

SCHOOLS COMPETITION RULES FOR 2026/27 as passed at AGM 2026

Preamble.

A The AGM for Munster Schools' Hockey is seen as the most important platform for the sharing of information, the shaping of competitions and the development of the game in our schools. It is supported by two regional meetings, one in Cork and one in Limerick, held early in September, where regional coaches can meet and discuss relevant and pertinent issues concerning the season ahead.

These meetings must be attended by as many coaches as possible and all schools entering teams must be represented. It is recognised that circumstances do not always allow everybody to attend.

B All schools are obliged to nominate a 'main contact' for each season. It is up to schools themselves to decide who is nominated. This person has, however, several responsibilities for the season. They are responsible for submitting entries before the established deadlines. They must complete the information section on entry forms regarding other in-school coaches' contact details and school colours. They must ensure that all coaches in the school are familiar with the rules, particularly those regarding eligibility for teams, match cards, season and match schedules, and the arrangement of fixtures. All coaches should be kept up to date with communications during the season if they are not included on the mailing list. The lack of knowledge of our rules is not a defence when rules are broken.

C Coaches' Responsibilities:

1. The home team coach must seek to arrange the fixture at least two weeks before the play by date. There **must** be a written record of this be email or phone message.
2. The home team coach **must** contact the fixture secretary and the away team coach before the two week deadline, if they cannot fulfil the fixture before the play by date. A failure to contact may result in the loss of home advantage.
3. The home team coach **must** provide and complete the match card. The match card **must** have 4 signatures and be submitted to the fixture secretary less than 24 hours after the game.
4. The away team coach **must** keep a photograph of the completed match card also

1. REGISTRATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Each player must be a Bona Fide member of an affiliated School and attending 2nd Level education.

Age Groups:

Senior: Full time, bona fide students attending the affiliated school. (Note: Equivalent JAG Squad is U18)

Junior: U16 on 1st January in season of competition

Minor: 2nd Yr students, regardless of age. (1st Yr students of the standard can play up, but ONLY to the highest Minor team entered by the school.)

1st Yr: 1st Yr students, regardless of age

Leagues.

- 1.1 Each season, before playing the first league game at each level (Senior, Junior, Minor and 1st Yr) the coach must email a list of the full names of ALL players at that level playing hockey in the school, along with dates of birth. This is the registration list, which may be added to during the year by sending the same details about any player who may be joining the player group at a level. **NO unregistered player may represent the school on any team.**

On playing the first match and submitting the match sheet to the relevant league secretary, the full names of 11, for the highest team entered at each level, or 9, for subsequent teams entered at that level, bona fide playing members of each team, which are called nominated players, must be provided. These names must be the first 11 or 9 names on the match sheet and must take part in the game.

1.2 Schools may enter their 1st Team in all age levels to 'A' and/or 'B' level competitions only. 'C' level is for 2nd teams only, and emerging schools, as agreed by the committee, previous results will be taken into consideration. Any school team that has reached a league or cup final at Minor C, Junior C or Senior C, will not be allowed re-enter corresponding Junior C or Senior C for a period of 2 years after that season.

1.3 Players nominated on a given team shall be ineligible to play for a lower team.

1.4 Any player playing representative hockey in the current season should be registered only on the highest team at the relevant age group. Exceptional circumstance may be ruled upon by the Competitions Committee.

1.5 Where it is clear that a player has missed, or will miss, 2 or more consecutive matches through absence, injury or suspension, Schools Competitions Committee shall remove the player in question from the nominations immediately. A new player will now be nominated in that player's place. Should any of the nominated players be unavailable for a match the competition secretary should be informed in advance by the school whose player will be absent.

1.6 Where Schools have more than ONE team in the same competition, 11, at 'A' level, or 9 nominated players may only play on ONE team and may NOT sub on the other team, with the exception of the Goalkeeper. The goalkeeper can play on another team only if playing outfield. An outfield player on one team can play as a keeper on a lower team.

1.7 Where a school recognizes the need to re-grade a player due to circumstances, they may apply to Competitions Committee for this to be considered, specifying the reasons for this request. Competitions Committee will decide and inform the school coach concerned. No re-grading has taken place until the concerned coach has been informed.

- 1.8 Nominated players can only play for team nominated to or above. Blitzes and leagues are run for 1st Years under rules agreed by the competitions committee.

1.9 No registered 'A' player may play on any 'B' or 'C' team unless it is on the most senior team in the school.

1st Year players can only play up to the highest entered team at Minor level.

1.10 All matches, league and cup, will be played in quarters. At all levels, 11-a-side games will be 4 quarters of 15 mins. No more than 2 mins should be allowed at quarter breaks and 5 mins half time.

Cups

1.11 Cup Nominations must be made in advance. Each school must provide a list of 11, for 'A' level competitions, or 9, for 'B' and 'C' level competitions nominated players as bone fide members of the team concerned, to the relevant Cup Secretary 7 DAYS prior to the commencement of the competition. These nominated players are tied to this team. The nominated players must take part in the game. A player who has not played one league game at that level prior to the start of the schools' cup competition will not be approved to play in competition. Where a school fails to submit cup nominations as per above it will be deemed to have nominated the same players registered in the first LEAGUE game of the same season

1.11.a Should a squad member be injured and possibly miss an entire league campaign their name should be added to the League Registration sheet as an 'Extra'. Should this player recover and is fit to play in the Cup, without having played a league match at the same level, the coach/administrator must notify the relevant comp secretary that the nominated player is fit and request that the player be added to the team cup nominations.

1.12 Schools may enter their 1st Team in all age levels to 'A' and/or 'B' level competitions only. 'C' level is for 2nd teams or lower only, unless by application to and agreement with the Competitions committee.

1.13 Any player playing representative hockey in the current season should be registered only on the highest team at the relevant age group. Exceptional circumstance may be ruled upon by the Competitions Committee.

1.14 Where schools have more than ONE team in the SAME Cup, players may only play on ONE team and may NOT play on the other team, with the exception of the Goalkeeper. The goalkeeper can play on another team only if playing outfield. An outfield player on one team can play as a keeper on a lower team.

1.15 Teams in breach in rules 1.1 to 1.10 shall be dealt with by the Schools Competitions Committee.

1.16 The Schools Competitions Committee shall reserve the right to veto any school's nominations and may impose conditions on certain nominations with a view to ensuring fair competition.

1.17 All entries for Munster Schools' Competition should be submitted as early as possible to ensure competition can commence as soon as feasible. In any event, no entries can be considered after the guideline dates below.

All Senior and Junior grades entries for Cup and League will be required by the end of May after the previous season.

All other entries by end of the 3rd school week in September.

2. LEAGUE RULES. (Also refer to Registration and Nomination 1.1 – 1.10 above)

2.1 Competition hockey shall commence and end on the instruction of the Schools Competitions Committee in conjunction with Competition Secretaries.

2.2 The HOME team to contact the AWAY team to arrange the match

2.3 League Points are awarded as follows:

- a. Win = 3 points
- b. Score Draw = 2 points
- c. No score Draw = 1 point
- d. Defeat = 0 points

2.4 Teams must play the required number of games before Christmas on the instructions of the relevant League Secretary/Competitions Committee.) All teams in league competitions where prescribed dates are not stipulated must have one more than half their league programme played by Christmas. Schools who have not played the requisite number of games by Christmas will be eliminated from the corresponding cup competition.

2.5 Games are to be completed by the given deadline which is decided with the relevant League Secretary /Munster Schools Competitions Committee.

2.6 Where colours are the same the HOME team MUST change. All schools must have a change of strip, with the alternative colours advised on team entry form for each year.

2.7 If there is a particular difficulty in arranging matches, schools should contact the relevant League Secretary. It is expected that schools contacted by other coaches engage positively to arrange fixtures. A record of communication should be kept to assist with appeals.

2.8 ALL finals must be played on synthetic surfaces.

2.9 On completion of the League competition:

- The team with the highest number of points shall be the winning team in each Section.
- All matches in the leagues that end in a draw will require shuttles to be played.
There will be no points awarded for the shuttles but they will be used in the event of a tie in the league to avoid the need for play-off games. The result of shuttles should be recorded on the match card. Both teams agree on a timekeeper.
- Goal difference will not be used as the deciding factor.
- Playoffs for league position shall be organised by the relevant Fixture Secretary with approval from Competitions Committee.
- Where a play-off is necessary, it should be in the reverse venue to the league match played between the same schools.

3 CUP RULES (Also refer to Registration and Nomination 1.11 to 1.14 above)

3.1 The drawing and organising of Cup Competitions shall be the responsibility of the Schools Competitions Committee.

3.2 The Senior, Junior and Minor A Cups shall be non-regionalised. All other cup draws shall be regionalised with cross-over redraw at semi-final stage.

3.3 Matches shall be played on the ground of the team whose name is on top. For rounds between 1st round and semi-final redraw, if the team on top have received a bye, or have achieved a home win in previous round, and the team below have won away, then the venue is reversed. The Semi-final and Final will be played as drawn, with no venue reversals, unless by agreement between the schools involved.

3.4 The home team should contact the away team to arrange the match. The rain date should also be agreed.

3.5 Players on a Cup team MUST have played 1 league game for the School. (See 1.11 and 1.11.a)

3.6 Teams must wear numbered shirts for Senior A and Junior A Cup games. Failure to wear numbered shirts will mean forfeiture of match.

3.7 Where colours are the same the HOME team MUST change. All schools must have a change of strip, with the alternative colours advised on team entry form for each year

3.8 In accordance with instruction from Hockey Ireland, there will be no extra time or replays in any cup competition. Where schools finish a cup game in a draw, the tie will be decided by shuttles as per F.I.H. regulations.

3.9 Results MUST be phoned/ emailed to the relevant Cup Secretary.

3.10 Cup result sheets MUST be sent to the relevant Cup Secretary even if the result has been phoned/ emailed. No result sheets could lead to disqualification.

3.11 Finals of Senior A, Junior A, Minor A Cups shall be on neutral grounds with neutral umpires.

All other Cup finals shall be hosted by the top team in the draw as reflected in the cross-over redraw for semi-finals.

All other Cup finals shall be hosted by the top team in the draw as reflected in the cross-over redraw for semi-finals.

3.12 The dates and venues for all finals shall be the responsibility of the Schools Competitions Committee and relevant Fixture Secretary. All finals must be played on synthetic surface.

3.13 Venue for Senior A and Junior A Cup and League competitions shall alternate between North and South of the province. If a final or play-off is to be contested between two teams from the 'away' region that final will revert to their own region for that year. This will not affect the other venues or the future alternating schedule.

(This season, 2023/24, Senior A final is scheduled for South Munster. Junior A is scheduled for North Munster)

3.14 Ball girls must be organised by the schools involved for all Senior A Cup matches and all A finals. Ball girls should be briefed regarding responsibilities and must wear gumshields and shinguards.

4. FIXTURES

4.1 A match cannot take place without 2 umpires officiating. In the absence of appointed umpire(s), it is the responsibility of each team to provide an umpire.

4.2 For Senior A and Junior A Cup, school coaches should not be appointed as umpire for their own school. Should it prove impossible for a school to find an unaffiliated umpire, there should be agreement between both schools about the umpires nominated.

4.3 A coach cannot umpire and coach his/her team during the match - including half-time – even if opposition agrees, except with Minor teams.

4.4 CUP matches will take precedence over league matches.

4.5 A record should be kept of attempts to contact, and correspondence with, other schools regarding the arrangement of fixtures. Where a reasonable effort has been made to contact another school and has failed, the competition secretary should be notified promptly, and support sought to resolve the delay. Records of the failed attempts to communicate must be provided.

4.6 Home team for League/Cup must incur the cost of pitch hire for a game if they don't own their own pitch.

5. POSTPONEMENTS, REARRANGEMENTS & FORFEITED MATCHES

5.1 Where a match otherwise is not played, the two schools shall attempt to find a mutually agreed date to play the fixture. If a date cannot be agreed the schools shall notify the Competition Secretary/ Schools Competitions Committee. The Competition Secretary, in conjunction with Schools Competitions Committee, shall decide on the new date for the fixture. If a team cannot fulfil the fixture, a walkover will be awarded to the opposition.

5.2 CUP: Where a team does not play its scheduled cup match on/before the given date, without prior official postponement or agreement with relevant Competition Secretary to rearrange the match with their opposition, they shall be deemed to have forfeited the match.

5.3 An agreed date for a scheduled match can only be changed within twenty-four hours of this agreed original arrangement with the prior agreement of both teams and in consultation and with the agreement of the relevant Competition Secretary

5.4 Where a team forfeits a match the opposition is awarded a win in the match.

5.5 Exceptional circumstances may be considered by the Schools Council.

6. PITCH UNPLAYABLE

6.1 Where a school team and/or umpire(s) is to travel more than 50km and if there is any doubt about the condition of a pitch due to weather, the HOME team

- a. Shall ring the travelling team/umpire(s) by 9.00am and give a report on the condition of the pitch.
- b. Shall find out what time the travelling team/umpire(s) is due to start the journey
- c. Shall ring the travelling team/umpire(s) again before they are due to start the journey and either cancel or confirm the fixture.

6.2 If the procedure in 6.1 above is not adhered to and the travelling team arrives and the match is not played, the fixture will be reversed.

6.3 If the procedure in 6.1 above is adhered to and the match is cancelled by the umpires or the grounds man, the match will be re-fixed at the original venue.

7. UNFINISHED MATCHES

7.1 In the case of unfinished matches, the Schools Competitions Committee shall, at its discretion, and with regard to the circumstances in which the match remained unfinished:

- a. Re-fix the match
- b. Reckon the result of the match as per the score at the time the match was stopped.
- c. Reckon the match as a draw.
- d. Reckon the match as forfeit by either or both teams.

8. MATCH CARDS and RESULTS

8.1 Match cards shall be kept by Schools Secretaries which shall include the full names of the players on the panel, the name of the competition, the venue, date & time of the fixture. Goalkeepers must be identified on each match card.

THE MATCH CARD SHALL BE COMPLETED BY BOTH TEAMS AND HANDED TO THE UMPIRES PRIOR TO THE START OF THE MATCH BY THE CAPTAIN OF THE HOME TEAM.

8.2 At the end of the match the umpires shall enter the score, name of scorer(s), mark any disciplinary card(s) used, sign and return the card to the Coach of the winning team.

8.3 The winning team shall send match card to relevant fixture secretary, within 48 HOURS of the time of the fixture. For match cards not received within 14 days, points WILL NOT BE AWARDED. A photo of the completed match card will suffice.

8.4 The match card should be an accurate record of the match played. Any deliberate falsification of entries on match cards shall be dealt with by Schools' Competitions Committee/Competition Secretaries who may reckon the match as forfeited by the offending team and may make further sanctions.

8.5 Goal difference is not a factor in deciding league positions and cup games have winners and losers irrespective of the scoreline. Accordingly, the recording of results on cup and league record sheets shall reflect never more than a five-goal difference between the teams involved. Match cards, however, should be completed according to 8.4 above.

9. UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

9.1 Players must wear full hockey uniform for all matches. Only bicycle shorts either white or same colour as skirt/skort are permitted and can only be worn under said skirts/skorts.

9.2 When colours are similar, the HOME TEAM MUST change socks and/or tops.
All schools must have a change of strip, with the alternative colours advised on team entry form for each year. This alternative must be accessible for use when/if the need arises.

9.3 Any CHANGE OF COLOURS BY A SCHOOL MUST BE ADVISED TO THE COMPETITIONS COMMITTEE AND MUST BE PASSED BY THEM.

9.4 It is essential that numbered shirts are worn in all Senior A and Junior A Cup matches, and League finals

9.5 It is strongly advised that gum shields and shin guards should be worn by all players.

9.6 NO jewellery should be worn while playing hockey.

9.7 At Senior and Junior A level, the Captain of the day must wear a distinctive armband/tape.

10. DISCIPLINE

10.1 Cards given to a Schoolgirl in a Schools match Senior A and Junior A are carried forward to Club matches.

10.2 Any player who receives a red card in a game shall be deemed to have brought the game into disrepute. They shall be reported to the management committee who shall deal with the matter in accordance with Article 26 – Discipline – of the Branch Constitution. They shall serve an automatic one match ban & any additional ban as decided by the management's disciplinary committee.

10.3 Any player who receives three yellow cards in a season shall serve an automatic one match ban.

10.4 The school of any player subject to a ban is responsible for ensuring that the player does not play until the ban is served. If a player plays before the ban is served then additional sanctions may be applied by the disciplinary committee including increasing the ban for the player and/or deciding that matches played by the team that played the banned player should be forfeited.

11. BRANCH TROPHIES and MEDALS

11.1 All School League/Cup Trophies shall be returned to the Schools Chair or Fixture Secretary's, clean and engraved by 31st January of each hockey season.

11.2 Where a School permanently mislays a Trophy, the School will reimburse the Munster Branch with its replacement.

11.3 The Branch undertake to provide medals for competition winners and runners-up to reflect squad size on a given day. 18 medals only will be provided. Extra medals may be ordered by a school, at their own expense, on request and subject to stock variables for our supplier.