

Saracens Hertfordshire Premier League Constitution 2023

1. Title

The name of the League shall be the "Hertfordshire Premier Cricket League" (hereinafter referred to as "the League") and may also incorporate a sponsor's name or identity if appropriate. Reference to Premier & Championship divisions shall hereinafter be referred to as Premier divisions.

2. Object

The object of the League shall be to organise and control an annual league and other cricket competitions for founder member clubs and other invited clubs.

3. Membership

New members:

- a) Any cricket club may, in writing, apply to the Secretary requesting an invitation to membership. Such applications are to be received at least 12 months before the start of the first season in which such club wishes to enter the League, except for existing member clubs wishing to enter additional teams, which must apply by 30th September preceding the year in which the additional team wishes to join.
- b) New Members by Invitation; SHPCL Executive may at their discretion invite clubs to join the league. In order to be invited to join the League, clubs must normally be able to demonstrate that they have fulfilled three years consecutive competitive cricket, immediately prior to their application, before they can be considered. Clubs must meet the criteria for maintaining membership and will be admitted to membership only at the divisional level which the standard of their facilities allows, subject to the discretion of the Executive Committee whose decision must be accepted. All new member clubs shall pay to the league the designated membership fee within one month of their election to membership.

Maintaining membership: To maintain membership of the League, all clubs must:

- a) Be properly constituted
- b) Be affiliated to the ECB through their membership of the Hertfordshire County Cricket Association, either as full or associate members, and to the Club Cricket Conference.
- c) Ensure a duty of care to all players and members by adopting and implementing the ECB 'Safe Hands – Safeguarding of Young People in Cricket' policy and any future versions of that policy. Full requirements published annually in the League Handbook.
- d) Have grounds and other facilities acceptable to the Executive Committee, including any alternative or occasional ground used for league matches. All clubs must have a well maintained playing area, particularly with regard to the square. No club will be eligible for promotion to a higher division unless the minimum standards for that division are attained, or unless otherwise agreed by the Executive Committee.

The minimum requirements for facilities will be:

Divisions 10 and below: Changing rooms, showers (in full working order) and toilets must be available close to the playing area, together with a suitable room where food can be consumed under hygienic conditions. In the absence of a scoreboard, a scoreboard is required, visible from the pitch. Boundaries shall be clearly marked by a white line, rope or flags. A well-stocked first aid kit shall be available. A clock must be provided, visible from the pitch.

An artificial pitch may be used only in Divisions 10a and below.

Divisions 7a-9b: As above except that changing rooms etc. must be adjacent to the playing area. In addition, boundaries must be marked by a white line or rope, with flags added where possible.

In Divisions 7a-9b inclusive dispensation from the minimum standards for facilities may be granted by the Executive Committee for 3rd Xis and lower.

Divisions 5a-6b: As above, plus: sight screens positioned at each end of the ground. Boundaries must be marked by a white line or rope, plus flags to aid visibility. In addition, there must be a fully functioning scoreboard or scorecard and a telephone must be available in the main pavilion.

Division 4b and above: As above plus bar facilities within the pavilion. Changing rooms must be an adequate size for each team and all players' kit.

Premier divisions: All clubs must meet ECB Premier League Assessment Criteria and any other ECB specified requirement, prior to any season's commencement. This includes a separate, adequate Umpires Changing room.

Voluntary termination of membership: Any club wishing to withdraw from the League must give written notice to the Hon. Secretary by 1st November prior to the last season in which it participates in the League.

4. Management

The management of the League shall be vested in an Executive Committee consisting of the Officers and up to eight other members, each of whom shall have one vote excepting the Chairman who shall exercise only a casting vote in the event of a tied vote among the other members. The Officers and committee members shall be elected at the annual general meeting and shall operate sub-committees. At least two members of the Executive Committee shall be from clubs playing in the top two divisions in the year following the AGM. No club shall have more than two of its members elected to the Executive Committee.

5. Officers

- a) The Officers of the League shall be: the President, Chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Results Secretary, and Fixtures Secretary.
- b) The Committee shall appoint members to following roles; Registration Officer, Umpire and Scorer Coordinator, Sponsorship Coordinator, Facilities Coordinator, League Safeguarding officer, Disciplinary Coordinator and Premier Divisions Representative
- c) Officers and committee members standing for re-election shall be included on the agenda for the AGM.
- d) Nominations for New Officer or Committee Member, must be received by the Hon. Secretary, from Member clubs (together with their seconders), at least 28 days before the AGM.

6. Appointment of Reporting Accountants

Reporting Accountants, to verify the financial accounts, shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

7. Functions of the Executive Committee

- a) The committee shall meet at least four times per annum. Additional meetings may be called at any time by the Hon Secretary at the request of at least three members of the committee acting together. At least seven days notice must be given for any meeting.
- b) A quorum shall be a majority of the members of the committee.
- c) The committee shall be responsible for the efficient running of the League, shall control finances, and shall have the power to:
 - i. Establish minimum standards for playing conditions and facilities in participating clubs additional to rule 3(d) above, and ensure that all clubs continue to meet those standards.
 - ii. Consider applications for membership and invite clubs to join a division of the League deemed appropriate to the known standards of the invited club.
 - iii. Co-opt on to the Committee additional or replacement members, as appropriate.
 - iv. Appoint sub-committees considered necessary from time to time, delegate to each sub-committee appropriate powers, and appoint an officer or one of its members to chair the sub-committee.
 - v. Determine the level of any fines and additional levies required in any year.
 - vi. Take any action deemed appropriate where a fixture is not fulfilled or not in accordance with league rules.
 - vii. Arbitrate in any disputes.
- d) The committee may discipline clubs and players in any way it deems appropriate for breaches of the constitution, or match rules, or for failure in any way to conform to the required standards of the League. Disciplinary action against a club may include deduction of points, a reprimand, fine, relegation, suspension, or termination of membership at any time. Action against a player may include a reprimand, suspension, or permanent ban from participation in the League. The decision of the Executive Committee is final (subject to appeal, see 12).

8. General Meeting

- a) The Annual General Meeting shall be held in February each year. The Hon. Secretary's report and the statement of accounts, duly audited, shall be presented at this meeting.
- b) An Extraordinary General Meeting may be convened by the Hon. Secretary at any time, at the request of the Executive Committee, or on receipt of a written request signed by not less than 25% of member clubs. Such meeting to be convened within 28 days.
- c) The Secretary will give a minimum of 14 days notice, in writing, of any General Meeting, to include an agenda.
- d) A quorum at a General Meeting shall be a majority of the member clubs.
- e) Each club shall be entitled to one vote at a General Meeting but the Executive Committee shall announce the number of club representatives who may attend any General Meeting. Officers of the League not representing their clubs shall not be entitled to a vote at a General Meeting.
- f) Any club which fails to send a representative to a General Meeting shall be fined a sum equivalent to the current membership fee set out in clause 10. A) of the Constitution, regardless of whether that fee is currently suspended.
- g) A captains' meeting shall be held during the month of April before the start of any season at which cricket balls, handbooks and other equipment will be distributed. Every club sending a captain or other suitable representative to such meeting will receive a 5-point addition to its league points total at the start of that season for each of its teams.

9. Financial Year

The financial year shall end on 31 October each year.

10. Financial Requirements

- a) The level of annual subscription shall be determined by the Annual General Meeting. Subscriptions for 2023: Clubs with one team in the League- £40; two teams - £80; three or more teams - £100. The annual subscription may be suspended at the discretion of the executive committee, during the period of any sponsorship agreement, when financially feasible.
- b) The annual subscription shall be due on 31 March in each year and must be paid a maximum of 30 days after the invoice date. Failure to do so will result in a penalty becoming payable in addition to the subscription; such penalty to be at a rate of 30% for each month or part thereof that the subscription is overdue and will be levied on a monthly compound basis. If the subscription and the penalty additions are not paid within two months the offending club may not be eligible for membership in the following season.
- c) A non-recurring membership fee shall be payable by all clubs on joining the League, as follows: Clubs with two or more teams - £100; Clubs with one team - £50. The fee to be paid before the AGM in the year that club participates in the League for the first time.
- d) Each member club shall contribute £25 towards the cost of the annual handbook. This sum shall be abated at the rate of £25 per quarter page fully-paid advertisement obtained by the club for the handbook. This payment is due at the same time as the annual subscription and will attract a penalty on the same basis as set out in clause 10(b).

11. League Rules

- a) Membership of the League signifies awareness and acceptance of the constitution and match rules which shall be published annually in a handbook to be distributed to all member clubs.
- b) Any club may propose a change to the constitution or match rules, for consideration at a General Meeting. Such proposals must be submitted to the Secretary in writing, together with the names of three other member clubs which have agreed to support the proposal. Proposals must be submitted at least twelve weeks before the date of the annual general meeting for consideration by the Executive Committee which will circulate all proposals to member clubs. Clubs may propose amendments to those proposals, which must be submitted to the Secretary at least six weeks before the date of the annual general meeting. Such amendments, if considered reasonable by the Executive Committee, must be included on the agenda for that meeting, along with any proposals for changes to the constitution and match rules.
- c) All resolutions before a General Meeting, to amend the constitution or match rules (except for sub-clause e) below), shall be decided by a simple majority of member clubs present and voting. Clubs abstaining from voting shall not be counted when calculating a majority for passing resolutions.
- d) Changes to match rules will be considered by a General Meeting and implemented for an experimental period not exceeding one season. Thereafter, any proposal to adopt the change on a permanent basis must be included on the agenda for the AGM in that year, and voted on by all member clubs present.
- e) Changes to match rules, player eligibility and divisional structure which directly affect the Premier divisions, shall require the approval of the majority of clubs in those divisions, at the time of voting.

- f) All matters not covered by the constitution or match rules shall be dealt with by the Executive Committee whose decision, in all cases, shall be final.

12. Disciplinary Regulations

All clubs, players, officials, spectators & club members are subject to the Leagues Disciplinary Regulations as outlined yearly in the League handbook and on the League website

13. Player Eligibility

- a) After June 30th in any season, no player shall move to a club and represent that club, having already played in that season in the Saracens Herts League for another member club. No player who is a new club member may be registered after July 31st. No player may be registered to play for more than one league club at any one time (except in the Regional Divisions where an application is made to the registration officer for temporary registration of a player with another club (and in this respect such temporary registration shall be for only one other club) for the remainder of the season in question where the registration officers decision shall be final. At the end of the season in question such temporarily registered players shall be deleted from the list of registered players on that clubs list. Players in Premier divisions may only be registered to play for one ECB designated premier league club.
- b) No player shall receive any payment or payment in kind whether from the club or anyone associated with the club for playing for the club in Division one or below. The penalty for breaking this rule shall be automatic relegation by up to 3 divisions, disciplinary proceedings and may include expulsion from the League.
- c) After July 31st:
- No player who has normally appeared for a particular XI shall play for a lower XI
 - No new member who has not previously been registered for a club in that season, shall appear in a league match for that club in the remainder of that season. Special application may be made to the League to register a player to play who has moved to live in the Hertfordshire Premier League area having not previously lived within a reasonable distance from a Hertfordshire Premier League club.
 - In the event of any allegation against a player under this rule, the club concerned will be required to justify its selections for the match concerned.
- d) All players must be bona-fide playing members of their clubs. Clubs are responsible for maintaining a record of all their members and for verifying that all players registered to play in the League are aware of and conform to child Safeguarding guidelines and requirements. To play in League matches Division 1 and below, all players, including any substitutes, must be registered only once under one of more of the following categories, with restrictions applying as shown, subject to any special exemptions granted in advance by the Executive Committee:

Category 1

i a British or Irish citizen born in England and Wales and is deemed "ordinarily resident"* or

ii a player who has been resident in England and Wales for the immediately preceding year and is deemed 'Ordinarily Resident'

*A player will only be treated as having been ordinarily resident within England and Wales for the relevant period if he or she has spent a minimum of 210 days in the year within England or Wales and has not played as a domestic player in their own country during the year (for which purpose a 'year' shall mean a year ending 31st March immediately before the year in question)

Confirmation: A player who holds a British passport and lives outside the UK must also meet the "Ordinarily Resident" criteria.

'Deemed' status

A player who was resident in England and Wales and would benefit from Category 1 status but for having relocated outside England and Wales for temporary work purposes (unrelated to cricket and for a period of no more than 24 months), may apply to their league or the ECB for 'deemed' Category 1 status immediately on his return to England and Wales. Approval is at the discretion of their league or the ECB and is not automatic'.

- No restriction on number of Category 1 players per team.

Category 2 Contracted Player to a first class county.

A player (capped or uncapped) qualified to play for England under the current ECB regulations and, currently, under contract to a First-Class County Club. For the purposes of clarification, a contracted player is one who has a current full playing contract, a summer contract or a development (scholarship) contract but not an Academy contract (16-19 years). Should a Category 3 player be under contract to a first class county he/she will be treated as a 3 player for registration purposes.

- Maximum one Category 2 player per team unless the player, before being awarded a contract by a first class county, has been a bona fide member of the club for more than two years (24 months) and has played a minimum of 12 league games for the club in those two years.

Category 3 Players who are not deemed "Ordinarily Resident.

If the player does not meet the criteria for Category 1 they will be deemed to be a Category 3 player.

- One Category 3 player per team.

A Category 3 overseas player will not be eligible for new registration if he has played Test or one-day international cricket for a Test playing country since April 1st in the previous year.

All players other than Category 1 must be registered in writing with the League by 10pm on the Wednesday before the first match in which they appear. Category 1 players must be registered by 10am on the day of their first match. Any player not registered on the League web site by the stated deadlines, shall be deemed ineligible for any match in which he participates.

To play in Premier divisions matches, all players, including any substitute must be

i Registered on play-cricket and meet ECB Premier league Registration guidelines as outlined yearly in league handbook in addition to having been registered on the League website.

ii Registered only once, under one of more of the categories defined above, with restrictions applying as shown, subject to any special exemptions granted in advance by the Executive Committee.

- e) Before the toss of the coin the captains shall hand a written list of their team members for that match to the umpires, or if no umpire to the opposing captain. After each match, any substitutes used shall be added to the team sheet which shall then be countersigned as valid by one non-playing umpire (where there are umpires) and by the opposition captain. In Divisions 3a and below inclusive, team sheets from opposing teams should be retained by the captains after the game and each captain (or a club officer) is subsequently responsible for checking that the opposition's players are all registered on the league web site. Further, each captain, (or designated person), shall record the names of those that played in the match, (and recorded as having done so on his team sheet), on the league website, using the Herts Cricket App, by 9pm the evening the match was played. Any discrepancies to be reported to the League Registrations Officer by submitting the team sheet, accompanied by details of the alleged discrepancies, within three days.

In Premier divisions and Divisions 1, 2a & 2b, the appointed umpires, shall return the team sheets to the League Registrations Officer for checking.

Each club is responsible for ensuring that their players are correctly registered on the League website and (in the case of the Premier divisions) on play-cricket.com. Should any club be found to be playing a player under the wrong category, the club will forfeit 50% of the points they have gained thus far in the league for the team that the player has most represented. It is within the league's powers to also ban players from the team thus punished from subsequently playing for lower teams, in line with 13, c, i above.

If a club is found to have played a player under a false name, the team(s) which that player has represented will be automatically relegated. It is within the league's powers to also ban players from the team thus punished from subsequently playing for lower teams, in line with 13, c, i above.

Any team breaking either of these rules will face an extraordinary disciplinary procedure which could result in one or more of their teams being relegated automatically or possibly expulsion from the league.

f) Any player transferring clubs (within Herts League) between 1st May and 30th June shall complete a transfer form, jointly with his new club, for submission to the League. All players transferring into or out of an SHPCL Premier or Championship club at any time must fully complete the Player Registration Transfer Form available to download from the League's website

A player moving to another SHPCL club at any time shall be eligible to play for the new club only if all financial and other obligations to the former club have been discharged. The League has the power to suspend players from all League matches until the clubs involved agree a player's obligations to his original club have been discharged.

Players changing clubs during the close season are outside of the jurisdiction of the league and it is always down to individual clubs to enforce their own policies around the payment of subscriptions and match fees.

i) On or before July 31st, in the event of a proven allegation against an unregistered player the team fielding the ineligible player will have 5 points deducted. Should the unregistered player be Under 18 on the day of the match, the penalty will automatically be 30 points.

ii) From the 1st of August onwards, any team that fields an ineligible player, will incur a 10 point deduction, excepting where the player is Under 18 on the day of the match, in which case the penalty will be 30 points.

iii) For the avoidance of doubt, a captain registered on the League website as captain who has not been Cricket specific ECB DBS checked is deemed an ineligible player and the club will face the penalties in i) and ii) above.

14. Fixtures

All league fixtures shall be arranged centrally by the Fixtures Secretary and circulated to all clubs. No alteration shall be made to that list without the consent of the Fixtures Secretary acting on behalf of the Executive Committee. In the event of a club being unable to fulfil all fixtures on any day, the playing of the senior sides' match(es) shall take precedence.

If any match is postponed, which can only be with the consent of the Executive Committee, the match must be re-arranged to be played within 28 days of the original date, provided such date is before the final scheduled day of the season. If a date cannot be mutually agreed by the two clubs concerned, then the postponed match must be played on a date designated by the Executive Committee.

Any team which fails to fulfil four or more fixtures in its division during the season may be asked by the Executive Committee to withdraw from that division forthwith and all matches involving that team shall be declared null and void with no points awarded. At the end of the season the Executive Committee shall decide whether to invite any side having conceded four or more fixtures during the season into the following season's league structure and shall tell the side's club before the end of September in that season as to its decision in that regard. Any team unable to fulfil a league fixture must advise its opponents by 8:00pm on the Thursday preceding the match and obtain formal acknowledgment of the cancellation from an officer of the opposing club. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in a financial penalty of £150 in total, payable to the opposing club. Non-payment of the penalty within 14 days shall attract a penalty on the same basis as set out for subscriptions under rule 10b, payable to the opposing club. Any club failing to meet its obligations under this rule will be fined additionally by the League at a rate not less than three times the outstanding debt. Any team failing to fulfil three or more fixtures during a season may be subject to demotion to a lower division in the following season, at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

Where both fixtures between any two teams during the same season are arranged to take place at the ground or grounds of one of those teams the visitors shall pay to the home team the sum of £100.00 as compensation for having to provide the facilities twice in that season.

15. League Structure

a) The league will be divided into an appropriate number of divisions in a single structure with the exception of the regional divisions. All teams shall have the same rights to promotion to a higher division, providing the minimum requirements for facilities have been met. The size of all divisions shall be determined from time to time by the Executive Committee except as required by 11e) above. Commencing in 2024, teams in divs 7a-9b inclusive at the end of 2023 season, after usual changes to reflect promoted/relegated teams, will join the regional divisions

b) Only a club's 1st XI is eligible for promotion to Premier divisions

c) Normally two clubs will be promoted from Championship to Premier division and two relegated, subject to play-off matches.

Promotions will be on following basis:

Championship, Divisions 1 & 2A, 2B, 3A	Top 2 sides promoted 1 division (2 nd side in Championship subject to play-off)
Divisions 3B to 9B	Side finishing 1 st promoted 2 divisions Side finishing 2 nd promoted 1 division
Divisions 10 N/S/E/W	Sides finishing 1 st promoted to Division 9
Divisions 11 N/S/E/W/C	Promoted to Division 10 will be: [a] the 5 sides in 1 st place [b] Next 3 sides based on the ranked average points total

Relegations will be on following basis:

Premier, Championship & Division 1	Bottom 2 sides relegated 1 division (9 th place in Premier subject to Play-Off)
Divisions 2A to 9A	Side finishing 9 th relegated 1 division Side finishing 10 th relegated 2 divisions
Division 9B	Sides finishing 8 th , 9 th & 10 th relegated to Division 10
Divisions 10 N/S/E/W	Sides finishing 9 th & 10 th relegated to Division 11

The Executive Committee shall have the discretion to vary the numbers promoted and relegated between the regional divisions depending on the number of clubs participating in those divisions.

e) In all cases, if any of the clubs in a promotion place is deemed ineligible, due to the standard of facilities or for any other reason, only the club finishing in the next place below the promotion places may be considered for promotion.

f) Clubs eligible for promotion shall be promoted only if their facilities are deemed acceptable by the Executive Committee.

g) Where two or more clubs finish with the same aggregate of points, the club with the higher number of wins shall be placed higher in the league. If still equal, then the club with fewer losses shall be placed higher. If still equal, then the club with the higher scoring rate in completed matches, based on runs per wicket, shall be the higher.

h) In the regional divisions the side finishing top will be the side that has the best average points score. That average shall be calculated by dividing the total number of points accumulated throughout the season by the number of games played. The number of games played shall not include games where an opponent has conceded a game or games against it but will include a game or games that it has conceded against its opposition. Where two or more sides finish with the same points the procedure in g) above shall apply. For the avoidance of doubt no points will be awarded for conceded matches in the Regional Divisions.

16. Officials, Team sheets, Results and Facilities Reporting

a) Clubs may face a fine of £10 for failure to submit averages or other specific information required by the Results Secretary and notified to clubs.

b) All clubs are required to co-operate in reporting results, when requested, to press agencies and newspapers.

c) A facilities reporting scheme will be operated throughout the league.

d) Any club which fails to submit a report when required and in accordance with the time limits and arrangements specified by the Executive Committee shall be subject to a fine of £20, for each occasion it fails to report. Non-payment of such fines, more than one month after notification by the Treasurer, shall attract a penalty on the same basis as set out for subscriptions under rule 10b.

17. Playing Regulations

All league games shall be played in accordance with the Laws of Cricket as published and amended from time to time by the MCC, except as varied or amended by the match rules contained in the League handbook, printed annually. All league and cup games shall be played in accordance with the Preamble to the Laws – “the Spirit of Cricket”, and in accordance with any directives, guidelines and policies published by the national governing bodies and adopted by the League.

February 2023

ENDS