National League Division 1 and 2 Rules of Competition

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1. Scope and Interpretation

The governing body for ice hockey in the United Kingdom is Ice Hockey UK Limited (IHUK). There may be references in these terms to policies of England Ice Hockey (EIH) and Scottish Ice Hockey (SIH) which are now policies of IHUK and will continue to apply to all Clubs and Teams. IHUK is now entitled to enforce these. In due course we will rebrand EIH and SIH policies and other documentation. References to EIH or SIH shall, where the context requires, be construed as references to IHUK.

All IHUK/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 IHUK insurance only when the game, tournament or camp has been formally sanctioned or approved by IHUK.

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2. League Identity & Structure

NIHL leagues are solely owned and operated by IHUK. The regular season runs 5 Sep 2026 – 21 Mar 2027.

League formats and the 2026-27 divisional matrix are set out in Appendix A.

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3. Divisional Challenge Cups

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

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 two 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 IHUK approval and sanctioning.

4. Points System

Results	**Points Awarded**
Regulation win	3 points
Overtime/shootout win	2 points
Overtime/shootout loss	1 point
Regulation loss	0 points

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, a Game Winning Shots (GWS) competition will take place. This process is detailed in the IHUK In House Rules.

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5. League Title Tiebreakers

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

- Total points earned in the regular season.
- Points earned in games between the tied teams.
- Overall goal difference in games between the tied teams
- Overall goal difference in the regular season.
- Total goals scored in the regular season.
- Number of regulation wins (60-minute wins only).
- Fewer penalty points accumulated in the regular season.
- 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.

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6. Promotion and Regulation

There is no promotion or relegation in any NIHL league.

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7. NIHL Game Length and 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

8. 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 IHUK, clubs may request to move divisions during the off-season, NIHL Management shall request the approval of the CEO (or their designee) prior to making decisions about teams moving up or down.

Entry of second or third teams is at IHUK discretion, subject to:

- Ice time agreements with their venue; and
- Successful completion of the affiliation process.

9. Governance Hierarchy

- IHUK Board: Strategic oversight & ratification of rules
- IHUK Board and/or Risk & Governance Committee: Rule-change scrutiny; safeguarding audi
- NIHL Management Committee: Day-to-day league ops & discipline referrals
- Club Representatives: Fixtures, operational feedback, voting

10. Season Calendar 2026-27

15 Jun 2026: League formats confirmed
5 Sep 2026: Season opens (all divisions)
31 Dec 2026: Season-Age reference date (6.2)
31 Jan 2027:17:00: Domestic transfer deadline
14 Feb 2027: IIHF ITC deadline (international)
21 Mar 2027: Regular season ends
27 Mar – 18 Apr 2027: Divisional & National play-offs
31 May 2027: Expression-of-interest for new teams

IHUK may change these dates from time to time upon reasonable notice to the Clubs and Teams.

11. Team Eligibility & Minimum Squads

Affiliation & Contacts

Clubs must:

- Provide sufficient home-ice slots within five working days of request (quantities per appendix).
- Settle all outstanding fines/fees.

Minimum Squad & Bench Registration

- Initial registration deadline: 30 Aug 2026.
- Squad size: ≥14 players+ 1 netminder and ≤30 players + minimum 2 netminder 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. If there is no Level 2 the game cannot continue.
- Plus, one additional coach:
    - Minimum Level 1 coach or a Level 2 player-coach listed on the team sheet;
    - or ideally an additional Level 2 coach
- A registered Team Manager 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 1 and NIHL 2.
- A non-playing Level 2 coach must still be the designated bench lead.
- Player-coaches must be clearly identified on the game sheet.
- A player-coach cannot be a captain or alternate.

If the non-playing Level 2 coach is ejected:

- The additional Level 2 coach can assume control of the bench or
- a Level 1 coach who has completed a required bench management training module.
- Alternatively, the player-coach must remain off-ice and assume bench control for the remainder of the game.

If these requirements cannot be met, see rule 13, abandoned games.

Compliance

- All NIHL clubs must meet the minimum thresholds by 30 August
- Failure to do so may result in removal from NIHL competition.

Player Eligibility & Age Rules

Eligibility Checklist

- A player may compete in NIHL if they:
    - Are registered in Gameday to the relevant club/team;
    - Hold either a British passport or a valid IIHF ITC approved by IHUK;
    - Have no unpaid IHUK/EIH fines; and
    - Meet the age & transfer rules below.

Season-Age Definition

- Season Age means the age a player will attain on or before 31 December of the playing season.
- Minimum Age for Senior Competition:
    - Players with Season Age ≥ 16 may dress for senior fixtures from opening night.
    - Players with Season Age 15 who will turn 16 by 31 Dec may apply under 6.3.2.
    - No player younger than Season Age 15 may play senior hockey.

Under-Age Application (15-year-olds)

- Submit via IHUK/EIH Cognito Form at least 72 hours before first fixture:
    - GB Pathway or equivalent elite-performance confirmation;
    - Coach assessment of physical & emotional readiness; and
    - Parent/guardian consent
- NIHL Management Committee may approve, condition or refuse.

British-Trained Definitions

For the season 2026-2027 the following definitions apply:

- 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).

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.

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12. Movement of Players

Mechanisms (all via Gameday)

- 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.

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 not accepted.
- A Club may reject a permanent transfer on the grounds of club debt, equipment return expected or any other valid contracted reason. This should be confirmed in club rules with players.
- IHUK may refuse any movement on duty-of-care or competitive-balance grounds.

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.

PINIHL Carve-Out

The PNIHL operates mandatory age-category roster requirements. Please refer to PINIHL National Rules of Competition.

Appearance Limits

Two-Way Player (NIHL1/NIHL2) – Age 23+

- A two-way player may appear in a maximum of 3 NIHL1 games while remaining eligible to play for their primary team.
- Once a player reaches 4 NIHL1 appearances, they are locked into NIHL1 for the remainder of the season. They cannot appear for any other team unless formally transferred or re-registered under the Rules of Competition for their new competition.

Priority in a fixture clash

- Primary club has priority in a clash, unless there is written agreement for the player to represent the secondary club for that specific fixture.
- Without written agreement, appearing for the secondary club may render the player ineligible for that game. Both league sanctions and DOPS sanctions could be applied.

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.

Agreement & approvals (mandatory)

A two-way agreement must be submitted, completed and approved in GameDay prior to the day of the fixture. Approval steps may be declined if requested at short notice by NIHL Management.

Bench-Strength Dispensation

Request Bench-Dispensation via email nihl.management@englandicehockey.com ≥ 48 h pre-game. Minimum approved bench: 10 + 1. Written IHUK approval required; otherwise, fixture is challenge-only.

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13. Fixture & Match-Day Administration

Fixture Scheduling

- 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. Later face-off can be agreed both clubs but does require approval by NIHL Management and IHUK Fixtures.
- The game must begin no later than five (5) minutes after the official scheduled start time, unless mutually agreed or a rink issue requires a later start such as overrunning session prior to game.
- Intermissions shall be no less than 15 minutes and no more than 18 minutes, unless otherwise approved by IHUK.
- 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 Management 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 IHUK 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.

IHUK 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).
- Severe weather or travel/traffic delays; Red alert level; subject to IHUK approval. Delays impacting 3+ players or a key coach such as vehicle breakdown.
- Death or Medical Emergency, applies when the following occurs; Death of a team member, official, or team member's family member or medical emergency involving 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 and 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, 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.

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 IHUK before reimbursement is authorised. Payment should be arranged between clubs. IHUK will only intervene if payment is not paid as agreed.

The following will not be considered valid claims:

- Player or staff wages.
- Loss of matchday revenue (tickets, catering, etc.).
- Any other indirect or consequential costs.

Abandoned Games
Games may be abandoned by rink management or club and on ice officials mutually agree;

- 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 IHUK.

14. Appendices

Appendix A: Divisional structures & games matrix
Appendix B: Play-off formats
Appendix C: Minimum video recording spec & fines
Appendix D: On-ice official fees;
Appendix E: Immigration, ITCs, and Player Classification (BT/NBT)
Appendix F: Student Visa Participation
Appendix G: Playoff Price Money Distribution
Appendix 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	5th September 2026	5th September 2026
End date	21st March 2027	21st March 2027
Playoffs	Top 8 teams	Top 8 teams
Playoff dates	QF: 27-28th March 2027 SF: 3-4th April 2027 F: 10-11th April 2027	QF: 27-28th March 2027 SF: 3-4th April 2027 F: 10-11th April 2027
Champs date	18th April 2027	18th April 2027
Cup games	1 H & A against all teams within their Groups	1 H & A against all teams within their Groups
Cup final	20-21 February 2027	20-21 February 2027
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	22	24
Format	1H & 1A against all teams	1H & 1A against all teams
Start date	5th September 2026	5th September 2026
End date	21st March 2027	21st March 2027
Playoffs	Top 8 teams	Top 8 teams
Playoff dates	QF: 27-28th March 2027 SF: 3-4th April 2027 F: 10-11th April 2027	QF: 28-29th March 2027 SF: 3-4th April 2027 F: 10-11th April 2027
Champs date	19th April 2026	19th April 2026
Cup games	1 H & A against all teams within their Groups & 1 additional game against 4 teams.	1 H & A against all teams within their Groups
Cup final	20-21 February 2027	20-21 February 2027
Clubs	Altrincham Aces Billingham Buccaneers Bradford Bulldogs Coventry Blaze 2 Deeside Ducks Kingston Sharks Nottingham Lions 2 Sheffield Titans Sutton Sting Widnes Wild 2	Basingstoke Bison 2 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 2026/2027

All games will follow the IHUK/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 IHUK.
- 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.

Team Seedings

For cup and playoff legs, the allocation of home fixtures shall be determined by applying the following criteria in order:

1. **Mutual agreement** – where both teams have ice available, the order of legs shall be agreed mutually for each fixture.
2. **Senior team priority** – where ice availability at a rink is restricted by a senior team's fixtures, that rink's availability shall take precedence (e.g. where ice is only available on the Sunday because the

senior team holds the ice on the Saturday).

3. **League finishing position** – where both teams have the same days available and no agreement is reached, the team with the higher league finishing position shall have priority.

For the purposes of this rule, "senior team" means: Elite League or NIHL National teams, in respect of NIHL 1 clubs; and Elite League, NIHL National or NIHL 1 teams, in respect of NIHL 2 clubs.

Playoff weekends are notified to all clubs at the start of the season. Once the play-off picture becomes clear, clubs must communicate with each other as promptly as possible so that any unrequired ice can be returned to rinks at the earliest opportunity for use for other fixtures or public sessions.

Player Eligibility

To be eligible to represent a team in the play-offs, 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 (Season Age) 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 IHUK 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	£159.00	400	£180.00	£339.00
NIHL 2	£133.00	350	£157.50	£290.50

League	Referee Fee	Linesman Fee	2 Man System
NIHL 1	£69.00	£45.00	£79.50
NIHL 2	£57.00	£38.00	£66.50

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.

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.

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.)

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.

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.

Club Compliance Checklist
When registering a player, clubs must confirm:

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

Appendix F – Student Visa Participation

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.

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.

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.

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.

Anything outside the above is prohibited for Student Visa holders.

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.
-

Declaration Requirement

Before registering a Student Visa holder, clubs must complete and submit a Student Visa Participation Declaration to 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.

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/IHUK. The method of calculating the NET figure is a matter for management and is not included in these Rules of Competition.

Allocation of NET Prize Fund is under review and will be supplied to clubs later in the season.

Administrative Guidance

- Each team entitled to a share of the prize fund will be asked to submit an invoice to IHUK 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.

Appendix H- Contacts

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