

## 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 the Visa Eligibility Grid referenced in Appendix 2 under “EH Participation in Hockey for non-UK Passport Holders”. This is a UK Government (HMRC) 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 fixed at 5 minutes** across Grades 2–5, 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  |
|-----------------|--|---|
| <b>Glossary</b> | Definitions                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>NEW</b> terms added: "ALCC" (Area League Competitions Committee), "Dual Registration", "Primary Club", "Secondary Club"</li> <li>– <b>REMOVED</b>: "NOC (No Objection Certificate)" (consistent with deletion of old 7.5)</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b>: "Doubling Up" redefined from "same match day" to "same Matchweek"</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b>: "Ineligible Player" broadened ("due to these Regulations or the EH Disciplinary Regulations")</li> <li>– Existing definitions updated for consistency with the ALCC/ALMC governance structure</li> </ul>  |
| <b>1</b>        | Introduction                             | – No substantive changes  |
| <b>2</b>        | Management                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> qualifier at 2.9: umpires may adjudicate on Regulations "as required to make match day decisions, e.g. under Regulation 13.2"</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 2.11: Grade 5 now limited to "the Division(s) at the lowest Steps"; ALMC discretion to designate "any other Divisions" as Grade 5 has been removed</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3</b>        | Entry into the League                    | – Clarification only – no change to obligations   |
| <b>4</b>        | The Competition                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Any changes to an Area League pyramid will be agreed by the AMC</li> <li>– Any significant changes to Area League pyramids or the Grades of Divisions will be reviewed and agreed by the ALWG</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 4.1.2(c): authority to decide parallel divisions moved from ALMC → AMC</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 4.5.8: vacancy-filling priority reordered: Promotion now ranks ABOVE Reprieve (was below previously)</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 4.5.10(b): promotion/relegation appeal window reduced from 7 to 5 calendar days</li> </ul>   |
| <b>5</b>        | Fixtures                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 5.1.4: only <b>University Clubs</b> may request reschedules for fixtures outside term time (was "Clubs"); weekends immediately before/after term now explicitly count as part of term</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 5.2.2: opposition must be informed before GMS is changed (was "as soon as GMS is changed")</li> <li>– <b>NEW</b> 5.2.3 trigger: agreement required to change details after the ALDS has locked the fixture (in addition to the 21-day window)</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 5.2.4(c) / Appendix 3 Rule 5.1: <b>Premier Division matches now played as four quarters</b> unless the home team advises otherwise (direction reversed from 2025-26)</li> <li>– Minor wording updates elsewhere</li> </ul>  |
| <b>6</b>        | Matchday Administration                  | – <b>NEW</b> 6.3.4: Clubs must supply "appropriate illumination certification" on request to use the floodlight late-start allowance  |
| <b>7</b>        | <b>Player Eligibility – Registration</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>NEW section 7.5 "Non-UK Passport Holders"</b> must comply with the Visa Eligibility Grid referenced in Appendix 2 as EH Participation in Hockey for non-UK Passport Holders. This is a UK Government (HMRC) requirement</li> <li>– <b>REMOVED</b>: Old 7.5 "No Objection Certificate (NOC)" section has been deleted entirely – NOC regime no longer exists</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 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"</li> <li>– <b>NEW</b> 7.2.3: explicit one-club-at-a-time rule for Adult League; players whose last game was outside England &amp; Wales must satisfy both transfer and registration requirements</li> <li>– <b>7.2.4 Multiple Registrations</b>: 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</li> <li>– <b>NEW</b> 7.4 fallback: a player who becomes ineligible for the female category mid-season may move to the Open/Men's category</li> </ul> |

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|-------|--|---|
|       |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 7.3 <b>Age Requirements:</b> Players must be <b>aged 13 or above on the day of the fixture</b> unless ALMC has approved players aged 12 in Development Team matches <b>only</b> [wording tidied; substantive rule carried forward from 2025-26]</li> <li>– <b>Registration deadline</b> moved from 1st February to 23:59 on 31st January (7.6.2)</li> <li>– <b>NEW 7.7.1:</b> explicit ALMC arbitration role for transfer refusals (in addition to the existing appeal route)</li> </ul>   |
| 8     | <b>Player Eligibility – Team Selection</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>NEW 8.2.2(c):</b> "Clubs are expected to pull players up from lower teams before requesting a double up"</li> <li>– <b>NEW 8.3.2(d):</b> 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</li> <li>– <b>NEW 8.3.4(c):</b> data from the prior season may be used to determine eligibility in the first week of the season</li> <li>– <b>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</b></li> <li>– <b>REVISED 8.4.2(b)</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"</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> Doubling-up conditions; note the checklist conditions</li> <li>– <b>NEW 8.4.3(c):</b> 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))</li> <li>– <b>REVISED 8.5.1(a):</b> "previous match day" changed to "previous <b>Matchweek</b>" – wider restriction on higher-team players doubling up for a lower team</li> <li>– <b>NEW 8.5.1(c):</b> 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).</li> <li>– Refer to the detailed Doubling Up Summary table (8.5.4)</li> </ul> |
| 9     | Team Sheets, Scores & Match Sheets         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>NEW:</b> Match-sheet completion deadline is 20:00 on the day of the match <b>for all grades</b></li> <li>– <b>NEW:</b> Team officials listed on the match sheet must be aged 16 or over (9.3.2)</li> <li>– <b>REVISED 9.4.3:</b> the 20:00 confirmation now covers goals AND cards, not just the score</li> <li>– <b>NEW 9.4.5:</b> injuries requiring hospital treatment must be reported by the match-sheet deadline</li> </ul>   |
| 10    | Dress                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No substantive changes</li> <li>– A reminder that shirt numbers are mandatory</li> </ul>   |
| 11    | Umpires & Match Officials                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>NEW:</b> EHO (England Hockey Officiating) membership suspensions now explicitly recognised; a suspended EHO umpire may not officiate at any grade (11.4.2)</li> <li>– <b>NEW 11.5.3:</b> on EHO notification, the ALMC may temporarily or permanently suspend an umpire from League competition</li> <li>– <b>REVISED 11.8.2:</b> EHO added as a valid channel for umpire-conduct issues</li> <li>– <b>REVISED 11.8.3:</b> umpire report deadline moved from Wednesday to Monday after the match (and two days after a non-Saturday fixture)</li> <li>– Minimum accreditation requirements unchanged from 2025–26</li> </ul>  |
| 12    | Discipline                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>NEW:</b> Team penalty for accumulating yellow cards (12.2.1(b)); penalties are listed in Appendix 5</li> <li>– Player suspensions: Clubs must inform ALDS of pending suspensions and their duration (12.2.6)</li> <li>– 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)</li> </ul>  |

| Reg # | Regulation  | Comment / Nature of Change  |
|-------|---|---|
| 13    | Postponement or Abandonment                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 13.1: "Venue" added as a permissible reason for postponement</li> <li>– <b>NEW</b> 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")</li> <li>– Rearrangement deadlines and other procedures largely unchanged</li> </ul>   |
| 14    | <b>Failure to Honour a Fixture or Forfeiture of a Match</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>NEW:</b> Failure to honour a fixture in the last four scheduled fixtures of the season: all deducted penalty points are <b>doubled</b> (Appendix 5)</li> <li>– Note the grade-by-grade penalty matrix in Appendix 5 (Grade 2, 3–4, 5)</li> <li>– <b>NEW:</b> Forfeiting team to notify ALDS, at the time of the forfeiture decision and no later than the scheduled time of the match (14.3)</li> <li>– <b>NEW</b> 14.2.3: "A team cannot elect not to continue the match"</li> <li>– <b>REVISED:</b> Forfeiting team to notify ALDS, at the time of the forfeiture decision and no later than the scheduled time of the match (14.3)</li> </ul>  |
| 15    | Breach of Regulations & Penalties                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Penalty tariffs revised in Appendix 5 (see Appendix 5 entry below)</li> </ul>  |
| 16    | Appeals   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Grounds for appeal reorganised: 16.1.3 lists three grounds (error of fact, procedural error, unreasonable sanction)</li> <li>– <b>NEW:</b> 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</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 16.3.2: Further-Appeal grounds changed from two grounds + "reasonable prospect of success" test to <b>three standalone grounds</b> (error of fact, procedural irregularity, manifestly unreasonable); the "reasonable prospect of success" filter has been dropped</li> <li>– <b>Detailed procedures and timelines remain in Appendix 6</b> (note new 5-day Further-Appeal window – see Appendix 6)</li> <li>– Appeal deposit remains at £100</li> </ul> |

## 8. Player Eligibility – Team Selection

| Element                                 | 2026–27 Position  | Change Type & Impact                            |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Aims (8.1)</b>                       | Aims substantively unchanged; emphasis on avoiding "unselectable" players retained  | Clarification only                              |
| <b>Pull-up Expectation (8.2.2(c))</b>   | <b>NEW:</b> clubs expected to pull players up from lower teams before requesting a double up  | New expectation on club selection practice      |
| <b>EHL Premier 2nd teams (8.3.2(d))</b> | <b>NEW:</b> second teams of EHL Premier clubs may play SXP-approved players per EHL Reg 8.3.5   | Clarification                                   |
| <b>Prior-Season Data (8.3.4(c))</b>     | <b>NEW:</b> prior-season data may be used to determine eligibility in Week 1  | Resolves ambiguity at the start of a new season |
| <b>Doubling-up Conditions (8.4)</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Max squad size when doubling up reduced from <b>13 to 12</b> players (8.4.2(c))</li> <li>– Per-player limit of <b>two games per match-day</b></li> <li>– Reference point shifts to "two teams <b>below player's Regular Team</b>" (8.4.2(b))</li> <li>– <b>Final-four 50% rule now applies to BOTH teams</b> (8.4.3(c))</li> <li>– Conditions now presented as checklist items 8.4.3(a)–(d)</li> </ul> | 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"> <li>– <b>NEW:</b> Non-UK Visa Eligibility added "EH Participation in Hockey for non-UK Passport Holders", cross-referenced from Regulation 7.5</li> <li>– Existing EH policy list updated for current framework</li> </ul>  |
| 3      | Variations to FIH Rules               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Half-time interval of 5 minutes</b></li> <li>– <b>Quarters format is the default for Premier Division</b> unless varied by the home team (was optional in 2025–26). Four quarters of 17½ minutes</li> <li>– <b>NEW Rule 8.2:</b> "Time is not to be stopped after a goal is awarded"; this is a distinct new rule variance</li> <li>– No time stoppage for penalty corners</li> <li>– Suspension-timing clauses unchanged from 2025–26</li> </ul>  |
| 4      | <b>Player Selection Guidance</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>REVISED:</b> "General Principles" section added</li> <li>– Doubling-up conditions, GK rules and SXP triggers for each grade</li> <li>– Practical scenario examples expanded from the previous narrative-style guidance notes</li> </ul>  |
| 5      | <b>Standard Penalties &amp; Fines</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Penalty tables revised</li> <li>– <b>NEW:</b> Team yellow-card penalties added (12.2.1(b))</li> <li>– <b>NEW</b> 6.1.5: "Unauthorised personnel in the team's designated bench area" (warning → T1 fine → T1 + 1 point)</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 7 (fielding ineligible player at Grade 5): now split into "administrative error" vs "negligent" with different tariffs</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 7.7 (Transfer/registration breach): suspension now capped at <b>max 3 games</b> (or until registration corrected, whichever is longer)</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 11 (Failure to supply umpire): now split into two offences</li> <li>– "failure to supply umpire or match official" and "failure to supply properly qualified umpire or competent &amp; equipped match official"; Grade 3-4 penalties now include 1-point deductions at Stage 2</li> <li>– <b>NEW</b> 12.2.6(b): "Failure to inform ALDS of length of player's suspension" (T1/T2/T3 escalator)</li> <li>– <b>REVISED</b> 14 (Failure to Honour cascade): result stands but same point deduction <b>+1 additional point</b> applied to the lower team</li> <li>– <b>NEW</b> 14.2.2: "Failure to complete a fixture" added as a distinct offence separate from Failure to Honour</li> <li>– Regulation 13 penalties: 13.2.2 (not informing ALDS by deadline) and 13.3.1 rearrangement penalties now included</li> </ul> |

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