandhockey.co.uk

Regulations Update. Both Adult and Junior

Both the Adult and Junior regulations have been updated during the summer months. They are available to download on the South Central website from their respective areas on the site:

Adult: <https://southcentral.englishhockey.co.uk/adult-leagues-competitions/regulations-supporting-documents>

We advise you familiarise yourselves with the full regulations. However this is a summary of the changes for the coming season.

Summary

• Glossary definitions of:

- o Doubling up
- o Due Date
- o Matchweek

• 3.2.9 Development Teams - Clubs may request a team to be designated a development team, to be accepted at the discretion of the ALMC.

• 5.1.2 Moving Fixtures - Clubs may agree to move a fixture to within 5 days

(Sunday to Thursday) after or any time before the scheduled date. This is subject to the approval of ALMC.

• 5.2.3 Changing Fixtures - ANY change to this information must be notified to the ALM or ALDS as directed and to the Team Admin of the opposing team, as soon as GMS is changed, but a minimum number of days prior to the match:

Grade 2-5 – 10 days prior

• 8 & Appendix 4 Player Eligibility – Fair Selection, Youth Experience Player,

Special Exemption Pass - The fair selection framework provides clubs with reasonable flexibility while maintaining guidelines to ensure fairness and prevent unfair advantages. Clubs should select players for their League teams based on a hierarchical order determined by availability. Players should not be selected at a lower level than their Regular Team to strengthen a lower-ranked team. Clarity and additional examples have been provided and we advise that the Regulation 8 and Appendix 4 is read in totality.

o Youth Experience Player (YEP) – limited to one player in any MatchWeek.

o Doubling Up – shown in the table in 8.4.4

o Special Exemptions (SXP) – regulation 8.6

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• 9.4.1 Uploading Team Sheets - All players with shirt numbers and any team officials participating in a match must be uploaded onto the team sheet before the match. The ALMC/ALDS has discretion to apply flexibility for this at Grades 4 & 5.

• 9.4.2 Viewing - Both captains & both umpires must be able to view both team sheets before the match starts.

• 11.1.3 Umpire Provision The away club has contacted the home club to say it intends to appoint an umpire for the match. This must be done at least 5 days before the match. The home club is not allowed to decline. The away team is then responsible for appointing an umpire, unless and until both teams agree otherwise.

• 11.12 Umpire Reports - All clubs MUST complete an Umpire's report for Area

Appointed Umpires by 20:00 the Wednesday after the match.

• 12.2.3 Suspensions The suspension is to be applied for all League games, on the date of the next match of the player's regular team (by appearances), unless advised otherwise by ALMC.

• 12.2.5 Yellow Cards – Any yellow card(s) issued to the same player in that match shall be counted for the purpose of the regulations and should be recorded on GMS as two yellow cards only.

• 13.2.3.4 Postponing Matches If teams are not able to agree a date, then the ALDS or ALMC will set a reasonable date. Which can only be postponed due to weather.

• 13.3.1.3 Postponing Matches - In the event of the home team wishing to postpone a match the away team shall, at its own cost, have the right to inspect the ground prior to a decision regarding postponement being reached.

- 14 Failure to honour a fixture or forfeiture of a match - A team that fails to play due to shortage of players is deemed to have failed to honour the fixture and penalties applied, subject to review by ALDS/ALMC. Failure to Honour a fixture includes not completing the fixture unless the umpires agree to abandon the game because of the problems with pitch, the weather, danger to players or a medical emergency and, a team cannot walk off the pitch. Extensive changes to penalties, see Appendix 5.

Appendix 5 Standard Penalties & Tariffs of fines – If fines are not paid within 28 days they may be doubled. We advise that the Appendix 5 is read in totality due to a number of other minor changes.

Junior:

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

Summary

- 2.1.4 & Appendix 1 U16 Tier 1 Championships – The structure has changed to

Tier 1 now being central entry and a nationally led league playing from September through to Supra League and knockout competitions for those who fail to progress to the Supra League. This replaces the Tier 1 Area / Supra League format and KO Championship that was run last year.

- 2.4.7 Match results limit - in all competitions match results shall be limited to a goal

difference of eight, and any score recorded as 8-0 to the winners. Once a match

reaches 8-0 the game should be paused and come back out with a score of 0-0 to enable players to be rotated to support development, retain players interest in the game and ensure all junior players enjoy and learn from the game.

- 2.4.10 U14 & U16 Tier 1 failing to honour two of League fixtures – any team that fails to honour two of its league fixtures will be automatically withdrawn from the Leagues and all previous results will be void and will forfeit its entry fee. In any other competition, any team that fails to honour at least half of their fixtures will be automatically withdrawn from the leagues and all previous results will be void and will forfeit its entry fee.

- 7.1 Rescheduled Matches - If any match is re-scheduled because of postponement or abandonment, the game is to be played on the next available slip date, as per the calendar, or within 14 days of the original fixture date. The new date of the game must be reported to and agreed by AJLCC.

New Board Members

Firstly we would like to put on record our thanks to 2 Directors who both stepped down and both helped steer the start up of South Central Hockey Ltd and contributed hugely over the first 3 years.

Stephen Downham—Vice Chair (outgoing)

Stephen has been a bastion of support to the Board and help build the company from scratch.

Frankie Tierney—Governance Director (outgoing)

Frankie gave stalwart service to Hockey, both for the area but in also in previous roles chairing ladies hockey in the South.

New Directors

In the early summer months, an advertising campaign took place online to gain expressions of interest to join the Board of Directors of South Central Hockey Ltd.

Many people sent in their applications which the recruitment and remuneration committee lead by our Chair Jacqui Barlow reviewed and interviewed each person.

After a period of deliberation by the applicants who contemplated the roles and the committee, two new directors have been appointed to the Board and are now listed on Companies House.

Hatty Wood—Vice Chair

Steve Hills—Governance Director

Both Hatty and Steve have a wealth of senior leadership in business experience which allied to their club hockey committee background makes them great additions to your Board. Both were voted into position at the AGM in July.

Their Biography's can be read on the South Central Website (About us section)

Junior Section

Fixtures

Junior league fixtures for all tiers have now been uploaded onto the GMS and South Central website with the exception of the following -

T1 U18 boys and girls. These are being done centrally by London forming a combined league across all three areas to make a more competitive league.

T1 U16 boys and girls – these were direct entry with EH

Please contact -

U14leagues@southcentral.hockey for issues with U14 fixtures/results

SC.juniorleagues@southcentral.hockey for issues with T2 and 3 U16 fixtures/results

chair.juniorleagues@southcentral.hockey for issues with U18 T2 fixtures/results

juniors@london.hockey for issues with U18 T1 fixtures and results

Vacancies

We are still looking for help with running junior leagues. We really need another 3 people to help out. Please contact Kate Porter if you are willing to help chair.juniorleagues@southcentral.hockey

IN2Hockey South Central finals organiser this is a paid role organising the competition for the weekend of 21st April 2024 again please contact Kate for details

State school organiser tournament organiser for Bucks Berks and Oxon. This is a paid role organising one tournament late in the season to support the work EH has been doing within this area of education. Please contact Kate for details. chair.juniorleagues@southcentral.hockey

Junior League Regulations

These can be found on the South Central website here <https://southcentral.englishhockey.co.uk/junior-hockey-in-the-south-central-area/junior-leagues-competitions>



Additional requirements for 2023/24 season

This year we will be requiring all T1 and 2 teams to complete team sheets on GMS. Please make sure that your managers and coaches know that this is now required.

During the coming season please ensure that you upload timings and venues to GMS as soon as you can and at least 2 weeks before the fixture. If you have to change the time/venue of a match please make sure you let the club you are playing know. GMS does not send an alert about changes to the fixture and so your opposition may not know the match has changed.

Please remember to put your results through on the day of the match, it will cut down our administration considerably. Please also let us know as soon as possible if the fixture isn't taking place and the reasons.

