

## League and Competition Rules 2023-24

1. **DEFINITIONS** – For the purposes of these L&C Rules, the following terms shall be defined as follows:
- i. **Club** means a touch club represented by a team participating in any HKTA Competition
  - ii. **Competition** means any touch Competition administered by the HKTA
  - iii. **Effective Registration** means the Player has been registered by the Player's Club online in the HKTA database for the relevant season
  - iv. **L&C Rules** means these League and Competition Rules 2023-24
  - v. **League** means the domestic touch Competitions administered by the HKTA
  - vi. **League Competition** means a Competition within the League
  - vii. **LCP** means the League Control Panel, which is authorised to make determinations on issues arising under the L&C Rules. The LCP will consist of up to 3 members of the touch community appointed by the HKTA each Season to represent a cross section of Clubs. The HKTA will nominate one of these members to perform the role of League Commissioner. In the event HKTA is unable to formulate the LCP, the duties and responsibilities of the LCP will be temporarily delegated to the HKTA until a suitable panel is formed
  - viii. **Match** means a touch Match administered by the HKTA
  - ix. **Member Club** means any Club that registration under HKTA
  - x. **Team Squad** means the squad of Players that each Member Club has registered with the HKTA and listed as its Team Squad for League/Competition
  - xi. **Player** means a Player playing a Match administered by the HKTA
  - xii. **Player Transfer** means a request of players clearances from Player's current Club to New Club.
  - xiii. **Season** means the touch season, which typically runs from May to April
  - xiv. **HKTA** means the Hong Kong Touch Association

## **2. COMPETITIONS**

- 2.1.** The HKTA controls and is responsible for the administration of the Competitions.
- 2.2.** Save for any exception set out in the rules and regulations of any particular Competition, the L&C Rules shall apply to all Clubs and all Competitions during the Season with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May.
- 2.3.** The entry procedures, format, divisions, sequence, timing, and duration of the Competitions shall be determined by the HKTA.

## **3. EFFECTIVE REGISTRATION**

- 3.1.** A Player shall hold Effective Registration with the HKTA once they have been registered by a Club online in the HKTA's database for the relevant Season (with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> April). The only evidence admissible of a Player's Effective Registration with a Club on any particular date is the computerized listing held by the HKTA.
- 3.2.** Player Transfer – A Player who wishes to transfer Clubs may do so between 15<sup>th</sup> August and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Player's New Club Admin will have to start requests a player transfer via GameDay, with Existing club to accept or deny request of outgoing player, final approval will be made by HKTA.

If the current Club deny the Player Transfer for any reason it will be treated as a registration dispute and will be referred to the LCP for resolution. In the event of a registration dispute, the Player may not transfer to or play for the new Club unless and until permitted by the LCP. A Player may not transfer Clubs after 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 for the remainder of the relevant Season, irrespective of whether the Clubs concerned are in agreement.

- 3.3.** New Players (currently not registered to any other Club) may be registered with a Club at any time during the season.
- 3.4.** No Club may field a Player for a team in any Competition Match who:
  - 3.4.1.** Does not hold Effective Registration with that Club; or
  - 3.4.2.** Has not obtained a Player Permit under the Player Permit System allowing the Player to play for the Club in the relevant Match; or
  - 3.4.3.** Is currently under suspension under the L&C Rules or the HKTA - Disciplinary Action Protocols.

## **4. LOSS OF EFFECTIVE REGISTRATION**

- 4.1.** A Player will cease to have Effective Registration with a Club:
  - 4.1.1.** Upon having Effective Registration with another Club; or
  - 4.1.2.** Upon having Effective Registration cancelled or suspended by the LCP for any reason; or

**4.1.3.** Where Effective Registration is invalidated pursuant to Rule 5 below.

## **5. FALSE OR MISLEADING INFORMATION**

**5.1.** If a Club or Player supplies incorrect or misleading information to the HKTA on the online Player registration system, the Effective Registration will be void. A financial penalty may also be imposed as the LCP considers appropriate.

## **6. SQUAD REGISTRATION AND TEAM LIST SUBMISSION**

**6.1.** Team participants for Summer/Winter Touch League and Touch Competitions, need to submit the Team Squad through GameDay (up to maximum 24 players for Men's and Women's category and maximum 36 players for Mixed category), to be approved by the HKTA a week before the first fixture of the League/Competition. And all players in the Team Squad shall hold effective registration with the HKTA.

**6.2.** All teams that play are required to submit the team list for each match day (24 hours before), teams are required to maximum select 16 players from the Team Squad and during the match day pick the final 14 players play for each game.

**6.3.** Teams playing unregistered players are liable to forfeit any match in which unregistered players have competed.

## **7. PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PERMIT SYSTEM**

**7.1.** Permits may be granted to allow Players to play in a named Competition for another Club for the purposes of Player development potential towards national representation.

**7.2.** A Permit is required to allow a Player to play for a Club, other than the Club for which the Player is registered, in any fixture.

**7.3.** The procedure for granting Player Permits will be:

i. A permit is a letter of permission written by an Official of the Club with which the Player is registered. All permit requests will be acknowledged in writing by the HKTA.

ii. A permit must be sought for each Match in which a Player plays, and such permit may be granted for a Match at any time in the season. Any permit issued must be agreed in writing (by fax, letter, or email) by both the Club with which the Player is registered, and the Club with which he/she is to play on permit and lodged with the HKTA before the Match takes place.

iii. The HKTA will confirm to the requesting Club whether the Permit has been granted.

## **8. LEAGUE COMPETITION FORMATS AND PONITS**

### **8.1. SUMMER TOUCH LEAGUE**

#### Premiership League (Category Men's & Women's)

All teams will play two round robin game, top team of the League will become League Champion. Follow up with the top 4 teams in the league will enter the Grand Final.

Standard pitch size 70m x 50m.

A Match is 40 minutes in duration, consisting of 2 x 20-minutes.

#### Championship League (Category Men's)

6 teams - All teams will play two round robin game; top team of the League will become League Champion. Follow up with the top 4 teams in the league will enter the Grand Final.

Standard pitch size 70m x 50m.

A Match is 30 minutes in duration, consisting of 2 x 15-minutes.

#### Championship League and Community Competition (Category Women's)

6 teams - All teams will play two round robin game; top team of the League will become League Champion. Follow up with the top 4 teams in the league will enter the Grand Final.

Standard pitch size 70m x 50m.

A Match is 30 minutes in duration, consisting of 2 x 15-minutes.

#### Community Competition

Play two round robins' game in Pool stage, follow up with the knock-out games.

Half-pitch size setup for each game.

A Match is 20 minutes duration and no half-time break.

### **8.2. TOUCH WINTER LEAGUE**

#### Premiership League (Category Mixed)

All teams will play two round robin game, top team of the League will become League Champion. Follow up with the top 4 teams in the league will enter the Grand Final.

Standard pitch size 70m x 50m for each game.

A Match is 20 minutes duration and no half-time break.

#### Championship League (Category Mixed)

All teams will play two round robin game, top team of the League will become League Champion. Follow up with the top 4 teams in the league will enter the Grand Final.

Standard pitch size 70m x 50m each game.

A Match is 20 minutes duration and no half-time break.

#### Community Competition (Category Mixed)

Play two round robins' game in Pool stage, then split into 2 Divisions play the knock-out games.

Half-pitch size setup for each game.

A Match is 20 minutes duration and no half-time break.

### **8.3. LEAGUE COMPETITION POINTS**

#### **8.3.1. Points will be awarded for League Competition Matches as follows:**

- i. 3 League Competition points for a win
- ii. 1 League Competition points for a draw
- iii. 0 League Competition point for a loss

#### **In the event that a team forfeits a League Competition Match:**

- i. 3 League Competition points will be awarded to the team that receives the forfeiture
- ii. 3 League Competition point will be deducted from the team that forfeits the Match
- iii. The team receiving the forfeiture will receive 5 Match points for and nil Match points against
- iv. The team forfeiting the Match will receive nil Match points for and 5 Match points against.

#### **8.3.2. Where one or more teams have equal League Competition Points at any stage of the Season, the position of each team in the relevant League Competition at that stage shall be determined firstly by the number of wins achieved and then on the basis of match points differential. A Club with a larger number of wins shall be placed higher than a Club with the same number of League Competition points but fewer wins.**

If teams have equal League Competition points and an equal number of wins then a team with a larger difference between match points "for" and match points "against" shall be placed higher in the relevant League Competition than a team with a smaller difference between match points "for" and match points "against".

Should two teams have the same number of League Competition points and the same match points difference, the team having scored more match points "for" shall be placed higher in the relevant League Competition than the team having the lesser number of match points "for".

If the above does not establish different League Competition positions, then the team in the higher position shall be the team that has achieved the higher aggregate match points scored by it in the same season against the other team.

## **9. POSTPONEMENT OF MATCHES**

Subject to Spirit of the Game - The act of good sportsmanship and fair play.

A Club must fulfil its Competition fixture obligations in respect of any Match on the date and at the time appointed for such fixture.

### **9.1. MATCH ABANDONMENT**

Apart from the willful abandonment of a Match, if a Match is abandoned after its commencement under the provisions of the FIT Rulebook, the following procedure applies:

- a) Where a Match has been abandoned at either half-time or any time in the second half, the result and tries scored by each team in the match will stand;
- b) Where a Match has been abandoned during the first half, the result shall be declared a draw;

- c) Where a Match has been declared a draw, then for that Match, each Team will be awarded one Match point and any tries scored will count towards the total points and tries scored by each Team in all their pool matches;

If a Team refuses to play or leaves the Match during play without authority of the Match Referee, that Team will be taken to have abandoned the Match. In these circumstances, that Team will be awarded no points and the opposing Team will receive the three points for a win (regardless of the score).

## **9.2. EXPELLED TEAMS**

If a Team is expelled from the Competition for whatever reason, then:

- a) That Team is deemed to have been awarded no competition points and to have scored no tries or points in Matches; and
- b) All Match results against such Team are deemed null and void. This means that all competition table points awarded in Matches against the expelled Team and tries scored or conceded in Matches against such Team will not be considered in determining standings in the competition table.

## **9.3. MATCH POSTPONED**

Subject to the approval by the HKTA, reasons of the bad weather, unsuitable venue for use, etc. a Match may be rearranged in the match day and postponed to another date. A Match will be rescheduled at a time, date, and venue either as both teams shall agree, or in the absence of agreement as determined by the HKTA / LCP in its absolute discretion.

In the event that a Match is unable to be rearranged, then the game shall be declared a draw, then for that Match each Team will be awarded one Match point and the game will be deemed a 0-0 draw.

## **9.4. MATCH CANCELLATION**

Should there be any bad weather conditions on the Competition and Tournament Day, which will affect the competition, the Tournament will be cancelled as per the following conditions:

- a) If there is Typhoon Signal No.3 or above, and Red or Black Rain Warning hoisted by the HK Observatory, the Tournament will be CANCELLED.
- b) When the Thunderstorm Warning is hoisted by the HK Observatory before or during the Competition or Tournament the decision as to whether a competition will be postponed or cancelled will be made by the Tournament Organizer and Referee Manager.

For further information relating to the weather conditions on a Tournament Day, HKTA will inform all Team Captains of cancellation of the Tournament on any given Match Day by text message and announced on HKTA Facebook as soon as we are made aware (usually 2 hours before game start).



## **10. FAILURE TO HONOUR FIXTURES**

Where the HKTA is of the view that a Club has unjustifiably failed to fulfil its Competition fixture obligations, the Club shall be treated as having forfeited each remaining Match in the relevant Competition and may be deducted up to a further three League Competition points and receive a monetary fine, as the HKTA considers appropriate.

## **11. EFFECT OF FORFEITURE OF 3 OR MORE MATCHES**

Any team which forfeits 3 or more Matches in the same Competition shall, in addition to any other penalty, be liable to disqualification from that Competition, to be decided at the absolute discretion of the HKTA.

## **12. PROMOTION AND RELEGATION SYSTEM**

### **12.1. SUMMER TOUCH LEAGUE**

- a) Promotion and relegation system will only apply for Men's & Women's category League/Competition.
- b) A top team from the Championship League and Community Competition Winning Team, will automatically be promoted to higher Division in coming season.
- c) A bottom team from Premiership League, will automatically be relegated to lower Division in coming season. Not relegation for Championship League in 2023-24 season as to develop the league structure into 8 teams.

The final number of teams in next season 2024-25 Summer League will be:

Premiership League: 8 teams in both Men's & Women's Divisions.

Championship League: 7 teams in both Men's & Women's Divisions.

### **12.2. TOUCH WINTER LEAGUE**

- a) Promotion and relegation system will apply for Touch Winter League/Competition.
- b) A top team from the Championship League and Community Competition Winning Team, will automatically be promoted to higher Division in coming season.
- c) A bottom team from Premiership League and Championship League, will automatically be relegated to lower Division in coming season.

Subject to the approval by the HKTA, any reasons for the team from lower-division rejected to promotion, the existing team in high-division may be able to stay in coming season, as determined by the HKTA / LCP in its absolute discretion.

## **13. GENERAL COMPETITION RULES**

### **13.1. TEAM UNIFORMS AND PLAYERS PERSONAL EQUIPMENT**

- a) Participating players are to be correctly attired in matching Team uniforms. Playing uniforms consist of shirt, singlet or other item as approved by HKTA, or HKTA competition provider, shorts and/or tights and socks.
- b) In the event of a kit clash, it is the responsibility of the designated away team to wear an alternate kit. In the event of any dispute the Referee will be the arbitrator of whether or not a kit clash exists.
- c) All players are to wear a unique identifying number not less than 16cm in height, clearly displayed on the rear of the playing top. Identifying numbers must feature no more than two (2) digits.
- d) Hats or caps are permitted to be worn during a match provided they are safe and meet HKTA regulations.
- e) Players may wear sports spectacles provided they are safe and securely attached. And fill in the declaration form of glasses usage in competition submit back to HKTA:  
<https://www.hkrugby.com/assets/downloads/Declaration-the-use-of-safety-goggles.pdf>

### **13.2. DRAWN MATCHES**

If there is a draw in any knockout competition, the FIT 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Rulebook - Rule 24 "Drop-Off" will be following procedure is used to determine a Winner.

### **13.3. PLAYER SENT OFF**

Player sent off from referee at the match, an automatic two matches suspension will apply, unless the HKTA considers further action is warranted, a bye (or forfeited) game is not countable. Hong Kong Touch Association holds the right to make the final decision.

### **13.4. INCOMPLETE SEASON**

In the event that a league cannot be completed due to Force Majeure or factors outside of the control of HKTA, a league winner will be declared based on the current standings at the time of suspension.

## **14. REFEREES**

Referees play a key role in providing a fun, safe and fair environment for all players to enjoy the game of touch. Referees shall be appointed for each Match by the HKTA or event day Referee Manager. Teams have the responsibility of nominating Referees as part of the team nomination process. The following requirements for any given game day are listed below.

- a) Each Premiership team must nominate at least two qualified referees (Minimum: F.I.T Introductory Touch Referee) on each game day.
- b) Each Championship team must nominate at least one qualified referee (Minimum: F.I.T Introductory Touch Referee) on each game day.
- c) HKTA understand that sometimes teams may need to loan Referees to achieve the required Referee quota. Where a team loans a referee from another team to meet the quota, they must have written



- approval from said Referee or from the Referee's own Touch Club. The written approval must be shared with HKTA 12 hours before the game day.
- d) In the event that the teams in their specific league are unable to fulfil their obligation, three league competition points will be deducted per game day.
- i. Nominated Referees that do not meet all the eligibility requirements will be rejected.
- e) Further, in the event that HKTA faces challenges in recruiting and retaining referees for the Match, and no referees has been appointed, the two teams have to agree upon an appointment of a referee from each team to support the Match.

## **15. UNDER-AGE PLAYERS**

No team may select or play in any adult Competition any Player under the age of 18 unless the following application process has been complied with: (and no Player aged under 16 in any circumstances):

- a) The applicant Player has applied to the HKTA in writing using the application form provided by the HKTA and including with that application:
- i. Endorsement from the chairman of the Club where the Player wishes to play adult touch rugby;
- ii. A letter from the applicant Player's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) supporting the application;
- iii. Reference from current coach or coach of the adult touch rugby team for whom the applicant wishes to play; the form can be downloaded at the "Underage Players Form" section of Union website - <https://www.hkrugby.com/pages/document-downloads>
- b) The application and recommendation should be submitted to the HKTA and will inform the LCP of all applications. The HKTA reserves the right to make the final decision as to whether to allow the applicant to play adult touch rugby.

## **16. MASTER COMPETITION**

No team may select to play any Player under the age of 35-year-olds, all players from Master Competition have to reach 35-year-olds/or above (on or before the game day).

## **17. INTERPRETATION AND BREACH OF L&C RULES**

- 17.1.** The LCP shall have absolute discretion on the interpretation or application of the L&C Rules, including determination of any breach of the L&C Rules, or any matter not provided for in the L&C Rules (including rectifying any administrative error) and shall give directions or make rulings as appropriate. The LCP's decision shall be final and binding.

- 17.2.** Any dispute or request for a determination relating to the interpretation or application of the L&C Rules shall be referred to the LCP. Applications should be submitted in writing to the Head of Rugby Engagement and Transition, or his/her nominee addressed to the LCP along with all supporting documentation. Where a determination is sought in advance of a particular fixture being played, the application must be submitted to the LCP at least 72 hours before the relevant fixture. The LCP's decision shall be final and binding.
- 17.3.** Where there has been any omission or error in the L&C Rules the LCP will have power to correct such error or omission in the manner they see fit.
- 17.4.** Should a Club/Team breach any of the L&C Rules, in addition to any express forfeiture provisions set out above, the relevant Club/Team that breached the L&C Rules may be deducted up to a further three League Competition points and/or the Club may receive a monetary fine, as the LCP considers appropriate.

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