

RULES FOR COUNTY LEAGUE

(as amended after AGM 2011)

1. Eligibility

- a. Only players registered with both the ESMBA and the County are eligible to play.
- b. Teams will comprise of 8 players, playing as two teams of four. ESMBA Rules concerning shortage of players apply. Teams will not be compelled to play with less than 8 players but may do so. However, Clubs **must ensure** that they have sufficient players registered so that if two players are absent from any team, for any reason, they will still have sufficient players available to be able to fulfil a fixture under normal circumstances – see para 10b for ‘exceptional circumstances’. **(Amended AGM 2010)**
- c. Players may only play for the Club they are registered with when they play their first league game (except under rule 1d below).
- d. Players, who belong to a Club that has not entered a team in the League, may play for another Club in the League without having to transfer their membership to that Club. The Secretary of a Club, which uses non-members under this rule, must notify the League and KO Cup Secretary in writing before the player's first match. The player's Club should also be notified.
- e. Where a Club has more than one team in the League:
 - (i). Where the teams are in different divisions a player who has played for a team in a higher division may not play for a team in a lower division – except as follows:

“A player who has played for a team in a lower division may play – once in the season – for a team in a higher division. In any match only two players in a team may have played in a team in a lower division”. **(Amended AGM 2010)**
 - (ii) Where the teams are in the same division a player may only play for one team during the season.
 - (iii) If it becomes necessary in an early season fixture, to ‘play up’ in a higher division fixture, a player whom it is intended shall be a lower division player, but who has not yet played in a lower division fixtures, the club must ensure that this is clearly annotated on the Result Form.

(Amended as agreed at the AGM 27 Jun 07 and 23 Jun 10). These have caused some confusion so I have attempted below to clarify sub-para e (i).

A club that has teams - in different divisions – may now - if they need to do so - use TWO PLAYERS - from a lower division team - in a higher division game when they are short of their regular players for that higher division team. This ‘calling up of players from the lower division’ could happen on more than one occasion during the season BUT it is important to remember that as each player from the lower division can only play once in the higher division - on the second and any subsequent occasions the higher division team would have to use different players from the lower division team. Players who commence the season in the higher division can only play in a lower division – if so notified as under sub para iii) above.

- f. Any requests for transfer to a new Club after the start of the season must be made in writing to the League and KO Cup Secretary who will refer the matter to the Management Committee.

2. Season

The County League season will run from the 1st September to the end of April in each year. There will be an entry fee of £5 per team (2 mats).

3. Divisional arrangements

- a. The County will be divided into three zones - County Wide, Northeast and Southwest.
- b. The County Wide zone will normally comprise two divisions each of six teams. In both the Northeast and Southwest zones there will normally be two or more divisions with each division comprising of no more than seven teams adjusted – where possible - to give an equal balance between the two zones.

4. Promotion and Relegation

- a. At the end of the season the top team from the first divisions of the Northeast and Southwest zones and the top two teams from the other divisions (except for the County Wide first division) will normally be promoted (but see c. below). The bottom two teams of each division (except for those of the lowest divisions in the Northeast & Southwest zones) will normally be relegated - but in order to avoid three teams being promoted to any division, one less team may be relegated – see b. & c. below. **(Amended AGM 2011)**
- b. Any current league team, that fails to re-enter the league for the forthcoming season, shall be

considered to be a relegated team and therefore one less team may be relegated from the Division in which that team was due to be allocated a place in the forthcoming season, in order to maintain the status quo in that division. If however it is necessary to reduce the number of teams in a division then two teams may also still be relegated. **(Amended AGM 2011)**

(i.e. if a team that has withdrawn, was due to remain in a division then one less team shall be relegated to maintain the number in that division - but if the team was due to be relegated anyway then one less team shall be relegated from the lower division to similarly maintain the numbers in that division. This will still allow normal promotion procedures to apply but should avoid up to three teams being promoted).

- c. The Management Committee may block the promotion of a second place team to adjust the balance between the divisions. Similarly there could be only one team relegated from Northeast and Southwest first divisions if the number of teams needs to be equalised.
- d. Should the teams being relegated from the second division of the County Wide zone be from the same region of the County then the Management Committee will reallocate a team from Northeast and Southwest or vice versa; this will be done in consultation with the Clubs concerned.

5. New Clubs/Teams

Clubs/Teams re-entering or entering the league for the first time will start in the lowest division of the Northeast or Southwest zone.

6. Arrangement of Matches

- a. Within each division each team will play all the other teams both home and away.
- b. Matches may be played any time of the week, mutually convenient to both teams. The Home team must offer at least 3 dates including one weekend to their opponents. Weekend dates when County Premier or A team matches are scheduled may be rejected by the Away team. In such a case an alternative weekend date must be offered. If the Home team cannot offer 3 dates then they may elect to play away or at a neutral venue.

If a Club has more than one team in any Division then these teams must play their matches against each other within the first three months of the season and preferably before they play any of their other matches. ***When such matches are to be played the Management Committee reserve the right to insist that a neutral observer is present.*** *The purpose of this rule is to stop any favouritism being shown by one team in a Club to another of its Club's teams.* **(Amended AGM 2011)**

- c. Venue costs shall be paid by the home team and no match fees shall be charged to the away team. **(Amended AGM 2008)**

7. Fixture List

Clubs must send a copy of their league fixture list to the League and KO Cup Secretary by the start of the season i.e. 1st September. **(Amended AGM 2008)**

8. Match Format

- a. The format for the league will be two mats with a minimum separation of 15 inches between mats and a minimum distance between mat and the sidewalls of 6 inches and between mats and spectator area of 18 inches. 32 ounce jacks must be used. All matches to be played over 21 ends and ESMBA rules will apply.
- b. No player in a League match shall play on the same mat on the day of such a match before play commences, under penalty of disqualification from the League Competition for the rest of the season.
- c. The Captains shall each complete two score cards with the names of the players on them. The Home Captain shall indicate which is League Mat 1 and which is League Mat 2 and then each captain shall mark one of these mat numbers on each of their two score cards. The players shall then play on the mat as numbered on the card.
- d. Captains will toss for the mat at the commencement of play. Two trial ends must be played unless both Captains agree not to do so.
- e. On each mat two points shall be awarded for a win and one point for a draw, the aggregate score of the two mats will count in deciding the match winner who will receive a further two points for a win and one point for a draw. Shot difference counts in deciding positions in the league table.
- f. The Home team must send the Match Result Form to the League and KO Cup Secretary within four days. The Match Result Form must be fully completed and signed by both Captains.

9. Incompleted Matches

Should a match be started and be unable to be completed for reasons outside the control of either Club the following will apply:

- i. if the aggregate of both mats is 20 or fewer ends that have been completed the match will be re-arranged and replayed as a new match. A revised date for the match shall be arranged to enable the match to be played prior to the end of the season. This revised date shall be notified to the League and KO Cup Secretary within 14 days of the date of the incomplete match.
- ii. if the aggregate of both mats is 21 ends or more that have been played the match will be considered as completed and the score will stand.

10. Re-arrangement of Matches

- a. Should it become necessary, and in exceptional circumstances only, a match may be re-arranged subject to the agreement of the League and KO Cup Secretary.
- b. Exceptional circumstances are defined as:
 - i. The non-availability of the venue over which the Club has no control;
 - ii. The precedence of a higher level competition i.e. Inter County;
 - iii. A shortage of players due to illness or accident;
 - iv. The need to play a KO Cup match, subject to the prior agreement of the League and KO Cup Secretary.
- c. Should a match have to be re-arranged, the Club responsible for the non-fulfilment must in advance give a written explanation (or if less than 48 before the match a verbal notification followed by a written one) to the League and KO Cup Secretary as to why the match is required to be re-arranged. They should then contact the opposition in order to arrange a revised date. Clubs should be aware that when a postponement is requested due to 'lack of players' - in order that the Management Committee are in full possession of facts in order to decide if 'exceptional circumstances apply' - the League Secretary will request from the club details of why each player registered is unable to play on that particular date. **(Amended AGM 2010)**

When seeking to arrange a revised date, all possible dates shall be explored, including weekends, different evenings and where possible different weekdays. Dates where League, KO Cup or ICC matches are already arranged, are not acceptable dates and a mixture of up to 10 different dates should be considered if necessary. Unlike original dates offered prior to the start of the season, the oppositions views must be considered as they are the 'non guilty' party in such instances but once 10 varied dates have been offered they are required to accept one of those dates offered within the timescale detailed below. **(Amended AGM 2010)**
- d. This revised date when arranged, shall be notified to the League and KO Cup Secretary, by both clubs, within 14 days of the decision to re-arrange the match. Where teams are unable to agree on a date for the re-arranged match, both teams shall notify the League and KO Cup Secretary in writing, within the next seven days, giving reasons why they are unable to agree a revised date. The matter will then be discussed by the League and KO Cup Secretary with members of the Management Committee who shall decide upon a date and if necessary, a venue, after hearing representations from each Club. This decision will be binding on both clubs.
- e. The Club responsible for the non-fulfilment of any match must meet any costs incurred for the original match arrangements. All non-fulfilled matches must be re-arranged to be completed prior to the end of the season.
- f. Once the season has commenced no more than two matches shall be re-arranged in any one season by any one team. The reasons for any re-arrangement of a match will be subject to review by the County Management Committee who may decide to deduct points if in their opinion the reasons for the re-arrangement are not justified.
- g. Any subsequent re-arrangement of a re-arranged match by the same team will also be subject to review by the Management Committee who may decide to deduct further points if in their opinion the reasons for the re-arrangement are not justified.

11. Dress

Full ESMBA dress regulations will be in force at all stages of the competition. Clubs may dress in their own colours provided that all players dress the same; otherwise it must be mid-grey below the waist and white above. Proprietary bowling shoes or bowling sandals must be worn whilst playing on the rink mat.

12. Bowls Stickers

Bowls stickers, if used, must be the same on all of the team members bowls.

13. Disputes

In all disputes and in any interpretation of these rules the County Management Committee's decision will be final.

(Para. 6d and para. 7 amended at the AGM 2008).
(Paras1b, 1e and 10c amended at the AGM 2010).