



# ENGLAND HOCKEY

## Standard Hockey League Variations Regarding Covid-19

### 1. Introduction

a. These proposed regulations are issued by England Hockey as guidance for all leagues for the variance of existing league rules to endeavour to offer a consistent framework for the management of issues relating to Covid-19 that may impact on league hockey. They may be updated during the course of the season. England Hockey strongly recommends the adoption of the proposed regulations.

The Regions Consultative Committee met in July 2020 and endorse the approach to a consistent set of league rules and regulations for the return to play. The RCC strongly recommended that all leagues follow EH guidance and only seek to vary them with the consent of their participating clubs.

b. Each League shall have an “Emergency Committee” who will be responsible for managing any issues that arise in relation to these regulations, any issue not covered by these regulations, any issue that may arise from non-compliance with these regulations, any issue arising from the spirit of the regulations not being applied.

c. Certain Regulations herein refer to CV-19 Level 1 CV-19 Level 2 and CV-19 Level 3 of the League where different regulations apply. The definition of CV-19 Level 1, CV-19 Level 2 and CV-19 Level 3 in respect of all leagues is shown as Appendix CV19-2.

### 2. England Hockey Getting Back on the Pitch - Step 4 Guidance

a. *England Hockey Getting Back on the Pitch – Step 4 Guidance (the Guidance)* is available here

<http://www.englishockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=2633&sectionTitle=Covid%2D19+Club+Support>

This details the conditions under which hockey may be played in the 2020-21 season. It supersedes all existing league regulations where relevant. The Guidance is updated as and when required and will be posted on the England Hockey website and social media platforms. It is important that all clubs take steps to ensure that they are aware of the most up to date version of the Guidance prior to any fixture. England Hockey will take every step to ensure that any changes to the Guidance are made available in good time prior to fixtures. However as this is often in response to Government guidance, this may not always be practical.

b. The Guidance shall be applied to all fixtures

c. Where there is a major breach of the Guidance a fixture should not go ahead or continue. A major breach is one that clearly contravenes ‘The Guidance’ and as a result causes

significant risk to a participant or participants.

d. The breach should be reported to the relevant league official by the team(s) and / or appointed umpires and match official and the league will adjudicate on the matter in line with these regulations.

### **3. Withdrawal of Teams**

a. Any club that wishes to withdraw a team or teams from a League must do so in order of their League ranking, starting with the lowest ranked team.

b. In exceptional circumstances a club may apply to a League to withdraw a different team. If the League approve it, any teams ranked lower than the withdrawn team will not be eligible for promotion at the end of the season.

c. Any team that withdraws from the League shall be deemed to have filled the lowest place in the Division it was due to play in or has played in. The playing record of any team that withdraws once the season has started shall be expunged.

d. the League shall have the authority to revise any teams' Division and fixtures therein prior to the start of the season or after a maximum of four rounds of fixtures have been played in order to facilitate the smooth running of the League.

### **4. Scheduling of Fixtures**

In variance to the relevant League regulation the League shall have the authority to determine at any time if any individual Division, group of Divisions or the whole league shall be reformatted and fixtures rescheduled in line with one of the following formats.

a. Delayed season. Each team shall play all other teams in its Division on a home and away basis on revised dates specified by the league.

b. Revised season. Each team shall play all other teams in its Division once, on a home or away basis, on revised dates specified by the league. This shall form Phase 1 of the Division. The Division will then be divided into two sections, top and bottom, based on placings at this time and each team will play all other teams in its section on a home or away basis on revised dates specified by the league. This shall form Phase 2. (See Appendix CV19-2 for further details of this).

c. Shortened season. Each team shall play all other teams in its Division once, on a home or away basis, on revised dates specified by the league.

d. A league may reformat an individual Division, group of Divisions or the whole league more than once during the season, e.g. its status may change from Normal to Delayed, Delayed to Revised, Revised to Shortened.

e. If any of the above formats are used but it is not possible to complete all fixtures the season will be designated as Curtailed and any outcomes will be in line with Regulation 7 below. If a season is curtailed, the league reserves the right to vary any fixture list and/or order specific fixtures to be played or rescheduled in order to ensure that promotion or relegation issues may be resolved.

## 5. Final League Positions

a. When all scheduled fixtures have been completed in whichever format used or it is designated a Curtailed season, the final tables for a Division shall be calculated. Promotion and Relegation will apply in line with Regs 6. to 8. below.

## 6. Promotion and Relegation

a. Standard league regulations shall apply where any of the formats, as shown above, are used and all fixtures concluded.

b. If the formats shown above are used but not all fixtures in a Division are concluded the season shall be designated Curtailed and Regulation 7 shall apply.

c. In both instances, teams may apply for a reprieve from relegation in line with Regulation 8.

## 7. Curtailed Season – variance to Promotion and Relegation

a. If all teams in the Division have played each other once and all teams have played 80% or more of their scheduled matches then the final table will be decided on a PPG basis when PPG represents the number of points gained by teams in all league fixtures divided by the number of fixtures played. If teams are level on points the standard league regulations for determining final positions shall apply.

b. If all teams in the Division have played each other once but some teams have played less than 80% of their scheduled matches then the final table will be decided by the number of points gained by teams when each team had played each other once. i.e. only the results of these matches shall count to the final table, i.e. not the result of any reverse fixtures or if a Revised format used, fixtures in Phase 2. If teams are level on points the standard league regulations for determining final positions shall apply.

c. If all teams in the Division have not played each other once then there shall be no promotion or relegation save in line with Regulation 7.d below for Shortened format.

d. Promotion and Relegation in Curtailed Shortened format.

i. any team who has secured a promotion place (ie at the time a season was determined Curtailed it was in a promotion place and could not be overhauled) shall be promoted if a place is available in the relevant higher Division. This will either be by a team in that Division being eligible for relegation in line with 7.d.ii below, or a place being available due to a promotion in line with this regulation or withdrawal or league restructure. Where more than one team has secured a promotion place the team with the highest PPG (or placing as determined by standard league regulations) shall be promoted if only one place is available.

ii. any team who cannot avoid ending in a relegation place (ie at the time a season was determined Curtailed it was in a relegation place and could overhaul another team) shall be relegated if a place is available in the relevant lower Division. This will either be by a team in that Division being eligible for promotion in line with 7.d.i above or a place being available due to a relegation in line with this regulation or withdrawal or league restructure. Where more than one team cannot avoid ending in a relegation place the team with the lowest PPG (or placing as determined by standard league regulations) shall be relegated if only one place is available.

## 8. Request to Reprive

- a. If a team withdraws from the league in line with Regulation 3.c above but the season is curtailed with no promotion or relegation that team will retain its place within the Division for the subsequent season.
- b. At the end of the season where a team occupies a relegation place within a Division a club may apply to the League for it to be reprived. A reprive may be granted if feasible, for example due to the number of teams being eligible for promotion or relegated to/from the relevant Division means that for the subsequent season there is fewer than the standard number of teams otherwise eligible to play in that Division or its successor. Priority for any reprive will be for a team who has completed a league season, in order of any ranking or equivalent playing record if from different Divisions, over any team who has withdrawn.

## 9. Start times and scheduling of fixtures

Where possible existing league regulations should apply in respect of start times. In variance to these and in order to facilitate fixtures being fulfilled the following shall apply.

- a. Fixtures at CV-19 Level 1 must start between 1100 hrs and 1530 hrs\* (\*1430 hrs from 25 Oct to 21 Feb unless the venue has floodlights with an average lux level of 350 lux, with current valid certification or dating from 1 Jan 2019 if it has not been possible to arrange a test.)
- b. Fixtures at CV-19 Level 2 and CV-19 Level 3 must start between 0900 hrs and 1700 hrs\* (\*1430 hrs from 25 Oct to 21 Feb unless the venue has floodlights with an average lux level of 350 lux, with current valid certification or dating from 1 Jan 2019 if it has not been possible to arrange a test)
- c. Where both teams and the League agree fixtures can be played outside of these time windows including on a different date within three days of the original date, (e.g. For a Saturday fixture the preceding Wednesday, Thursday or Friday evening or following Sunday or Monday or Tuesday evening).

## 10. Venue availability

- a. Clubs must prioritise venue availability for all their teams (both men's and women's) in ranking order with the highest ranked team having highest priority for any available pitch slots. Any available slots between 1200 and 1430 hrs must be allocated to clubs' highest ranked teams.
- b. The home team must confirm the venue and time for a fixture, 16 days in advance of it.
- c. If the home team is unable to provide a venue for a fixture the away team shall be given the opportunity to host the fixture at a venue and time in line with these regulations (see Regulation 9 above). In these circumstances the away team may agree to reverse a subsequent fixture between the teams or retain home advantage for the subsequent fixture.
- d. At any time within 16 days of the fixture if a venue becomes unavailable after it has been confirmed, the home team must immediately advise the away team of a change of venue/time. If no alternative venue is available, the home team must advise the away team immediately who shall be given the opportunity to host the fixture in line with 10.c above.
- e. Any change of start time by the home team must be within 90 minutes of the original start time or approved by the away team otherwise the away team shall be given the opportunity to host the fixture in line with 10.c above.

f. If it is not possible to arrange the fixture on the scheduled date the home team may request to postpone it or choose to forfeit a fixture at no penalty other than the fixture being recorded as a 3-0 loss subject to any further remission or penalty as imposed by the league.

## **11. Player availability**

Standard league regulations shall apply save the following regulations shall apply where a club is unable to field sufficient players for its teams to fulfil all its fixtures on any one day.

a. Starred player regulations or those that are used to determine fair selection for teams shall only apply at CV-19 Level 1 and 2.

b. On the last two rounds of matches in a Division or of Phase 1 or Phase 2 if a Revised format is used, players eligibility to play for a team will be subject to the following.

i. If a player has played a fixture in a higher ranked team during the season, they are only eligible to play for the team if they have played 2 or more matches for the team or a lower ranked team during the season.

c. Apart from on the last round of matches in a Division or of Phase 1 or Phase 2 if a Revised format is used, players may play for more than one team within a club on any one day where both fixtures are at CV-19 Level 2 or below within the relevant league structure. However, the lower ranked team a player plays for and any other further lower ranked teams for that club may not have more than 12 players in its squad.

d. A team may choose to forfeit a fixture at no penalty other than the fixture being recorded as a 3-0 loss, subject to any further remission or penalty as imposed by the league, or request to postpone it.

e. Where both teams are unable to field a team they may choose to postpone the fixture or forfeit it at no penalty other than the fixture being recorded as a 0-0 draw with one point awarded to each team, subject to any further remission or penalty as imposed by the league

f. The club should postpone/forfeit any fixtures for teams in their ranking order starting with the lowest ranked first.

## **12. Local lockdown**

a. Where a team is subject to local restrictions due to the impact of Covid 19 that mean it is unable to fulfil a fixture it may choose to forfeit a fixture at no penalty other than the fixture being recorded as a 3-0 loss, subject to any further remission or penalty as imposed by the league, or request to postpone it.

b. Where both teams are subject to local restrictions due to the impact of Covid 19 they may choose to postpone the fixture or forfeit it at no penalty other than the fixture being recorded as a 0-0 draw with one point awarded to each team, subject to any further remission or penalty as imposed by the league.

## **13. Postponed and forfeited matches and slip dates**

a. The League will consider any evidence in relation to a request to postpone a fixture and may approve this or decline this and determine the fixture forfeited. If a request to postpone a fixture is approved, it shall be rearranged in line with slip date regulations.

b. A team will be entitled to postpone a maximum of 20% of scheduled and postponed fixtures due to unavailability of a home venue or players or a local lockdown. If they are unable to fulfil further fixtures these fixtures will have to be forfeited in line with the relevant regulation. This is in addition to any postponements due to a venue being unfit for play due to the weather.

c. Any postponed match must be replayed on the designated slip date or may be played prior to the slip date if agreed by both teams (see *Appendix CV19-1* for slip dates for the season).

d. The league retains the right to impose further remissions or penalties on teams forfeiting matches where, but not exclusively - a team forfeits multiple fixtures, where it is determined that Covid-19 was not a factor in the decision, where the outcome of a Division may be impacted by such a decision.

#### **14. Umpires**

a. Umpires will be appointed to fixtures by relevant umpire associations where possible.

b. Where clubs are required to provide umpires, standard league regulations will apply.

c. If a team is unable to appoint an umpire in line with regulations to a fixture, they should advise their opposition as soon as possible. The opposition may appoint an umpire qualified in line with league regulations. If they are unable to do so the team should appoint another individual to umpire the game. At CV-19 Level 3 it is acceptable for a team to use two individuals to each umpire and play half the fixture.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix CV19-1 – Slip date calendar

Appendix CV19-2 – League Pyramid CV-19 Levels

Appendix CV19-3 – Revised Split Season regulations

Use your own protective equipment or disinfect before use (e.g. facemasks)

