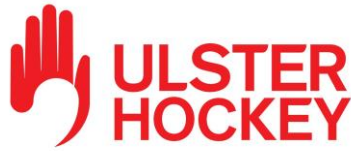




# YOUTH HANDBOOK

2024/2025



## **BRIEFING NOTES FOR THE SEASON 2024/2025**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to the 2024/25 Youth Hockey Handbook. This handbook serves as the definitive guide for all clubs, coaches, and players, containing the complete set of rules, regulations, and guidelines for the season. It has been updated to ensure clarity, consistency, and adherence to the standards that govern our sport.

Clubs are expected to use this document as their primary reference for all matters related to the season, including competition rules, safety protocols, and administrative procedures. By following the guidelines set forth in this handbook, we can ensure a fair, safe, and enjoyable environment for all participants.

We wish everyone a successful season and look forward to a year of growth, sportsmanship, and excellence in Youth hockey in Ulster.

**NB: Please ensure this handbook is distributed to all relevant individuals within your club. It is important that everyone involved in the 2024/25 Youth Hockey season has access to this document.**

Thank you in advance for your co-operation in making this a smooth and successful season for all!

### **Competition Formats & Rules**

The Ulster Hockey Youth Formats and Rules have been passed through the Executive Manager for implementation in the 2024 - 2025 playing season. All Youth hockey played under the auspices of the Ulster Hockey Union should adhere to the requirements of the rules document.

### **Inability to fulfil a fixture**

If a club is unable to fulfil a scheduled fixture or attend a region Blitz, it is imperative to notify the opposing/host team as soon as possible (this will normally be the Youth Officer of the host club).

Clubs who persistently do not notify their unavailability/inability to travel should be reported to Ulster Hockey and their future involvement in the youth league will be reviewed appropriately.

\*Under 15 Leagues will follow different protocol for inability to fulfil fixtures. Please see U15 rules

The Ulster Hockey Youth Development Officer should also be contacted ([jack.kyle@ulsterhockey.com](mailto:jack.kyle@ulsterhockey.com))

## Requesting Additional Team Entries for a Blitz

Ulster Hockey strongly recommends that you make sure you have an accurate number of teams for both U11 and U13 hockey from the start of the season. This allows the host clubs to plan accordingly. Additional U11 and U13 teams can participate in a particular blitz at the host-coordinator's discretion if sufficient notice is provided. Host coordinators have the right to refuse entry for additional teams if seven days' notice is not provided or if an additional team would result in a significant increase in pitch time.

## Notification of Fixtures

Fixtures are the responsibility of the **HOST CLUB**. Ulster Hockey will endeavour to help in this process as it can be time consuming. However, host clubs must take on this responsibility.

Fixtures for blitzes must be released 3 days prior to the event. This is to allow sufficient time for clubs to make sufficient arrangements for both travel and to check the availability of players, coaches and volunteers.

## Match Times

All teams should arrive at their allocated venue in time to warm up and be ready to play for the time specified on the programme or as agreed by the host club. This should include enough time to allow for your goalkeeper to be kitted up.

All teams should strictly adhere to their allocated time slots (i.e. to be off the pitch before the next match is due to start, and beside the pitch ready to play your next match). If you are running late on the day, please inform the host club immediately via verbal communication. Repeated lateness and slowness to get to pitches will jeopardise your involvement in the youth league programme.

## Umpiring of Games

Blitz's provide an excellent opportunity not only to develop young players but also to nurture the next generation of umpires. Just as we focus on skill development for athletes, it is equally important to invest in the growth of young umpires, offering them valuable experience in a supportive environment. It is imperative that respect is shown to all umpires at all times, as their role is critical to the success of the game. Any form of abuse—whether from players, coaches, or spectators—will not be tolerated. Strict enforcement will be applied, with clear punishments for individuals who violate this policy, ensuring that our tournaments remain respectful and positive experiences for all involved.

## Young Umpires Programme

Ulster Hockey in partnership with Ulster Umpires Association, Irish Hockey Umpires Association and Hockey Ireland run a Young Umpires programme. Please find the link below with all the information needed about this programme and how to get your young members involved:

- <https://ulsterhockey.com/get-involved/umpiring/young-umpires-programme/>



**YOUNG  
UMPIRES  
PROGRAMME**

## **Results**

There will be **no results** recorded for U9/U11/U13 blitz days.

Scores will be recorded for U15 matches. Scores will be required to be submitted by the home team no longer than **1 day** after playing the game. Scores should be submitted to the U15 results WhatsApp group. To be added to this group, please contact Jack Kyle (YDO) by email ([jack.kyle@ulsterhockey.com](mailto:jack.kyle@ulsterhockey.com)) or mobile (07521777525).

## **Fees**

A request for Ulster Hockey youth fees will be issued in due course. These fees will be charged per youth team entered to the youth league playing programme. (U11 and U13 = £75 per team. U15 and U18 = £90 per team)

## **Child Protection & Code of Conduct**

The Ulster Hockey Union is fully committed to adhering to child protection guidelines and the established code of conduct is of utmost importance in ensuring the safety, well-being, and positive development of all young participants. These guidelines are in place to create a secure environment where children can enjoy and grow through hockey without fear of harm or misconduct. Every individual involved—whether a coach, player, parent, or volunteer—must strictly follow these protocols to safeguard the welfare of the children. Any breach of these standards will be taken seriously, with appropriate actions taken to uphold the integrity and safety of our community.

***It is essential that all members of the Ulster Hockey community adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport***

If you have any queries regarding child protection, please contact Ulster Hockey's Designated Safeguarding Children Officer – Hilary Reid. *Phone: 07802 381444 Email: [hilaryreid@talktalk.net](mailto:hilaryreid@talktalk.net)*

## Useful Contacts

<u>Role</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
Administrative Officer	Nicki Bayes	<a href="mailto:admin@ulsterhockey.com">admin@ulsterhockey.com</a>	02890701417
Executive Manager	Marc Scott	<a href="mailto:marc.scott@ulsterhockey.com">marc.scott@ulsterhockey.com</a>	07889363477
Workforce Development Officer	Jonathan McMeekin	<a href="mailto:jonathan.mcmeekin@ulsterhockey.com">jonathan.mcmeekin@ulsterhockey.com</a>	07912320225
Club Development Officer	Michelle McMillan	<a href="mailto:michelle.mcmillan@ulsterhockey.com">michelle.mcmillan@ulsterhockey.com</a>	07562953263
Inclusion and Diversity Officer	Eamonn McFerran	<a href="mailto:eamonn@ulsterhockey.com">eamonn@ulsterhockey.com</a>	07562688989
Youth Development Officer	Jack Kyle	<a href="mailto:jack.kyle@ulsterhockey.com">jack.kyle@ulsterhockey.com</a>	07521777525
Schools Activation Officer	Harry Templeton	<a href="mailto:harry.templeton@ulsterhockey.com">harry.templeton@ulsterhockey.com</a>	07805765039
Hockey Development Co-ordinator	Laura Brown Laura Logan	<a href="mailto:laura.brown@ulsterhockey.com">laura.brown@ulsterhockey.com</a> <a href="mailto:laura.logan@ulsterhockey.com">laura.logan@ulsterhockey.com</a>	07850059139 07743934474
Communications Officer	Andy Morrison	<a href="mailto:andy.morrison@ulsterhockey.com">andy.morrison@ulsterhockey.com</a>	07355094282
Pathways Manager	Ian Hughes	<a href="mailto:ian.hughes@ulsterhockey.com">ian.hughes@ulsterhockey.com</a>	07921211018
Designated Safeguarding Children Officer	Hilary Reid	<a href="mailto:hilaryreid@talktalk.net">hilaryreid@talktalk.net</a>	07802381444

# BLITZ DATES

## **UNDER 11 & 13 Girls**

*Session 1: 29.9.24*

*Session 2: 27.10.24*

*Session 3: 1.12.24*

### **WINTER BREAK (INDOOR)**

*Session 4: 2.2.25*

*Session 5: 2.3.25*

## **UNDER 11 & 13 Boys**

*Session 1: 22.9.24*

*Session 2: 20.10.24*

*Session 3: 24.11.24*

### **WINTER BREAK (INDOOR)**

*Session 4: 26.1.25*

*Session 5: 23.2.25*

## **UNDER 15 League Play by dates**

*Please see the Ulster Hockey website  
for all play by dates for each round of  
U15 games.*

[https://websites.mygameday.app/assoc\\_page.cgi?c=0-12671-0-642692-0&a=COMPS](https://websites.mygameday.app/assoc_page.cgi?c=0-12671-0-642692-0&a=COMPS)

## **Finals Days**

**U11 Girls/Boys – 30.3.25**

**U13 Girls/Boys – 6.4.25**

**U15 Girls/Boys – 13.4.25**

# U9 FUN FOURS

## RULE 1 – AGE QUALIFICATION

- A. Players **MUST** be in Primary 4 or below as of the day of the blitz / tournament.

## RULE 2 – TEAMS

- A. The game is played between two teams. They shall each have a maximum of 4 players permitted on the pitch at any one time.
- B. No Goalkeepers at this age group
- C. Teams can be mixed (boys and girls)

## RULE 3 – SUBSTITUTIONS

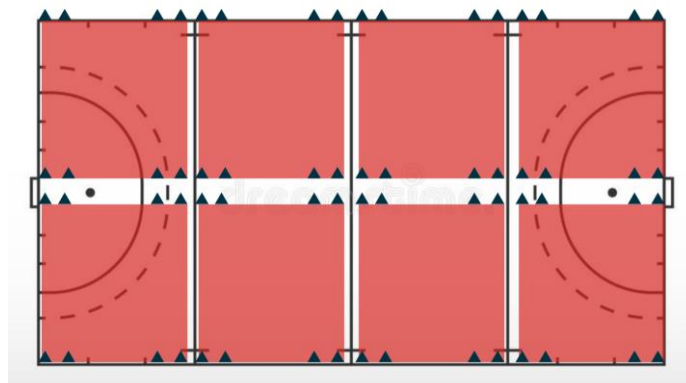
- A. Substitutions are unlimited throughout the game.

## RULE 4 – DURATION OF GAME

- A. Games will be played for 8-10 minute duration straight. There will be no half time or changing of sides.
- B. 2-3 minutes will be scheduled to get to your next game.

## RULE 5 – THE PITCH

- A. For U9s the pitch will be split into 1/8's
- B. Each pitch should have 4 mini goals that can be marked with cones. Goals should be 2m or 2 stick lengths.
- C. Goals can be scored from anywhere on the pitch, therefore there are no scoring zones. There are no penalty corners. Any frees to the attacking team within 5m of the goal is moved back 5m.



# U11 SUPER SIXES

## RULE 1 – AGE QUALIFICATION

- A. Players **MUST** be in Primary 5,6 or 7 as of the day of the blitz / tournament. Players in Primary 4 or below should not be playing in U11 Blitz's unless approved by Ulster Hockey YDO.

## RULE 2 – TEAMS

- A. The game is played between two teams. Each team shall have a maximum of six players on the pitch at any one time.
- B. Teams are encouraged to play with a goalkeeper however goalkeepers are not compulsory at Regional Blitz's. Teams are permitted to play with six outfield players. **For Ulster Hockey U11 club finals day and McCloy/Pearson competition's (including qualifying Blitz's), Goal keepers are compulsory.**
- C. Squads are made up of no more than 10 players to allow for sufficient game time.
- D. Teams should be separated by gender at Super 6s.

## RULE 3 – SUBSTITUTIONS

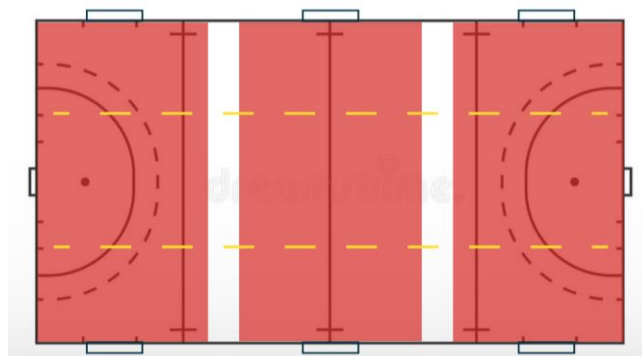
- A. Substitutions are unlimited throughout the game.

## RULE 4 – DURATION OF GAME

- A. Games will be played for 8–12-minute durations. There will be no half time or changing of sides.
- B. 2-3 minutes will be scheduled to get to your next game.

## RULE 5 – THE PITCH

- A. For U11 the pitch should be split into thirds, with run off space between pitches. (pitch can be split into 4 smaller pitches to accommodate for large number of teams at one event)
- B. Scoring Zone Markers (in yellow in below image) should run the length of the pitch from the Penalty Corner injection mark.
- C. The white lines in image below are for coaches and players only. Ideally, these lines should be set out using white and yellow cones. Yellow cones from baseline to scoring zone and white cones from scoring zone to scoring zone.
- D. Corners will be played from the scoring zone line coinciding with where the ball went off the pitch.





# U13 EXTREME 8S

## RULE 1 – AGE QUALIFICATION

- A. Players **MUST** be in Year 8 or 9 as of the day of the blitz / tournament. Primary school players should not be playing in U13 Blitz's unless approved by Ulster Hockey YDO.

## RULE 2 – TEAMS

- A. The game is played between two teams. They shall each have a maximum eight players permitted on the pitch at any one time.
- B. Teams are encouraged to play with a goalkeeper however goalkeepers are not compulsory at Regional Blitz's. Teams are permitted to play with seven outfield players if they do not have a GK. **For Ulster Hockey U13 club finals day and regional qualifying Blitz's, Goal keepers will be compulsory.**
- C. Squads are made up of a maximum of 12 players to allow for sufficient match time for all.
- D. Teams must be separated by gender.

## RULE 3 – SUBSTITUTIONS

- A. Substitutions are unlimited throughout the game.

## RULE 4 – DURATION OF GAME

- A. Games will be played for 8–12 minute duration straight. There will be no half time or changing of sides.
- B. 2-3 minutes will be scheduled to get to your next game.

### **Free-Hit: Infringement within the shooting zone**

- A. If the free hit is awarded to an attacker a 4 vs 3 power play is awarded.
- B. If the free hit is awarded to a defender in the free zone/circle, then a hit out will be taken in line with the start of the free zone.
- C. Equivalent of a penalty corner is a '4v3' power play

### **POWER PLAY (U13 ONLY)**

1. Ball starts at the centre of the scoring zone, outside the top of the circle.
2. 2 outfield defenders can start anywhere in the circle zone – but must be at least 5 metres from the ball.
3. The goalkeeper starts behind the goal line.
4. The attacking team has 4 players, one who starts the Power Play. The other 3 can be in the circle or the free zone but must be 5 metres away from the player with the ball.
5. The attacking team must move the ball 5 metres before bringing it into the circle. The ball can be moved 5 metres by the player who takes the free or passed to another player outside of the circle to comply with the 5 metres rule.
6. All other players on both teams start in the opposite circle.

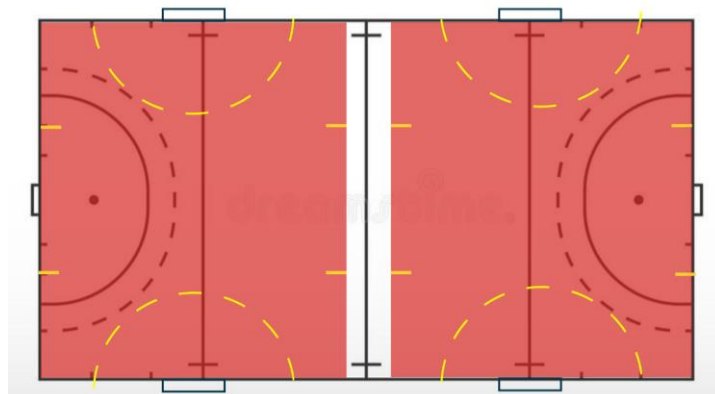
Please see the video uploaded to Ulster Hockey's YouTube channel showing a Power Play.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQADBieHY-8>

This link will also be uploaded to Ulster Hockey's website

### **RULE 5 – THE PITCH**

- A. The pitch will be half of the full-sized pitch for girls and boys, with a run-off between the two pitches.
- B. The circle will have a radius of 15 metres from the by-line (15 steps either side of each post, 15 steps out from the centre of the goal and join).
- C. Free Zone Markers should be placed at the Penalty Corner attacker's mark.
- D. Please ensure the pitch layout is consistent and followed strictly to allow uniformity across all locations.



# UNDER 15

## **RULE 1 – AGE QUALIFICATION**

- A. Players are only permitted to participate for one club in the Ulster Hockey Youth League Programme, i.e. players cannot play for two clubs in the Youth League Programme and this additionally applies for those who train/play with two different age groups at two different clubs.
- B. Players participating in any U15 program must be born after the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009 (aged 13-15 / in school Years 10 and 11). Players born before this date will be eligible to play adult club hockey as they will have passed their 15th birthday.
- C. Players turning 15 throughout the season will be permitted to play in the youth leagues.

## **RULE 2 – TEAMS**

- A. The game is played between two teams. They shall each have a maximum eleven players permitted on the pitch at any one time.
- B. Goalkeepers are compulsory.
- C. For Girls U15 Performance/Intermediate games, squads are limited to 16 players. For development games there is no limit, however Ulster Hockey recommend 16 players to allow for sufficient pitch time.
- D. For Boys U15 Performance games Squads are limited to 16 players. For boys Development games, there is no limit to squad sizes.
- E. Boys U15 Development games can be played with numbers between 8v8 and 11v11, if both clubs agree before hit off. The team with more players must match player numbers to the team with the least number of players.
- F. Teams must be separated by gender.

## **RULE 3 – SUBSTITUTIONS**

- A. Substitutions are unlimited throughout the game.

## **RULE 4 – DURATION OF GAME**

- A. Games will consist of 4 quarters.
- B. Ulster Hockey advise 12- 15 minutes per quarter. However, if both clubs agree, this can be altered.
- C. A 2-minute interval between each quarter and a 5-minute interval at half time is advised.

### **RULE 5 – THE PITCH**

- A. 11v 11 games will be played on full-sized hockey pitch. For Boys Development games, 8v8 and 9v9 games should be played on  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a pitch (by-line to opposite 22), with a full-sized D marked out. 10v10 or 11v11 games should be played on a full-size pitch.
- B. Goals should be positioned in the centre of each of the backlines as for 11v11 formats.

### **RULE 6 – FIXTURES**

- A. Every effort must be made to fulfil every fixture throughout the season. This is crucial for the benefit of the children, ensuring they have the opportunity to play, while also respecting the significant effort involved in booking pitches, and the time and commitment of players, coaches, and families who travel to participate.
- B. It is up to the Home team to organise and book the fixture.
- C. The home team must provide **3 separate dates over 2 different days** for the away team. For example, 2 Sunday dates and a Friday date. If an agreement cannot be made by both teams, then the match will be null and void. No points to either teams will be given.
- D. If the a team has provided 3 dates (proof will be required i.e. screenshot of messages sent) as proposed above, and the opposing team cannot fulfil the fixture, then the game will be recorded as a 3-0 win to the and they will be awarded 3 points. There will also be a 1-point deduction for repeated fixtures not fulfilled.

### **RULE 7 – PLAY BY DATES**

- A. This will be heavily monitored this year. As stated above, if a team cannot fulfil a fixture before the play by date, the above ruling will apply.
- B. If both teams cannot fulfil the fixture, the above ruling applies.
- C. Play by dates for fixtures are on the website and clearly stated.  
([https://websites.mygameday.app/assoc\\_page.cgi?c=0-12671-0-0-0&a=COMPS&seasonID=6021299](https://websites.mygameday.app/assoc_page.cgi?c=0-12671-0-0-0&a=COMPS&seasonID=6021299))
- D. It is important to note that the play by dates are the *play by dates* and not the play on dates. Clubs can play these games weeks before the date if they want.

## QUALIFICATION FOR FINALS

### Girls

#### Performance League:

Two leagues: Performance League North and Performance League South.

Each league has teams playing a Home and Away fixture.

At the end of the league stage, the top two teams from each league will advance to the semi-finals.

Winner of Performance League North plays Runner Up of Performance League South. Winner of Performance League South plays Runner Up of Performance League North.

The winners of the two semi-final matches will compete in the Final to determine the overall Champions.

#### Tie-Breaker Rules (if two teams are tied on points):

1. Head-to-Head Results: The team that won the match between the two tied teams will rank higher.
2. Goal Difference: If head-to-head results don't resolve the tie, the team with the higher goal difference (goals scored minus goals conceded) ranks higher.
3. Goals Scored: If goal difference is equal, the team with the most goals scored will rank higher.
4. Replay: If all the above criteria are tied, a replay match will be required

### Intermediate League:

Three leagues: Intermediate League North, Intermediate League South, and Intermediate League Central.

In each league, teams only play each other once.

At the end of the league stage the Winner from each league will automatically progress to the semi-final stage.

#### Additional Semi-Final Spot:

The one highest-placed runner-up from the three leagues combined will also progress to the semi-finals.

The runner-up will be determined by:

1. Points: The total points earned in the league stage.
2. Head-to-Head Results: If teams are tied on points, their results against one another will be the next determining factor.
3. Number of Wins: If head-to-head results don't resolve the tie, the team with more overall wins in the league stage will progress.
4. Goal Difference: If head-to-head results don't resolve the tie, the team with the higher goal difference (goals scored minus goals conceded) ranks higher.
5. Goals Scored: If goal difference is equal, the team with the most goals scored will rank higher.
6. Replay: If all the above criteria are tied, a replay match will be required

#### Semi-Final Stage:

Random Draw that will be recorded and uploaded on social media for fairness.

#### Final Stage:

The Winners of the two Semi-Final matches will compete in the final to determine the overall Champion.

### Development 1:

Five leagues: Development League West, Development League South, Development League North, Development League East, and Development League Belfast.

In each league, teams only play each other once.

At the end of the league stage the Winner from each league will automatically progress to the quarter-final stage.

#### Additional Quarter-Final Spots:

The 3 highest-placed runners-up from all five leagues will also progress to the quarter-final stage.

This will be decided based on:

1. Points: Total points earned in the league stage.
2. Head-to-Head Results: If teams are tied on points, their results against one another will be the next determining factor.
3. Number of Wins: If head-to-head results don't resolve the tie, the team with more overall wins in the league stage will progress.
4. Goal Difference: If head-to-head results don't resolve the tie, the team with the higher goal difference (goals scored minus goals conceded) ranks higher.
5. Goals Scored: If goal difference is equal, the team with the most goals scored will rank higher
6. Replay: If all the above criteria are tied, a replay match will be required

#### Quarter-Final Stage:

Random Draw that will be recorded and uploaded on social media for fairness.

#### Semi-Final Stage:

Random Draw that will be recorded and uploaded on social media for fairness.

#### Final Stage:

The Winners of the Semi-Finals will play in the Final to determine the overall Champion.

## Development 2:

Three leagues: Intermediate League North, Intermediate League South, and Intermediate League Central.

In each league, teams only play each other once.

At the end of the league stage the Winner from each league will automatically progress to the Semi-Final stage.

Additional Semi-Final Spot:

The one highest-placed runner-up from the three leagues combined will also progress to the semi-finals.

The runner-up will be determined by:

1. Points: The total points earned in the league stage.
2. Head-to-Head Results: If teams are tied on points, their results against one another will be the next determining factor.
3. Number of Wins: If head-to-head results don't resolve the tie, the team with more overall wins in the league stage will progress.
4. Goal Difference: If head-to-head results don't resolve the tie, the team with the higher goal difference (goals scored minus goals conceded) ranks higher.
5. Goals Scored: If goal difference is equal, the team with the most goals scored will rank higher.
6. Replay: If all the above criteria are tied, a replay match will be required

Semi-Final Stage:

Random Draw that will be recorded and uploaded on social media for fairness.

Final Stage:

The Winners of the two semi-final matches will compete in the final to determine the overall Champion.



## Boys

### Performance League:

This league has teams playing a Home and Away fixture.

At the end of the league stage, the top two teams will advance to the Final to determine the overall Champions.

### Intermediate League:

This league has teams playing each other once.

At the end of the league stage, the top two teams will advance to the Final to determine the overall Champions.

### Development League:

Two leagues: Development League East and Development League West.

In each league, teams only play each other once.

At the end of the league stage, the Winner from each league will advance to the Final to determine the overall Champions.

Any tie breakers will come down to the following criteria:

1. Points: The total points earned in the league stage.
2. Head-to-Head Results: If teams are tied on points, their results against one another will be the next determining factor.
3. Number of Wins: If head-to-head results don't resolve the tie, the team with more overall wins in the league stage will progress.
4. Goal Difference: If head-to-head results don't resolve the tie, the team with the higher goal difference (goals scored minus goals conceded) ranks higher.
5. Goals Scored: If goal difference is equal, the team with the most goals scored will rank higher.
6. Replay: If all the above criteria are tied, a replay match will be required

# GENERAL RULES

## RULE 1 – PLAYER EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

- A. Ulster Hockey strongly recommended that shin-protectors and mouth guards are always worn by all outfield players (inclusive of training sessions/games). [FIH Rules of Hockey 2023](#)
- B. No player shall wear any equipment that may be dangerous to themselves or other players.
- C. The use of appropriate footwear for the playing surface (trainers or turf shoes) and suitable warm clothing (tracksuit) are encouraged.
- D. **Goalkeepers must wear full padding, kickers, pads, abdominal protector, chest guard, protective sleeves and gloves and a full helmet with neck protector AT ALL TIMES.** No helmet = no game.

## RULE 2 – UMPIRES

- A. Young Umpire programmes will be in place for the 2024/25 youth season – it is recommended that each host club has 6-12 young umpires in attendance to umpire U9/U11/U13 Blitz matches. For U15 matches, each club should provide a nominated umpire.
- B. Two umpires per pitch are needed for U15. Two umpires per pitch are recommended for U11/U13, however one umpire per pitch is suitable.
- C. If young umpires are not available, each team should have a nominated umpire that is not a member of the coaching/supervisory staff.
- D. The umpires are responsible for all decisions and penalties.
- E. The umpire's decision is **FINAL**
- F. **Ulster Hockey hold the right to remove anybody that is aiming abuse towards any officials at Ulster Hockey youth events.**

### **RULE 3 – STARTING THE GAME / PASS BACK AWARD**

- A. The first named team on the fixture schedule will provide the ball for the game.
- B. The first named team will be awarded pass back to start the game. A coin toss with captains is therefore not required.
- C. The game will start with a push or hit from the centre of the pitch. The ball can travel either backwards or forwards.

### **RULE 4 – STARTING AND RESTARTING THE GAME**

- A. The game is started with a pass backwards or forwards taken from the centre of the centre line. It follows the umpires whistle indicating the start of the game or after a goal has been scored. The ball may be raised immediately using a push, flick or scoop but must not be raised intentionally using a hit.
- B. Each team must be positioned in their own half of the pitch and the opposing players must be a minimum of 5 metres from the ball until the hit off is played.
- C. The ball can be played forwards, backwards or sideways.
- D. The taker can use a self-pass (i.e. pass the ball to themselves). The pass must involve two very distinct actions i.e. the taker must first tap it forwards, sideways or backwards and then play it a second time either to pass it or to dribble it.

### **RULE 5 – SCORING A GOAL**

- A. A goal is scored when the ball has been struck by, or deflected off, an attacking player, or touches the stick or body of a defending player, while it (the ball) is in the shooting zone. It must cross completely over the goal-line between the goalposts and under the crossbar.
- B. Goals will not be awarded if the ball is struck outside the scoring zone and does not touch an attacker's stick.
- C. A goal cannot be scored directly from a free hit / auto-pass. The ball must travel at least 3 or 5\* metres by the attacking player before a shot can be made by the player taking the auto-pass. This will apply at long-corners and side-line balls within the scoring zone also.
- D. If a player takes an auto-pass and dribbles past one or two players, he/she is entitled to score, provided the ball has travelled at least 3 or 5 metres\*
- E. All players except the striker must be 5 metres from the ball at free hits and corners and the ball must move at least 1 metre from all free hits, side line balls etc., when using an auto-pass.

\*3 metres for U11 – 5 metres for U13/U15/U18

## **RULE 6 – BALL OUTSIDE THE FIELD OF PLAY**

### **Over the side-line:**

When the ball passes completely over the side-line it shall be put back into play in any direction by a hit, push, scoop or self-pass taken by an opponent of the player who last touched it. The ball may be raised immediately using a push, flick or scoop but must not be raised intentionally using a hit. This is called a side-line hit-in.

Until the hit-in is taken, no opposition player shall be within 5 metres of the ball.

### **Over the base line off an attacking player:**

When the ball passes over the base line off one of the attacking players and no goal is scored, the game is re-started with a hit to the defence. This is called a hit-out. The ball can be hit, pushed, scooped or a self-pass can be played. The ball may be raised immediately using a push, flick or scoop but must not be raised intentionally using a hit.

It is to be taken level with the top of the shooting zone and in line with the place where it crossed over the base line.

### **Over the base line off a defending player:**

If the ball is played over the base line by a defending player and no goal is scored, the game is re-started with a long corner to the attacking team. The corner can be hit, pushed, scooped, or a self-pass can be played. The ball may be raised immediately using a push, flick or scoop but must not be raised intentionally using a hit. A shot at goal cannot be taken directly from a long corner.

The corner should be taken at the scoring zone in line with where the ball left the pitch. Not on the side line.

No player, other than the taker, shall be within 5 metres of the ball until it is played.

### **RULE 7 – FREE HIT**

- A. Free hits are to be taken where the offence occurred. The ball can be hit, pushed, scooped or a self-pass can be played. The ball may be raised immediately using a push, flick or scoop but must not be raised intentionally using a hit.
- B. The ball must be stationary at a free hit.
- C. Until the free hit is taken, all opposition players must be a minimum of 5 metres from the ball.
- D. Opponents who remain within 5 metres when the free hit is taken must not interfere with the play until they have moved 3 or 5 metres\* away from where the free hit was taken, or the ball has moved 3 or 5 metres\*. Running alongside the taker (channelling) should be penalised as interference.

### **Free-Hit: Infringement within the shooting zone**

- E. For U11, if the free hit is awarded to attacker within the shooting zone it must be taken back out to the edge of the shooting zone in line where the infringement happened. All players except the taker must be a minimum of 5 metres from the ball.
- F. For U13 a Power play may be awarded (See Rule 9)
- G. For U15 a penalty corner may be awarded.
- H. If the free hit is awarded to a defender in the shooting zone, then a hit out will be taken in line with the start of the shooting zone.

### **RULE 8 – PENALTY 1 v 1 SHOT**

**Penalty run Rule not used for U9's. For U11's/U13's penalty run rule may be applied in the occurrence of **repeated** deliberate infringements in the scoring zone. For U15 a penalty run may be awarded in line with FIH Senior Hockey rules (see Rule 7)**

A 1v1 penalty run shall be awarded for any one of the following reasons:

- A. An offence by a defending player inside the shooting zone that prevents the probable scoring of a goal.
- B. An intentional offence in the shooting zone by a defending player against an opponent who has possession of the ball or an opportunity to play the ball.

Following a penalty shot, play is re-started with a centre pass (if a goal has been scored). If no goal is scored or the allocated time runs out, play is re-started with a hit out to the defence taken at the top of the shooting zone.

- C. Penalty runs are 1v1's taken in line with the shooting area marker with the ball placed in the centre of the goals.
- D. Apart from one defending player (a GK or an outfield kicking back) and the penalty run taker, all other players must be beyond the half-way line.
- E. One defending player should be positioned on or behind the goal line and is not permitted to move until the ball has been played by the attacking player.
- F. The attacking player has 8 seconds from when the umpire blows their whistle to beat the defending player and score a goal.
- G. Other attacking and defending players are not permitted to enter the restricted zone until the 8 seconds have been completed or a goal has been scored.
- H. If the defending or attacking player fouls during the act of playing the penalty run, the following should be awarded:
  - **Attacking player fouls: a hit out to the defence.**
  - **Defending player fouls deliberately: Penalty goal (goal automatically awarded to attacking team).**
  - **Defending player fouls accidentally: re-take penalty run.**

In line with the FIH rules of hockey ([FIH Rules of Hockey 2023](#)), Ulster Hockey strongly recommends that face masks should be worn across all age groups and playing formats when defending a penalty corner.

### **RULE 9 – OWN GOALS**

- A. Own goal ruling has been removed from all Youth League age categories, therefore should not be awarded. A long corner is to be awarded instead.

### **RULE 10 – ACCIDENTS**

- A. If the game is temporarily suspended because of an accident or injury where no offence occurred it shall be re-started with a bully close to the spot where the accident occurred.
- B. Players must stand square of each other and prior to playing the ball and following the umpires whistle, they shall tap the ground with their stick once and tap each other's stick above the ball once.
- C. All non-involved players must be a minimum of 5 metres from the ball.

- D. Players who are cut or bleeding will be required to leave the pitch immediately and shall not be allowed to return until the bleeding has been suppressed or stopped.
- E. It is imperative that **ALL** accidents are recorded in full using the *UHU Code of Ethics*. You can find this form in the link below:

<https://ulsterhockey.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/UHU-Code-of-Ethics-for-Young-People.pdf>

### **RULE 11 – INCIDENTS**

- A. An incident differs from an accident as this is something that may have happened intentionally. Bullying and Physical or Mental abuse are all examples of incidents.
- B. It is imperative that **ALL** incidents are recorded using the *UHU Code of Ethics*. Please find the document in the link. Here you will find both an accident and incident form:

<https://ulsterhockey.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/UHU-Code-of-Ethics-for-Young-People.pdf>

### **RULE 12 – FAIR PLAY**

- A. Rough or dangerous play shall not be allowed, nor any behaviour which in the opinion of the umpire, amounts to misconduct.
- B. Players must not intentionally use any part of their body to play the ball.
- C. Players must not use the rounded side of the stick when playing the ball and when striking the ball. The stick must in no way cause danger, nor lead to dangerous play, or be intimidating to any opponent.
- D. Players must not play in any way that is dangerous.
- E. Players must not kick the ball.
- F. Players must not obstruct by running between an opponent and the ball, thereby unfairly preventing the opponent from playing the ball. Neither must they use any part of their body or stick to obstruct a player.
- G. Players must not hold, charge, kick, shove, intentionally trip, or strike any player or umpire.
- H. **Coaches and spectators must always remain respectful.** Challenges to decisions should be directed courteously and if possible, through the team captain.
- I. Coaches are expected to manage the discipline of their players

### **RULE 13 – REVERSE HIT AT U9 AND U11**

The reverse hit is a crucial skill in the modern game. We recognise its importance and encourage all clubs to incorporate the reverse hit into their training sessions. However, for Blitz's and Finals competitions, the reverse hit **will not be allowed in the shooting zone/circle** for safety reasons. Clubs can decide between themselves if they wish to use the reverse hit in their regional Blitz's. Given the mix in skill levels of players competing, there is a heightened risk during these matches. Some players may not yet know how to safely avoid or anticipate a reverse hit, while others may be unaware of where to position themselves, increasing the likelihood of accidental injury. Additionally, the set-up of pitches at this level is situated close to spectator areas and we want to minimize the risk of stray balls accidentally hitting those watching. This rule is not about discouraging the use of the reverse hit but ensuring the safety of everyone involved. This decision has been considered at length and if closer to Final's Day there is strong objection, we can look at changing the rule. Plenty of notice will be given.

### **RULE 14 – GAME RULES**

- A. Some rules have been adapted by Ulster Hockey. All other rules of senior hockey will apply as per issued by the International Hockey Federation:

<https://www.fih.hockey/static-assets/pdf/fih-rules-of-hockey-June23-update.pdf>



As we look ahead to the season, we encourage everyone to embrace the spirit of teamwork, sportsmanship, and respect that underpins Youth Hockey. This handbook has been designed to guide you through the rules and expectations that ensure a positive and rewarding experience for all involved. Whether you are a player, coach, or supporter, your commitment to these values is what will make this season a success.

Thank you to the backbone of Youth Hockey in Ulster; the volunteers who dedicate so much of your time and effort every week to give the children a chance to enjoy the sport we all love.

Ulster Hockey would like to say good luck and we wish you all a fantastic season.



# HOST SCHEDULE

2024/2025

## U11/U13 Girls Blitz schedule

Area	Hosting Duties	
<b>Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>	<b>Host Club – U11</b>	<b>Host Club – U13</b>
Belfast	NICS	NICS
Mid – Ulster	Randalstown	Randalstown
Northern	Coleraine	Coleraine
Newtownabbey	Ballyclare	Castle
North Down	Bangor	Bangor
Southern	Armagh	Armagh
<b>Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>	<b>Host Club – U11</b>	<b>Host Club – U13</b>
Belfast	Instonians	Club KV
Mid-Ulster	Cookstown	Cookstown
Northern	North Down	North Down
Newtownabbey	Castle	Parkview
North Down	North Down	North Down
Southern	Armagh	Armagh
<b>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024</b>	<b>Host Club – U11</b>	<b>Host Club – U13</b>
Belfast	CI	CI
Mid-Ulster	Rainey	Rainey
Northern	Ballymoney	Ballymoney
Newtownabbey	Parkview	Ballyclare
North Down	South Antrim	South Antrim
Southern	Lisnagarvey	Lisnagarvey
<b>WINTER BREAK (INDOOR)</b>		
<b>Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2025</b>	<b>Host Club – U11</b>	<b>Host Club – U13</b>
Belfast	Instonians	Pegasus
Mid-Ulster	Dungannon	Dungannon
Northern	Ballymena	Ballymena
Newtownabbey	Larne	Larne
North Down	Ballynahinch	Saintfield
Southern	Dromore	Dromore
<b>Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2025 (U13 Qualifier)</b>	<b>Host Club – U11</b>	<b>Host Club – U13</b>
Belfast	Belfast Harlequins	Belfast Harlequins
Mid-Ulster	Antrim	Antrim
Northern	Limavady	Limavady
Newtownabbey	Mossley	Mossley
North Down	Ards	Ards
Southern	Banbridge	Banbridge

## U11/U13 Boys Blitz schedule

Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2024	
Area	Host Club
Belfast	Instonians
Northern	North Down
Southern	Armagh
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	
Belfast	CI
Northern	Ballynahinch
Southern	Portadown
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	
Belfast	NICS
Northern	Mossley
Southern	Banbridge
WINTER BREAK (INDOOR)	
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	
Belfast	Annadale
Northern	Bangor
Southern	South Antrim
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2025	
Belfast	Lisnagarvey
Northern	Antrim
Southern	Cookstown