

NATIONAL LEAGUE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Please note that the below should not be read as a substitute for the competition rules

NL COMPETITION RULES – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Please note that the FAQs, but in conjunction with them. Where relevant, competition rules are also detailed below.

The answers below are valid as of 11th September 2024.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO ENTER TEAMS IN NATIONAL LEAGUE COMPETITIONS?

The start of the planning process for each National League season involves establishing how many teams wish to take part in the competition. Currently, we run four divisions for both men and women (Premier, and Divisions 1, 2 and 3).

In considering how many teams to enter in the NL, Clubs should agree the following points:

- How many players are registered with the Club, given that it's likely that your teams may be required to play on the same day on any given weekend,
- What venue can I use for home matches,
- How many referees do I have available to call on? This is a critical factor, because as teams climb the divisions, so the minimum level requirement for referees increases.

Whilst participation is encouraged, the rules lay out that sanctions exist for failing to fulfil fixtures. Clubs should therefore ensure that they have no foreseeable player, venue or referee issues prior to committing to a full season of competition.

HOW DOES A PLAYER REGISTER TO PLAY FOR MY CLUB?

In order to play in National League competitions, a player will need to:

- 1 – Complete a player profile on the JustGo membership portal, including uploading a Head & Shoulders photo, for pre-match identification purposes,
- 2 – Pay for a National League player license on JustGo,
- 3 – Complete Sport Ireland's online Anti-Doping module and upload the completion certificate to their JustGo profile as a credential (under 18s and players only in Division 3 do not need to do this step).
- 4 – The Club Secretary/Admin will need to allocate the player to one of their preset teams on JustGo, to confirm the team that the player will be playing for.

Once the above steps are complete, the office will check and approve the details on the profile, including the AD certificate and, if everything is in place, will issue the player with a VI player number.

Please note that the cut-off for a player to be eligible to play in matches is three working days prior to the match. This means that for a Saturday/Sunday matchday, the cut-off is Tuesday evening. If any of the above is incomplete – including step 4 above, which is new for this season – a player number will not be issued to the player, making them ineligible to play.

In Cup & Shield competitions, the last date for registering new players is the date of the relevant team's Semi-Final match in that competition. Anyone not registered with the team by that date is ineligible to play in the competition final.

The cut-off for new registrations for the NL season is the last working day before 17th March in the year that the competition finishes – no new player registrations are permitted beyond that point.

More information on the above can be found in section 3 of the Competition Rules.

WHY DOES A PLAYER NEED TO BE ALLOCATED TO A SPECIFIC TEAM ON JUSTGO?

A player can only play for one team in a club in any season, unless they are “playing up” in a higher division. In previous seasons it has been difficult to monitor which is a player’s “original” team for the purposes of recording how often the player plays in a higher team, particularly on occasions where the player actually plays up in a higher team before playing for their original side, or when the coach forgets to record this on the scoresheet.

Therefore, by ensuring that the club places the player in the correct starting team, it is easier to monitor when that player is playing up in a higher team.

From this season, player numbers are coded according to the starting division of their original team, so a player number cannot be issued to a player who has not been assigned by their club to one of their teams.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO ARRANGE FIXTURES FOR MY TEAM(S)?

Once the initial fixture list has been produced and released to Clubs, the home team must confirm which day of the weekend the match will be played, at what time and at what venue. All this information must be sent back to the office by the stated deadline.

If, during this process, it becomes clear that a home fixture cannot be honoured due to venue availability, the Club should consider alternatives such as a different venue to play the match or flipping the home and away fixture with the opposing team (if applicable).

Once the deadline has passed, each team’s away fixtures need to be checked. If the date(s) chosen by the home side do not fit with the team’s own logistics, they are entitled to engage with the home side to try and agree a compromise, but a successful resolution might not always be possible. Again, this stage of the fixture planning process will have a deadline, which will be communicated by the NLMC.

More information on the above can be found in section 4 of the Competition Rules.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO CHANGE FIXTURE DETAILS – AND WHEN?

Once the fixture list for the season has been confirmed, the VLY website will be the location of up-to-date fixture details.

If either team needs to change the scheduled date/time/venue for a fixture then they should, in the first instance, contact the opposition to outline why the change is needed. Alternative options should be discussed between teams to try and reach a mutual agreement.

Once a new date has been agreed, the team seeking the change should complete the relevant fixture details form, including old and new fixture details and the reasons why, and this should be submitted to the NLMC for approval at least 10 working days prior to the original or new fixture date (whichever is sooner). In exceptional circumstances, the NLMC may consider a change of fixture within 10 working days.

The form must be accompanied by written/email confirmation from the opposing team to the new fixture details.

Clubs should not assume that a change of fixture will be automatically approved, as there may be external factors that prevent that change from being possible. Additionally, the NLMC is not an active participant in negotiations over changes of fixture – it is hoped that both teams try to resolve such issues in the spirit of cooperation.

More information on the above can be found in section 5 of the Competition Rules.

HOW DO I REPORT A MATCH RESULT – AND WHEN?

All matches in Premier Division and Divisions 1 and 2, as well as Association Cup & Shield, shall be scored online through the Genius Sports E-Scoring platform. Results of matches will automatically be uploaded to the competition management system once the final result has been validated.

For matches in Division 3, the winning team is asked to submit a copy of the scoresheet by 10pm on the day of the match to the VLY office. This should be submitted either by email to info@volleyballireland.com or by WhatsApp on +353858725946. Without this information, league tables and the website cannot be updated. As a guide, all four corners of the page should be visible on the screenshot/photo.

The scoresheet from the match should then be posted to the office, to arrive no later than four days after the conclusion of the match.

More information on the above can be found in section 6.5 of the Competition Rules. Please note that a fine of €50 applies for any teams failing to complete the reporting above including, where mandated, E-Scoring of matches.

MY TEAM WISHES TO LODGE A PROTEST ABOUT THE RESULT OF A MATCH – WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

If your team has a grievance about an incident in, or the result of a match, and/or that the competition rules have not been followed, it is entitled to protest the result of the match. In order to lodge a protest, the club must complete the relevant protest form, to be sent to the office on info@volleyballireland.com. In addition, the club must pay a protest fee (€30), and both items must be submitted no later than five working days after the relevant match.

The office will then pass the details of the complaint to the PADACC (Protests, Appeals, Disciplinary and Complaints Commission) who, if they feel the protest is valid, will appoint a Hearings Panel (drawn from volunteers of other Clubs) to consider the Protest. If it does, then the respondent or any other relevant party (e.g referees, the office etc) may be asked to submit a report. Once the Hearings Panel has deliberated on the protest, their decision will be approved by PADACC and all interested parties will be notified.

Prior to submitting a protest, Clubs are asked to consider whether their grievance amounts to a breach of competition rules (and, more importantly, which ones), bad planning on the Club's part or the result of player errors in matches. In addition, PADACC will not re-referee matches – meaning that any claim that a referee error on a single point in the match cost a team the match will not be entertained.

If the Hearings Panel rules in the club's favour, then the protest fee will be refunded.

More information on the above can be found in section 12 of the Competition Rules.