

SG Hockey Senior Club League Rules

2026 Season | Effective 6 July 2026

These rules govern all SG Hockey senior club league competitions. They are designed to be clear and practical so that club officials can apply them confidently. Where anything is unclear, contact the League Manager before the match, not after. Email and contact details are available on the SG Hockey website.

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1 Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this document:

League Manager(s)	Person(s) appointed by the Club (Senior) Exco Member to administer the leagues on behalf of SG Hockey.
Team Official	A captain, manager, or coach participating in a hockey match.
Match Official	An umpire or technical official appointed for a hockey match.
Club Official	An appointed officer of a club — whether employed or an elected committee member.
SG Hockey Official	An appointed officer of SG Hockey — whether employed or an elected committee member.
SG Hockey	Southern Gauteng Hockey Association.
FIH	International Hockey Federation.
SAHA	South African Hockey Association.
R&T	Rules and Technical.
Clearance Certificate	A document confirming that a player has no outstanding financial obligations or unresolved disciplinary matters with their previous club and/or province.
Sportivo	The online platform used by SG Hockey for player registration, team sheets, and match reporting.
Business day	Any day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or South African public holiday.

2 League authority and fair play

2.1 Who runs the league

- SG Hockey has placed league administration under the authority of the Club (Senior) Exco Member, who has delegated day-to-day management to a League Manager(s). The League Manager has authority to make all necessary decisions as set out in these rules.
- League rules are administrative in nature and do not constitute policy under the SG Hockey constitution. However, clubs will be consulted on all intended changes and given a reasonable opportunity to provide feedback before changes are finalised.
- **Final decisions:** In all matters, the decision of the League Manager is final, subject to the appeal process set out in Section 8.
- Where these rules are silent or ambiguous, the League Manager will exercise their discretion, guided by FIH and SAHA definitions and regulations where applicable.

2.2 Our shared values

- All SG Hockey league hockey is played with these values in mind:
 - **Respect:** We respect our opponents — they make us better. We respect our officials — without them we have no game.
 - **Fair Play:** In the game of life, sportsmanship matters. My team plays hard, but plays fair.
 - **Lead by Example:** I role-model what I expect from others, on and off the field.
 - **Together:** Inclusion is our game plan. Hockey is for everyone, from all backgrounds.
- By submitting a team entry, clubs explicitly agree to abide by SG Hockey's constitution, the SG Hockey Handbook, and these rules.

3 Team entries

3.1 Eligibility

- League competitions for men and women are open to all SG Hockey member clubs that are in good standing with SG Hockey. Competitions are communicated in advance by the League Manager.
- Teams are automatically entered based on the prior season's performance and associated promotions and relegations. New club or new team entries are placed into the lowest available league.
- **Premier League (outdoor only):** Premier League is reserved for 1st teams only. A club's 1st team may only participate in the Premier League if that club also fields a 2nd team (in any league) during the season in which Premier League status is held.

3.2 Confirming entries

- Clubs must confirm their team entries in writing. The League Manager will communicate all logistical and financial information, including entry fees, payment terms and key deadlines in writing.
- League structures will in principle mirror the previous season. SG Hockey may adjust formats to suit the needs of the province or participating clubs and will communicate changes in advance of the season.

3.3 Withdrawals

- **Withdrawal 14 days or less before the season starts:** A withdrawal fee of 10% of that team's league entry fee applies, payable in accordance with the standard payment schedule.
- **Withdrawal after the season has commenced:** The full entry fee remains payable. League results involving the withdrawn team will be adjusted as though that team was never entered.

3.4 Non-payment and suspensions

- Teams whose clubs have not met payment terms will be suspended. The League Manager will exercise discretion for partial payment allocations made by clubs without communication in this regard.
- Suspended teams will have 7 further days from the suspension date to settle their account. If payment is not received within those 7 days, the team is withdrawn from the league with points adjusted accordingly.
- No credit will be issued for any team withdrawn due to payment terms not being met.
- Catch-up games for previously suspended teams will be scheduled at the preference of the opposing team and will incur an administration fee of R2,500 per game.
- Interest will accrue on outstanding amounts at the prevailing prime lending rate.

3.5 Playing kit

- Any new club colours or change of club colours must be submitted to the League Manager for approval before the season commences.
- **Numbers:** All players must wear solid (not outlined) whole numbers, from number 1 upwards, on the back of their shirts. Numbers must be 16–20 cm in height. No duplicate numbers are permitted. Players without correct numbering may not take the field unless the opposing team captain permits this. Teams that do not address incorrect numbering may have a monetary penalty of not more than R2,000 applied at the League Manager's discretion. The League Manager has the right to waive this requirement for the lowest league for both men and women, before or during the season.
- All players must appear in the uniform of their club. Black skins are permissible. Teams wishing to use differently coloured skins as part of their uniform must obtain prior approval from the League Manager.
- For all women's leagues, skirts or skorts are preferable. Shorts are permitted provided they match the skort/skirt design and material and form part of the SG Hockey-approved club uniform. Ski-pants or hotshorts are not permitted at any league matches.
- **Colour clashes:** The away team (team named second) must change their strip if there is a potential colour clash. Clubs are expected to liaise directly with each other before match day. Bibs are a permitted alternative.

4 Player registration and clearances

4.1 General registration requirements

- Clubs must maintain an accurate player/member database at all times. During a season, clubs may be required to provide this information to SG Hockey and SAHA on request.
- **Age:** Only players in the U15 age group or older may register for senior league hockey (a player must be at least 14 years old on 1 January of the current year).
- **U18 players:** Players under 18 require written parent/guardian consent, managed by the club.
- By entering senior teams, clubs acknowledge that they have obtained all necessary indemnities from players and their parents/guardians, indemnifying and holding harmless SG Hockey, member clubs, and SG Hockey officials in relation to senior league hockey activities.

4.2 Clearance certificates — intra-SG hockey transfers

- A Clearance Certificate confirms that a player leaving a club has no outstanding financial obligations or unresolved disciplinary matters with that club.
- **Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the player to request a Clearance Certificate from the player's previous SG Hockey club, with a copy submitted to the new club and the League Manager. The club may take on this responsibility on behalf of the player.
- **Previous club's obligation:** The previous club must respond to a clearance request within 10 business days. Failure to do so without written justification will be treated as a clearance granted by default, and the League Manager will issue a provisional clearance to the new club (see **Disputes** paragraph below).
- **Grounds for withholding clearance:** A clearance may only be withheld if there are genuine outstanding financial obligations or active disciplinary matters. Clearances may not be withheld for administrative, logistical, or any other reasons.
- **Disputes:** If a player or club believes a clearance is being withheld unfairly or unreasonably delayed, they may escalate the matter in writing to the League Manager, who will investigate and make a binding ruling within 5 business days.

4.3 Clearance certificates — inter-provincial transfers

- A player moving from another province to SG Hockey requires both a club-level clearance from their previous club and a provincial clearance from the relevant provincial association.
- **Provincial clearance delays:** If a player has made a bona fide application for provincial clearance and the issuing province has not responded within 10 business days, the player's new club must notify the League Manager in writing with supporting evidence of the application. The League Manager may grant a conditional registration permitting the player to participate while the clearance is being finalised, provided no disciplinary bar is known to exist.
- **Responsibility:** It is the player's or new club's responsibility to initiate and follow up on both clearance processes timeously. The League Manager should be kept informed of progress.

4.4 Unregistered or uncleared players — process and sanctions

These rules distinguish between administrative delays and deliberate non-compliance. Sanctions are proportionate to the circumstances.

- **No proactive investigation duty:** It is not the League Manager's responsibility to proactively investigate, audit, or monitor whether players are correctly registered or cleared. Clubs and players are expected to take ownership of compliance responsibilities. This process is triggered when an issue is raised — whether by an opposing club, a match official, or identified through routine Sportivo administration — not through active League Manager investigation.
- The League Manager will notify a club in writing if it is found to have fielded an unregistered or uncleared player.
- **Step 1 — Remedy period:** The club has 10 business days from the date of written notification to provide the required documentation or a satisfactory written explanation.
- **Step 2 — Outcome if documentation is provided:** If the club demonstrates that it acted in good faith (for example, the clearance was requested timeously but not yet received), the League Manager may allow results to stand, subject to conditions. No automatic match forfeit will apply in cases of demonstrable good faith.
- **Step 3 — Outcome if documentation is NOT provided (no good faith shown):** All matches played with the unregistered or uncleared player will be recorded as a 5-0 loss unless the actual result was a loss and the goal difference was 5 goals or more. In this instance the original result will stand.
- **Repeat or deliberate non-compliance:** The League Manager may impose additional sanctions at their discretion, including fines and further point deductions.

4.5 Disbanded clubs

- If a club disbands while still indebted to SG Hockey, registered players of that club remain proportionately liable for the accumulated debt. A player may transfer to a new club only once their proportionate share of the outstanding debt has been settled with SG Hockey.

5 Team selections

5.1 Selection principle (fair play)

- Clubs are expected to select players such that a 1st team is meaningfully stronger than a 2nd team, which is stronger than a 3rd team, and so on. This principle underpins fair competition across all leagues.

5.2 Players playing an additional match in the same week for another team

- A player may not play for two different teams in the same calendar week (Monday to Sunday), except where ALL of the following conditions are met. This applies regardless of the order in which the fixtures fall during the week — the lower-team fixture may be played before or after the higher-team fixture.
 - Players playing an additional match is necessary for the club to honour a fixture and avoid a postponement or cancellation.
 - **Field players must play up:** A field player selected to play for two teams in the same week must, for the additional match, play for a higher team than their primary team for that week — never a lower one. This applies irrespective of which match is played first. For example, a 2nd team player may also turn out for the 1st team that week (whether before or after their 2nd team fixture), but not for the 3rd or 4th team.
 - **Maximum squad size:** A team using one or more field players who are also playing for a lower team that same week may have a maximum of 14 players (3 reserves) for the match in which that player is playing up. This restriction does not apply to Premier League teams.
 - **Goalkeepers:** A goalkeeper already selected for a lower team may also play up for another match that week only if they are temporarily covering for an injured 1st-choice goalkeeper (the injury may have occurred prior to or during that match). This applies regardless of which fixture falls first in the week.
 - **Youth development:** Clubs are encouraged to select school-going players for additional matches under this rule, supporting youth development.
 - **Notification:** The opposition captain and all match officials must be informed of this before the match commences. For Premier League and League 1 matches, the club must also notify the League Manager in writing before or after the match.

5.3 Breach of team selection rules

- Any club found in breach of team selection or player eligibility rules will have the affected match(es) recorded as a 5-0 loss for that team unless the actual result was a loss and the goal difference was 5 goals or more. In this instance the original result will stand.

6 Fixtures and match scheduling

6.1 Venues

- Any concern about league venues utilised must be submitted to the League Manager in writing with the necessary details that the League Manager can investigate the complaint.

6.2 Preparing fixtures

- The League Manager will prepare draft fixtures in advance of the season, taking into account public holidays, major school hockey events, and other relevant considerations.
- Clubs will be given a reasonable opportunity to review and comment on the draft fixtures. Amendments may be made based on club feedback before fixtures are finalised and circulated.

6.3 Rescheduling matches — all leagues except Premier League

- **General rule:** League matches may not be postponed. Matches must be played on the prescribed date and time. Rescheduling is only available in exceptional circumstances.
- **How to apply:** A club representative must submit a written request to the League Manager by email, copying the opposition club. The request must:
 - Be submitted 5 or more calendar days before the scheduled match.
 - Include a new date, time, and venue confirmed by both clubs.
 - Propose a new date within 2 weeks of the original match and before the last day of the league.
- **Late notice:** Any request received fewer than 5 days before the scheduled match will be treated as a cancellation (Rule 6.5) for the requesting team.
- **Costs:** Any additional costs arising from a rescheduled match (umpires, field hire, technical officials) are the responsibility of the requesting club.

6.4 Rescheduling matches — Premier League

Premier League fixtures are centrally scheduled to provide umpiring of the highest standards possible and cost-effective medical services. Postponements are therefore only available in very limited circumstances.

- **General rule:** Premier League matches may not be postponed.
- **Exceptional circumstances:** Postponements in the Premier League will only be considered where an event is genuinely beyond the requesting club's control. Qualifying circumstances include:
 - Confirmed national or provincial representative duty directly affecting a significant portion of the team.
 - A force majeure event (e.g. official natural disaster declaration, venue destruction, government-mandated restriction on gatherings).
 - A medical emergency or bereavement affecting a significant portion of the team, evidenced in writing.
- **Application:** A request must be made in writing to the League Manager as soon as reasonably possible after the qualifying circumstance arises. Where the circumstance is known more than 72 hours before the match, the request must be submitted no later than 72 hours before the match. Where the circumstance arises within 72 hours of the match, the request must be submitted as soon as reasonably possible thereafter, and in any event before the scheduled match start time. Supporting documentation is required.
- **Decision:** The League Manager has sole discretion to approve or decline a Premier League postponement request. The decision is final.
- **Costs:** If a Premier League postponement is approved, all additional costs (umpires, field hire, medical, technical officials) are borne by the requesting club.

6.5 Cancellation of matches

- If a club is unable to field a team for a scheduled match, the League Manager and the opposing club must be notified in writing at least 72 hours (3 days) before the match.

Situation	Sanction
Valid cancellation with 72+ hours' written notice	10-0 loss recorded for the cancelling team; 1 league point forfeited (unless the League Manager decides otherwise).
Failure to fulfil a fixture without correct notification	10-0 loss recorded; 3 league points deducted; fine of up to R2,000.
Repeat offences	Further sanctions at the League Manager's discretion.

7 Match regulations

7.1 Applicable rules

- All matches are played in accordance with the relevant FIH Rules of Hockey (outdoor, indoor, and Hockey 5s). Where any contradiction exists between FIH Rules and these league rules, these league rules will prevail.

7.2 Ground and equipment

- Fitness of the ground:** The umpires, in consultation with the captains, shall decide whether the ground is fit for play. In the event of a dispute, the umpires' decision is final on the day. The matter may be referred in writing to the League Manager within 48 hours of the match for a ruling.
- Match ball:** The home team (team named first) is responsible for providing an FIH-compliant match hockey ball.
- Player equipment:** Club officials and players must ensure all hockey equipment used complies with FIH regulations. Non-compliant equipment may not be used; any instances must be recorded on the match sheet, noting the player(s) concerned.
- Jewellery:** An umpire or technical official may require a player to remove jewellery if it poses a risk of injury. Refusal will result in the player being excluded from the match.
- Caps:** Caps are permitted provided they have a short, soft peak.

7.3 Match officials

- Each match must have 2 umpires officiating.
- The League Manager will communicate in advance of each season which leagues will have SG Hockey-appointed match officials.
- For leagues where SG Hockey does not appoint officials:
 - **Competence requirement:** A SAHA Level 0 accreditation or appropriate experience (disclosed to the opposition captain in advance) is required.
 - **Opposition's right of refusal:** For safety reasons only, the opposition captain can decline to play before the match starts if not satisfied with the evidence provided and the match will be postponed.
 - The League Manager must be advised of this in writing, including the reasons for not playing, within 1 business day of the match not being played.
- Home teams may appoint a Technical Official to support the umpires.
- No protest may be lodged against any decision made by the umpires and/or technical official during the match.
- Any officiating complaint must be submitted to the League Manager in writing within 2 business days of the match having been completed.

7.4 Technical area — authority of officials

- The umpires and technical official (where appointed) are the sole arbiters of fair play from 15 minutes before the match until 15 minutes after its conclusion.
- During this period, only players and team management (limited to a coach, assistant coach, manager, and medical officer) may occupy the technical area.
- The technical official may issue verbal warnings, yellow cards, and red cards for disciplinary incidents in the technical area. When a card is issued, the technical official stops play and applies the card to the offending individual.

7.5 Player numbers and team size

- **No minimum player requirement:** Matches may start with fewer than the standard number of players (subject to Rule 7.6).
- **Maximum players — Outdoor hockey:** A maximum of 18 players may be used, of whom 2 must be goalkeepers wearing full protective equipment. If a team chooses not to include a second goalkeeper, they are limited to 16 players for that match.
- **Maximum players — Indoor hockey:** As per FIH rules.
- **Maximum players — Hockey 5s:** Up to 4 court substitutes and 1 substitute goalkeeper (total squad of 10, including 2 goalkeepers).
- **Enforcement:** Team limit breaches must be corrected on the spot by the match officials. No complaint or sanction may be raised after the match has concluded.

7.6 Start and duration of matches

- **Delayed start:** An outdoor match may be delayed by up to 10 minutes if either team has 7 or fewer players at the scheduled start time.
- **Match timing:** Quarter breaks are 2 minutes. Half-time is 5 minutes for all leagues. Time is not stopped for goals scored.

7.7 Lightning protocol

- A match may not start or continue if lightning is present in the area and all participants must be removed from the field.
- **Lightning detection system:** Where a venue uses a lightning detection system with a siren, the system must be obeyed at all times.
- **No detection system:** Officials and/or umpires must use a lightning app. The field must be vacated immediately if lightning is detected within a 15km radius. Play may only resume after 30 minutes with no further lightning strike within the 15km radius.
- **Option not to continue:** Where a match is stopped under this lightning protocol, the teams are not obliged to wait out the full resumption period and may instead elect not to continue the match. This is treated as an abandonment under Rule 7.8 with all options within Rule 7.8 applicable. Both captains must be in agreement.

7.8 Abandoned matches

- If a match is abandoned for any reason after the completion of the second quarter, the match is deemed to have been completed and the score at the point of abandonment stands.
- If abandoned before the end of the second quarter, the match must be replayed not later than 2 weeks after the original scheduled date, unless both captains agree to accept the result at the point of abandonment.

7.9 Points and results

Result	Points Awarded
Win	3 points
Draw	1 point each
Loss	0 points

7.10 Match reports (Sportivo)

- Player details (name, surname, and playing number) must be added or updated in Sportivo before the season starts. A 2-week grace period applies at the start of each season. Details must be maintained on an ongoing basis thereafter.
- For fair play purposes, team lists should be available 24 hours before the match.
- **Pre-match team list review:** Before the match starts, each team must make its full team list — via Sportivo or hard copy — available for the opposing captain to review (player name, surname and number). This allows both captains to address any potential player rule breaches.
- **Team list not provided:** A team that fails to make its team list available for review before the match starts may be required to forfeit the match at the discretion of the opposing team captain. A match forfeiture is recorded as a 10-0 loss.
- **Submission deadline:** Match reports (full team list, result and cards) must be captured on Sportivo within 1 business day of the match.
- **Home team responsibility:** Where the League Manager has not appointed a technical official, the home team captain is responsible for submitting the match report.
- **No report submitted:** The League Manager will record a 0-0 result. The non-reporting club will receive a spot fine of R1,000 or more.
- **Late or non-compliant Sportivo entries:** Clubs not complying with player details requirements will receive spot fines of R1,000 or more.
- **False declaration:** If in contravention of the fair play principle, a 10-0 loss will be awarded against the offending team. Further sanctions may be imposed at the League Manager's discretion.

8 Discipline, sanctions and appeals

8.1 Match card sanctions — individual players and team officials

- A match official may rescind a yellow or red card in writing, with reasons, submitted timeously to the League Manager.
- Cards accumulate across the full season. The following will trigger a minimum 1-match suspension to be applied immediately by the relevant club:
 - 3 yellow cards accumulated in the same season.
 - 1 red card.
- Suspensions begin immediately after the last recorded offence (applicable to SG Hockey league matches only).
- Suspensions not completed by the end of a season roll over to the following season for the same hockey code.
- **Failure to serve a suspension:** The team in which the player received their suspension-triggering card will be deemed to have lost each match played while the suspension was in effect 10-0, with a further 3-point deduction per match and a fine of up to R2,000.
- **Personal consequence for the player:** In addition to the team sanction, a player who plays in any match while suspended will have their suspension extended by a further 1 match for a 3 yellow card suspension and 2 matches for a red card suspension, on top of any suspension still outstanding at the time of the breach. This extension applies regardless of which team the player turned out for.
- Players accumulating sufficient cards for a further suspension within the same season may receive additional sanctions at the League Manager's discretion.
- The League Manager will maintain card records for Premier League and League 1 (subject to accurate Sportivo and team sheet data) and will notify clubs of players at risk and when a suspension is triggered. Notwithstanding this, clubs and players are responsible for self-regulating and must act on any suspension triggered, whether or not notification has been received.

8.2 Complaints and disciplinary procedures

- Complaints regarding misconduct in a senior league match must be submitted in writing to the League Manager as soon as possible after the incident.
- For full procedures, refer to the Hockey Handbook under the Code of Conduct, Spectator Behaviour, and Disciplinary Procedures sections.

8.3 Appeals

- **How to lodge an appeal:** Any sanction may be appealed in writing within 1 week of the sanction being issued, together with an administration fee of R1,000. The appeal must state whether it is against the finding, the penalty, a procedural irregularity, or a combination, and must include reasons.
- **Sanction stays in effect:** A suspension or other sanction continues to apply while an appeal is pending — lodging an appeal does not suspend the sanction.
- **Who hears it:** SG Hockey will schedule a hearing within a reasonable period, before an appointed chairperson and optional panel members, with relevant experience.
- **Representation:** Individuals appealing a sanction must represent themselves, but may be supported by a club or league representative (e.g. team captain, club chairperson, R&T official).
- **Outcome:** The chairperson will issue a written decision within 1 week of the hearing. They may allow or dismiss the appeal, vary the original decision, or increase, decrease, or replace the sanction.
- **Final recourse:** Once the appeal process has concluded, the decision may only be taken further by referral to the Arbitration Foundation of South Africa (AFSA). AFSA's resolution is final and binding on all parties.
- For the full appeal procedure — including evidentiary requirements, hearing conduct, and provisions while a suspension is being appealed — clubs and individuals should consult the SG Hockey Constitution under the Appeals heading.

9 Promotion and relegation

9.1 Standard promotion and relegation

- At the end of each outdoor and indoor league competition, the teams finishing first and second are promoted to the league above, and the teams finishing last and second-last are relegated to the league below.

9.2 Outdoor Premier League promotion from League 1 special provision

- Teams eligible for promotion must be 1st teams. A team gaining promotion to the Premier League without a 2nd team in the same gender for that season, will have their promotion reversed in the following season if they are unable to field a 2nd team.
- The League 1 winner is automatically promoted to the Premier League, replacing the last-placed Premier League team.
- The team finishing second in League 1 will play a promotion/relegation match against the team finishing second-last in the Premier League at the end of the season. Only current season club-registered players may participate in these promotion/relegation matches.
- In the instance of League 1 having a 2nd team as the winner and a 1st team finishing second, the League 1 winner is not promoted and the promotion-relegation match will be between the 1st team that finished second and the Premier League team that finished last.

9.3 Log position tiebreakers

If two or more teams are equal on log points at season's end, positions are determined in the following order:

1. Most matches won.
2. Highest goal difference.
3. Highest number of goals scored.
4. At the League Manager's discretion. Where a conflict of interest exists, the matter is delegated to the Club (Senior) Exco Member or another Exco member.

9.4 Voluntary demotion or declining promotion

- A team may apply in writing to the League Manager to decline promotion or to request voluntary demotion. The League Manager's decision in response to such a request is final.

9.5 Hockey 5s

- Promotion and relegation rules for Hockey 5s will be communicated by the League Manager in advance of each season or competition.

Version: Updated 5 July 2026 | **Document owner:** SG Hockey Club (Senior) Exco Member |
Administered by: SG Hockey League Managers

Questions? Contact the League Manager via the contact details on the SG Hockey website before your match, not after.