

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE RULES (RINKS) 2025-26 v2a**1. Eligibility**

- 1a. Entries for the League should be made on the appropriate form and must be returned to the League Secretary before the date stated on the form. Applications received after this date will not be accepted.

There is an entry fee of £6.00 per Team for the League.

- 1b. Player registrations are made using the County Form (WSU-M04 & WSU-M05) which must be returned to the Membership Secretary by the 31st August. The transfer of a player from one Club to another must be notified to the Membership Secretary before 31 August in order for that player to be eligible to play in the league for his/her new Club. New additional players need to be registered before they can play League matches, providing payment has been confirmed. Please allow 7 days for this process. No player can play league matches for more than one club in a season. Failure to so notify the Membership Secretary will result in that player being an ineligible player and the penalties specified in Rule 1i will be applied.
- 1c. Only players registered with both the ESMBA and the County are eligible to play.
- 1d. Teams will comprise of 8 players, playing as two teams of four. ESMBA Rules concerning shortage of players will apply. Teams are expected to play fixtures providing they have 6 or more players available. If fewer than 6 players are available the match will be postponed and re-arranged and the team responsible for the postponement could be penalised by a deduction of 6 points and 20 shots. The revised date for the fixture must be agreed and notified in writing to the League Secretary within 7 days unless the League Secretary has agreed that the Clubs may have extra time to re-arrange the fixture. The penalty for a postponement of a match will only be waived in the 'Exceptional Circumstances' set out in Rule 10b.
- 1e. A player may only play for the Club they are registered with when they play their first League Match (except under Rules 1f and 1h below).
- 1f. 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 Secretary in writing before the player's first match. The player's Club must also be notified. A maximum of 3 different non-members can be used during the season with only two permitted to play in any one match.
- 1g. Where a Club has more than one team in the League:
- (i) Where a Club has more than one team in the same Division - a player may only play for one team in that Division during a season.
 - (ii) Where a Club has teams in different Divisions a player may initially play for any team but once a player has played twice for any team or combination of teams at the higher level, then that player becomes locked to that level or above and is ineligible to play for any team at the lower level. There may only be two players from a lower team or teams used in any match.

- 1h. Any requests for transfer to a new Club after the start of the season must be made, in writing, to the Membership Secretary who will refer the matter to the Management Committee.
- 1i. In the event of a team fielding an ineligible player the points for that rink and the aggregate match points shall be awarded to their opponents. Any shots scored by the defaulting rink shall be deducted.
- 1j. In League matches all players taking part in the match shall constitute the team and will normally play together throughout the match. One additional player may be used as a substitute if one of the original players becomes ill or unavailable during a match. For players with a disability please see the Policy which is on the County website. Details of any player change during a match should be recorded in the "comments" section of the results form.

2. Season

The County League Season will run from the 1st September 2025 to 31st March 2026.

3. Divisional Arrangements

- 3a. The County will be divided into two Zones – North East and South West.
- 3b. The formation of the divisions will be at the discretion of the Management Committee who will review matters on an annual basis.

4. Promotion and Relegation

- 4a. The winner of the County Wide Rinks title will be decided by play-off matches involving the top 2 teams in both NE and SW Division 1. Play-off finals to be held at Storrington on Saturday 4th April 2026. The bottom two teams in both NE and SW Division 1 will be relegated to their respective Division 2. The top two teams in both NE and SW Division 2 will be promoted to their respective Division 1. The bottom two teams in NE and SW Division 2 will be relegated to their respective Division 3. The top two teams in both NE and SW Division 3 will be promoted to their respective Division 2.
- 4b. 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. If however it is necessary to reduce the number of teams in a division then two teams may still be relegated.

5. New Team

Any team entering for the coming season that was not a member of the league in the previous season could start in the lowest division of the North East or South West zone.

6. Arrangement of Matches

The County Management Committee meet in mid-May to formulate the League Structure for the coming season. Dependent on the number of teams entered for the new season the number of teams promoted and relegated may vary within the guidelines of Rule 4.

The League Structure will be published by the League Secretary before the 31st May, Clubs will then be able to arrange fixtures for the forthcoming season (See Rule 7).

- 6a. All teams within a division will play each other both home and away.
- 6b. Matches shall be arranged to be played any time of the week, mutually agreeable to both teams between 1st September and 31st March. The home team must offer at least 3 dates including one weekend to their opponents. Times that are offered for the commencement of evening matches must be reasonable and take into consideration the distance the opponents are required to travel. If any team feels the dates offered are unreasonable, they should contact the League Secretary immediately. If midweek dates commencing at an appropriate time cannot be offered then at least two weekend dates must be offered. Weekend dates when ICC County Matches, County Trials or County & National Qualifying Competitions 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 at a neutral venue or shall play away.
No league match should be arranged on KO Cup/Plate finals day (*See County Diary*).
- 6c. 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. 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 favoritism being shown by one team in a Club to another of its Club's teams.
- 6d. Venue costs shall be paid by the home team and no match fees shall be charged to the away team.

7. Team Fixtures, Match Dates, Match Times:

- 7a. The League Fixture Form WSC-FIX01 should be completed in full and returned to the League Secretary before the 31st July 2025. Incomplete Fixture Forms will not be accepted.
- 7b. Changes to received Fixture Forms will be accepted during the period 1st August to 31st August.
- 7c. The official match dates and times are as recorded on the Team Fixture Forms and published as a Fixture List by the League Secretary before the start of season. Clubs must check that the published dates and times agree with their Fixture Form and notify both the opposing Club and the County where any variance is found. Any request for change after the start of the season should be made in writing to the League Secretary as per Rule10.
- 7d. The League Secretary will publish the Fixture List with results as the season progresses.

8. Match Format

- 8a. 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.

The format for all matches is two trial ends followed by 18 ends. ESMBA Rules will apply.

- 8b. On the match date no player shall play on the match mats before play commences, under penalty of disqualification from the League Competition for the rest of the season.
- 8c. The captains shall each complete two score cards with the names of their 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.
- 8d. Captains will toss for the mat at the commencement of play.
- 8e. 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 decide 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.
- 8f. The Match Result Form WSC-RES01 must be completed, in full, and signed by both Captains.

The home team must send the result form to the League Secretary to arrive within four days of the match date. Results that are posted should use First Class mail.

9. Incomplete 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 17 or fewer ends that have been completed the match will be re-arranged and played 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 18 ends or more, the match will be considered as completed and the score will stand.

10. Request to Re-arrange a Match Date

- 10a. A match date may only be re-arranged in 'Exceptional Circumstances' and with the prior agreement of the League Secretary. (See Rule10b)
- 10b. Exceptional circumstances are defined as:
 - (i) The precedence of a higher-level competition i.e., Inter County;
 - (ii) The need to play a KO Cup match, subject to the prior agreement of the League Secretary. The KO Cup finals date should be kept free by both clubs (see 6b)
 - (iii) Verifiable traffic delays.
 - (iv) Non-availability of the venue over which the Club had no control.

- (v) In the event of The Met Office issuing a weather warning, 24 hours ahead of the fixture date, which includes an 'amber/red' likely impact on risk of travel, either club may seek agreement to postpone by liaising with the opposition and the League Secretary. Any costs incurred due to a postponement to be shared by the clubs concerned. The fixture to be re-arranged and, wherever possible, played within 3 weeks of the original fixture date. The home team to liaise with the League Secretary to confirm the re-arranged date within 7 days of the original fixture.

A request under these circumstances must be notified, in writing, if possible, to the League Secretary as soon as the circumstances become known.

- 10c. Should a match have to be re-arranged the Club responsible for the non-fulfilment must, wherever possible, give a written explanation (or if less than 48 hours before the match a verbal notification followed by a written one) to the League Secretary as to why the match is required to be re-arranged and obtain the agreement of the League Secretary to the need to re-arrange. This notification should include the agreement of the opposition team to the need to re-arrange.

When seeking to rearrange a match 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. Unlike original dates offered prior to the start of the season, the opposition's 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.

- 10d. This revised date when arranged shall be notified to the League Secretary by both Clubs within 14 days of the decision to re-arrange the match. Where Clubs are unable to agree on a re-arranged date, both Clubs shall notify the League 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 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.
- 10e. 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.
- 10f. 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.
- 10g. Any subsequent re-arrangement of a re-arranged match by the same team will also be subject to review by the County Management Committee who may decide to deduct further points if in their opinion the reasons for the re-arrangement are not justified.

11. Withdrawal of a Team

- 11a. Any club that withdraws a team during any season will not be permitted to enter more teams in the following year than the number it finished with in the season it withdrew a team.
- 11b. The Management Committee may decide to take further action against any club that withdraws a team after the League Structure has been agreed and published by the League Secretary.
- 11c. The Management Committee may decide to expel from the League, any team that fails to fulfil more than two fixtures on original dates other than where such fixtures are postponed due to Exceptional Circumstances as laid down in Rule 10b.
- 11d. Any Club that withdraws a team, or is expelled by the Management Committee, shall be responsible for any reasonable costs incurred by any opponents they were scheduled to play.

12. Dress

For the latest information regarding appropriate dress code please refer to the ESMBA website.

13. Bowls Stickers

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

14. Disputes

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