



HAMPSHIRE NETBALL ASSOCIATION

OPEN LEAGUE PLAY-OFFS

RULES AND REGULATIONS 2026

1. Overview

Hampshire Open Netball League (HONL) Division 1 and 2 are league competitions organised by Hampshire Netball Association (HNA) to enable clubs to compete against each other to determine a county winner, whilst encouraging participation and development in netball through an open, fair, progressive and transparent league structure.

The HONL Play-offs is a competition organised by HNA between winning teams in the local league that takes place once the Netball South Regional League (NS-RL) Play offs have concluded. The team that finishes top of HNA Open Division 1 will be eligible to enter NS-RL play offs for promotion to NS-RL Division 3.

These regulations set out below outline the Rules and Regulations (“the Regulations”) through which the HNOL Play-offs only shall be governed..

These Regulations must be followed by all teams, players, officials, spectators and administrators involved in the management, administration and operation of the HNOL Play-offs.

2. Competition Structure

2.1 Entry into the Hampshire League Play-offs will be through the following methods:

2.1.1 Team finishing bottom of division 2

2.1.2 Teams that finish top of the highest local leagues. If the team finishing top are ineligible the 2nd placed team can enter. All teams will play off for a place(s) that are vacant in Division 2 of the league.

NO club can enter the play off from more than one route.

2.1.2.1 Local League Teams –

Players must have taken to the court for the nominated team in the league they are representing during the current season.

Where a team already has two teams under the same England Netball Membership number in the HNOL they will not be able to participate in the Playoffs.

2.1.2.2 Teams will play off in a way that is dependent on the number of entries.

The format will be decided by HNA. The number of places in Division 2 will be determined by the team entering the Regional League Play Offs gaining a place in the League. All unsuccessful teams will return to Local League

2.1.3 - HNA reserve the right to adjust the number of teams in each division of the HNOL based on the number of entries received and the finishing position of teams already in the league. The process as to how this will be achieved will be decided by the HNA

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committee and details will be sent to clubs if it differs from that outlined above.

3. Competition Organisation

- 3.1 The Competition and all rights and properties associated with it shall be owned, controlled and managed by Hampshire Netball which may delegate its powers and authority in this respect.
- 3.2 HNA is responsible for the organisation and management of the HNOL Play-offs as well as the HNOL Divisions 1 and 2.
- 3.3 Local Leagues (or other mechanisms used by the Leagues) that feed into the HNOL Play-offs are the responsibility of the Local Netball Leagues, as autonomous organisations independent from England Netball. These competitions may have different regulations to these set out in this document.
- 3.4 Prior to the start of County League Play-offs, HNA shall announce the following:
 - 3.3.1 the Competition Referees; and
 - 3.3.2 the person appointed to receive appeals of the decisions of the Competition Referee

4. Competition Referees

- 4.1 Competition Referees will be appointed by HNA for the County League Play-offs. There will where possible be three (3) Competition Referees who will have the authority and jurisdiction to make decisions on all matters arising throughout the Competition including, but not limited to:
 - 4.1.1 altering or amending the playing schedule as necessary.
 - 4.1.2 determining if there has been a breach of the Regulations and imposing an appropriate sanction including but not limited to the disqualification of any individual team or player.
 - 4.1.3 adjudicating instances of unsportsmanlike behaviour or behaviour that brings the sport into disrepute, including but not limited to instances of Teams predetermining, or attempting to predetermine, the outcome of a Match and/or the Competition.
 - 4.1.4 determining the result and score should any Match not be concluded due to any unforeseen circumstance.
 - 4.1.5 enforcing the decision by any Medical Advisor, Competition Medic or Competition Physiotherapist, regarding the participation of a player and whether they are able to:
 - a) Start the match or
 - b) Continue to play
 - 4.1.6 determining any matter not covered specifically within the Regulations.
- 4.2 The Competition Referees may call upon, or delegate to, additional persons to assist with the Competition or consult with other persons prior to making any decision. However, the final decision and accountability for the decision will rest with the Competition Referees.
- 4.3 If a Player is suspended from a Match or ordered to leave the court and take no further part in the Match, that Player and a Team Official, normally the Coach, may be required to attend a hearing before the Competition Referees immediately after the end of the Match. After the hearing the Competition Referees will decide what action should be taken.
- 4.4 All teams will be responsible for providing their own Primary carer who cannot be a player but can be another Bench Official. Proof of qualification may be asked for when registering.

- 4.5 The Competition Referees will maintain and be responsible for a confidential Competition Referee Log Book where appropriate

5. Pre-Competition Management and Administration

5.1 Team Entry and Eligibility

- 5.1.1 Entry to HNOL Play-offs shall be through finishing in the appropriate final positions of local leagues. This is detailed in clause 2.1.
- 5.1.2 All clubs / teams participating in the Competition must be a member of England Netball, Netball South, Hampshire and have paid a full membership fee in this respect.
- 5.1.3 HNA is entitled to charge an entry fee to compete in the HNOL Play-offs and this must be paid in full within the permitted timescales for a team to participate. This charge will include the costs associated with appointing the Umpires.
- 5.1.4 By entering a team in HNOL Play-offs, clubs/teams agree that:
- a) they are able and willing to fulfil the costs and commitments of participation in the HNOL Play-offs.
 - b) they will fulfil their obligations and responsibilities as set out in these Regulations.
 - c) they are bound by the Competition Regulations
 - d) they are bound by all of the rules, policies, regulations and by-laws of England Netball, including the England Netball Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations, as may from time to time be in force.
- 5.1.6 Where a Local Nomination already has 2 teams under the same England Netball Membership number in the HNOL they will not be able to participate in the Play-offs,

5.2 Player/Team Official Eligibility

- 5.2.1 In order to qualify to participate in the HNOL Play-offs Players and Team Officials (as defined in 6.6 below) must be in membership of England Netball, Netball South and Hampshire Netball Association, having paid the full membership fee due and received confirmation of their membership in advance of submitting the Squad Registration Sheet for the HNOL Play-offs.
- 5.2.2 All players must be over 14 years old as at 11.59pm on 31st August immediately prior to the commencement of the playing season in which the HNOL Play-offs take place, unless they have completed an Age Banding Consent Form and submitted it with the Squad Registration Sheet.
- 5.2.3 Players will not be allowed to play in HNOL Play offs if they have played an accumulation of 12 quarters or more for a higher placed team in any Regional or County League or in the England Netball Premier League (including Play offs) during the current season.
- 5.2.4 Players must at all times carry proof of ID and Team Managers to carry age banding forms for any player under 14 playing in a higher age group.
- 5.2.5 Proof of age comprises of one or more of the following:

- a) Copy of birth certificate.
- b) Copy of passport.
- c) Photographic Driving Licence

- 5.2.6 England Netball and HNA recommend that individuals (player, coach, umpire) if pregnant should only participate with approval from their doctor and in accordance with any guidelines issued by itself.

The England Netball Personal Accident insurance cover excludes any loss or expense due to pregnancy, childbirth, miscarriage or any consequence thereof. If, for example, a member who is pregnant is involved in an accident not related to the pregnancy, subject to the conditions of the policy, the relevant benefits would be payable. However, if any situation (such as hospitalisation) was prolonged as a direct result of pregnancy, pregnancy complications or even early childbirth, then this portion of any claim is not covered.

5.3 Registration of Squads

- 5.3.1 Participating teams must complete a Google Registration Sheet fully listing each player and their membership numbers. To enable full player checks to be completed, this must be lodged with HNA Event Organiser seven (7) days prior to the commencement of the HNOL Play-offs. No additions can be made once the seven (7) day deadline has passed.
- 5.3.2 Teams may only use those players whose names appear on their Squad Registration Sheet held by the league administrator and are Members of England Netball, Netball South and Hampshire
- 5.3.3 There is no limit to the number of players who can be listed on the Squad Registration Sheet Squad but only 12 players can be used in any match.
- 5.3.4 Once a player has been registered on a Squad Registration Sheet and has played for that team at any time in the Competition, she cannot transfer to another team participating in the HNOL Play-offs during the course of the current Competition.
- 5.3.5 Only players who have taken to the court in local competition during the course of the season will be eligible to compete for their registered team within the HNOL Play-offs for that season.
- 5.3.6 Players that have played 12 quarters or more in any regional league cannot play in the HNOL Play Offs

5.4 Competition Venues

- 5.4.1 HNA will hire the venue from a third party and conduct a full risk assessment, and take all appropriate measures to mitigate any identified risk.

6. Playing and Competition

6.1 Time of Arrival and Registration

6.1.1 Registration of teams will be 30 minutes before the tournament start and this will be determined when team schedule is completed.

6.1.2 All teams will be held responsible for the behaviour, demeanour and actions of their Players, Team Officials and Supporters.

6.2 Competition Scheduling

6.2.1 All Matches must be played as per the issued schedule unless otherwise agreed by the Competition Referee.

6.2.2 HNA will only postpone or cancel HNOL Play-offs due to extreme and unforeseen circumstances. Examples of unforeseen circumstances include but are not limited to, inclement weather such as flooding, heavy rainfall, snowfall, storms, or other conditions which would make participation dangerous. HNA will not be responsible for any costs incurred by the teams as a result of a postponement or cancellation due to extreme and unforeseen circumstances. In instances of the above, HNA will contact all teams either by phone or email at the earliest opportunity, through the contact details provided on the Squad Registration Sheet.

6.2.3 If the Play-offs are postponed or cancelled, HNA will ensure that the teams and umpires are informed immediately the postponement or cancellation is known.

6.2.4 No team may play a Match with less than 5 players. Any team with less than 5 players on court during a match will automatically concede the game.

6.2.5 In the event of a Match being conceded:

- The non-offending team will be awarded five (5) points, and the team which conceded will have zero (0) points.

6.2.6 In the event that a Match is abandoned for any reason, (e.g., because of serious injury), the result of that Match will be determined by the Competition Referee, having regard to the score at the time at which play was suspended.

6.3 Match rules and format

6.3.1 All Matches shall be played in accordance with the World Netball Rules of the Game currently in force at the time, except where specifically stated in these Regulations.

6.4 Match Officials

6.4.1 Umpires will be provided by HNA at the appropriate level.

6.5 Technical Officials

6.5.1 Each team MUST provide a competent scorer, either an umpire, technical official or a person with a working knowledge of scoring. Scorers will be required for all fixtures.

6.5.2 All games will be centrally timed but start and finish on the umpires whistle.

6.6 Team Officials

6.6.1 A team may have up to five (5) Team Officials. These will include a coach, level 2 where U18 players are involved, and at least one primary care Person. The Primary Carer must not be a player listed on the results sheet. All Team Officials must hold full membership to EN.

6.6.2 A Primary Care Person:

- Must have completed a recognised certified First Aid course.
- Must wear Primary Carer identification.
- Is permitted on the court during a stoppage for injury/illness of a Player or blood issues.
- Must advise the umpires if a Player is too ill/injured to be removed from the court within 30 seconds and/or if assistance is required.

6.6.3 Team Officials may be fewer than specified and may therefore undertake several duties. However, primary care person/s must not also be players and it is preferable that they do not hold any other role.

6.6.4 The Team Officials and up to five (5) Players not on court shall constitute the Team Bench.

6.6.5 The Team Bench will be situated in the half of the court that the Team is defending at the start of the Match, to the right of the netball posts, unless otherwise agreed with the Event Organiser or umpires .

6.7 Match Timings

6.7.1 The length of matches will be decided by the HNA and teams will be notified before the Competition. All Matches shall be centrally timed but will start and finish on the umpire's whistle.

6.7.2 Injury time will be managed according to the Rules of Netball but the clock for timing the game will not be stopped.

6.7.3 If a Primary Carer advises the umpire that a player cannot be moved within 30 seconds the umpire will note the lost playing time.

6.7.4 No extra time will be allowed for injury/illness/blood unless the tournament referee decides extra time is to be played.

6.7.5 Umpires must ensure that:

- a) Before the start of each Match the Captains have tossed for centre pass.
- b) Both Teams are on court, in position and ready to play at the scheduled time in accordance with the playing schedule and the central timer.

- c) No Team starts a Match with less than five (5) Players.
- d) The stoppage time is noted for any injury that is extended beyond 30 seconds.

6.8 Kit and Equipment

6.8.1 Teams must carry an alternative set of bibs for use where a clash of colours occurs. If the Umpires identify any potential colour clash, team captains shall arrange to toss a coin to decide who shall wear their alternative bibs.

6.9 Scoring

6.9.1 For all matches, teams will be awarded points as follows:

- Five (5) points for a win.
- Three (3) points for a draw (except as provided for in 6.7.3 above).
- Two (2) points for a loss within 5 goals of the winners' score – e.g., 50-46 = 2 points, 50-45 = 1 point.
- One (1) point for a loss with more than 50 per cent of the winners' score.
- Zero (0) points for a loss

6.9.2 In the event of a tie on points positions will be decided by:

1. Goal Average shall be used to determine their relative positions, i.e., the team with the higher average score over the course of the Competition shall take precedence.
2. In the event that Goal Average does not differentiate between the teams, then Goal Difference shall be applied, i.e., precedence shall be given to the team with the greater difference between goals scored and goals conceded.
3. In the event that Goal Difference does not differentiate between the teams, then the team with the greatest number of goals scored shall take precedence.
4. In the event that neither Goal Average nor Goal Difference nor goals scored can differentiate between the teams, the score in the match played between the teams shall determine the standings, with the winning team taking precedence.

In the event that none of the above differentiates between the teams, the Competition Referee shall determine the means of differentiation.

Note - Where one of the teams has its Goal Average, Goal Difference or total number of goals scored affected by conceded fixtures, then all goals scored by and against conceding team(s) in all fixtures shall be omitted from the calculations of both team's level on points. Except where one of the teams level on points is the conceding team, at which point they assume a goal average of 0 and will be the lowest ranked team of those level on points.

6.10 Registration of results

6.10.1 Following the completion of each match, the scorers must agree and complete the Scoresheet and hand to the result table. Once the score has been recorded no dispute can be logged.

6.11 Photography

6.11.1 Any Persons wishing to take any photographs must scan and complete the google form.

6.11.3 Flash photography is not permitted in the playing arena at any time.

6.12 Health and Safety

6.12.1 Play may be stopped if the Umpire deems it necessary due to the injury or illness of a player.

6.12.2 Team Officials are required to take great care in moving an injured player or ill player from the court.

6.12.3 Should the primary care person feel that an injury is critical (e.g., head, neck or back) and that the injured Player should not be moved without the assistance of Medical Staff, then the Match Officials should note the time lost during treatment and report to the Competition Referee who will adjudicate.

6.12.4 For all accidents or injuries on or off the court at the Competition, where any Player, Team Official, Umpire, Bench Official, Spectator, Volunteer, Staff Member or any other individual connected to the Competition is injured, the Competition Referee must complete a Netball South Accident Report Form and return it to Netball South. This procedure should be followed for all injuries and accidents, longer than 30 seconds.

7. Competition Complaints Procedure

7.1 On the Competition Day, all queries and complaints (“a Complaint”) should be directed to the Competition Referee in the first instance, which will be dealt with as follows:

7.1.1 Where the Complaint relates to the Competition format or management, including but not limited to the schedule, the opposing Team, playing surface or other playing arrangements, a protest must be made before the start of the Match (or as soon as possible after the issue becomes apparent during the Match) to the Competition Referees. The Complaint must then be acknowledged by the Competition Referee who will decide what action should be taken; or.

7.1.2 Where the Complaint relates to the playing of a Match, the scoring and/or its result, the relevant team member or Team Official must:

- a) Inform their opponents and the Umpires of the Complaint.
- b) Mark the Scoresheet with the words ‘Under Protest
- c) Take the Scoresheet marked 'Under Protest' to the Competition Referee, straight after the Match (within 30 minutes of the game concluding).
- d) Explain the issue in full to the Competition Referee.
and the Competition Referee will decide what action should be taken.

7.1.3 The Competition Referees decision in relation to decisions taken under clauses 7.1.1 or 7.1.2 is binding apart from where parties to the complaint have the right to appeal the decision under Section 8 below.

- 7.2 Where a Complaint relates to the governance or administration of the Competition by England Netball, such Complaint will be dealt with under the Complaints Procedure of England Netball.
- 7.3 Where a Complaint relates to the behaviour of an individual Player or Team, volunteer or individual attending the Competition which could be considered as a Disciplinary Offence under England Netball's Disciplinary Regulations, such Complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out in England Netball's Disciplinary Regulations and should be referred to the Disciplinary Secretary of England Netball.

8. Appeal of the Competition Referees Decision

8.1 The decision of the Competition Referee in relation to a Complaint submitted in accordance with sections 7.1.1 or 7.1.2 shall be final and binding on all parties save that a party has a right to appeal in the following circumstances:

- 8.1.1 if the decision of the Competition Referee has a potential impact on a Match result, a league table, or the outcome of the Competition; and
- 8.1.2 there has been a failure by the Competition Referee to follow or act in accordance with these Regulations and/or the Competition Referee has reached a decision on the basis of an error of fact.

These are the only grounds of appeal, and any appeal must be submitted in accordance with the appeals process set out below.

8.2 An appeal should be forwarded in writing from the Team Manager of the appealing Team to the Chair of HNA within seventy-two (72) hours of the Match.

8.3 The appeal shall be accompanied by a cheque for £100 which shall be returned if the appeal is upheld or if there are any other extenuating circumstances. The Competition Appeals Committee (CAC) will decide whether the extenuating circumstance warrant the cheque being returned.

8.4 The Chair of HNA will establish a CAC which will consist of individuals that are independent of and not connected to the Competition. One of those individuals will be appointed as the Chair. The CAC will usually but not exclusively be three members.

8.5 The Chair of the CAC will give notice of the appeal to the opposing Team and any other Team the CAC believe could be affected by the outcome of the appeal. These Teams will be permitted seventy-two (72) hours from the time that the appeal notice is sent from the CAC to submit any evidence or submission that they wish the CAC to consider.

8.6 All submissions and evidence must be submitted in writing. The Chair of CAC will otherwise have the discretion to determine the process, procedure and direction of the appeal.

8.7 The CAC shall reach a decision within seventy-two (72) hours of receiving all the evidence and submissions.

8.8 The CAC will notify all the parties that made submissions and presented evidence of its decision and any penalties and sanctions imposed within twenty-four (24) hours of reaching its decision. The CAC shall have the discretion to publish the decision through whatever medium it considers appropriate.

8.9 The CAC shall have the delegated power of HNA to make all decisions and impose and enforce

any penalties and sanctions (including but not limited to reprimands, the deduction of points, fines, suspensions and expulsions from the Competition) relating to the appeal.

- 8.10 The procedures set out in this Section 8 shall be governed by the Arbitration Act 1996 (the Act) and amount to a binding arbitration agreement for the purposes of Section 6 of the Act. For the avoidance of doubt, there shall be no further right of appeal against the decision of the CAC.
- 8.11 The parties also waive irrevocably their right to any form of appeal, review or recourse to any court or other judicial authority, or under England Netball's Disciplinary Procedures Manual or otherwise, insofar as such waiver may be validly made.
- 8.12 The seat of arbitration shall be England, the language used shall be English and the governing law of the regulations and these proceedings under Section 8 shall be English Law.
- 8.13 If the circumstances require a decision to be taken sooner than provided for by this Section 8, and all parties to the appeal consent, the timetable within which an appeal is raised, submissions made, and the decision taken can be shorter than the seventy two (72) hours stated in this Section 8. In such cases the CAC shall issue a revised directions timetable which shall be binding on all parties.
- 8.14 In order to adhere to the timescales set out in Section 8, all communication will take place via electronic mail to the contact held by the league administrator, or if this is left blank, the contact provided to on ENgage. It is the participating Teams' responsibility to ensure that these contact details are kept up to date.

9. Miscellaneous

- 9.1 England Netball and HNA will not be liable to any person, whether in contract, tort (including negligence) or otherwise for any direct or indirect loss or injury of any nature, howsoever caused and howsoever arising from the matters covered by these Regulations, provided that nothing in these Regulations excludes or restricts England Netball's liability for any personal loss or injury caused by England Netball's own negligence, the negligence of its employees, or for fraud.
- 9.2 If any of these Regulations are held by any competent authority to be invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of the Regulations shall not be affected thereby.
- 9.3 These Regulations shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with English law.
- 9.4 HNA reserves the right to amend these Regulations each year in advance of the Competition and such amendments will take effect from the first date of publication of the completed amended procedure on the HNA website