

Woman's National Ice Hockey League Rules of Competition 2026-2027

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1. Scope & 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-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 Sex & Gender Participation Policy → IHUK In-House Rules → WNIHL 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.

2. League Identity & Structure

WNIHL leagues are solely owned and operated by IHUK. The regular season runs **5th Sep 2026 – 16th May 2027**. League formats and the 2026-27 divisional matrix are set out in Appendix A.

Midweek fixtures

- Permitted by mutual written agreement of both teams. On agreement, the Home Club must notify IHUK (Scheduling/Officiating) so officials can be appointed and systems updated.

Formats & fixtures

- League formats aim to be finalised by 31 May prior to each new season to ensure an optimal development structure.
- The total number of games and home/away distribution for each team is set annually for each section and published in Appendix A.

Points System

<u>Result</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
Regulation win	2 points
Regulation draw	1 point
Regulation loss	0 points

Double Points & Unfulfilled Fixtures

No double-points games will be played, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. a non-fault failure to fulfil a fixture that cannot be rescheduled).

In such cases, the requesting team must:

- Obtain written agreement from the opposing team, and
- Submit this, with supporting reasons, to IHUK for approval.

IHUK reserves the right to refuse any request.

If no fixture remains to award double points, the result will be recorded as 0–0, one point each.

Unfulfilled games will be reviewed by IHUK and the WNIHL League Management, in consultation with the league fixtures secretary, before a result is awarded. Permission from IHUK must be obtained in advance if a scheduled fixture cannot be played.

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.
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

Club Eligibility

- A club cannot have two teams in the same division. If a club already has a first team in the next division, its other teams are not eligible for promotion.

End-of-Season Movement

Automatic Relegation/Promotion

Newly promoted teams to the Elite Division will be immune from relegation in their first season. If a new team is bottom placed, there will be no promotion playoff. If an established Elite team finishes in the bottom place, the following format will apply:

WNIHL Elite vs WNIHL1:

- The top placed team in WNIHL1 North plays the top team in WNIHL1 South in a promotion playoff. This will be 1 home and 1 away.
- Winner: Competes in WNIHL Elite next season
- Loser: Remains in WNIHL1
- Matches must be completed by June 30, 2027
- Bottom placed team in WNIHL Elite will automatically be relegated.

WNIHL1 North & South:

- Bottom teams → relegated to WNIHL2 North/South Valerie A
- Top teams from WNIHL2 North/South Valerie A → promoted to WNIHL1 North/South

WNIHL2 North/South Valerie:

- Bottom teams → relegated to WNIHL2 North/South Elizabeth B
- Top teams from WNIHL2 North/South Elizabeth B → promoted to WNIHL2 North/South Valerie A

Declined Promotion

- If the top eligible team declines or is withdrawn, the relegated team may stay in the higher division.
- If they also decline, promotion is offered to the next eligible club.
- Any team that refuses promotion will start the next season with a 10-point deduction.

Game Length & Format

Game duration and format for WNIHL matches are defined as follows:

Age group	Length	Format
WNIHL U16	3 x 15 minute periods	Full ice, non-checking, stop clock
WNIHL	3 x 20 minute periods	Full ice, non-checking, stop clock

All WNIHL league games must be played over 3 x 20-minute periods. In extraordinary circumstances, teams may apply to IHUK for permission to play 3 x 15-minute periods. If a team cannot meet the standard format, they must:

- Inform the fixtures secretary immediately when submitting their fixtures.
- Provide a clear explanation for the deviation.

No WNIHL Fixture is permitted to face off any later than 7pm. Travelling opposition must have the ability to complete the fixture and return home before 2am for WNIHL Senior Fixtures, and 12am for WNIHL U16 Fixtures (under normal traffic conditions)

Once the season starts, game duration cannot be changed.

League Entry & Affiliation

- **Entry deadline:** Clubs must apply by 31 May each year to enter teams for the following season.
- **Conditions:** By applying, clubs agree to abide by the IHUK/EIH Rule Book and the rules of IIHF, IHUK, and EIH.
- **Returning teams:** Teams from the previous season are accepted if they:
 - Have no outstanding debts, and
 - Meet re-affiliation criteria. They must still formally confirm their intent to participate.
- **New teams:** Must apply in writing to IHUK by 31 May and have an ice time agreement in place to fulfil home fixtures. Once accepted, the team must complete the IHUK affiliation process to gain full membership.
- **Multiple teams per age club:** Entry of a second or third team is at the discretion of IHUK, subject to venue ice time agreements.
- **Divisional structure:** Reviewed annually by IHUK in consultation with clubs. During the off-season, clubs may request to move divisions. *The WNIHL League Management shall request the approval of the CEO (or their designee) prior to making decisions about teams moving up or down.*
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Withdrawal

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

3. Governance Hierarchy

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

4. Season Calendar 2026-27

<u>Date</u>	<u>Milestone</u>
15 Jun 2026	League formats confirmed
5 Sep 2026	Season opens (all divisions)
31 Jan 2027 17:00	Domestic transfer deadline
15 Feb 2027	IIHF ITC deadline (international)
16 May 2027	Regular season ends
29 May 2027	WNIHL National play-offs (per appendix B)
31 May 2027	Expression-of-interest & affiliation deadline

5. Team Eligibility

To be eligible for any IHUK competition, each team must:

- **Affiliation & Registration**
 - Complete IHUK affiliation before entering the following season.
 - Register the minimum number of players, coaches, and managers by 30 August of the playing season. Failure to meet this may result in removal from competitions.
 - WNIHL teams must have at least 12 registered players including a netminder (11+1). without any players being dual registered with other clubs.
 - To enter two teams at the same age group, clubs must have 22 players including 2 netminders (20+2) without any players being dual registered with other clubs.
 - There is no maximum squad size.
- **Contacts & Administration**
 - Provide email and telephone details for a lead contact and fixtures secretary. If these details change during the season, the club must notify IHUK and the relevant regional lead without delay.
 - Submit an expression of interest to enter by 31 May each year.
 - Make available sufficient home ice dates to fulfil fixtures. Clubs must supply dates to IHUK within five working days when requested. (Number of required dates is set annually and listed in Appendix A.)
- **Finance & Compliance**
 - Settle all outstanding fines and debts owed to IHUK or IHUK-affiliated clubs. Teams with unpaid debts may be suspended until cleared.
- **Coaching & Support Staff**

Each WNIHL team must have, as a minimum, on match days:

- 1 x Level 2 Head/Team Coach
 - 1 x Level 1 Assistant Coach or an additional Level 2 Coach. This can be a designated bench coach or player coach.
 - Team Manager is not required on the bench. However, can go on the bench at the discretion of the Head Coach, but is not counted towards.
 - Clubs are strongly recommended to appoint a **registered and qualified medical practitioner**.
 - **Eligibility reference:** Player eligibility -including sex & gender criteria for WNIHL - is set out in Section 6 and governed by the IHUK Sex & Gender Participation Policy.
 - **Additional Teams**
 - Entry of a second or third team is at the discretion of IHUK. Applications must be made by 31 May, for the following season with supporting ice-time agreements.
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6. Player Eligibility & Age Rules

To be eligible for any WNIHL IHUK competition, players must:

1. Be registered in Gameday to the relevant club/team;
2. Where required, a player must hold a valid IIHF International Transfer Card (ITC) approved by IHUK before participating. British citizenship/passport is not a requirement for junior eligibility.
3. Have no unpaid IHUK fines
4. Be registered with the correct age group team (see age rules below) by 31 January of the current season.

Sex & Gender Eligibility – WNIHL (Senior & U16)

Female category (WNIHL senior & WNIHL U16): Eligible players are those whose sex recorded at birth is female. In the adult female category, a player must not be undergoing masculinising hormone treatment (e.g. exogenous testosterone) or they will be ineligible. This is consistent with the IHUK Sex & Gender Participation Policy for gender-affected collision sports.

- Mixed participation (U11 and below): For clarity, mixed-gender ice hockey is permitted U11 and below; this sits outside WNIHL and follows the IHUK policy.
- U12–U18 categories (general principle): From U12 upward, competition is sex-segregated under IHUK policy; WNIHL U16 sits within the female category definition above.
- Data, privacy & process: Any eligibility checks will be minimal, necessary and proportionate, handled confidentially on a need-to-know basis under the IHUK policy (data rights, retention and DPIA apply).
- Anti-Doping: If a player is on medication that may require a TUE, UKAD rules apply (as referenced in the IHUK policy).

Senior vs Junior status

A junior age player who registers solely for senior membership forfeits eligibility to play in any junior team, league, competition, or tournament.

Junior Age Eligibility

- Players must be at least 14 years old on the date of the fixture to play in WNIHL senior women's leagues.
- Players aged 11 and over may train with a senior WNIHL team, but only in drills. No scrimmages allowed.
- For WNIHL U16, players must be 10 years old on the date of the fixture.
 - Female netminders may play from age 9.
- Players may train with a WNIHL U16 team from age 8, but only in drills, not scrimmages.
- Players registered with a junior club may request to play WNIHL U16 elsewhere if:
 - No agreement exists between affiliated clubs at the same rink; or
 - No development opportunity is available.
 - This does not apply to unaffiliated WNIHL U16 teams at the same rink.
- In the event of a fixture clash involving an U18 female player, junior teams do not have priority.
- The parent or guardian decides which team the player will represent.
(only if this decision does not leave either team below the minimum bench strength required to fulfil a fixture)

ITC Holders

- **Limited ITC:** one-club registration.
- **Unlimited ITC:** movement options per IHUK rules.
- Please refer to the [IHUK ITC Policy](#) for further information

British-Trained Player Definition

A British-trained player has the meaning set out in the British-Trained Definition Policy.

Key Points

- The main factor is whether the player transferred to/from the UK association before age 18.
- If a player has never been registered, they may be authorised as British-trained under IIHF transfer regulations.

Team Registration

- Teams may register unlimited British-trained and non-British-trained players.

Reclassification Applications

- Applications to be classified as non-British must:
 - Use the official form.
 - Be complete and supported by evidence.
- Incomplete or unsupported applications will be rejected.

7. Movement of Players

Player movement during the season can occur through:

- **Multiple club registration**
- **Transfers** (permanent)

- **Emergency transfers** (temporary)
- **Dispensation to play up** (age group or division)

General Rules

- Transfer requests are valid for 28 days; no new request until this expires (except emergencies/dispensations).
- All parties (clubs, player, parents if U18) must agree in writing (email accepted).
- Clubs must submit official requests via Gameday.
- Requests need 5 days' notice before a fixture (non-ITC players).
- IHUK approval is mandatory; they can refuse any movement.
- Players with dispensation don't count toward minimum squad strength (except WNIHL U16).
- Breaches = player ineligible, team penalised for icing an ineligible player.

Registering for More Than One Club allowed when:

- Junior plays up to WNIHL senior league.
- Junior plays WNIHL U16 (if primary club has no affiliated U16 team).
- Senior plays in both WNIHL & NIHL (different clubs allowed).
- Registration lasts until season end.
- Eligibility rules & age limits apply.

Transfers

- Permanent move between clubs/teams with all approvals.
- Deadline: 31 January (after this, only challenge games/tournaments, Frank Wright Cup and Insurance only registrations are permitted).
- Transfer locks for 28 days after approval.
- International transfers follow IIHF deadlines.
- All transfer requests must be submitted via GameDay before 5pm on Friday of each week (Excluding emergency transfers for netminders)

Emergency Transfers (Less Than 7 Days)

- Temporary (usually one game) for unforeseen circumstances.
- Senior hockey: only for netminders if game cannot proceed.
- WNIHL U16: max 3 players per fixture if below minimum bench strength.
- England National Team Programme juniors cannot be used in same age group.
- Female recreational netminders eligible for WNIHL (Inc. BUIHA) with written approval from IHUK and partner organisations.
- IHUK approves case-by-case and can refuse.

Dispensation: Playing Up

- For player development or to meet bench strength.
- Means playing in a higher division or age group (including junior → senior).
- Clubs must show duty of care and carry out full due diligence when selecting a player to play up.

Playing Up Within a Club (Multiple Divisions)

- Players can move up from a lower division team within the same club to aid development.
- Age 14–22 (on fixture date and under 23 by 31 Dec):
 - May play up without restriction, except WNIHL2 → WNIHL Elite and WNIHL2 Elizabeth → Valerie (not allowed).
- Female player restrictions for WNIHL2 (Elizabeth and Valerie – excluding netminders):
 - Cannot play if they are:
 - A current GB Women's National Team member (GB U18 or GB Senior – GB Futures does not apply).
 - Registered with a WNIHL Elite or NIHL team (2, 1, or PINIHL).
- **Players over 23:**
 - May play up max 3 times to the next division only (e.g., WNIHL2 Elizabeth OR Valerie → WNIHL1, or WNIHL1 → Elite).
 - On the 3rd game, they become registered to the higher division.
 - Cannot play playoffs for the lower division.
 - All Requests need WNIHL GM approval and only if higher team is below minimum bench strength.
- Playing down is not permitted (except netminders). Permanent transfers down to a lower division may be allowed for safety/injury, but then 28-day freeze period is in place where no further transfers can take place.
- Players can only play for one higher division team, unless WNIHL U16 (who may play for two higher teams, but not both WNIHL2 and Elite).

Playing Up an Age Group

- Juniors can play up one age group; cannot play down.
- **Female players:**
 - Age 10 (or 9 if netminder): can play in WNIHL U16.
 - Age 14: in any WNIHL division.
 - Age 16+: can play in any WNIHL or NIHL Senior division.
 - WNIHL female category eligibility is as defined in Section 6 and the IHUK Sex & Gender Participation Policy (sex recorded at birth female; adult players not

undergoing masculinising hormone treatment). No biological male (recorded sex at birth is Male) players/netminders.

- Emergency netminder requests must first try IHUK goalie pool.

Dispensation from Minimum Bench Strength

- Teams are required to request exemption from **10+1** bench minimum. This must be requested in writing no less than 5 days before the date of the fixture. Approval must be obtained in writing from IHUK.
- Bench Team Officials can be borrowed from other teams, but priority goes to their primary club if there's a clash.

8. Failure to Fulfil a Fixture

Principle

A team that, without just cause (as defined in IHUK/EIH Regulations), fails to fulfil a league or cup fixture will forfeit the match and may be fined and required to reimburse the non-offending team's reasonable costs (e.g., ice hire, officials, travel), subject to evidence.

Automatic outcomes

- **One team at fault:**
 - Result: awarded to the non-offending team in line 5-0.
 - Sanctions: fine (tariff below) + cost reimbursement.
- **Both teams at fault:**
 - Result: 0-0, no points.
 - Sanctions: both teams fined (tariff below).
- **Neither team at fault:**
 - Result: 0-0, one point each.
 - Sanctions: none.

Fine tariffs (by age group)

Age group	Tariff 1	Tariff 2	Tariff 3	Tariff 4
WNIHL	N/A	£100	£150	Expulsion
WNIHL U16	N/A	£50	£100	Expulsion

Points deductions

- **Tariff 2:** -2 points
- **Tariff 3:** -4 points

Tariffs are generally applied cumulatively (e.g., Tariff 1 for a first offence), but the League Management and DOPS may escalate where warranted (e.g., cancellation within 24 hours, high-profile fixtures, or no-show without notice).

Costs

The offending team must indemnify the non-offending team and, where applicable, the venue, for game-specific ice costs and officials' expenses.

Removal from competition

If a team is removed, all their results are expunged from the competition record.

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 weather alert, issued by the Met Office, should result in game postponement as a safety concern; 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.

9. Payment of On-Ice Officials

- **Fees:** Referees are reimbursed in accordance with Appendix D.
- **Default method:** Cash to the Match Officials, with a receipt provided on request.
- **WNIHL fixtures (all IHUK-sanctioned competitions: league, cup, challenge, tournaments, camps, exhibitions):**
 - The Home Team is responsible for the full officiating fees. Payment must be made no later than immediately after the game and before the officials leave the venue.
 - **Default method:** Cash to the Match Officials, with a receipt provided on request.

Non-payment

- If payment (cash or agreed electronic) is not confirmed before face-off, IHUK Referee services may be suspended for that team until all amounts are settled.
- Any fixture falling within a suspension period will be cancelled and recorded as a Failure to Fulfil a Fixture, with the non-paying team at fault.

10. Equipment & Kit

Baseline: IIHF equipment rules apply, with IHUK additions set out below.

IHUK Requirements

- Full kit at all times during games (including when serving a penalty).
- Facial protection (Full-face covering or half visor and mouth guard) is mandatory in IHUK WNIHL Competition
 - Must be worn as manufactured; no alterations.
 - Fit: chin sits properly in the chin cup; helmet secured; J-clips (where provided) engaged. If fit cannot be achieved, the player must not continue until corrected. Refer to the IHUK In-House Rules for further information.
- Neck-laceration protector: mandatory and unaltered from manufacturer spec.
- Illegal equipment: Non-compliance with face and neck protection will be penalised as illegal equipment.
- Jerseys: Shirt/number must match the official team list.

Bench standards

- Rostered (dressed) players on the bench: full kit, including helmet (Full-face covering or half visor and mouth guard) and neck guard.
- Non-playing U16 players may be on the bench only if wearing, at minimum: helmet with full-face protection, neck guard, and upper-body protection. Otherwise, they must leave the bench.

11. Mercy Rule

Applies to all U16 Girls Only.

Trigger: When a team leads by **12 goals** (e.g., 12–0, 13–1).

From the moment of trigger:

- The **score is frozen** and becomes the **official result** for standings.
- **No further goals or shots on goal** are recorded on the game sheet or scoreboard.
- **Penalties** continue to be assessed, served, and **recorded**.
- The remainder of the fixture is treated as a **Challenge game**; mark **“Challenge – Mercy Rule”** on the game sheet.
- By mutual agreement, teams may **swap goalkeepers, mix players**, or continue as-is.
- The game **must continue to full time**; **match officials’ fees** are payable as normal.

The mercy rule applies to **no** senior leagues within the WNIHL.

12. Appendices

A – League structures & games matrix

B – WNIHL Championship Weekend

C – Minimum squad & bench strength requirements

D– On-ice official fees

E- Frank Wright Conference Rules of Competition

F – Contacts

Appendix A – League structures & games matrix

WNIHL Leagues

Division	WNIHL Elite	WNIHL 1 North	WNIHL 1 South
Games	20	20	20
Format	1H & 1A against all teams, plus 1H & 1A against all teams in their group	2H & 2A against all teams	2H & 2A against all teams
Start date	5th September 2026	5th September 2026	5 th September 2026
End date	16 May 2027	16 May 2027	16 May 2027
Championships	Top 4 teams	Top 2 teams	Top 2 teams
Champs dates	29 – 31 May 2027	29 – 31 May 2027	29 – 31 May 2027
Clubs	GROUP A Queen Bees Solihull Vixens Guildford Lightning Whitley Bay Beacons Elite GROUP B Streatham Storm Elite Bristol Huskies Elite Kingston Diamonds Elite Caledonia Steel Queens	Sheffield Shadows Nottingham Vipers Solway Sharks Ladies Kingston Diamonds 2 Whitley Bay Beacons 2 Widnes Wild Women	Swindon Topcats Chelmsford Cobras FireBees Milton Keynes Falcons Cambridge Kodiaks Haringey Hounds

Division	WNIHL 2 North Valerie	WNIHL 2 North - Elizabeth	WNIHL South A Valerie	WNIHL 2 South B - Elizabeth
Games	20	20	20	18
Format	2H & 2A against all teams	2H & 2A against all teams	2H & 2A against all teams	2H & 2A against all teams
Start date	5 th September 2026	5 th September 2026	5 th September 2026	5 th September 2026
End date	16 May 2027	16 May 2027	16 May 2027	16 May 2027
Championships	Top 2 teams	Top 2 teams	Top 2 teams	Top 2 teams
Champs dates	29 – 31 May 2027	29 – 31 May 2027	29 – 31 May 2027	29 – 31 May 2027
Clubs	Leeds Roses Blackburn Hawks Women Sheffield Shadows 2 Caledonia Steel Bees Telford Wrekin Raiders Manchester Storm Women	Kingston Diamonds 3 Leeds Thorns Manchester Storm Women 2 Nottingham Vipers 2 Deeside Dragons Women Whitley Bay Beacons 3	Streatham Storm 2 Slough Sirens Oxford Midnight Stars Cardiff Comets Solent Amazons Invicta Dynamics	Chelmsford Pythons Cambridge Kodiaks 2 Coventry Phoenix Bristol Huskies 2 MK Falcons 2 Lee Valley Vampires Oxford Shining Stars Slough Odyssey Basingstoke Women Peterborough Phantoms Women

WNIHL U16 Leagues

Format	1H & 1A against all teams	1H & 1A against all teams
Start date	5 September 2026	5 September 2026
End date	16 May 2027	16 May 2027
Championships	Top 2 teams	Top 2 teams
Champs dates	29 – 31 May 2027	29 – 31 May 2027
Clubs	Whitley Bay Beacons Manchester Storm Academy Caledonia Iron Maidens Leeds Junior Knights Girls Billingham Stars Kingston Diamonds Deeside Junior Dragons Nottingham Vipers Sheffield Shadows	IceBees Chelmsford Rattlesnakes Haringey Hounds Girls Bristol Huskies Puppies Swindon TopKittens Oxford Junior Stars Girls MK Storm Midlands Wrekin Raiders

Clubs with two teams are encouraged to **balance rosters** so that all players receive fair and equal opportunities.

Appendix B – WNIHL Finals Weekend

- All games follow **IHUK/EIH Rule Book**, except as noted below.

Attendance & Format

Mandatory attendance for:

- Top 4 teams: **WNIHL Elite**
- Top 2 teams: **WNIHL N1 & S1**
- Top 2 teams: **WNIHL N2A & S2A**
- Top 2 teams: **WNIHL N2B & S2B**
- Top 2 teams: **U16 North & South**

Venue: Neutral site (2027: IceSheffield, 29–31 May)

Format

- **Elite:** 1v4, 2v3 → Final
- **WNIHL 1:** N1vS2, S1vN2 → Final
- **WNIHL 2A:** North1vSouth2, South1vNorth2 → Final
- **WNIHL 2B:** North1vSouth2, South1vNorth2 → Final
- **U16:** North1vSouth2, South1vNorth2 → Final

Player Eligibility

- Only eligible players can be listed; naming absent players = suspension + £25 fine per sheet
- Criteria:
 - Must play for primary club
 - Played ≥25% of league games for that team
 - Transfers: 25% counted from season start, not transfer date
 - Players turning 14:
 - Must complete 25% of games after birthday
 - Must turn 14 before Championship Weekend

Dispensation

IHUK may grant dispensation if:

- Player missed games due to:
 - **Injury or pregnancy** (with evidence)
 - **International duty** (per IIHF Rule 11)
 - **Cancelled fixtures**
- Exceptional cases: illness/injury → player pool (after internal options)

- Netminders: age 14+, registered before 31 Jan
- All requests follow normal dispensation/approval process

Match-Day Protocols

- **Team lists:** Submit by deadline in tournament invite
- **Ineligible player listed** = team expelled from event
- **Discipline:**
 - Penalty points & suspensions carry over to next season
 - Major offences → match reports
 - Abusive/damaging behaviour → ejection, bans, liability for costs

Appendix C – Minimum Squad & Bench Strength Requirements

Summary of Minimum Squads

League	No. of teams	Squad size by 31 August of playing season
WNIHL	1	Min: 12 + 1
	2	Min: 20 + 2

All players must be fully registered and allocated in GameDay to their respective teams by 31 August 2025.

Summary of Minimum Bench Strength on Match Day

League	Players	Bench officials
WNIHL	Min: 10 + 1* Max 20 + 2	L2 Team Coach and minimum L1 Assistant Coach (U16 cannot be player coach) Team Manager: does not count towards bench strength, but may be on the bench.

Late Arrivals

- A game may start with a minimum of six players (5 skaters + 1 netminder).
- By the start of the second period, the team must reach the full minimum bench strength as defined in Section 8.
- These late-arriving players must be dressed and on the bench, ready to participate.
- If the required number is not met by the second period, the fixture will be classified as a failure to fulfil.
- ^Unless written approval from IHUK has been granted.

Appendix D – On-Ice official fees

The following fees apply for the 2026–2027 season.

Please note: the prices listed exclude unavoidable additional charges such as parking fees, toll roads/bridges, congestion charges, or similar expenses.

League	Total Fee*	Max Mileage	Max Mileage Fee	Total	Referee Fee	Linesman Fee	2 Man System
WNIHL Elite	£129	350	£157.50	£290.50	£57.00	£38.00	£66.50
WNIHL1	£82	250	£112.50	£194.50	£35.00	£23.50	£41.00
WNIHL 2	£82	250	£112.50	£194.50	£35.00	£23.50	£41.00
U16 Girls	£71	200	£90	£161	£31.00	£20.00	£33.50

**Without Mileage*

Appendix E- Frank Wright Conference Rules of Competition

- All Players must be fully IHUK registered
- Fixtures to be provided upon request
- All Players (including goalies) must be at least 14 years of age
- As soon as any player has played their 3rd WNIHL game they will no longer be permitted to play in the FWC
- U23's may play an unlimited number of WNIHL u16's and WNIHL2 games
- Each team will have the ability to nominate 2 STAR players at the start of the season, star players can be any age and play up to 6 WNIHL2 games
- Mixed junior division A, WNIHL1 and WNIHL Elite players will not be permitted to play in the FWC
- Mixed junior division B players may be considered on a case-by-case basis, but they must not have participated in Showcase or trialed for England/GB and dispensation to the FWC committee must be sought prior to the game
- Where there is no goalie, any WNIHL player can be selected to play in goal, to assist in WNIHL goalie recruitment
- The minimum of one team coach, one assistant coach and one team manager must be present for every game and is the responsibility of the home team. The personnel requirement at FWC games must adhere to IHUK coaching protocols and player ratios. Assistant coaches, foundation coaches and assistant managers can assist in a learning capacity
- All games will have a referee supplied
- Where any club fails to turn up, the forfeiting team will be responsible for any ice costs
- Minimum bench strength is 10+1 with dispensation allowing a minimum of 9+1 following an unsuccessful player pool request
- All games will follow normal WNIHL rules
- Any player or official serving an IHUK ban will not be allowed to participate in the FWC until the ban has been served
- Any club deemed to be playing ineligible league players will be suspended from the FWC for a timescale determined by the FWC Committee
- All teams must be setup on GameDay and promote all players to register on TeamApp for the player pool
- All teams must be affiliated with England Ice Hockey
- All Teams will produce team sheets and game sheets from GameDay
- All players and netminders should register in TeamApp and add their availability for all games to assist with the player pool
- All players selected from the player pool will be done so on a rotation basis



Appendix F- Contacts

General Manager – WNIHL

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