

Playing Conditions 2026 - Premier Divisions

1. Playing Conditions

- 1.1 The conduct of all matches will be governed by The Laws of Cricket (2017 Code 3rd Edition - 2022) and all relevant ECB regulations and guidelines, except as stated otherwise in these rules.
- 1.2 In each Division, all clubs will play each other home and away. Matches shall be one innings each.
- 1.3 Matches in Weeks 1 to 5 and 15 to 18 will be played under the 50 Overs match rules specified in Section A.
- 1.4 Matches in Weeks 6 to 14 will be played under the match rules specified in Section B.

2. Umpires

- 2.1 The Umpires Panel will appoint umpires.
- 2.2 Umpires will be paid by the League and each club will be charged for the cost of its umpire fees. The level and method of reimbursement will be determined from time to time by the League Executive Committee.
- 2.3 For the Premier League relegation Play Off match the umpires will be paid the agreed fee by the League Executive Committee.
- 2.4 All teams playing in the Premier Divisions are required to provide a Qualified umpire to the League Umpires Panel. They should make themselves available to umpire through the Who's the Umpire (WTU) system for a minimum of 9 games in the season.
Failure to meet this requirement will result in a 5-point penalty for each game below the minimum requirement that the team is able to provide umpire availability for. The penalty will be applied on a weekly basis at the point in the season where it is clear that the team will be unable to meet the minimum requirement. Note that the required minimum number of games can be covered by more than one suitably qualified umpire that is associated with the relevant team.

3. Scorers & Duckworth-Lewis-Stern Match Managers

- 3.1 All clubs will appoint their own scorers, who shall be qualified to Level S4 of the ECB Scoring Pathway or have been granted dispensation by the League, and shall be full members of the ECB ACO.
- 3.2 Failure to provide a registered scorer for the duration of the match will result in a 5-point penalty and the side will be required to nominate a player to score for the duration of the match, who shall take no playing part in the match.
- 3.3 The home club is responsible for providing a competent Duckworth-Lewis-Stern Match Manager (DLSMM), as defined in the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern Procedure document and failure to do so will result in a 5-point penalty.
- 3.4 The umpires shall be responsible for reporting any breach of rule 3.2 and 3.3 and their decision shall be final.

4. Cancellation

No game shall be cancelled without the explicit agreement of at least one of the appointed umpires, or a deputy from the Umpires Panel nominated either by one of the appointed umpires or the Umpires Co-ordinator. An umpire attending to inspect the ground may request reasonable travelling expenses not exceeding £10 from the home club, which will be payable as specified in 2.2 above.

5. Ground

The umpires shall be responsible for decisions concerning the fitness of the ground for play and the use of covers from one hour before the scheduled start time.

6. Covers

Up to one hour before the scheduled start time covers shall be used at the discretion of the home club and its groundsman to protect the pitch. When one hour or less remains before the scheduled start time rule 5 will apply. Clubs must make covering available throughout the match day, to be used at the direction of the umpires. The minimum requirement is to cover the pitch; reasonable efforts must be made to cover the bowlers' run-ups to a minimum of ten (10) yards. The umpires will report any deficiency in covering to the League, which may result in disciplinary action being taken against the club.

7. Clock

The home side shall provide a working match clock which is visible and clear from the square.

8. Team Sheets

Captains must pass team sheets to the umpires prior to the toss taking place. Team sheets will contain names of players and, if applicable, identify all players aged under 20 so that all applicable ECB Regulations with respect to young players can be monitored.

9. Balls

- 9.1. All league fixtures will be played with cricket balls that have been approved by the League (see inside back cover).
- 9.2. One new ball will be used from the commencement of each innings. New balls are to be supplied by the home club.
- 9.3. Home clubs must ensure that at least two spare new balls (one for use in each innings if required), of the correct make and grade and a selection of suitable spare balls of varying ages and use are available to the umpires prior to the start of the match. The umpires may delay the start of a match if suitable spare balls are not provided.

10. Results

- 10.1. The standard HPCL rules will apply to the reporting of match results.
- 10.2. In addition to 10.1 the home team is responsible for posting the match result on play-cricket, as follows:

- a) By 9pm on the day of the match: the team totals, wickets taken, overs bowled and result. Penalty for late report - 5 points deduction.
- b) By 11pm on the Tuesday following the match: the full scorecard including names of match officials. Penalty for late/no report - £30 fine.

11. Marking

- 11.1. Captains will mark umpires' performance using the facility on Who's The Umpire in accordance with the rules set out within this handbook.
- 11.2. Umpires will mark the pitch, team discipline and facilities as well as reporting any instances of misconduct.

12. Discipline & Disciplinary Points

- 12.1 The standard HPCL Disciplinary rules will apply.
- 12.2 Law 42 will apply except that when a Level 1 or Level 2 offence has been committed by a member of the batting side, Laws 42.2.2 and 42.3.2 shall be replaced by 'Together the umpires shall inform the batters at the wicket and each incoming batter that an offence at this level has occurred and, as soon as practicable, inform the captain of the batting side.' Refer to the table within this handbook for guidance concerning dissent and serious dissent.

13. Junior Players / Fast Bowling Regulations

- 13.1 A player under the age of 13 at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season is not permitted to play in the Premier League or Championship.
- 13.2 Any player under the age of 14 at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season shall be eligible to play in the Premier League or Championship provided the player has been selected for the County at U14 or above in the current season and has both sign off from an independent Level 2 coach and written parental consent to play in Open Age cricket. Such evidence shall be lodged with the Club's Safeguarding Officer prior to that player's registration with the League. The League may request evidence of compliance with these requirements.
- 13.3 The ECB fast bowling regulations (published in the league handbook) shall apply to all league games and failure to comply will result in a 10 point penalty on each occasion.

14. League Positions

League positions in each Division will be determined by the total number of points gained. In the event of two or more clubs finishing on equal points, league position will be determined in the following order:

- The side with the highest number of wins, but if still level
- The side with the fewest defeats, but if still level
- The side with the highest runs per wicket, calculated by aggregating all runs scored in completed matches divided by the total number of wickets lost.

15. Promotion and Relegation

At the end of each season a system of promotion and relegation will operate as follows:

- a) The side finishing 10th in the Premier Division will be relegated to the Championship.
- b) The side finishing 1st in the Championship will be promoted to the Premier Division.
- c) The side finishing 9th in the Premier Division and the side finishing 2nd in the Championship will play a Play-Off under the 50 over match rules, using balls approved for use in the Premier Division. For the purpose of match rules 3.1.1 and 3.5.2, the Start Time will be 11.00am, the Close of Play will be 6.30pm and the latest start time if the match is reduced to 20 overs per side shall be 3.40pm. The winner will play in the Premier League and the loser will play in the Championship in the following season. The match will be played on the Saturday of Week 19 at the ground of the side finishing 2nd in the Championship unless agreed otherwise by the two clubs. In the event of adverse weather, the reserve date for this match is the following Saturday i.e. seven days later.
- d) The sides finishing 9th and 10th in the Championship will be relegated to div. 1.
- e) The sides finishing 1st and 2nd in Division 1 will be promoted to the Championship.
- f) In the event of a side that qualifies for promotion from the Championship or Division 1 not wishing to accept, or not meeting the criteria for promotion, then the League Executive Committee shall determine the composition of the sides in the Premier Division and Championship for the following season.
- g) If it is agreed to admit an additional side:
 - To the Premier Division then the sides in 9th and 10th place will be relegated and the side finishing in 8th place shall play in the Play Off.
 - To the Championship then only the side finishing in 1st place in Division 1 shall be promoted.
- h) Promotion into the Premier Division and Championship is dependent on the clubs concerned meeting the criteria for facilities, youth teams and financial security specified by the League.

16. Entitlement To ECB Premier League Payment

The ECB payment to the HPCL & clubs is subject to the HPCL and clubs fulfilling certain conditions specified by the ECB. These include but are not limited to:-

- a) Complying with club audit requirements, adhering to disciplinary procedures, player registration, umpire marking, facility reporting, result reporting on play-cricket and adhering to ECB Code of Conduct & Spirit of Cricket.
- b) In the event of non-compliance by any club with any ECB condition HPCL may withhold payment and/or impose, in addition to any penalty imposed by a disciplinary hearing, a penalty determined by the HPCL committee.