

THE HONG KONG LEGAL LEAGUE RULES

Each team and individual player, by virtue of their participation in the Hong Kong Legal League (the “Legal League”), agree to abide by the following rules.

1. Scheduling of Matches

- 1.1 Matches must be played according to the schedule determined by the Executive Committee (hereafter referred to as “ExCo”). This schedule will be prepared by the Fixtures Officer and it is the responsibility of all teams to observe and adhere to the schedule and any amendments thereto.
- 1.2 Matches will normally be played on Saturday afternoons and where possible not start any earlier than 1:00pm and no later than 6:30pm. Teams cannot refuse to play at, or during the period 1:00pm to 6:30pm on Saturdays nor can they refuse to travel to the allocated ground. Games can be allocated outside these time slots by the fixtures officer if its a prior agreement by both teams or is shown as their preference time slots in the sheet they fill. Matches may also be played on Monday and Friday Nights no earlier than 7.30pm however the ground must be fairly central for all teams to get to in sufficient time after work.
- 1.3 Matches may be scheduled on weekday evenings or on public holidays depending on the availability of pitches or if postponed or catch up games are required.
- 1.4 Matches may be played on artificial grass pitches and the size of the pitch must meet FIFA's minimum requirements for 11-aside matches.
- 1.5 Where teams have arranged their own pitches, those teams will normally play their matches on their own ground, however, when both teams have their own pitches a “home and away” system should operate where possible. In addition if ExCo needs to relocate these games for any reason, teams must play at whatever pitch has been allocated to them and under those circumstances cannot insist on the game being played at their own ground.
- 1.6 Matches will start in September and attempt to finish no later than June where applicable.
- 1.7 Matches will not be scheduled over public holiday weekends, the HK Rugby sevens, Easter, Christmas and the week before, Chinese New Year or any Public Holidays. This also includes any other weekend mutually agreed as a holiday period by the majority of the team managers. If teams are able to get a competitive side out they should notify the League Chairman or the Fixtures Officer for a possible fixture.
- 1.8 The Referees Officer has the sole right to appoint officials from one or more organizations where deemed appropriate for the league. The Referees Officer may have the right to request a particular match official from an organization if the situation deems appropriate for the fixture.

2. Postponement of Matches

- 2.1 Teams are requested to advise the Fixtures Officer as early as possible (and at least a month before the event) if a special event that involves a majority of the team is planned, such as stag weekends, weddings, football trips etc. In those circumstances, the team will not be required to play a fixture on the weekend of the event.

- 2.2 If a team cannot fulfil a fixture, the following rules will apply:
- (a) Should a team be unable to fulfill their fixture either by playing the fixture themselves or by finding an alternative team to play the fixture within 13 days of the fixture-taking place they will be deemed to forfeit the game 3-0 and be responsible for pitch costs for the fixture.
 - (b) **NB: teams can no longer use the ONE “free postponement”.**
 - (c) After first forfeiture, fines will increase to \$1,000 (exclusive of pitch cost and referee fee).
- 2.3 Teams cannot postpone matches without prior authority from the Fixtures Officer. Any team wishing to seek a postponement must send an email to the Fixtures Officer using the guidelines in 2.1 clearly stating the reasons why the team wishes to postpone the match a month in advance.
- 2.4 Whether a postponement is granted is at the sole discretion of the Fixtures Officer. The Fixtures Officer will aim to accommodate requests for postponements if pitches are available or are likely to be available over the course of that season.
- 2.5 If a postponement is granted, the Fixtures Officer will re-arrange the time and date of the postponed matches subject to pitch availability. These games may be replayed weekday evenings or on non-scheduled playing weekends and both teams must play at the time/date scheduled by the Fixtures Officer.
- 3. Non-Appearance of Team**
- 3.1 Failure to have at least 7 players ready to start the match no more than 10 minutes after the scheduled kick off time shall be deemed as failure to appear and the offending team shall be subject to a fine and disciplinary measures as determined by ExCo and as outlined in the Disciplinary Guidelines. (3 nil loss recorded to the offending team and 3 points to the opposition)
- 3.2 A team which turns up to a fixture with less than 7 players must pay both pitch a referee fess in full for the fixture. If a friendly is arranged between the captains of both teams then they may agree to share the costs if mutually agreed by both sides.
- 4. Duration and Abandonment of Matches**
- 4.1 The duration of League matches shall be two 40 minute halves. If, for any reason, two 40 minute halves cannot be played, teams shall play two halves of equal length of the maximum length that would fit within the window of time booked for the match. If it is not possible to play at least two 25 minute halves of equal length, the game must be abandoned and be replayed in full on another date.
- 4.2 If a match is abandoned at ANY stage of the game due to circumstances of no fault of either team the result stands if 75% of the game has been played regardless if the halves are not equal. For a 70 minute game that is 52.5 minutes. If 75% of the game is not played then the match is abandoned and replayed in full on another date
- 4.3 If the game is a knockout fixture like a semi-final or final of the Champions League and the scores are level after 75% of the match has been played but the game is abandoned, then a full replay will take place at a later date to determine the winner.

5. Inclement Weather

- 5.1 If, due to inclement weather, there is doubt as to whether a match is to be played, both teams must contact [the Leisure and Cultural Services Department] to confirm whether the ground they are scheduled to play on is officially closed. A match will be cancelled if the ground is closed two hours before the scheduled starting time of that match.
- 5.2 Both team managers should make every effort to determine if the pitch is opened or closed on the day. If the pitch is open even with inclement weather and a team fails to turn up this will be deemed a forfeit and the penalties will apply as per Section 3 of the Rules.

6. Non-Appearance of Match Officials

- 6.1 There must be at least two match official present for a fixture to take place. If two match officials fail to turn up then the fixture will be rescheduled to a later date. No scores will be accepted without at least two match officials regardless if a game took place or not.

7. Registration of Players

- 7.1 All players in the League must be registered with a team before they can participate in any matches scheduled by the League. Teams may register a maximum of 40 players at any given time (subject to the transfer restrictions outlined below).
- 7.2 To register a player (or re-register a former player), a team must add the player's full name as shown on his or her Hong Kong Identity Card or Passport **as well as first 4 characters of their HKID number**, to the team's squad list (as defined below) and send a revised squad list to the Registration Secretary.
- 7.3 For a player to be eligible to play in a match, the Registration Secretary must have received his or her registration details at least 24 hours prior to that game being played, subject to Rule 7.5.
- 7.4 Should an unregistered player take part in any league or cup fixture, the team who played the unregistered player will be asked to provide a report to ExCo for the reason the unregistered player played. If ExCo has sufficient proof that an unregistered player played the following will occur:
- i. Be fined HK\$500.
 - ii. Forfeit the game with the three (3) points being allocated to the opposition.
 - iii. The match forfeit would result in a three-nil [3-0] loss being recorded against the offending team.
 - iv. NB: if a non-registered player was not noticed until after the game had been completed yet the offending team had lost the fixture by a margin greater than three-nil [3-0], the actual match result would still stand.
- 7.5 If a team needs to register players on the day of a match in order to ensure they have at least 11 players available to play, the new players must notify the opposing team of the fact that they are being registered that day. This may also include transfer of players on the day where the team manager must also outline the player who is transferred out of the team squad.

- 7.6 Moonlighting Players: Players cannot be registered for more than one team. If a player is registered for one team and plays for another, the second team shall provide a report to EXCO for the reason the unregistered player played. Exco has the power to reverse the result or declare a forfeit as they deem is appropriate for playing an unregistered player. Should a player be caught playing for a team he is not registered with a second time, that individual player will face a suspension from the League.

8. Squad Lists

- 8.1 Each team must provide to Registration Secretary prior to the commencement of a season and maintain a squad list containing the full name of each registered player in that team's squad (the "Squad List") **as well as the four (4) characters of their HK ID card**. The Squad List can be added at any time throughout the season however once the 40 player limit is reached any changes will require a Transfer of Player per Section 9. in the Rules.
- 8.2 Each team must have a copy of its Squad List available for inspection by match officials and/or the opposition team prior to matches if requested either by paper or electronically on the internet on a mobile or computer device.
- 8.3 ExCo members and/or match officials may require a player or players to prove that they are properly registered. This may include, but is not limited to, the inspection of a team's Squad List prior to a match taking place. Failure to provide proof of a player's identity may be taken to indicate that the player or players concerned are not registered. In such circumstances, the team in question has 5 days to prove the identity of the player in question. ExCo may impose further disciplinary measures on the team involved including reversing the result or declaring a forfeit if deemed appropriate.

9. Transfer of Players

- 9.1 Each team may make 16 player transfers per season. A transfer shall occur whenever a team registers a new player after the commencement of a season and deregisters a current player in the Squad List.
- 9.2 Players may transfer from one League team to another. Any player wishing to transfer does not require the previous manager approval however that manager should be notified. The current team must provide full details of the player to the Registration Secretary.
- 9.3 Players will be entitled to transfer between Legal League teams over the course of a year, but cannot play for more than 2 Legal League teams over the course of any one season.
- 9.4 When a transfer takes place, if that player has already played in a cup game for another team, the player cannot play in any cup games for the new team for the remainder of that season.

10. Safety

- 10.1 All players must wear shin pads. Referees must not allow players to play if they are not wearing shin pads. If a team cannot field enough players with shin pads then rule 3 “Non Appearance of Team” will apply.
- 10.2 Players will not be allowed to continue to play with visibly bleeding wounds.

11. Substitutes

- 11.1 Unlimited substitutes may be used by teams. Substituted players may return to the match under a “roll-on, roll-off” system. The ball must be out of play for substitution to occur and the referee must stop proceedings.

12. Team Strips

- 12.1 Each team in the League shall have a home strip and an away strip of differing colours. Numbered strips are mandatory and if a player is reported by a referee and there is possible sanctions, proof of the player’s number and identity must be shown to both referee and the opposing representative if the player’s identity is at all in question.
- 12.2 It is the responsibility of the away team (the team named second on the fixture list) to ensure that there is no similarity of colours between the teams at any given match. The away team must change shirts if the colours are similar.
- 12.3 New teams that are accepted into the league must have either:
 - a. Two different strips
 - b. A colour which doesn't match current existing teams in the league.
- 12.4 Team captains must be clearly identified during a game by either an armband, headband, sweatbands or very tape wrapped around the players arm. The Team Captain along with the management should be responsible for the teams conduct on the field.

13. Disciplinary Procedures

- 13.1 The League will appoint a Disciplinary Committee (the “LDC”) comprising representatives from six teams. The LDC shall have the power to make all decisions concerning the discipline of teams and/or players.
- 13.2 Where an incident is reported to the LDC, the LDC in its sole discretion shall decide whether it is necessary to conduct an investigation into the incident. If the LDC considers that no investigation is necessary, the LDC may impose such a sanction on the team or player involved as it thinks fit, provided that the sanction is in accordance with the Disciplinary Guidelines. If the LDC considers that an investigation is necessary prior to deciding what (if any) sanction should be imposed, the LDC shall advise the team or player concerned that it is conducting an investigation into the incident prior to its next fixture.

- 13.3 Any team or player the subject of a disciplinary review by the LDC may make submissions to the LDC sufficient time (at least 3 days) prior to its next fixture of receiving notice from the LDC that an investigation of the incident is being conducted. Any other team or player involved in the incident under investigation (or a witness thereto), may also make submissions if requested to do so by the LDC.
- 13.4 The LDC may also require the player, or a representative of the team, whose conduct is being investigated to attend a disciplinary hearing. Failure to attend such a hearing may result in further disciplinary sanctions in accordance with the Disciplinary Guidelines. The LDC shall advise the player or team concerned in writing of its decision prior to its next fixture of the player or team's submission being received, or the hearing, whichever is later.

14. Disciplinary Records and Suspension of Players

- 14.1 Where a player is suspended for on-field conduct, teams must automatically suspend that player. Teams must keep their own record of their players' disciplinary offences.
- 14.2 Any suspension of a player will result on all team managers in the league being emailed once the decision has been made of the player or players in question and the length of their sentence.

15. Finance

- 15.1 Teams shall be required to pay an annual fee for pitch fees and other league expenses. The Treasurer shall advise each team of the amount of the annual fee prior to the commencement of the season.
- 15.2 Teams shall be required to pay the annual fee upfront, usually prior to the commencement of the season.
- 15.3 Teams must pay the annual fee on or before the due date. Failure to do so will result in the amount of money owed being increased in accordance with the Disciplinary Guidelines.
- 15.4 Teams who bring a pitch to the league and is accepted by the fixtures secretary for a league game will be fully reimbursed the sum it costs the team representative. The fixtures secretary has the sole right to either accept or refuse the pitch offered to the league.
- 15.5 Any team that fails to pay its annual fees within the period of time required by the League shall be fined an additional \$500 PER MONTH until the payment is made.
- 15.6 Payment is required after the game for each team to the match officials. This is usually shared between the teams at an agreed nominal fee by the league and the referee official body at the start of the season. If the match officials have to travel further than usual, the payment to officials will increase per team to pay for the match officials travel expenses.

16. Match Reports

- 16.1 After a match both team representatives must SMS the result to the league secretary of the match. The SMS should also contain any goal scorer's names, match details and a simple refs rating from 0 to 5. 0 = very poor performance to 5 = excellent performance.

17. The Competition League Format

- 17.1 Each match will be awarded 3 points for a win, 1 point for a draw and 0 points for a loss.
- 17.2 In Division One each team must play each other twice for the competition to be deemed completed or unless mathematically the winner of the league cannot be contested with remaining fixtures left. In this case the Exco has the power to declare the league champions if circumstances warrant it due to adverse weather conditions or unavailability of pitches. This can only occur when no other competitions like the Champions League (Section 19.) standings can be affected.
- 17.3 When all games have been completed the winner of the league will be the team that has the most points. If at the end of the competition two or more teams are equal in points then goal difference will decide the winner; followed by the team who scored the most goals. If two or more teams have identical points, goals for and goals against then the games played between each other will decide the winners. If that still remains the same then a one-off Championship game will be played with Penalties to decide the league winners if the scores remain equal.
- 17.4 As of 2015/2016 Season Division 2 will initially have 16 teams playing each other once. Then Division 2 will then be divided equally into 8 teams in Division Two and Division Three depending on position of the team on the table at the time of the completion of all of the first 15 rounds of games. The teams will play only the respective sides in their new Division for the remaining games of the competition. The points accumulated from the first 15 games will be carried on into the new split competitions.
- 17.5 At the completion of the competitions the two bottom teams from Division One will get demoted to Second Division while the top two teams in Division Two will get promoted to Division One. As for promotion and demotion between Divisions Two and Three the decision will be decided prior to 2016/2017 Season depending on the numbers accepted into the league for that season at the AGM meeting.

18. The Cup Competition (Champions League format has been abandoned in 2015/2016 preference for straight knock out Cup competition)

- 18.1. All matches in Cup will be 35 minutes long each half. The semi-finals and finals will have 10 minutes extra time (if pitch hire is available) should scores remain level at full time. Should pitch hire not allow for extra time, the match will go straight to penalties, 5 penalties per team will be taken. Should the scores remain level after 5 penalties, sudden death penalties will determine the winner.
- 18.2 If a player plays for another team during the season he cannot play for another team in the Champions League as he is cup tied.

18.3 The first round of matches each team will be selected by hat there will be no seeding. The winner of each of the first round of games will go directly to the main cup competition, while the losers will be given another chance in a separate Plate competition. From this point on it's a straight knockout competition.

19. Language

19.1 These rules are published in the English language only. If translations to Chinese language are made they are to be considered unofficial. In the interests of enhancing the management of the League, ExCo has the power to interpret the meaning of rules and to amend them during the season.

ADDENDUM 1 - DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES

These guidelines constitute an indication of the action that may be taken by the LDC and/or ExCo in respect of breaches of discipline.

1 RED CARDS

1.1 Any player receiving a red card (or two yellow cards in one match) automatically receives a one-match suspension. The League will be informed immediately after the completion of the game and the players' name will be circulated by email on the League's management list to inform teams which players are suspended for the following weeks fixtures.

1.2 Any player found guilty of serious foul play, as defined by FIFA will be subject to a further suspension of at least one match in addition to the automatic one-match suspension.

1.3 Any player found guilty of violent conduct, as defined by FIFA will be subject to a further suspension of at least two matches in addition to the automatic one-match suspension.

1.4 Any player receiving two red cards during the course of any one season will be subject to suspension of at least three matches. Any player receiving three red cards during the course of any one season will be subject to suspension of at least five matches.

1.5 Any player receiving a red card during the course of the season be subject to a \$500 fine. With an extra \$100 for each month there is a delayed payment.

2 FIGHTING

2.1 Any player found guilty of fighting will be suspended for a minimum of three matches.

2.2 Any teams found to have been involved in a prolonged period of fighting without intervention from the team management to stop the incident may be subject to suspension from the League with a view to being expelled.

- 2.3 Any teams found to have been involved in fighting, but where it can be clearly shown that the team management intervened to stop the incident may be placed on probation. Individual players involved in the incident should be identified by the team management so that appropriate disciplinary action can be taken in accordance with these guidelines.

3 PLAYERS AND MANAGERS CONDUCT:

- 3.1 Team Managers, Team Reps, supporters and players standing on the touch-line should not seek to confront verbally or otherwise players on the pitch or match officials. In future, if such conduct is reported as leading to a disciplinary incident, the DC will consider imposing a penalty upon the person initiating the confrontation. Unless otherwise directed by match officials, team members should not normally enter the field of play during a match.

4 ASSAULTS ON OFFICIALS

- 4.1 Any player or team found guilty of any form of intimidation including oral, written or other non-physical abuse of any League or match official at any time will be subject to a suspension of two matches.
- 4.2 Any player or team official found guilty of physical abuse of any League or match official will be subject to a suspension of between three years to life.

These guidelines are subject to regular review by ExCo and may be amended without reference to members of the League.

ADDENDUM 2 – RULES TO VETERANS (LEGENDS) LEAGUE (OVER 35’S)

The below rules were agreed upon in a meeting held on 18 August 2014 and take precedence over the normal leagues were applicable for the Over 35’s “Legends League”. Where a ruling is required and doesn’t appear below for the “Legends League” the normal league rules above will be applied where appropriate.

1 REGISTRATION

1. All players’ full names appearing on proof of identification as well as date of birth must be given for registration.
2. The registration process can take place either via email or on the whatsapp group 15 minutes before kick-off including that player’s date of birth.
3. The player must be either 35 years or older on the day of the fixture to be eligible to play a league game. All players names registered will appear on the league website or on the whatsapp group prior to kick-off. A player on neither list will be deemed not eligible to play and the team will be subject to 3-0 forfeit.

4. All players must provide an official form of photo id at every league game: HK ID, Passport or overseas licence, the ID must contain the player's date of birth as well as a photo.
5. An opposing manager prior to the game will check the opposition teams players. The manager has the right to request any player to produce an ID as outlined in 1.4 above. If there is any question of the players age at any time prior, during or after the match. If the player cannot produce any form of ID outlined they will not be permitted to play the match. If the player has already played the team will be subject to a 3-0 forfeit and possible fines.
6. All managers must give the match officials a team registration form prior to the game will all players' names and numbers on it. The ref will mark goals, yellow cards and red cards on the match sheet. Both managers and refs will sign the respective team sheets after the game. A clear photo of the registration form after the completion of the match will then be taken and put on to the whatsapp group.
7. Teams are allowed to register 40 players at any one time with unlimited transfers.
8. A player can only play for maximum of 2 teams per season. Once they have deregistered from one side they cannot go back to previous side or play for another team.

2. DURATION OF MATCHES, SCHEULDE MATCH TIME AND FORFEITS

- 2.1. A match can commence as long as both teams have a minimum of 7 players.
- 2.2. Matches will be 40 minutes each half.
- 2.3. A team must have at least 7 players no later than 15 minutes after scheduled time for the game to commence without a forfeit.
- 2.4. If the playing time is reduced a match can be reduced to 35 or 30 minutes long each half depending on the amount of pitch time available and agreement between respective managers and the match officials.
- 2.5. Games will be played on Saturday mornings no earlier than 10am and no later than 1pm. Midweek nights if a team can bring a regular good pitch on that night. No games will not be scheduled on Sundays.
- 2.6. Teams are allowed to make a request postponement 14 days before the fixture is to be played at no cost for either team. A team was allowed to do this only twice a season as to avoid the system being over abused.
- 2.7. A team who are unable to field a side within the 13 days of the fixture taking place will be deemed a 3-0 forfeit and all pitch cost will be covered by that team.
- 2.8. Teams who are No Show will forfeit the game as well as pay for all pitch and referee costs associated with the match.

3. NUMBER OF PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- 3.1. A team will have no more than 11 players on the pitch. They may however have as many reserve players as they like.

3.2. Substitutions are unlimited and are roll on roll off. All substitutions must take place at the half way line and the referee must be notified before a player can enter the field.

4. Disciplinary

4.1. Any player receiving a straight red card will be fined \$500 and receive at least a one match ban. The player will be subject to a disciplinary committee for possible further sanction as deemed fit.

4.2. A player receiving a fourth yellow card in a season will be suspended for one game and receive also \$500 fine.

All other rules are per the official FIFA rules.

Note: Many thanks to Yau Yee League as some rules have been taken from that competition.