



SELECTION, ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

This policy will apply (as far as possible) to all teams within the Club, but not limited to Men's teams, Ladies' teams and Junior teams. Any deviation from this policy should be agreed with an appropriate "Club Official" (meaning any section club captain or committee member) in advance. The terms "squad" and "team" have the same meaning throughout this policy document.

Objectives

The objectives of the policy are

- Select the best combination of players to win matches for each team such that each team is successful over the whole season
- Create an environment to develop all players to their maximum potential but, in particular, an inclusive environment for younger players. Younger players being defined as those currently playing in the junior teams or recently played in junior teams
- Ensure players are offered a reasonable playing pitch time to provide adequate amounts of hockey at a suitable and appropriate level for their skill and experience
- Ensure that selection decisions are made fairly and objectively based on the Selection Criteria – and based only on this Selection Criteria (as outlined in "Section A")

Section A

Selection Criteria

The selection process will consider a number of factors including, but not limited to

- Skill, ability and experience
- Versatility, fitness and pace
- Enthusiasm, attitude and interaction with team mates
- Regular availability for selection – including reliable communication and punctuality
- Development potential, adaptability and flexibility to meet overall team needs
- Attendance and attitude/approach at training sessions
- Team formation and playing system
- Continuity, stability and consistency of team play
- Discipline and respect for team mates, opponents and officials (on and off pitch)
- Age and gender – but only where these are required by league rules or external parties

Section B

Selection Process

The Club will allocate each member to a 'team squad' based on the above criteria. This will be carried out, for each section of the Club by the "Selection Panel", this panel is made up as follows:-of

- Team captains (adult sections)
- Coaches and Managers
- Club Captain (adult sections)

The Selection Panel will meet on a periodic basis and players may move from one 'squad' to another squad based on performance, player availability and the Selection Criteria. Players would not normally expect to move up or down by more than one team (except in exceptional circumstances).

It is the objective of the Selection Panel to construct the best balanced teams, playing the best standard of Hockey based on the Selection Criteria. The Selection Panel should also comply with any rules or requirements set out by South East Hockey around player availability and selection.

If a member changes 'squad' following a selection meeting this should be communicated either by telephone or face to face rather than via electronic messaging and should be undertaken before this is communicated or available to other players. This may be done by either captain or the Club Captain.

Members play for the Club (and not a particular team). Movement within the 'squads' is a normal and regular part of selection and players should not expect to be guaranteed a place in any particular team. This should be borne in mind when players return from injury or other lengthy absences.

New players to the Club should start at an appropriate level decided by the Selection Criteria outlined in Section A.

Section C

Weekly Selection Communication

Team selection is carried out on a weekly basis using electronic communication (currently via Teamo App in the first instance or WhatsApp). Members will be expected to be proactive in providing their availability as early as possible in the week.

Members should enter their availability into Teamo (or the application at that time utilised by WHC (and if appropriate) notify the captain for the following week as soon as possible (once they know their availability) . Each member should respond promptly and proactively to any WhatsApp message around availability.

It is the responsibility of each individual player or parent/guardian (where applicable) to ensure availability and contact information is kept up to date. It is not standard practice of WHC that the Team Captain will pursue individual players to establish their availability. Consequently, if players do not provide their availability promptly they may not be selected.

Finalisation of teams should be confirmed and published by the captains by Thursday each week at the latest. If any player's availability or circumstances change this should be communicated to the Team Captain or Club Captain as soon as possible.

If a member is not available for their game (based on their 'team squad') they should advise the captain as soon as possible and advise if they would be available for any other matches. The Club will endeavour to accommodate this where possible.

If a member is asked to play for a different team due to availability across the Club, this will be advised in advance as far as reasonably practicable. Players should try to do this, as far as reasonably possible, to accommodate and support their squad and the Club and its overall objectives.

Section D

Start of Season

All members will have the opportunity to be considered for selection for any team for which they are eligible. The Club will run a number of pre-season training sessions and trial matches to provide every opportunity for members to participate and be considered. The Selection Panel will meet at the start of each season to determine the 'team squads'.

Previous season's selection and performance will be considered and is likely to be a strong indicator of ability. However, it does not guarantee selection for any particular team and other factors such as changes to membership and development of players will of equal consideration.

Club Captains, Coaches and Team Captains should develop their plans at the earliest possible opportunity and should aim to have all playing members participating at the right level as quickly as reasonably possible so that 'team squads' are cohesive and developing before season commencement.

Section E

Throughout the Season

Club Captains should hold regular selection meetings as required. These should ideally be on a monthly basis but a minimum of 4 meetings within any given season to make sure that each 'team squad' has sufficient players for each team and does not have an excess of players as this may be detrimental to certain players and the overall objectives of the Club.

Team Captains and Coaches will collaborate on selection decisions as much as possible and on a regular basis. However, the Team Captain for the appropriate squad will have the final decision on selection for that Team in respect of any adult player. Selection of junior players will be at the discretion of junior coaches and parents. Where a player is required for a "higher" squad the captain of that Team should be free to select any player from the lower squad. Any issues or disagreements over selection should be referred to and resolved by the Club Captain – who will make a final decision (where required).

Team Captains will select the required number of players each week. Selection will start with the higher team and move downwards. Any unselected players from that squad will ordinarily be made available to the next lower side (in accordance with league rules) and any shortfall should be selected from the next lower side. This means that players will not normally move up or down by more than one team on a weekly basis. However, from time to time there may be exceptions due to availability which mean this is not viable – but selection should always be in accordance with league rules.

Any player selected for any side has a reasonable expectation of fully participating in the match for which they have been selected and having significant pitch time (significant playing time would normally mean around half the pitch time but should be no less than 25 mins in total. This applies to all matches including matches where there is a full squad and a number of substitutes. There may be exceptions (such as injury or discipline) or shorter playing time may be agreed in advance with a player (or parent/guardian) on the basis of a development opportunity.

Players who predominantly play for a lower team (than their assigned squad) are in all probability likely to be moved into that lower squad at the next selection meeting. However, this is an indication only and should not be construed as a rule.

Club Captains and Team Captains should develop and agree a suitable pathway for those players returning from injury or prolonged absence such that they “re-engage” with the Club and its overall objectives and are therefore deemed to have given the opportunity to play and progress to their previous level. This does not infer that they will be selected for the same team as previously allocated.

Section F

Goalkeepers

Goalkeeper is a specialist position required for each match but there is little if any overlap between goalkeeper and outfield player. As far as possible, the selection principles apply equally to goalkeepers. Except for junior teams - only one goalkeeper will be selected for each squad – although some additional flexibility may be needed around availability.

Hence, a goalkeeper may be required to move up more than one team due to lack of availability one week and will then go back to their regular team the following playing week.

To ensure skill level is correctly and appropriately assessed and to ensure safety of goalkeepers, Team Captains and Coaches will (always as far as possible) consult with the Goalkeeping Coach on suitability of selection – or individual who is an experienced goalkeeper.

Selection of junior goalkeepers for a senior team should be carefully considered from a safeguarding perspective and this should be discussed with the Safeguarding Officer and parents/guardians as well as the relevant Coaches and Team Captains.

Section G

Role of a Team Captain

The role of the team captain is to select the most appropriate side each week from the resources available in any given week to win as many matches as possible. In order to achieve this the Team Captain is expected to

- Collaborate with their Coach and other Team Captains
- Highlight any conflicts of interest and escalate any issues to the Club Captain to resolve
- Be mindful of how selection news may be received and communicate accordingly
- Be available to discuss selection issues at any time throughout the season
- Providing feedback and support to players on selection decisions
- Maintain regular communication with players as required
- Attend all selection meetings

Section H

Player Expectations

The role of this policy is to help members understand the Selection Policy used by the Club. This policy will only achieve its objectives if all members are fully engaged and therefore the Club expects all members to:-

- Play to the best of their ability at all times for whichever team they are selected
- Attend training sessions as much as possible – particularly if selected in the higher teams
- Strive to get the most out of their own hockey experience by fully participating
- Confirm availability and only alter their availability due to unforeseen circumstances
- Communicate with their Team Captain in a timely manner
- Raise any material concerns in an appropriate way
- Be prepared to be flexible and support the ambitions of the Club
- Respect the decisions reached by the Club or the Selection Panel

Section I

Social Considerations

The Club recognise that Club members have 'friends' within the Club and enjoy playing with their 'friends'. The Club will endeavour to accommodate this within the Selection Policy where it is not detrimental to the Club's overall objectives. However, it is not a factor within the 'Selection Criteria' and it should be considered as a '*nice to do*' element of the Selection Policy.

This is increasingly less likely for the higher level teams playing competitive hockey – where overall performance and outcome are more important to the Club's overall objectives.

For the avoidance of doubt, the selection policy only applies to competitive matches and does not apply to social games – where the organiser/captain is not bound by this policy and therefore may apply their own personal criteria and approach to selection. However, the organiser/captain must ensure that their selection can be seen to be fair and reasonable and all Club members should be offered the opportunity to play social hockey – so that this can be seen to be fully inclusive. In particular, that the exclusion of any players is not made on grounds of “protected characteristics” (for example - race, disability, religion, sex, sexual orientation or age).

Section J

Financial Considerations

Members pay regular match fees and subscriptions for membership. It is the responsibility of all members to pay their match fees and subscriptions in a timely manner. In general, payment of match fees will not be a consideration for the selection panel to consider.

However, it is unfair on all other members if some members do not contribute to the cost of running the Club, and it is not acceptable for members to refuse to pay and continue to participate and benefit from the Club facilities. In some cases, the Club Committee may advise the selection panel that a member is eligible for selection due to non-payment of match fees or subscriptions.

This will be seen as a last resort approach and any member should raise any financial issues separately with a member of the Committee.

Section K

Considerations for Junior Players

The Club recognises that there are particular circumstances around junior players which need specific consideration. For example, availability may be restricted by other factors and the need to create a safe pathway for junior members to develop through the junior sections of the Club and into adult hockey. This section is specific to junior members – some of who may be playing for adult teams.

1. Player Pathway

The player pathway aims to develop life-long hockey players by prioritising enjoyment and the development of junior athletes as both people and players. We offer a clear pathway to support the development of junior members, help them progress, realise their potential and meet their aspirations.

In addition to participating in age-group training and matches, many of the club's junior members will progress to play hockey on a Saturday as part of our junior development squad, and where appropriate, become a valued members of the club's adult teams and ultimately progress to the highest level of competition in the Club.

The Club's policy will be to try (as far as practicable) to move groups of younger players into adult teams such that there is help and support for them moving into adult hockey and they do not feel isolated or excluded.

Many of our junior members are selected to represent their county, with the goal that they will progress through the "England Hockey Player Pathway" to represent regional and national age-group programmes. The Club is fully committed to support its members achieve these goals and fulfil their potential.

However, the club's overriding objective is to enable every junior member to enjoy their experience of participating in training ,playing hockey and club membership so that they form a lifelong attachment to the game of hockey.

2. Progression to 11-aside hockey (full pitch)

From the age of about 11 (although consideration will be given to younger players who demonstrate an ability, understanding and where it is appropriate to do so), the majority of junior players will be given the opportunity to play 11-aside league hockey on a full size pitch, through one or more of the following:

- Participation in the Junior Development League in Sussex – with separate leagues for boys and girls. This supports the transition to playing in competitive adult matches.
- Players aged 13 and over (with parental consent) may be invited to participate in training sessions with senior teams. This will be discussed on an individual “case by case” basis.
- Players subsequently may be asked if they want to be considered for selection to play Saturday league matches for adults teams within the Club. This will be subject to parental consent and in discussion with Club Captains and Coaches. Junior players will be considered based on feedback from training sessions.
- Players who have reached Y12 in school, and are no longer eligible to play in the Junior Development League and will therefore need to move to an adult training sessions and matches. This will not preclude those players from assisting in the coaching and assisting within the Junior Teams
- All players and parents/guardians will be included of any discussion when moving players into senior hockey up to age 18.

3. Progression to Adult hockey

Junior players should only participate in adult hockey when they are physically and mentally ready for this transition. This will be agreed with coaches and parents as well as the players themselves.

The Club has an inclusive policy for all players; but will endeavour to ensure that junior players are invited to participate as a small group rather than moved individually to ensure a sympathetic and fluid transition from the junior to adult standard of hockey and therefore do not feel isolated.

The Club will endeavour to be flexible to include the wishes of junior members and potentially agree development sides for older junior members within adult hockey.

4. County and Regional Junior hockey

The Club will apply “England Hockey’s Right Athlete Right Environment” (RARE) principles when considering what is the most appropriate playing environment for a junior member at the time and whether/when it may be appropriate for them to progress to another playing environment.

The Junior Development Officer will consider the development pathway for all junior members and may nominate players for the trials and training programmes available for county representation. It is then up to the players and parent/guardian whether they opt to participate in the these programmes.

The Club has no role, input or influence whether players are selected to represent their county but the Club will obviously provide support any player who wishes to participate. Ultimately the county representatives may select players for regional or national trials.

5. School Commitments

A number of junior members have school commitments (either sporting or otherwise) on Saturdays. It is at the discretion of the player and their parents on which activities should be prioritised. This will have no bearing on selection for the Club. If a player was previous unavailable due to school commitments this is not a relevant factor in the selection process. However, selection will consider team play and a blend of player attributes.

Section L

Concerns with the Policy (or its implementation)

As a member if you have concern with the Selection Policy or its implementation , it is important that these are raised this as soon as possible so that they can be addressed and any changes required to the Clubs Selection Policy can be implemented.

Initially you should raise this with the Team Captain to discuss any issues around team selection. In the majority of cases this should resolve the matter. If you remain dissatisfied you should then raise this with the Section Club Captain as soon as practicable but preferably within 7 days of the discussion with the Team Captain. Hopefully this should resolve the issue to both parties' satisfaction. As a final step, you can raise this with the current Management Committee who will reach a final decision on the matter.

This policy is a working document and is unlikely to cover every eventuality. However, this will be reviewed and update it on a regular basis – so it continues to meet the Club's evolving needs/objectives..

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