



SENIOR CLUB LEAGUE RULES 2026

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1 DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 **League Manager(s)** administer the leagues on behalf of SGHA's Club (Senior) Exco Member.
- 1.2 A **team official** may be a captain, manager or coach participating in a hockey match.
- 1.3 A **match official** may be an umpire or technical official appointed for a hockey match.
- 1.4 A **club official** is an appointed officer of that club, employed or an elected committee member.
- 1.5 An **SGHA official** is an appointed officer of SGHA, employed or an elected committee member.
- 1.6 **SGHA** is the Southern Gauteng Hockey Association.
- 1.7 **FIH** is the International Hockey Federation.
- 1.8 **SAHA** is the South African Hockey Association.
- 1.9 **R&T** is rules and technical.

2 LEAGUE AUTHORITY AND FAIR PLAY

- 2.1 SGHA has placed the administration of the league under the authority of the Club (Senior) Exco Member who has delegated this responsibility to a League Manager(s). A League Manager has the authority to make all necessary decisions as indicated in these league rules.
- 2.2 League rules are not considered policy as mentioned in the constitution and therefore do not require the approval of members at a council meeting. However it is expected that participating clubs are consulted on all intended changes, with the opportunity to provide feedback thereon.
- 2.3 Our hockey leagues are run with our shared values top of mind:
 - 2.3.1 Respect (We respect our opponents, they make us better. We respect our officials, without them we have no game.)
 - 2.3.2 Fair play (In the game of life, sportsmanship matters. My team plays hard, but plays fair.)
 - 2.3.3 Lead by example (I role model what I expect from others, on and off the field.)
 - 2.3.4 Together (Inclusion is our game plan. Hockey is for everyone, from all backgrounds.)
- 2.4 All clubs submitting team entries explicitly agree to abide by SGHA's constitution, **Hockey** Regulations and these rules.
- 2.5 Wherever a term is used that is open to interpretation, the definition of FIH and SAHA shall provide guidance. Where regulations are silent or ambiguous on any matter, the League Manager will use their discretion to address the matter.
- 2.6 In all cases the decision of the League Manager is final, subject to the appeal process as indicated in this document.

3 TEAM ENTRIES

- 3.1 League competitions for men and women, communicated in advance by the League Manager, are open to all member clubs who are in good standing with SGHA.
- 3.2 League structures in principle apply as per the previous season or competition. At SGHA's discretion, this format may be adjusted to suit the needs of the province, the leagues and/or the majority of our clubs and will be communicated in advance of the season.
- 3.3 Teams are automatically entered into leagues based on the prior season's performance and related promotions and relegations. New club or new team entries will be entered into the lowest league available.
- 3.4 For outdoor hockey only:
 - 3.4.1 For a club's 1st team to be entered into Premier League, a 2nd team is required (in any league) the year you earn promotion.
 - 3.4.2 Premier league is reserved for 1st teams only.
- 3.5 Clubs are required to confirm their teams, and may apply for new team entries, in writing. The League Manager is tasked with communicating all logistical and financial information, including team entry fee and payment term details, and co-ordinating activities as necessary with club chairpersons and administrators.
- 3.6 A withdrawal of any team 14 days **or less** before the start of league, will result in a withdrawal fee of 10% of that team's league entry fee and will be required to be paid in terms of the standard entry fee payment schedule communicated to clubs.
- 3.7 Team entry fees are fully payable if a club withdraws a team after commencement of that league.**
- 3.8 Clubs not making payments according to payment terms communicated will have those teams suspended:
 - 3.8.1 In the case of part payments by clubs with no communication thereon, the League Manager will suspend teams at her discretion.
 - 3.8.2 Clubs will have 7 further days from the suspension date to make the necessary payment after which the team will be withdrawn from the league as if they were never entered to begin with (league points will be adjusted).
 - 3.8.3 Clubs having teams withdrawn during the season will not receive any credit in this regard.
 - 3.8.4 Teams suspended catching up fixtures will incur an administration fee of R2,500 for each game caught up.
 - 3.8.5 Catch up games will be scheduled based on the preferences of the opposing team that experienced the postponement through no fault of their own.
 - 3.8.6 Interest will be charged on outstanding amounts at the current prime rate.

Playing kit

- 3.9 Before the season commences, any change of colours must be submitted to the League Manager for approval.
 - 3.9.1 All players must appear on the field in the uniform of their club. Black "skins" are permissible.
 - 3.9.2 Teams wishing to include a different coloured skin as part of their uniform must obtain permission from the League Manager.

- 3.9.3 For all women's leagues, skirts or skorts are preferable in club uniform. However, shorts may be worn provided they match skorts material and need to form part of the approved club uniform by SGHA.
- 3.9.4 Ski-pants or hotshorts will not be allowed at any league games.
- 3.10 All players must wear solid (not outlined) numbers on the back of their shirts. The size of the number should be 16 cm to 20 cm in height. All numbers must be "whole numbers", from 1 upwards and there may not be duplicate numbers. Players without numbers or having duplicate numbers may not take the field or court. Tech Officials and Clubs are requested to notify league manager. The club will incur a monetary penalty.
- 3.11 If there is a potential clash of colours the away team (team named second) must change their strip (bibs are permitted). Clubs are expected to liaise with each other before the match.

4 PLAYER REGISTRATION AND TRANSFERS

- 4.1 Clubs entering senior teams acknowledge that as part of their member registration process they have obtained the necessary acknowledgements, indemnifying and holding harmless SGHA, SGHA members (clubs) and SGHA officials involved in or administering any form of hockey activities in relation to SGHA's senior leagues, appreciating and understanding the inherent dangers and risks of playing, officiating or watching hockey.
- 4.2 Only players in the U15 age group or older may register to play senior league hockey (a player must be 14 years or older on 1 January of that year).
- 4.3 All players under the age of 18 require parent or guardian consent managed by their club. In this instance, both parent/guardian and player under the age of 18 must indemnify and hold harmless SGHA as per 4.1 above.
- 4.4 Clubs are required to maintain a player or member database at all times. During a season or competition, clubs may be required to provide this information to SGHA and SAHA from time to time.
- 4.5 A clearance certificate provides evidence that there are no outstanding monies owed or disciplinary actions or penalties still applicable to a player when a player leaves a club or province.
- 4.6 Any player wishing to transfer from one SGHA club to another may do so provided that a clearance certificate is issued by the old club to the new club and the League Manager.
- 4.7 Any player moving from another province to this province requires both a club and provincial clearance certificate.
- 4.8 Teams playing unregistered or uncleared players will be notified by the League Manager and will have 7 days from the date of issue of the notification to provide the League Manager with the necessary documentation as per the league rules above.
- 4.9 If after 7 days, the club has not provided the League Manager with the required documentation, those matches played with unregistered or uncleared players will be deemed 10-0 losses to that team and a further 3 points will be deducted from that team.
- 4.10 In the event that a club disbands while still indebted to the SGHA, the registered players of that club will remain proportionately liable for the accumulated debt. A player will be allowed to transfer to a new club only once their proportion of the accumulated debt has been paid to SGHA.

5 TEAM SELECTIONS

- 5.1 In support of fair play, clubs are expected to select players for teams such that a 1st team is stronger than the 2nd team, which is stronger than the 3rd team, etc.
- 5.2 In support of fair play, a player may not play for 2 different teams in the same calendar week (Monday to Sunday). A player may however play one additional match over a calendar week's fixtures with the following conditions applicable:
 - 5.2.1 It is in the interest of a club honouring all fixtures for that week, avoiding the need to postpone or cancel matches.
 - 5.2.2 A field-player selected to play a second match must play up and not down. For example, a 2nd team field-player can be selected to play again for the 1st side but not the 3rd or 4th team. The team using a field-player for a second match may have a maximum of 3 reserves. For example, an outdoor hockey team using one or more field-players that are playing a second match may have a maximum of 14 players in total for that match.
 - 5.2.3 The maximum of 3 reserves is not applicable for premier league teams, with section 5.2 still applicable, however if a premier league team is utilising a second goalkeeper that second goalkeeper is required to play a minimum of 15 minutes.
 - 5.2.4 A goalkeeper already selected for a lower team, may play up for a second match provided they are either temporarily filling in for an injured 1st choice goalkeeper or alternatively in case of an injury (during the game) to the 1st choice goalkeeper.
 - 5.2.5 In the interest of youth development, clubs are encouraged to select school going players for 2nd matches.
 - 5.2.6 It is the clubs responsibility to notify the league manager of any player playing a 2nd match for Premier league and league 1 only.
 - 5.2.7 The opposition captain and all match officials must be informed of this before the match commences.
- 5.3 In the event that the League Manager finds any club or team in breach of team entry and player selection rules, that team(s) will be deemed to lose that match 10-0.

6 FIXTURES

Before a competition or season commences

- 6.1 All venues used by any club for their home matches or sourced by SGHA requires the approval of the League Manager.
- 6.2 The League Manager will prepare draft fixtures, in advance of the season taking into account public holidays, major school hockey events and other relevant events that make fielding a team difficult.
 - 6.2.1 The League Manager will provide a reasonable period of time for review and commentary on the fixtures with the option to amend fixtures based on feedback from clubs. Thereafter, fixtures will be finalised and made available to all clubs.

Rescheduling of matches

- 6.3 Matches must be played on the prescribed date and times.
- 6.4 Matches will only be postponed in exceptional circumstances. Any request to change a date and/or time must be submitted by a club representative via email to the League Manager, including the opposition club:
 - 6.4.1 5 days or more prior to scheduled match.
 - 6.4.2 New date, time and venue confirmed by both club teams.
 - 6.4.3 Match scheduled within 2 weeks of the previously scheduled match and before the end of the league.
 - 6.4.4 Match will be deemed as a forfeit if the League Manager is notified less than 5 days before the scheduled match.
 - 6.4.5 Premier League - NO POSTPONEMENTS will be accepted due to centralized fixtures.
- 6.5 For all other leagues exceptions to the above may be considered by the League Manager and will be managed on a case by case basis at the League Manager's discretion. Only one postponement will be allowed per team.
- 6.6 Any additional costs (umpire, field hire & TO costs where applicable) as a result of the rescheduling of the match will be at the cost of the requesting club.

Cancellation of matches

- 6.7 Any club, unable to field a team for a scheduled match, must notify the League Manager and the opposing team's captain or club official in writing, providing 72 hours (or more) notice.
- 6.8 In the event of a team having properly cancelled a match for valid reasons, that team will be deemed to have lost that match 10-0 and will also forfeit 1 log point, unless otherwise decided by the League Manager.
- 6.9 Any team that fails to fulfil a fixture without correct notification will be deemed to have lost that match 10-0 and will be deducted 3 points and will be subject to a fine not exceeding R2,000.
- 6.10 For repeat offences, the League Manager may apply further sanctions.

7 MATCH REGULATIONS

- 7.1 All matches are played in accordance with the relevant FIH Rules of Hockey (outdoor hockey, indoor hockey, hockey 5s.) Where there is any contradiction between FIH Rules of Hockey and these league rules, the league rules will apply.
- 7.2 The umpires, in consultation with the captains, shall have the power to decide the fitness of the ground. In the event of a dispute, the decision of the umpires shall be final on the day and the matter may be referred in writing, within 48 hours, to the League Manager for a ruling.
- 7.3 It is the home team's (team named first) responsibility to provide an FIH compliant match hockey ball.
- 7.4 It is the responsibility of club officials and players to ensure that all hockey equipment used on the field of play complies with FIH regulations. Any equipment found not to comply may not be used and information in this regard should be included on the match sheet indicating the player(s) concerned.
- 7.5 The umpire or technical official may ask a player to remove jewellery if in their mind it causes potential danger to other players or themselves. Refusal to do so by the player will result in that player not being allowed to take the field.

- 7.6 Caps may be worn provided they have a short and soft peak.
- 7.7 Loadshedding needs to be considered by the home team, particularly for evening games to avoid disruptions, particularly if there is a known delay on generator switch overs. Home teams should adjust the date and time of the game and notify the League Manager and visiting team accordingly.

Match Officials

- 7.8 Each match must have 2 umpires officiating the game.
- 7.9 The League Manager will communicate in advance of each season or competition the leagues for which SGHA will appoint match officials.
- 7.10 For any league where SGHA does not appoint match officials, each team is required to provide an umpire with a minimum of a SAHA Level 0 umpiring accreditation.
- 7.11 Any team not providing a certified umpire will forfeit the match and will be deemed to have lost that match 10 - 0. Home teams may appoint a technical official for their match to support the umpires.
- 7.12 If a team feels that their opposition has not provided an umpire of a suitable standard, they are requested to lodge a formal complaint, addressed to the League Manager for investigation.
- 7.13 The umpires and if applicable the technical official shall be the sole arbiters of fair play 15 minutes before the match, during the match and for 15 minutes after the match. During this time period:
- 7.13.1 Only players and team management (limited to a coach, assistant coach, manager and a medical officer) may occupy the technical area.
- 7.13.2 The technical official may issue verbal warnings, yellow and red cards for any disciplinary related incidents in their technical area, in relation to the code of conduct. When a card is issued, the technical officer will stop play and apply the card to ~~that team's captain.~~ the offending individual.
- 7.14 No protest can be lodged against any decision made by the umpires and/or technical official during the match.

Match reports

- 7.15 Player details including name, surname and playing number need to be added or updated in Sportivo before the season starts, with a 2-week grace period available. Player details must be maintained thereafter on an ongoing basis. Clubs not complying with this rule will receive spot fines of R1,000 or more at the discretion of the League Manager.
- 7.16 Team line ups on Sportivo must be available 24 hr prior to the match for review by any match official or a representative of the opposing team.

Player numbers

- 7.17 There is no minimum player number requirement.
- 7.18 Maximum player numbers:
- 7.18.1 Outdoor hockey: A maximum of 18 players may be used by a team in a match, of whom 2 must be goalkeepers wearing full protective equipment. If a team chooses not to include a second goalkeeper in the 18 players, they are limited to using 16 players in a match.
- 7.18.2 Indoor hockey: As per FIH rules
- 7.18.3 Hockey 5s: Each team is permitted up to 4 court substitutes and one substitute goalkeeper (meaning a total squad of 10, including 2 goalkeepers).

During the match

- 7.19 Outdoor hockey matches may be delayed by a maximum of 10 minutes if either team has 7 players or less at the time the match was scheduled to start.
- 7.20 A match played outdoors may not start or continue if there is lightning in the area.
 - 7.20.1 In the case of a venue using a lightning detection system with a siren, the system must be obeyed at all times.
 - 7.20.2 In the event there is no lightning detection system at the venue the officials and/or umpires must use a lightning app as follows: Vacate the field immediately if there is lightning within a 15km-20km radius. Play may only resume, with no warm-up time after 10 minutes without any further lightning strike within the same radius.
- 7.21 Penalty corners for outdoor hockey Premier League and League 1 only:
 - 7.21.1 Time will be stopped for 30 seconds for penalty corners.
 - 7.21.2 Umpires will fairly communicate with players in this regard and players will take as little time as possible to take their position. Defenders may receive green cards while the injector may be replaced if the umpire determines a player has unreasonably delayed taking their position.
 - 7.21.3 Time will not be stopped for penalty corners for all other leagues and other hockey codes.

After the match

- 7.22 In the event of a match having to be abandoned for any reason, if the second quarter is completed, the match shall be deemed to have been completed. If it is abandoned earlier than this, the match will have to be replayed, not later than 2 weeks after the scheduled date, unless both captains agree to allow the result to stand as it was at the point of abandonment.
- 7.23 Point allocations for all matches is 3 points for a win, 1 point for a draw and 0 for a loss.
- 7.24 Match reports are submitted utilising Sportivo for the full team list, result and cards received with the option for further match feedback via SGHA's Google sheet.
- 7.25 Sportivo capture can be completed real time or after the match (teams have the option to capture information using a paper-based template and then transferring the information onto Sportivo) after the match.
- 7.26 Where SGHA does not provide a technical official for a match, the submission of the match report becomes the responsibility of the home team captain.
 - 7.26.1 Match reports must be captured via Sportivo within 48 hours of the match having been completed.
 - 7.26.2 Where no match report is captured, the League Manager will submit a 0-0 result for that match and the club not capturing their result will receive a spot fine of R1,000 or more at the discretion of the League Manager.
- 7.27 If a false declaration is made in any match report, a 10-0 loss will be awarded against the offending team and the League Manager may issue further sanctions.

8 DISCIPLINE, SANCTIONS AND APPEALS

Match Card Sanctions

- 8.1 The accumulation of the following cards by a player or team official in the same season will result in a minimum of a 1 match suspension to be served:
 - 8.1.1 3 yellow cards.
 - 8.1.2 1 red card.
 - 8.1.3 Match officials may rescind a yellow or red card in writing, including the reason for the change, provided to the League Manager.
- 8.2 SGHA will keep records of the cards indicated above to monitor and impose prescribed sanctions **as per the Hockey Regulations (refer to the Conduct offences section)**. The League Manager will advise club representatives, in writing, when sanctions are to be prescribed.
- 8.3 Any period of suspension commences immediately after the last recorded offence, applicable to SGHA league matches.
- 8.4 Failure to suspend a player as required for each match that a suspension applies to, will result in the team, in which the player received their final card that resulted in their suspension, deemed to have lost each match 10-0 with a further 3 points being deducted for each match. The club will also receive a fine not exceeding R2,000.
- 8.5 Suspensions not concluded by the end of the season will roll over to the following season for that particular hockey code.
- 8.6 Players accumulating the required number of cards for a further suspension in the same season may be issued with additional sanctions at the discretion of the League Manager.
- 8.7 A disciplinary points system, for yellow and red cards only, applies to the Premier League and League 1 for men and women as follows:
 - 8.7.1 A yellow card equals 5 disciplinary points.
 - 8.7.2 A red card equals 15 disciplinary points.
 - 8.7.3 During the season, each team's disciplinary points accumulation will be tracked. If the total points accumulated exceeds 90 points that team will lose 1 league point.
 - 8.7.4 For every further 10 disciplinary points that the same team accumulates above the threshold, a further league point will be deducted (every further 10 disciplinary points = 1 league point additional deduction).

Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures

- 8.8 A written complaint for misconduct by any official, player or club supporter(s) may be submitted to the League Manager within 1 week of a match having been completed.
- 8.9 Any incident, complaint, dispute or breach of league rules will be managed by the League Manager unless there is a conflict of interest or the issue is considered by the League Manager outside the scope of SGHA's senior leagues. In this instance, the issue will be referred to a relevant Executive Committee member.
- 8.10 Complaints will be addressed with the necessary care and consideration, applying all relevant SGHA regulations and the principles of fair play. The League Manager may apply a sanction, call a meeting or a disciplinary hearing, issue a warning or apply any other remedy considered appropriate within a reasonable time period.

- 8.11 The League Manager will inform or consult appropriately with the R&T Executive or delegated R&T individual(s) on all “on the field” disciplinary related matters.

Appeals

- 8.12 For the appeal process, please refer to the constitution, under the Appeals heading.

9 PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

- 9.1 At the end of the outdoor hockey and indoor league competitions, teams finishing 1st and 2nd gain promotion to one league above, while the last and 2nd last teams are relegated to one league below.
- 9.2 Promotion and relegation rules for hockey 5s will be communicated prior to the start of a season or competition.
- 9.3 For all hockey codes and leagues, positions on league logs are determined firstly by most number of points earned, then in the event of a tie between 2 or more teams:
- 9.3.1 Most matches won, then
 - 9.3.2 Highest goal difference, then
 - 9.3.3 Highest goals scored, then
 - 9.3.4 At the discretion of the League Manager. In instances where there is a conflict of interest, this responsibility will be delegated to the Club (Senior) Exco Member another Exco member.
- 9.4 For field hockey only:
- 9.4.1 Clubs with only one team cannot have that team promoted to the Premier league.
 - 9.4.2 2nd teams cannot be promoted to Premier League.
- 9.5 A team may request, in writing to the League Manager, not to be promoted or to be demoted and will be required to comply with the decision of the League Manager.