

## **NATIONAL ICE HOCKEY LEAGUE (NIHL 1 & 2 ONLY)**

### **Rules of Competition 2025-2026**

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#### **1. Scope & Interpretation**

All EIH-sanctioned games and tournaments must adhere to the [IIHF Rules of Ice Hockey](#). Where the IIHF rules are supplemented or amended by the **IHUK In-House Rules &**

**Officiating Guidance** (<https://www.ihukreferee.uk/downloads>), the IHUK wording will take precedence for domestic competition.

**Order of precedence:** IIHF Rules → IHUK In-House Rules → NIHL Rules of Competition.

**Insurance notice:** Participants are covered by EIH insurance **only when** the game, tournament or camp has been formally sanctioned or approved by EIH.

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#### **2. League Identity & Structure**

NIHL leagues are solely owned and operated by EIH. The regular season runs **6 Sep 2025 – 22 Mar 2026**. League formats and the 2025-26 divisional matrix are set out in Appendix A.

##### **Divisional Challenge Cups**

League matches take precedence over all cup fixtures, except **NIHL Cup Finals** and **Playoffs**, which may replace junior or WNIHL league games if necessary.

Following the regular season, **qualifying teams will enter the NIHL playoffs**, with the format detailed in *Appendix B*.

A **Division 1 Championship Game** will be held between the **North and South Division winners**, scheduled during the NIHL National Finals weekend at a neutral venue.

Both **NIHL 1 & 2 North** and **South** operate their own **League Cup competitions**. The **first home and away league fixtures** against each team will double as **League Cup group games**.

- The **top four teams** in each group advance to **semi-finals**, played over two legs (home and away, ideally over one weekend).
- **Winners of the semi-finals** proceed to the **League Cup Final**, also played over two legs on a home-and-away basis.

Additional **Challenge Cup competitions** may be organised, subject to **ElH approval and sanctioning**.

### Points System

Result	Points Awarded
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Regulation win	3 points
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Overtime/shootout win	2 points
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Overtime/shootout loss	1 point
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Regulation loss	0 points
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- No league match shall end in a tie.
- If scores are level after regulation, games will proceed to:
  - **5 minutes of 3-on-3 overtime**, and if still tied,
  - If still tied, a **Game Winning Shots (GWS) competition** will take place as follows:
    - Each team selects **three (3) shooters** to take alternate shots.
    - If the score remains tied after three rounds, the shootout continues with **one shot each (“sudden victory”)** until a winner is determined.
    - All eligible players (except those serving penalties or injured) must shoot before any player can take a second attempt.
    - The goal credited as the winner will be recorded as the **Game-Winning Goal (GWG)**, and the final score will be increased by one goal for the winning team.

### League Title Tiebreakers

The placing of teams in the league table shall be determined according to the following criteria, applied in order until the tie is broken:

1. **Total points** earned in the regular season.
2. **Points earned** in games between the tied teams.
3. **Overall goal difference** in games between the tied teams.

4. **Overall goal difference** in the regular season.
5. **Total goals** scored in the regular season.
6. **Number of regulation wins** (60-minute wins only).
7. **Fewer penalty points** accumulated in the regular season.
8. **Fewer penalty minutes** accumulated in the regular season.

If teams remain tied after all criteria have been applied, the final position shall be determined by the league.

### Promotion & Relegation

There is **no promotion or relegation** in any NIHL league.

### NIHL Game Length & Format

- Game duration and format for NIHL matches are defined as follows:

	Length	Format
NIHL	3 x 20 minute periods	Full ice, checking, stop clock

### League Entry & Affiliation

- Clubs must apply to enter teams into the league by 31 May ahead of the upcoming season.
- By applying, clubs agree to follow the EIH Rule Book and rules set by IIHF, IHUK, and EIH.
- Teams from the previous season are automatically accepted if they:
  - Have no outstanding debts and Meet re-affiliation requirements.
- Returning clubs must still formally confirm their intent to participate each season.
- Divisional structure is reviewed annually by EIH; clubs may request to move divisions during the off-season.
- Entry of second or third teams is at EIH discretion, subject to:
  - Ice time agreements with their venue, and
  - Successful completion of the affiliation process.

### Withdrawal

- Any team that withdraws after the season begins:
  - Is liable for fines (at EIH discretion), and
  - Must settle all unpaid fees or penalties.
- Withdrawals must be submitted in writing by an authorised club signatory to: [info@englandicehockey.com](mailto:info@englandicehockey.com)

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### 3. Governance Hierarchy

Level	Body	Responsibility
1	EIH Board	Strategic oversight & ratification of rules
2	NIHL Management Committee	Day-to-day league ops & discipline referrals
3	Risk & Governance Committee	Rule-change scrutiny; safeguarding audit
4	Club Representatives	Fixtures, operational feedback, voting

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### 4. Season Calendar 2025-26

Date	Milestone
31 May 2025	Expression-of-interest & affiliation deadline
15 Jun 2025	League formats confirmed
6 Sep 2025	Season opens (all divisions)
31 Dec 2025	Season-Age reference date (6.2)
31 Jan 2026 17:00	Domestic transfer deadline
15 Feb 2026	IIHF ITC deadline (international)
22 Mar 2026	Regular season ends
28 Mar – 19 Apr 2026	Divisional & National play-offs

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### 5. Team Eligibility & Minimum Squads

#### 5.1 Affiliation & Contacts

Clubs must:

1. Complete EIH affiliation **before 31 May** for the following season.
2. Provide sufficient home-ice slots within **five working days** of request (quantities per appendix).
3. Settle all outstanding fines/fees.

#### 5.2 Minimum Squad & Bench Registration

- **Initial registration deadline: 31 Aug 2025.**
- **Squad size: ≥15 players** (skaters or goalies) and **≤30 skaters + 2 goalies** *excluding* junior-age players.

**Minimum Bench Staffing (at puck drop):**

- **A Level 2 (or higher) non-playing coach**, aged 18+, must be in charge of the bench.

- Plus **one additional coach**: minimum Level 1, or a Level 2 player-coach listed on the team sheet.
- A **registered Team Manager** and **Medic** may also be on the bench but do **not** count toward the coaching requirement.
- While not mandatory, the presence of a **qualified medic** on the bench is **strongly recommended**.

#### **Player-Coaches:**

- Permitted in **NIHL**.
- A **non-playing Level 2 coach** must still be the designated bench lead.
- Player-coaches must be **clearly identified on the game sheet**.
- If the non-playing Level 2 coach is ejected:
  - The player-coach must remain **off-ice** and assume bench control for the remainder of the game.
  - If this cannot be met, see **Loss of Eligibility** provisions below.

#### **Compliance:**

- All NIHL clubs must meet the minimum thresholds by 31 August
- Failure to do so may result in **removal from NIHL competition**. All NIHL clubs must meet these minimum thresholds by **31 August**.

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## **6. Player Eligibility & Age Rules**

### **6.1 Eligibility Checklist**

A player may compete in NIHL if they:

1. Are registered in **Gameday** to the relevant club/team;
2. Hold either a **British passport** or a valid **IIHF ITC** approved by IHUK;
3. Have no unpaid EIH fines; and
4. Meet the age & transfer rules below.

### **6.2 Season-Age Definition**

**Season Age** = age a player **will attain on or before 31 December** of the playing season.

### **6.3 Minimum Age for Senior Competition**

1. Players with **Season Age  $\geq 16$**  may dress for senior fixtures from opening night.
2. Players with **Season Age 15** who will turn 16 by 31 Dec may apply under 6.3.2.
3. No player younger than Season Age 15 may play senior hockey.

### 6.3.2 Under-Age Application (15-year-olds)

Submit via [EIH Cognito Form](#) at least **72 h before** first fixture:

- GB Pathway or equivalent elite-performance confirmation;
- Coach assessment of physical & emotional readiness;
- Parent/guardian consent;
- GP/physio clearance.

League Ops may approve, condition or refuse.

### 6.4 British-Trained Definitions

- **British-trained:** A player who has been under UK jurisdiction for a minimum of 16 consecutive months before their 18th birthday.
- **Non-British-trained (Import):** All other players.

Unlimited squad registration; NIHL import (**Non-British-trained**) limit applies **only on match-day (2 dressed)**.

### 6.5 ITC Holders

- **Limited ITC:** one-club registration.
- **Unlimited ITC:** movement options per IHUK rules; annual renewal £55.50 until player holds British citizenship.
- Please refer to the [IHUK ITC Policy](#) for further information.

## 7. Movement of Players

### 7.1 Mechanisms (all via Gameday)

<u>Movement type</u>	<u>Gameday function</u>	<u>Max duration</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Dual registration	"Secondary club"	Season	Gameday transaction implies consent by both clubs.
Permanent transfer	"Transfer"	—	Locked for 28 days after approval.
Emergency transfer	"Emergency transfer"	One fixture	Netminders only in senior hockey.
Play-up dispensation	"Temporary transfer"	≤ 28 days	For development or bench-strength issues.

*Transfer requests must be lodged by **17:00 Friday** to be eligible for weekend fixtures.*

### 7.2 Rules & Restrictions

- No further transfer can be lodged until 28 days after the previous approval.

- All approvals, including parental consent for juniors, **must be completed in Gameday**; e-mail chains no longer accepted.
- EIHL may refuse any movement on duty-of-care or competitive-balance grounds.

### 7.3 Playing Up

#### General Principle

The purpose of this rule is to support player development while maintaining competitive balance.

#### Ages 16–22 (NIHL1 & NIHL2)

- Players may move freely between age groups and senior teams within their primary club/organisation.
- *Example: A player registered with Telford Juniors may also play up for Telford NIHL2 and Telford NIHL1 without restriction.*
- Where a player's primary club does not operate a higher-division senior team, they may also be registered to play up for one additional higher-division club.  
*Example: A player from Haringey Juniors (no NIHL1 pathway) could play up for Haringey Juniors + Haringey NIHL2, and additionally for Slough NIHL1 as their one higher-division club.*
- These movements must be processed through the dual registration system.

#### Ages 23+ (NIHL1 & NIHL2)

- Players may make a maximum of three (3) appearances for a higher-division team in a season.
- Any further appearances beyond this limit will not be permitted unless a permanent transfer is formally agreed and approved.
- Netminders may be granted additional flexibility, recognising shortages in certain regions. Approval will be considered case by case.

#### PNIHL Carve-Out

- The PNIHL operates mandatory age-category roster requirements (U25, U21, U18).
- These requirements take precedence over the general playing-up rules above.
- Player movement into the PNIHL is therefore permitted where necessary to meet roster obligations, provided all players remain compliant with registration and eligibility rules.

#### Guidance Note

The carve-out exists because the PNIHL already embeds development opportunities by requiring U25, U21, and U18 players to be rostered each game. The general playing-up limits therefore do not apply in this division.

#### 7.4 Multi-Club Registration (summary)

- Juniors may dual-register with any senior club (primary-club must be Junior).
- Senior women may register WNIHL + NIHL in different clubs.
- Registrations expire at season end.

#### 7.5 Bench-Strength Dispensation

Request **Bench-Dispensation via email** ([nihl.management@englandicehockey.com](mailto:nihl.management@englandicehockey.com)) ≥ 48 h pre-game. Minimum approved bench: **10 + 1**. Written EIHL approval required; otherwise fixture is challenge-only.

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### 8. Fixture & Match-Day Administration

Key revisions:

- Latest face-off: **19:30 Sat/Sun; 20:00 mid-week**.
- Fixture change requests via **Fixture-Change Form** within 3 working days of issue; EIHL decision final.
- “Failure to fulfil” sanctions updated on DOPS Rules & Procedures
- Match-day minimum bench officials listed; emergency volunteers allowed **once** per season.

#### Fixture Scheduling

- EIHL Fixture Secretary aims to release the full season schedule at least one month prior to the start of the season.
- A mandatory league fixture meeting will be held once PNIHL fixtures are complete. Non-attendance may result in a fine and fixtures being allocated without club input.
- Clubs must submit sufficient weekend home ice dates within five working days of request. A maximum of three blackout date requests per team will be considered but not guaranteed.

#### Game Times & Prioritisation

- League games have priority over challenge matches and tournaments.
- NIHL teams must be available for all weekend dates unless excluded before fixture publication.
- Saturday/Sunday face-offs must start by 19:30; midweek games by 20:00. Fixtures must allow players to return home by midnight unless both clubs agree otherwise.



- As per IIHF Rule 77, the referee is responsible for ensuring the game starts “*at the designated time*” and that periods resume promptly after intermission. The game must begin no later than **five (5) minutes after the official scheduled start time**.
- Intermissions shall be **no less than 15 minutes and no more than 18 minutes**, unless otherwise approved by EIH.
  - **Exception – final intermission curfew flex:** To ensure game completion under rink curfew or exceptional delay (e.g., extended injuries/penalties), the **final intermission may be reduced to not less than 10 minutes if and only if** all of the following agree **before** the break begins: **both Head Coaches (or Team Managers) and the Referee**.
  - Any reduction must still permit **safe ice resurfacing** and **does not waive** any safety or medical requirements.
- In the event of a **late team arrival**, the warm-up will be reduced to a minimum of **15 minutes**, after which the game must commence immediately. The referee may adjust the warm-up length for safety or operational reasons, but no further delay to the scheduled start time will be permitted without NIHL Mgmt. approval.

### Fixture Amendments

- Fixtures may only be rescheduled in the following cases:
  - Ice withdrawn by venue or senior team fixture conflicts.
  - Agreement by both teams and approval by EIH at least 28 days in advance.
- Requests to rearrange must not clash with other league games and must be made via the [Fixture Change Request Form](#) within three working days of the issue.
- EIH reserves the right to decline any rearrangement request.

### Postponements

A fixture may only be postponed due to:

- Ice failure or unsafe rink (confirmed by management).
- Medical emergencies or Acts of God/severe weather (normally **Red alert level**; in exceptional cases, an **Amber alert** may be considered, subject to EIH approval). Delays impacting 3+ players or a key coach.
- Death of a team member or official.

Both teams must submit alternative dates within five working days. If rescheduling is not possible, the game is cancelled with a 0-0 draw and one point each. The team responsible for postponement bears any associated costs.

## Postponement Costs & Claims

- The **team responsible** for the postponement shall bear any **reasonable and unrecoverable costs** incurred by the opposition. **Events outside a club's reasonable control** (e.g., rink/plant failure, emergency venue closure, acts of God/severe weather) **will not render the scheduled home team responsible** for postponement costs.
- Claims are strictly limited to:
  - Pre-booked **same-day coach travel for the away team** that cannot be cancelled or refunded.
  - **Hotel accommodation deposits** that are non-refundable.
  - **Rink hire.**
- The following will **not normally** be considered valid claims:
  - Player or staff **wages**.
  - **Loss of matchday revenue** (tickets, catering, etc.).
  - Any other indirect or consequential costs.
- Such claims will only be considered in **extraordinary circumstances**, at the sole discretion of the governing body.
- All claims must be submitted with **documentary evidence** (e.g. invoices, booking confirmations, or cancellation policies) within **five working days** of the postponement.
- All claims are subject to review and must receive **formal approval from EIH** before reimbursement is authorised.

## Abandoned Games

Games may be abandoned by rink management or officials due to:

- Ice failure or unsafe conditions.
- Player/spectator safety risks.
- Medical emergencies.
- Team absence 10+ minutes after scheduled face-off.
- No qualified coach following ejection.

If <2 periods are completed, the game is a 0-0 draw. If ≥2 periods completed, the score stands. No abandoned games will be replayed unless exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing by both teams and EIH.

## **9. Appendices**

- A – Divisional structures & games matrix
- B – Play-off formats
- C – Minimum video recording spec & fines
- D – On-ice official fees;
- E – Immigration, ITCs, and Player Classification (BT/NBT)
- F – Student Visa Participation
- G – Playoff Prize Money Distribution
- H – Contacts

## Appendix A – Divisional structures & games matrix

### National Ice Hockey League 1 (NIHL 1)

Division	NIHL 1 North	NIHL 1 South
Games	36	28
Format	2H & 2A against all teams	2H & 2A against all teams
Start date	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
End date	22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2026	22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2026
Playoffs	Top 8 teams	Top 8 teams
Playoff dates	QF: 28-29th March 2026 SF: 4-5th April 2026 F: 11-12th April 2026	QF: 28-29th March 2026 SF: 4-5th April 2026 F: 11-12th April 2026
Champs date	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
Cup games	1 H & A against all teams within their Groups	1 H & A against all teams within their Groups
Cup final	21-22 February 2026	21-22 February 2026
Clubs	Billingham Stars Blackburn Hawks Deeside Dragons Hull Jets Leeds Knights 2 Nottingham Lions Sheffield Scimitars Solihull Barons Telford Tigers 2 Widnes Wild	Cardiff Fire Chelmsford Chieftains Invicta Dynamos Romford Buccaneers Slough Jets Solent Devils Streatham Redhawks Swindon Wildcats 2

## National Ice Hockey League 2 (NIHL 2)

Division	NIHL 2 North	NIHL 2 South
Games	24	22
Format	3 game series against each team.	1H & 1A against all teams
Start date	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
End date	22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2026	22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2026
Playoffs	Top 8 teams	Top 8 teams
Playoff dates	QF: 28-29th March 2026 SF: 4-5th April 2026 F: 11-12th April 2026	QF: 28-29th March 2026 SF: 4-5th April 2026 F: 11-12th April 2026
Champs date	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
Cup games	1 H & A against all teams within their Groups	1 H & A against all teams within their Groups
Cup final	21-22 February 2026	21-22 February 2026
Clubs	Altrincham Aces Billingham Buccaneers Bradford Bulldogs Coventry Blaze 2 Deeside Ducks Kingston Sharks Nottingham Lions 2 Sheffield Titans Sutton Sting	Bristol Pitbulls 2 Cardiff Canucks Chelmsford Warriors Guildford Phoenix Haringey Huskies Invicta Mustangs Lee Valley Lions Milton Keynes Thunder Oxford Rising Stars Peterborough Phantoms 2 Slough Spitfires Solent Junior Devils

## **Appendix B – Playoff formats**

NIHL Playoffs 2025/2026

All games will follow the EIH Rule Book, unless otherwise specified below.

### **Attendance and Format**

- Participation in the NIHL Playoffs is mandatory.
- Failure to participate will result in a 10-point deduction at the start of the next season and may incur a fine.

### **Format Overview**

- All playoff matches are played at a neutral venue over one weekend, as determined by EIH.
- Divisional playoffs include the top eight teams in each division.

### **Quarter-Finals (Home & Away Legs):**

- QF1: 1st vs 8th
- QF2: 4th vs 5th
- QF3: 3rd vs 6th
- QF4: 2nd vs 7th

### **Semi-Finals (Home & Away Legs):**

- SF1: Winner QF1 vs Winner QF2
- SF2: Winner QF3 vs Winner QF4

### **Finals Weekend (Neutral Venue): *Saturday***

- Laidler Playoff Final (NIHL 2 North)
- Wilkinson Playoff Final (NIHL 1 North)
- Moralee Playoff Final (NIHL 2 South)
- Britton Playoff Final (NIHL 1 South)

### ***Sunday***

- Division 2 National Championship Final
- Division 1 National Championship Final

### **Championship Finals Games**

If score is level after regulation, game will proceed to:

- **5 minutes of 3-on-3 overtime**, and if still tied,

If still tied, a **Game Winning Shots (GWS) competition** will take place as follows:

- Each team selects **three (3) shooters** to take alternate shots.
- If the score remains tied after three rounds, the shootout continues with **one shot each** (“**sudden victory**”) until a winner is determined.
- All eligible players (except those serving penalties or injured) must shoot before any player can take a second attempt.
- The goal credited as the winner will be recorded as the **Game-Winning Goal (GWG)**, and the final score will be increased by one goal for the winning team.

### Player Eligibility

To be eligible to represent a team in the playoffs, a player must have:

- **Played in at least 25% of that team’s regular-season fixtures.**
- This applies to all players, including those who transferred mid-season (25% counted from season start).

### Age Requirement:

- Players must be **aged 16 or older on or before 31 December** of the playing season in order to be eligible to participate in the playoffs.

### Junior Player Exemption:

- For development purposes, any player registered in **Junior hockey (e.g. U19)** is **exempt from the 25% threshold**, but the **seasonal age rule (16 on or before 31 December)** still applies.

### U23 Dual Registration:

- Players aged **U23** who are registered with multiple divisions may play in the playoffs for more than one team, provided they meet the **25% threshold** with each team. (Junior players moving up remain exempt as above.)

**Dispensation** may be granted in cases of injury, international call-up, or cancelled fixtures, with supporting documentation.

Any team found to have iced an ineligible player will be removed from the playoffs and all results awarded 5–0 to the non-offending team(s).

**Match Day Protocols:** Standard match-day rules apply.

### Discipline

- Suspensions or penalty points from the playoffs will carry over to the following season.
- Match reports will be produced for all major offences.
- Inappropriate, abusive, or destructive behaviour will be handled on-site by EIH DOPS.
- Sanctions may include ejection, future bans, and liability for damages.

## Appendix C - Minimum video recording spec & fines

### NIHL Minimum Video Recording Requirements

Every NIHL game—including league, cup, and challenge fixtures—must be video recorded and uploaded to YouTube by the home team. The YouTube link must be submitted via the [NIHL Video Link Upload Form](#) by **11:59 PM on the Monday** following the game.

For midweek games, the footage must be uploaded within **24 hours** of the fixture. It is the home team's responsibility to ensure adequate filming and timely submission.

Once submitted, a copy of the form will be sent to the home club and NIHL Management. The footage link will also be published in the [NIHL Game Video Library](#) on SharePoint, timestamped to confirm submission. Late submissions will incur fines and penalty points as outlined below.

### Minimum Filming Standards

#### Recording Equipment Levels:

- **Level 1:** One wide-angle camera at centre ice **or** two end zone cameras
- **Level 2:** One wide-angle camera at centre ice **and** two end zone cameras **or** one panning centre-ice camera
- **Level 3:** Two end zone cameras **and** one panning centre-ice camera
- **Level 4:** Level 3 plus additional camera angles (e.g., overhead, bench)

#### Minimum Requirements by Division:

- **NIHL National:** Level 2 or higher
- **NIHL Division 1 & 2:** Level 1 or higher

All video recordings must be:

- Digital format
- Full HD (1080p)
- Minimum 30 frames per second (FPS)

For inter-divisional or inter-league challenge games, the **minimum standard required is based on the home team's division**.

Teams should record the filming level used in the **official game notes** for reference. If recording is interrupted, officials must be notified at the next stoppage. Once resumed, officials should again be informed. Officials will notify coaches of filming changes during a stoppage.

### DRS Video Review Process

The **Discipline Review System (DRS)** video process is available to all **NIHL 1 and NIHL 2** clubs.



See the **DOPS Rules and Procedures** for detailed guidance on:

- How to initiate a review
- Timelines
- What to do if video is not made available

**Appendix D – On-Ice official fees**

League	Total Fee (without mileage)	Max Mileage	Max Mileage Fee	TOTAL
NIHL 1	£155.00	400	£180.00	£335.00
NIHL 2	£129.00	350	£157.50	£286.50

League	Referee Fee	Linesman Fee	2 Man System
NIHL 1	£67.00	£44.00	£77.50
NIHL 2	£55.00	£37.00	£64.50

## **Appendix E – Immigration, ITCs, and Player Classification (BT/NBT)**

This appendix sets out the requirements and distinctions clubs must follow when registering players. It clarifies the differences between immigration status, International Transfer Cards (ITCs), and how players are classified as British Trained (BT) or Non-British Trained (NBT) under league rules.

### **1. Immigration Status & Visa Requirements**

- A player's right to live and work in the UK is determined by their immigration status.
- Players with British citizenship, Settled Status (EU Settlement Scheme), Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), or Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE) have full rights and do not require a Sportsperson Visa.
- Where a player does not hold such status, they may require a Sportsperson Visa.

#### **Sportsperson Visa Process**

- To employ a player under a Sportsperson Visa:
  - The club must hold a valid Sponsor Licence issued by the Home Office.
  - The player must receive a Certificate of Sponsorship from the club.
  - The player must also obtain a Governing Body Endorsement (GBE) issued by Ice Hockey UK (IHUK), the recognised national governing body.
- Without these approvals, the player cannot be lawfully employed to play.

#### **Student Visa: (See Appendix F)**

- Players in the UK on a Student Visa are subject to strict Home Office rules.
- They may participate in ice hockey only on an amateur, unpaid basis unless specific visa conditions allow otherwise.
- Clubs must ensure no payments (wages, stipends, benefits in kind) are made that would breach visa conditions.
- Any breach of visa conditions may result in sanctions against both the club and the player.

### **2. International Transfer Cards (ITCs)**

- Immigration status does not determine whether an ITC is required.
- An ITC is required under IIHF rules whenever a player's last registration was outside the UK.
- Example: A Canadian citizen with ILR still requires an ITC if their last playing rights were in Canada.
- ITCs must be obtained before registration is confirmed. (See ITC policy for details.)

#### **4. British Trained (BT) vs. Non-British Trained (NBT)**

- After immigration and ITC matters are resolved, clubs must classify each player as BT or NBT.

#### **Definitions:**

- British Trained (BT): A player who has been under UK jurisdiction for at least 16 consecutive months before their 18th birthday, or is currently registered as U18.
- Non-British Trained (NBT): Any player who does not meet the above criteria, regardless of passport, residency, or immigration status.

#### **5. Practical Examples**

- Example A (NBT): A Canadian-born player with ILR (full work rights in the UK) would not need a Sportsperson Visa. If their last registration was in Canada, they require an ITC. As they developed outside the UK system, they are classified as NBT.
- Example B (BT): A Polish citizen who moved to the UK at age 12, registered with a UK club, and remained for more than 16 consecutive months before turning 18 is BT, even if they do not hold a British passport.
- Example C (Student Visa): A Slovak player studying in the UK on a Student Visa may train and play at amateur level only. They may not receive wages, stipends, or benefits in kind. They still require an ITC if their last registration was abroad, and their BT/NBT classification depends on their development history.

#### **6. Club Compliance Checklist**

##### **When registering a player, clubs must confirm:**

1. Immigration Status – Does the player have the right to live and work in the UK (citizenship, Settled Status, ILR, other visa)?
2. Visa Conditions – If on a Student Visa or other restricted visa, are they permitted to play and under what conditions?
3. ITC Requirement – Was the player's last registration outside the UK? If yes, an ITC is mandatory.
4. BT/NBT Classification – Does the player meet the criteria to be classified as British Trained?

## Appendix F – Student Visa Participation

### 1. General Rule

Individuals studying in the UK on a Student Visa may participate in ice hockey only within the limits set out by UK immigration law. Clubs are responsible for ensuring full compliance before registering a player.

### 2. Permitted Activities

Student Visa holders are permitted to:

- Play for their university team (e.g., BUCS, BUIHA competitions).
- Engage in amateur sport solely for personal enjoyment and without compensation.

### 3. Prohibited Activities

Student Visa holders are not permitted to:

- Play or coach at a professional or semi-professional level, even if unpaid.
- Receive any form of payment or benefits in kind, including but not limited to:
  - Match fees, appearance fees, or stipends
  - Reimbursement of travel or accommodation expenses
  - Free or subsidised equipment or kit
  - Free or subsidised gym access, physio, or medical care
  - Housing, transport, meals, or similar benefits
- Be registered with a professional or semi-professional club, regardless of whether direct payment is made.

#### 3.A Clarification – “Benefits in Kind” (Student Visas)

For the purpose of F.3, a “benefit in kind” includes any payment, reimbursement, or **material non-cash benefit** that a player **keeps** or from which they derive a **financial advantage** (e.g., core equipment, gym/physio packages, paid medical treatment, travel, accommodation, or meals).

**Permitted de minimis items (not a benefit in kind)** when **provided uniformly to all registered players**: incidental match-day consumables (e.g., tape, wax, laces), emergency blade/sharpening, bench water/standard sports drink, pitch-side first aid/emergency care, and **loan equipment for emergency use only** that is **returned immediately** after use. These must be of **negligible value** and must **not** amount to compensation.

Anything outside the above is **prohibited** for Student Visa holders.

### 4. Definition of Amateur

For the purposes of these rules, an “Amateur” is defined as an individual who:

- Participates in sport solely for personal enjoyment,

- Does not seek or receive payment, expenses, or other benefits in kind, and
- Is not registered with a professional or semi-professional organisation.

## **5. Declaration Requirement**

Before registering a Student Visa holder, clubs must complete and submit a [Student Visa Participation Declaration](#) to EIH and IHUK, confirming that:

- They have verified the player's immigration status.
- The player's participation is consistent with UKVI Student Visa restrictions.
- The player will not receive any payment, reimbursements, or retainable equipment/benefits.
- The player will only participate at an amateur/university level as defined above.
- We confirm that any match-day consumables and emergency loan items are supplied uniformly to all players, are of negligible value, and confer no financial advantage.

### **Any breach of this rule may result in:**

- The player being declared ineligible,
- Sanctions against the club, and
- Referral to UKVI for investigation.

## **6. Alternative Route**

Any player wishing to participate at a professional or semi-professional level must instead qualify under the International Sportsperson Visa route, which requires:

- A valid Sponsor Licence held by the employing club, and
- A Governing Body Endorsement (GBE) issued by IHUK.

## **Appendix G – Playoff Prize Money Distribution**

### **Post-Event NET Prize Fund**

Following the Playoff Finals Weekend, a NET prize fund will be calculated and approved jointly by NIHL/EIH. The method of calculating the NET figure is a matter for management and is not included in this Rules of Competition.

### **Allocation of NET Prize Fund**

- **90%** of the NET surplus shall be apportioned as prize money.
- **10%** shall be retained by EIH in a Development Fund to support the future growth of the leagues.
- **The 90% prize fund** shall be divided: **60% to NIHL 1; 40% to NIHL 2.**

### **Distribution Within Each League (Performance Awards = 100%)**

- **National Champion: 12.5%**
- **National Finalist (Runner-Up): 7.5%**
- **Divisional Champions (North & South): 35% total (17.5% each)**
- **Divisional Finalists (North & South): 25% total (12.5% each)**
- **Losing Semi-Finalists (4 teams): 20% total (5% each)**

### **Guiding Principles**

- Teams achieving success at national and divisional level are rewarded proportionally.
- A fixed 10% contribution is retained to reinvest in officiating, player development, and league operations.

### **Administrative Guidance**

- Each team entitled to a share of the prize fund will be asked to submit an invoice to EIH for their allocated amount.
- No VAT is to be added to these invoices, as this distribution represents a share of league prize money rather than a supply of goods or services.

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### **Worked Example – £30,000 NET Surplus**

- **£3,000 (10%)** retained by EIH for Development Fund.
- **£27,000 (90%)** distributed as prize money:
  - **NIHL 1 (60%): £16,200**
  - **NIHL 2 (40%): £10,800**

**NIHL 1 – £16,200 (Performance Awards 100%)**

- National Champion (12.5%): **£2,025**
- National Finalist (7.5%): **£1,215**
- Divisional Champions (2 × 17.5%): **£2,835 each**
- Divisional Finalists (2 × 12.5%): **£2,025 each**
- Losing Semi-Finalists (4 × 5%): **£810 each**

**NIHL 2 – £10,800 (Performance Awards 100%)**

- National Champion (12.5%): **£1,350**
- National Finalist (7.5%): **£810**
- Divisional Champions (2 × 17.5%): **£1,890 each**
- Divisional Finalists (2 × 12.5%): **£1,350 each**
- Losing Semi-Finalists (4 × 5%): **£540 each**

**\*\*Distribution is applied to NET as defined by the EIH Finance & Audit Policy (to be published). The approved definition will be incorporated into this Appendix and notified to clubs.**



## **Appendix H - Contacts**

### **EIH Director – National League, NIHL 1 & NIHL 2**

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*TBC*

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