

Chelmsford Hockey Club

Player Selection Policy

Preamble

This document is a policy adopted by the Management Committee of Chelmsford Hockey Club and applies to all teams playing senior hockey. Senior team selection is required to comply with the Developmental Selection Policy, which covers the development of young players, and should be read in conjunction with that document.

In making selection decisions in respect of individual players and teams Chelmsford Hockey Club (“CHC”, or the “Club”) will:

1. Follow the principles and guidance set out by England Hockey in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as adopted by the Club; and
2. The requirements set out in the EH Regulations (particularly appendix 4) under “Player Eligibility and Team Selection”. This broadly requires teams to be selected in hierarchical order and for individuals to be appointed to a team based on their ability in order that clubs put out the strongest teams they can at the highest level and do not seek to unduly strengthen a lower league side.

Selection decisions are, inevitably, a matter of judgement when it comes to individual players and their performance. The Club intends that selection should be a matter of consensus wherever possible and individual selection decisions should be made by a combination of coaches and captains working together in the best interests of the Club and playing members.

No policy can cater for all possible scenarios, but this document sets out a series of responsibilities, principles and procedures to assist coaches, captains and players make appropriate decisions so that Club members have a good playing experience and, where desired, the opportunity to develop their playing potential and understand the context in which they may progress and be selected to play.

Chairs of Selection

In accordance with Club rules a Chair of Selection will be appointed to each of the Men’s and Ladies’ sides to manage the selection process. The primary responsibility of the Chair of Selection is to organise the Selection Committee (see below), to ensure the smooth running of the selection process on an equitable and consistent basis across the teams, to support coaches and captains in the selection process, to assist settle any concerns raised in relation to selection decisions and to ensure that team selection complies with Club policy.

Governance

The two Chairs of Selection will report to the Club Captain, as the representative of the Management Committee, in respect of their performance of the role. The Club Captain is entitled to review that performance on an annual basis. The Club Captain and Chairs of Selection will together assess the Selection Policy on a regular basis and may make recommendations to the Management Committee for suggested changes where they consider it appropriate.

Coaches, captains and players can raise concerns to the Club Captain where they believe that a Chair of Selection is making or supporting decisions that are not in accordance with the principles of the Selection Policy as set out in this document. The Club Captain is not, however, a further point of appeal in matters of

judgement as to an individual player's ability or the team in which they should play; where the Chair of Selection undertakes this role and whose assessment is final (as set out below).

Management of Selection and the Selection Committee

The Chair of Selection will be responsible for agreeing, with coaches and captains (together the "Selection Committee"), the detail of the administration of the selection process (in line with the comments set out below) and to ensure that Club selection follows the guidelines agreed as Club policy. The Selection Committee of each of the Men's and Ladies' sides will meet throughout the season, as agreed by the Selection Committee, in order to agree the details of the administration of selection and any other matters needed to ensure the smooth and equitable running of team selection and player performance.

Where appointed, individual team coaches (who are expected to either play for or be a regular match day coach for a specified team) will have final responsibility, in consultation with the relevant team captain, for selection for the side that they coach.

Individual captains, where there is no appointed team coach, will have primary responsibility for selection of their teams, in consultation with Club Coaches, where appropriate. In cases of dispute between captains and/or Club Coaches as to individual player selection, the Chair of Selection will have responsibility for any final selection.

Where the Chair of Selection identifies that a player has not been selected or where they appear to have been selected in contravention of the Player Selection Policy the Chair of Selection is entitled to enquire as to why and to request and require changes if in their judgement this is necessary.

The Selection Committee is also expected to act as a forum for captains and coaches to discuss wider matters related to the match day playing experience of the Club's teams (and issues raised by playing members), including but not limited to setting objectives for team performance, training matters, umpire provision and facilities. Any broad concerns can then be fed back to the Club Captain through the Chair of Selection for consideration by the Management Committee as necessary.

Administration of Selection

The Club is committed to playing at the highest standard that its teams are capable of and, in recognition of that, provides particular support to its performance teams. At present a performance team is defined as L1, L2, M1 and M2. The remaining teams are referred to as "Club sides".

The consequence for selection is that performance teams select first and can reasonably expect that they can routinely field larger squads than lower league sides. Accordingly, they are entitled to select players as needed and would not normally be expected to provide players to lower league sides to make up their numbers. However, this preference needs to be tempered by an acknowledgment that no performance or any other more senior side (where themselves short of players) can make decisions that unnecessarily disadvantage Club sides. In the event of any disputes the relevant Chair of Selection will aim to reach a consensus but will ultimately make a decision based on the wider interests of the whole Men's or Ladies' sides at that particular time.

Squads are selected by the most senior team first and then in sequence by each team in order of league seniority. Coaches and captains are expected to discuss and agree movement of players in order to complete their sides in accordance with the guidance on selection set out below. Where a squad has a shortfall the more senior coach/captain is expected to discuss with the next captain down the players they may select first (and certainly before contacting players directly) but ultimately have priority for selection.

The club acknowledges that this may mean that the lowest league team is unable to field a squad and forfeits a game but notes that this is what EH league rules require.

Where players are likely to be asked to play for a team other than their usual team and this has been agreed between captains they should be contacted as soon as possible, by the captain of their usual team and notified of that possibility. Final squad selection should aim to be completed as early as possible in the week and once complete teams should be published to players. Teams should be announced by Thursday at the latest so players can plan accordingly.

Where players are asked to move squads, particularly where they are being asked to play for a lower team, they are entitled to be provided with an explanation from a coach or captain as to why they have been so selected. This explanation should come in the first instance from the captain or coach from the higher ranked team (whoever is most appropriate to undertake this communication will vary between teams). Players are entitled to receive an explanation for their movement between teams on each occasion. Where the move is planned as part of a longer-term strategy then both the player and the receiving team captain/coach should be advised of the reasons behind this. Players being selected for a more senior team and players stepping up should be expected to play several games in order to be properly assessed at that higher level. Appropriate care should be taken amongst coaches and captains when considering carefully the best way of passing on selection decisions to individual players.

Basis of Selection

These are intended to be broad guidelines and it should be noted that player availability is often the biggest influence on selection. For the purposes of selection players are regarded as club players first and team players second. While *de facto* squads take shape over the course of a season that does not create an entitlement (on either a coach/captain or a player's part) to select or be selected to play for a particular side on a given match day.

All players should be selected primarily based on their playing ability. Coaches and captains (particularly for more senior sides) can also reasonably take account of playing positions, understanding of squad tactics, individual injuries and player fitness in making their selections.

Note that attendance at training is not a requirement for selection for Club sides. Performance team coaches and captains can, however, set specific requirements here as they feel appropriate. For new (including club junior players) or returning players it can be expected that they should attend training, at least initially, so that a preliminary assessment can be made as to their playing ability.

Nonetheless, players should be aware that attendance at training is encouraged and that, over the course of a season, those players that attend training regularly are more likely to progress their playing ability, both at an individual level and in their understanding and execution of a team's playing tactics. On this basis it should be expected that such players would progress to more senior sides or hold their places in comparison to players who are unable or prefer not to train.

Finally, players should be aware that availability on a given week could mean that the club must withdraw a side from a match or that the club has too many available players and that players get moved down the playing sides. Players being asked to play down in these circumstances, or for playing performance issues, are reasonably entitled to expect that they are given selection priority in the next team down. Either of the possibilities noted above in relation to player numbers is likely to have a disproportionate impact on club members in the two lowest sides and selection will seek to mitigate this so that the club can offer the maximum number of club members a game each week, provided that this does not compromise a particular squad's ability to be managed effectively on match day.

Junior members

The Club actively encourages participation in senior hockey by junior players, who are eligible for selection for senior hockey from the age of thirteen. The Club considers that the development of junior players is of particular importance for its performance sides and will look to provide accelerated coaching and playing opportunities for those junior players identified as “future potential high-performance players” (i.e., where it is anticipated that the player will have the ability to play in the Club’s performance squads at a future date).

While the Developmental Selection Policy outlines the key considerations in providing playing opportunities for young players, the basis for selection for junior players otherwise is the same as for other club players with the following additional general caveats:

1. Depending on the stage of an individual’s playing career a junior player is more likely to develop faster than a senior player and, all things being equal, including actual match day performance, may be promoted to a more senior side ahead of an adult player;
2. The Club does not run junior teams in its senior league sides (which typically require a match day coach and a core of adults willing to play in such a designated squad). Accordingly, the total number of junior players in a squad may have to be limited to allow for the orderly management of a particular squad; and
3. The Club is mindful that some players within its junior programme often have multiple opportunities to play hockey (including school and England Hockey programmes) while a senior member may only have a single playing opportunity each week. Selectors will therefore be mindful that, where availability is high, denying a senior player a playing place in favour of a junior player may have a disproportionate impact on senior players, particularly in the lower sides of the club.

For the avoidance of doubt junior players who only participate in the Club’s senior hockey sides are treated in every respect the same as adult players, other than the considerations outlined in the Developmental Selection Policy and for those also identified as potential future high performers.

Limited availability and Occasional Players

Club members can have external commitments – Saturday school, shiftwork, childcare, for example – that may limit their ability to play at certain times or on certain match days. Such demands aside, these players are typically committed to playing hockey when they can and have full membership. Wherever possible the Club will aim to offer such players a game in the side that is most appropriate to their ability and within the constraints of EH league regulations, as these apply certain restrictions.

The Club also offers a limited playing membership and has junior players who may not regularly be available but offer to play for senior sides when they can. These individuals can be described as “occasional” players. While the Club will endeavour to offer such players a game when they are available for selection, such individuals should be aware that they may not be selected in a particular side in preference to a regular player (who might otherwise be dropped or not get a game) and may only be offered a game which they may regard as not at their playing standard.

Goalkeepers

It is noted that teams are reliant on a smaller group of individuals to play as goalkeepers. Selection for goalkeepers has potentially greater personal impact as goalkeepers rarely play other positions or rotate within a squad and so a decision to move them across squads can have a meaningful consequence on the standard of hockey they may play. Many of the club’s goalkeepers have and do play two games in a weekend to cover shortfalls which is an important commitment benefiting club members. Nonetheless, goalkeepers remain subject to selection on ability and while the club acknowledges that that may lead to goalkeepers

leaving the club in order to play at their desired standard (with a wider adverse impact than an outfield player leaving) the principle of selection on ability must remain.

Disputes and Appeals

Where players are not satisfied with where they are being selected to play or the basis of their movement between teams, they should discuss this first with the coaches and/or captain(s) concerned. It should be noted that player ability (and indeed relative ability in comparison to other players) is inevitably a subjective assessment and individuals may disagree, such that a satisfactory resolution isn't always possible.

Where a player is either unhappy with the explanation or feels that the explanation doesn't reflect Club policy then they are entitled to appeal to the relevant Chair of Selection, in the first instance, who will then investigate. Appeals to the Club Captain may only be made in the event that it is felt that neither the relevant captain nor the chair of selection has made a decision in line with the Player Selection Policy.

Dated: 23 March 2022

Version 4 (new draft).

Adopted by:

Club Management Committee [day]th [month], 2022

David Kitchiner
Chairman