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Stokesley Men's Hockey Club – Selection Policy 2025/2026

1. Objectives

The primary aim of team selection at Stokesley Men's Hockey Club is to field the strongest possible teams by choosing the best available combination of players. Our goal is to win matches while also supporting player development, particularly by providing opportunities for younger and less experienced players to progress.

Selection strives to be objective and takes into account a range of factors, including:

- Versatility, skill, fitness, and teamwork

- Contribution to the squad, positive attitude, and commitment

- Availability and reliability on match days

- Attendance and engagement at training (as this underpins teamwork and cohesion)

We acknowledge that some players participate mainly because of friendships within certain squads. While this will not prevent players from advancing when they are ready, we recognise that certain teams exist mainly for social purposes. Their composition may therefore allow for more flexibility, provided this does not undermine competitive or developmental priorities.

2. Principles

- **Eligibility**: Only members who have paid their membership fees, or have an active payment plan in place by 1 September, are eligible for selection (unless otherwise agreed by the committee).

- **Performance & Progression**: The best available match-fit players will be selected for the 1st XI, followed by the 2nd XI. For the 3rd XI, factors such as ability, balance, potential, and availability will also be considered.

- **Fair Distribution**: To ensure no team is disadvantaged, squad numbers will be balanced before additional players are allocated. No team may exceed 16 named players per match.

- **Rotation & Feedback**: Outfield players typically move up or down by no more than one team in a given week. Any player moved down will be offered feedback from the higher-team captain if requested.

- **Commitment**: Players are expected to remain available for selection in any team or position, provided reasonable notice is given. Personal circumstances will be considered at the committees discretion. Failure to do so will be treated as unavailability for **both** that week **and** the following week.

- **Conduct**: All players are expected to follow the Stokesley Men's Hockey Club Code of Conduct (available on the club's website).

These principles apply equally to outfield players and goalkeepers, although flexibility may be required for goalkeepers where availability is limited.

3. Balancing of Squads

To remain compliant with league rules and to ensure fairness, the following allocation framework applies when availability is low:

Total Players Available	1st XI	2nd XI	3rd XI
33	11	11	11
34	12	11	11
35	12	12	11
36	12	12	12

Beyond this, the rule is:

1. Each team must first have 11 players before any team is allocated a 12th.
2. Each must then have 12 before any team is allocated a 13th.
3. Once all three teams have 12, any remaining players may be added freely up to 16 per team.

If more than 16 players are available for a team, selection will be rotated fairly to ensure equal playing opportunities across the season.

4. Selection Process

- **Committee Approach**: Team captains collaborate and provide input during selection, with oversight from the selection chairperson. The committee ensures fair distribution of players and adherence to policy.

- **Deadlines**: Players must confirm their availability by **Wednesday at 18:00** to be considered for selection. This can be done by updating the club wide selection spreadsheet (for full details see appendix A at the end of this document). Squads will be announced that evening. There will also be a single club WhatsApp poll if you struggle with the spreadsheet which we will monitor.

- **Late Changes**: Any changes after the Wednesday meeting can only be made by the selection chairperson. Players becoming available after this deadline will be allocated at the chair's discretion, which may result in knock-on changes across teams.

- **Communication**: Captains are responsible for informing players of their selection. Sensitivity is required when a player moves to a lower team, with communication ideally coming from both the former and new captain.

- **Administration**: Match fee invoices will be sent monthly. If unpaid after 30 days, players will not be considered available for selection until the debt is cleared.

5. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually before the start of the season, or sooner if required. Updates will be communicated to all members.

Appendix A – Player Availability

To ensure smooth and fair team selection, all players must keep their availability up to date in the club's Google Docs spreadsheet. This allows captains and the selection committee to plan effectively.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. **Open the Spreadsheet**

   The link is available in the club WhatsApp group or via any of the captains.

2. **Find Your Name**

   - Locate your name in the **left-hand column** of the sheet.

3. **Update Availability**

   - Use the dates listed at the **top of the spreadsheet** to find the correct week.

   - Enter one of the following in the relevant box:
     - **Y** for **available** – the square will turn **GREEN**
     - **N** for **unavailable** – the square will turn **RED**
     - **?** if you are **unsure/confirm later** – the square will turn **ORANGE**

4. **Update Regularly**

   - You can confirm your availability for the **entire season in advance** if you wish.

   - You may **change your availability at any time** by editing the spreadsheet.

5. **Deadlines**

   - All players must ensure their availability is up to date by **Wednesday at 18:00** each week.

   - If you fail to update your status by this deadline, you may not be considered for selection that week.

6. **Responsibility**

   - Keeping availability current is the responsibility of each player.

   - Failure to update availability repeatedly will affect your selection chances and may result in being treated as **unavailable**.

Important Reminder:
Accurate availability is vital for ensuring fair selection and balanced squads. Please respect the deadlines and update promptly to support your team and captains.