



Norfolk Hockey Association

Junior Development Environment
Ethos and Framework

Sponsored by Empresa

2025/26



The Ethos:

The aim of the Norfolk Development Environment is to develop the potential of young players through regular, organised hockey games. By limiting the number of adult players, the focus will be to encourage young players to take a full and active part in the game. The presence of adult players will be to assist in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding of the game in an atmosphere of co-operation, collaboration and mutual respect.

Communication is vital between all parties.

The Framework:

1. Junior Players:

- 1.1 Players over 13 who regularly play in an adult team must withdraw from the Development Environment.
- 1.2 All junior players must be under 15 on the 1st of September 2024.
- 1.3 With the agreement of the two teams, U16 “beginners” will be allowed to play as part of the Development squad and not deemed to be an adult. There will be a maximum of two players per game.
- 1.4 No U15 County player from the present season may play in the Development Environment.

2. Over-age Players:

- 2.1 A player who is over the age of exit from the development Environment, has limited previous hockey experience when joining the squad as an over-age player and would not be safe in an adult league is physically too small to be safe in an adult league. (e.g. a goalkeeper)
- 2.2 An over-age player is the same as an actual junior development player and subject to all the same playing rules.
- 2.3 No over age player may play for more than two years as an over age player or up to the age of 17.
- 2.4 An over-age player should be progressed through the Club selection system as quickly but as safely as possible.

3. Adult Players:

- 3.1 An adult player is a player who is ineligible to play because of the above fore mentioned criteria
- 3.2 **An adult player must understand and show empathy with the role of the adult as mentor and coach on the pitch.**
- 3.3 **An adult player adds to the spirit of the game and does not aim to dominate it.**
- 3.4 No more than 2 adult players may play on the pitch at any one time.
- 3.5 **No adult** is allowed to take a free hit.
- 3.6 No adult can score a goal. If this happens, a free hit will be awarded on the 16m line.
- 3.7 No adult is allowed in the opposition’s “D” at any time. If this happens, a free hit will be awarded from the 16m line.
- 3.8 Only one adult may be involved in defending a penalty corner and this adult cannot act as number 1 runner.

4. Teams

- 4.1 There is no promotion for teams participating in the Development Environment.
- 4.2 The number of teams taking part in the development Environment can vary from year to year.
- 4.3 Both the girls’ and boys’ Development Environment will be played on a home/away basis before and after Christmas.

5. Captains/Team Managers/Coaches

5.1 It is the Team Manager's/Captain's responsibility to make the Umpires aware of the differences in the playing rules.

5.2 Team Managers/Captains must encourage all players to thank the Umpire and to shake hands with their opponents at the end of the game.

5.3 Captains/Team Managers/Coaches must address the composition of their team if the goal difference becomes greater than 5 goals. In the spirit of the Development Environment, no team should win by more than 5 goals.

5.4 If the goal difference becomes greater than 5, the adults should be substituted first and remain off the pitch.

6. Umpires:

6.1 A Club Umpire may umpire in the Development Environment

6.2 Junior Umpires should be encouraged to umpire but be partnered with a Club Umpire.

6.3 An Umpire Candidate who has been successful in their written paper, may umpire in the Junior Development Environment for a period of two years.

6.4 Umpires must explain their decisions to the players to support the players in their understanding of the game.

6.5 Clubs should support each other in finding two appropriate umpires for the match. Where reciprocal agreements for finding two umpires are not an option, the Club needing the umpire must pay the umpire fee.

7. Administration of Fixtures:

7.1 Games to be played on the designated/priority Saturdays but may be played on a Sunday if mutually agreed by both teams (no pressure to placed on a team to change to a Sunday). Please be aware of the location of your opposition when setting the fixture times.

7.2 Failure to communicate with the opposition may have financial implications with regard to payment for pitch bookings

7.3 Games will consist of 4 quarters of 15 minutes with up to 5 minutes between each quarter.

7.4 All development Environment games will be played on astroturf.

8. Safeguarding Young People

8.1 All adults involved in the running of a Development Squad should be EH DBS checked and understand and follow the principles and procedures of the EH Safeguarding Policy.

8.2 No photographs of a match or of individuals may be taken without the permission of the opposing team adult in charge.

8.3 No photographs, with or without names, should be displayed in the press or on social media without permission of the parent/guardian and the opposition adult in charge.

8.4 Only positive comments should be made about teams, players, officials and umpires. This concerns both open and closed social media platforms.

8.5 A Development squad should have a qualified First Aider and a First Aid kit pitchside

8.6 The email of the Club and County Welfare Officer must be clearly available to all young players, parents and all adults involved in the running of the development squad.

The Club Welfare Officer is the first point of contact.

Club Welfare Officer:

County Welfare Officer: welfare@norfolk-hockey.co.uk

9. Pitch Side Conduct

9.1 The Development Environment will abide by the EH Respect Code of Behaviour.

9.2 Team Managers/Coaches are responsible for the behaviour of their players, their officials and their spectators

10. NHA Rules:

Where clubs fail to uphold the ethos/framework of the Junior Development Environment, the Junior Committee will act under the following:

10.1 The Committee will make their decisions:

(a) according to the evidence presented

(b) with fairness and equity

10.2 Where teams break the rules, the Junior Committee has the option to impose a penalty or sanction the Committee sees fit to impose.

10.3 The Club will be officially informed of the outcome by the NHA Secretary.