

MRHA Men's League - September 2017 Newsletter

The season is almost upon us so it's time for my first Newsletter.

I am unfortunately starting with the sad news that my predecessor, Peter Cranswick, passed away on 15th September after fighting leukaemia for a number of years. I'm sure all your thoughts are with his wife and family.

By now you should have received your copies of the League Handbooks and two MRHA Handbooks. If not please let me know ASAP.

Please make sure you fully read the Rules and Rules Guidance. There are only minor changes this year, most of which are to clarify some rules which you felt needed to be a bit more specific. There are still far too many TBC of club officials, hopefully we can work towards reducing these next year. If you make both Divisional Secretaries and myself aware of any changes I'll make sure they are noted on the website. Most of you submitted your details and payments in a timely fashion but still far too many clubs that I had to chase.

We will be performing our normal Card Reviews at weeks 7, 15 and 22, so let's keep your average cards below one a game and you'll be free from any potential penalties.

We have added a section to this year's handbook, (page 145) titled 'Guide for Club Umpires', and would ask that you please ensure all your umpires are made aware of its contents. Hopefully it will remove a few of our problems we've had in previous years and reduce a few fines for incomplete match sheets. I'm attaching a copy of the document for you to pass on.

If you need more qualified umpires, remember the Men's League will reimburse £25 to all Level 1 course attendees and a further £25 when they are assessed and start umpiring Men's League games.

I'm glad to see that most clubs are entering their Home game Venues/Start Times on the League Website but still not 100%. One thing I would like you to be aware of is the communication of start times outside 'the window', as per Rule 12. Also ensure that the 1st team start/times venues are also specified on the MRHUA website for umpire appointments.

Divisions with 10 teams should check the instructions regarding submission of results for the extra Alpha/Beta games below.

You will also find below paper which the MRHA Council has asked me to add regarding teams that are entering competitions and non-regulated Leagues that are not part of a club affiliated to EH and if you play against them could invalidate your own club insurance.

News on our Open League work is that several Workgroups got together during the summer to look at: evaluate options and develop a new structure; ranking activities to propagate a structure; changes to the rules and a plan to implement. Work is still progressing but we will be communicating a proposal later in the year.

I know that Fixtures Secretaries no longer must verbally confirm fixtures, but a quick reminder about Guidance Note 4d.

‘The home club is expected to provide “teas” or suitable refreshment for the visiting side. It is advisable to let the visiting team know, when confirming the fixture, the venue for the “teas” and the arrangements, so that the opposition can confirm whether their players will be available to take “tea”– and if the visiting team is for any reason unable to accept the offer of “tea”, or if not all of the players can stay, then the visitors can notify in advance and any waste of food and costs can be avoided.’

Don’t just go straight home after the games if the Home teas are expecting you to return to their venue for ‘teas’.

Finally, I wish you all a problem free season and remember if you are not sure about any rules or need to do something you’re not sure about remember to seek clarification from the relative Divisional Secretary and a final reminder to make sure any new players are ‘transferred’ as per our process.

Alpha/Beta Result Management

Clubs

1st XI League

Contact Russells and report result, explaining it is an Alpha/Beta game so needs to be recorded twice. Team Sheet to be submitted as usual, showing normal Home and Away fixture.

Scorers to be e-mailed to Russells

Other Leagues

Both teams to text result. Team Sheet to be submitted as usual, showing normal Home and Away fixture. The Away Team should text with their own Team Code and an 'A' at the end to indicate it is the 'Away' team submitting the result.

Russells

Record both results to be recorded.

Correct points by removing any recorded against Alpha or Beta.

Scorers to be recorded in related team fixtures. Under Alpha or Beta team 'scorers' to be recorded against player 'Name Unknown'.

Divisional Secretaries

Correct points by removing any recorded against Alpha or Beta.

Scorers to be recorded in related team fixtures. Under Alpha or Beta team 'scorers' to be recorded against player 'Name Unknown'.

MRHA affiliated clubs playing non-affiliated MRHA / England Hockey teams/clubs

Background

There have been cases where MRHA affiliated clubs played non-affiliated MRHA / England Hockey teams/clubs in Summer Leagues and Tournaments in the Midlands. This is against MRHA rules and could invalidate the insurance cover of affiliated clubs when they play non-affiliated teams/clubs.

MRHA Rules

Rule 4.1.1.8 states” without the prior permission of the Councils of the MRHA and EH, no affiliated club shall play a club not affiliated, unless the opposition is.”

The exception to rule 4.1.1.8 that the opposition is an invitation team raised for a specific event would appear to apply to a team raised only for a single tournament. The exception to rule 4.1.1.8 is unlikely to apply to a team raised to play in a Summer League as a league is a series of games not a specific event or a team raised to play in series of tournaments as series of tournaments is not a specific event.

Affiliated clubs have ‘adopted’ summer league or tournament teams and registered their players to the club for occasional hockey in the past. Clubs I know who did this in the past are not now happy doing it now because of the administration involved and potential reputational risk and liabilities of players involved in incidents who did not play for the club on a regular basis.

Insurance Risk

The insurance risk for an affiliated club playing non-affiliated clubs/teams is that the non-affiliated clubs/teams is not obliged to carry insurance and therefore any successful claim against the non-affiliated clubs/teams and its players may be difficult to enforce. The member of the affiliated club who is injured when playing a non-affiliated team may be able to sue the committee of the club for negligence in allowing a game against a non-affiliated team.

The Perkins Slade insurance cover states that :-

“Club activities, including training for and the playing of hockey, hockey festivals, tournaments as well as social, fund- raising and administrative activities, subject to appropriate risk assessments”

Consequently, an affiliated club may find it has no cover as it has not undertaken an appropriate risk assessment in allowing a game against a non-affiliated club.

Action points

MRHA affiliated clubs should be advised to check with Summer League and Tournament organisers that the teams they are playing are affiliated with MRHA / England Hockey or if an invitation team raised for a specific event the team is insured.

Summer League and Tournament organisers in the MRHA area should be advised they need to ensure that the teams participating are affiliated to MRHA/England Hockey. In the case of Tournaments, the Tournament organisers should ensure that invitation teams raised for a specific tournament have taken out insurance.

Application of the Code of Ethics and Behaviour to Summer Leagues and Summer Tournaments including one-off casual events.

The England Hockey disciplinary process, plus the code of conduct, applies to all versions of Hockey that are played within England. As the National Governing Body, they have a duty to protect the game, its values and its spirits in which individuals play the game in all leagues / competitions / friendlies and as far down as club training and social events. MRHA have an obligation to ensure the England Hockey Code of Ethics and behaviour is duly followed across ALL HOCKEY 365 days of the year and not just at formal competitions.

Any MMO / Red Card or Disrepute identified MUST be submitted and will be handled in the same way as an MMO / Red Card from the standard “leagues” during the main season.

Action point Summer Leagues and Competitions played outside the control of MRHA or other Hockey Associations review their regulations and ensure that these are part of the regulations, to ensure that we protect the game as laid out in the first paragraph.

MRHA affiliated Associations and Clubs to ensure any individual affiliated to them are informed that when participating in any casual club event or a summer league anywhere in England they must expect the EH code to apply these events and be aware sanctions apply to all hockey.

MRHA and County HA's may take action against Clubs and individuals who organise competitions without due regard to these guidelines.