

Document	SENIOR COMPETITION RULES AND REGULATIONS
Season	2026-2027

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Introduction

Here is are the rules governing OHI senior competitions for season 2026/2027. Please note that some rules or appendices have been amended for clarification or updated.

Administration of the Rules

1. The Olympic Handball Ireland(OHI) is the governing body of handball in Ireland and shall be the final arbiter in any question that might arise through the administration of these rules and regulations.
2. The ultimate responsibility for ensuring adherence to any regulations shall lie with the OHI Board who shall, in the first instance, delegate such authority to the appropriate committee and/or to the appropriate sub-committee.
3. The OHI Board has delegated relevant authority to the Competition Committee (CC), as defined in the Competition Committee Terms of Reference, which is responsible for working with the OHI professional staff to coordinate effective management and operational delivery in respect of the planning and running of the national and regional league structures. All open age competitions shall be governed by this committee, which shall:
 - a. Set and, as necessary, revise the rules of such leagues and competitions, with relevant reference to the Rules of Handball set out by the European Handball Federation and/or the International Handball Federation;
 - b. Set fixtures relating to such leagues and competitions; a list of CC members should be accessible in the public domain.
4. The OHI Board has delegated relevant authority to the Standards and Adjudication Committee (SAC), which shall be chaired by the OHI's Governance and Legal Director and which is responsible for:
 - a. Ensuring compliance with any Rules & Regulations for Leagues and/or Competitions set up under the jurisdiction of the OHI; and
 - b. Progressing action against clubs, players, coaches and officials that

breach those rules; a list of SAC members should be accessible in the public domain as well as rulings of the SAC meetings.

Membership and Competition

5. There shall be found elsewhere regulations governing the OHI and these shall be in the form of Memorandum and Articles of Association (M&A).
6. OHI membership is open to all clubs, schools and organisations who subscribe to the M&A of the OHI. These clubs, school and organisations shall be deemed to have agreed to abide by the rules and regulations of the OHI, its code of ethics and behaviour (see Appendix G), and also doping regulations wherever they may be found. (Note: any club, school or organisation which is deemed to be a member of the OHI shall hereafter be referred to as a “club”.)
7. Such membership is obtained upon payment of the membership fee as set down by the end of the previous season and upon completion of the registration process. The M&A provide provision for the OHI to refuse an application for membership without explanation.
8. As stated in the membership conditions, all registered clubs, players, coaches, officials, etc. shall be insured through those policies officially provided by the OHI. Teams playing in approved OHI competitions shall be affiliated to the OHI in the prescribed manner together with their players, coaches and officials. Such teams shall be eligible to participate, at the appropriate level, in OHI approved competitions. Eligibility criteria for each competition under the committee’s control shall be set by the CC.
9. Clubs shall complete the appropriate registration process and pay the specified fees by the stated deadline. Clubs participating in leagues may also be liable to lodge a bond to cover (or part cover) any fines imposed by any relevant body.
10. All clubs must have a bank account either in the club’s name or administered through an appropriate organisation (e.g. a Students’ Union). In particular, each club shall, in addition to the above:
 - a. Be properly constituted (with a copy of the constitution lodged with

the OHI) ;

- b. Have three principal officers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer)
 - c. Have a minimum of 10 registered playing members
 - d. If the four principal officers are not registered playing members, they must register separately.
11. All club officials shall register in the full knowledge that they are indeed accepting the role of guarantors on behalf of the club in respect of honouring financial commitment and, if requested by the OHI, the payment of debts whatsoever owed to OHI by the club, its players, coaches or officials. Where such debts are to be recovered, the club shall be held liable for the recovery. Where the payment has not been received within the prescribed 14-day timescale, the club shall be deemed to have defaulted and may be suspended from their leagues until such time that the debt has been paid. Clubs entering European cup competitions should take particular note of their financial obligations and liabilities. Clubs are liable to pay in full any fines or other financial penalties imposed by the European Handball Federation.

Registration of Players

12. Each individual person participating in OHI approved competition must be registered as a player with the OHI. In order to be eligible to play in a match, a player shall be registered latest at 10am on the day of the match in question and approved by the OHI office. (Note: This regulation shall also apply to any coach for whom the intention is to be placed in the substitution area during the playing of a match.) It is the responsibility of each club to ensure conformity with this regulation. The list of registered players and officials is available on the GAMEDAY platform
13. Players shall be eligible to freely participate in the leagues once they have reached their 18th birthday. Players who have not yet reached their 18th birthday may be registered to play in senior competitions provided they have permission from a parent or guardian as well as the coach of the team with which they have registered.
14. Players shall register for a club for a period of one season. Any player

who might be contracted to a club for a longer period, whether for payment or otherwise, shall be bound to such contract until expiry to play only for that club to which he/she is contracted or until such time, by mutual agreement, where he/she might be released from the contract. The club to which any player is contracted is entitled to request and receive a reasonable fee from the club wishing to take up the contracted player's registration before the expiry of their current contract. Players issued with a contract shall be bound by the rules of the EHF and IHF concerning contracted players. It is the responsibility of each club to ensure conformity to the registration regulations. It is an offence for a club to be in breach of this rule.

15. A person identified as a player on the official score sheet cannot be at the same time a team official in the same league.
16. To participate in the play-offs, players must have been listed on a match sheet for at least one league match.

Double Registration of a Player

17. No senior player may register to play for more than one club. However, they may register as an official as long as they are not coaching in the same match in which they play.

Playing Season

18. The official playing season of all leagues shall be from Sept 1st to Aug 31st

Playing Facilities and Conditions

19. Each club shall be responsible for hosting matches at their nominated venue(s) during the season, subject to the court meeting league standards. The club must provide information concerning their nominated venue(s) to the OHI and CC (see Appendix A).
20. Each club must have a suitable home court on which to play. These courts should have dimensions of 40m x 20m with suitable outruns and floors (see Appendix A).
21. Should the nominated home court not meet the 40x20m specification, the club should seek approval to use the home venue prior to the

commencement of the season from the CC. Clubs must seek dispensation from the CC for courts with a minimum size of 32 m x 20m. Dispensation will only be granted for one season. If a club needs to use the same venue in subsequent seasons, further dispensation must be sought and obtained.

22. It is a requirement for league play-offs that the hall where the matches are played has a court with dimensions of 40mx20m and facilities to allow spectators to attend.
23. The playing court should be placed so as to have a minimum of one meter between the side lines and walls of the building in which the match is played. Where possible, any equipment forming part of the facility should be lifted clear of the floor.
24. Behind each goal line, a clear space of at least one metre is required. Where such a space is not possible, appropriate action should be taken to prevent accidents. However, the distance between the goal line and the first possible obstruction should never be less than half a metre.
25. If there are spectators watching the match at floor level, there shall be a minimum distance of one metre between the bench area and the nearest row of spectators. Where possible, it is recommended that a distance of three metres be allowed.
26. At any time, there must materials available for the drying of the court when requested by the match referees.
27. Any overhead obstruction should never be lower than seven metres from floor to obstruction.
28. Each club should have two team benches, an officials' table with at least two chairs, a scoreboard (electronic or manual) and a visible clock (electronic or manual) available in their hall for home matches. Failure to provide one or any of these may result in punishment for the club.
29. Any player sustaining a blood injury should leave the court until the bleeding has stopped and the wound has been covered to the referees' satisfaction. If blood is present on the players playing kit he/she shall not be allowed return to the court. It is the responsibility of each team to have additional kit with the same colour and design as those being

worn which shall be available to replace any bloodstained kits. This should either be without a number or with a previously unused number to allow the referees and table officials to distinguish the player. If such kit is unavailable, the player shall not be allowed return to the court.

30. There shall be separate changing facilities for the referees and each team. If the specified changing facilities at the venue are unavailable, the club shall seek approval for use of the venue prior to the commencement of the season from the CC (see Appendix A).

The Goals

31. The goals shall be fastened securely for the duration of the match. They must be of regular pattern and official IHF dimensions. Goals which do not comply with IHF regulations, or which are damaged, may not be used in competitions.
32. The goals shall be used according to the manufacturers' instructions and not modified in a way that may lead to injury or disruption of a match.
33. The goals shall made of aluminum, or other such light material as approved by the IHF, EHF or OHI.
34. All nets must be in a suitable state of repair and must be fastened to the structure of the goal in such a way as to prevent the ball exiting through holes. Referees may insist any holes are repaired to their satisfaction prior to the start of the match.

Substitution Area

35. Where possible, continuous linked chairs or a bench catering for substitutes and team officials only should be used in the area set aside for substitutes.
36. Players must not warm up in front of the substitution area or along the side line. Where space is limited, players may only warm up next to their benches with the permission of the referees and table officials.
37. Players, coaches and officials in the substitution area should be seated.

Players, coaches and officials must not obstruct the playing of the match. All equipment (belonging to team or player) or any other loose items must not be in a position where they may interfere with the match. The referee shall be the final arbiter of whether an item may interfere with the match.

Timing and Scoring Devices

38. The home team shall provide electronic scoreboards and timing equipment. Where this is not feasible, a manual scoring system may be employed. A separate timing clock shall also be employed if no other clock is available; this shall be of a size which makes it visible for coaches and team officials within the substitutes' area.

The Ball

39. Any ball used during the match shall be of the correct size and weight for the category of player.
40. Only balls approved by the OHI, EHF or IHF shall be used. Sponsorship agreements may determine if a specific brand of ball is to be used for certain competitions.
41. Where resin is not allowed at a venue it may not be used, nor may any ball coated in resin.

Personal Equipment

42. Any spectacles worn by players must be secured in such a manner that they cannot be removed or cause injury to any player. If any player is wearing nonsporting spectacles or spectacles which are not secured by means of a loop or band around the head, the referees shall ask the player to ensure they are secured prior to the match commencing. Failure to do this will mean that the player can participate only without their glasses or will be refused permission to participate.
43. Players are required to remove anything which might conceivably cause injury to others (e.g. watches, rings, necklaces). Where such an item is impossible to remove, it may be permitted to tape it in a manner that is considered safe. Any such action must be approved by the match referees before the match starts.

44. During match play, it is not permitted for any item (other than reasonable playing kit) to be on the players' person which might cause injury to another player or match referee. See IHF Clarification document issued August 2017.

Scheduling

45. All matches shall be played under the rules of the IHF, unless otherwise excepted in these rules and regulations.
46. Matches shall, in general, be played on Saturday or Sunday on weeks specified by the CC. Match times will be approved by the CC prior to the start of each season.
47. Home clubs should provide details of their home bookings (date and time of matches) to the CC prior to the start of the season on the date specified by the CC (which shall be at least two weeks prior to the scheduled commencement of league play). Clubs must be aware of their commitments under these rules. Where any club fails to meet these timings they may incur penalties, including being refused registration in the league.
48. Visiting clubs must confirm their attendance to the home club, and the CC, on the Monday prior to the match. Any team notifying their opponent and the CC that they are unable to complete the fixture at this, or any later, time, shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the fixture and a win will be awarded to their opponents, as per Article 57. The exception to this shall be any match postponed due to exceptional circumstances as per Article 61.
49. In the event of exceptional circumstances, the CC shall make a ruling based on the information available which may call for a match to be played on another date and/or at an alternative venue.
50. For all matches, the home team is responsible for booking the venue.
- a. In the case of a booking for a single match, a booking should have duration of two hours.
 - b. In the case of bookings for multiple matches, a booking should have duration of two hours per match.

51. It shall be the home team's duty to pay expenses related to a match, including (but not limited to) the first aider and hall hire (Note: the visiting team is responsible for costs associated with their travel). If multiple matches are played in a single venue, participating teams can agree on different methods of payments.
52. Each team shall pay half the costs related to referees and other officials, where the distance between home venues is less than 35km. Where the distance is greater than 35km, the CC shall inform the clubs prior to the commencement of the season of the costs to be incurred by each team.
53. Any team withdrawing from a match shall be deemed to have defaulted and shall be liable to pay all costs incurred by the home team. Any remaining balances should be paid before the next match played by the defaulting team. Defaulting teams shall be liable for:
- a. The cost of a two-hour booking for the court concerned and
 - b. The full cost of the referees' (and other officials) expenses and match fees (if within 24 hours of the match)
 - c. A 10-0 defeat will be recorded against them. No points shall be awarded to the defaulting team, and a points deduction may be imposed by the CC.
54. The defaulting team shall also be liable to submit another bond to the OHI prior to their next match and shall be suspended until the bond is paid.
55. Teams which default on two occasions consecutively and/or three matches in one season shall be suspended from the competition. The suspension shall be referred to the SAC. If the team has played fewer than half of their scheduled fixtures, all records related to the matches played by the team in question shall be removed. If the team has played at least half of their matches, a 10-0 victory shall be awarded to the opposing team for all the matches that remain.
56. No postponements will be granted within seven days of the scheduled fixture, unless exceptional circumstances apply in the opinion of the CC.

57. In the event of a postponement due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. weather, travel advisory, public health advisory, hall closure, etc.), teams shall share 50% of all costs associated with the match. Host teams are expected to take all reasonable steps to avoid prepaid hall time going to waste (e.g. negotiate with the venue, offer the time to other sports hall users, arrange training matches). The CC shall be informed as soon as is practicable by the home team regarding any postponement.
- A game postponed due to exceptional circumstances shall be fixed for the next available date, in accordance with the calendar published by the CC at the beginning of the season. This shall be done by the home team. If no new date is found within 14 days of the postponement, rule 62 and 63 shall determine the outcome.
58. In such circumstances, teams requesting to postpone matches must immediately communicate to the other team and the CC. The CC will rule as to whether the match is deemed to be postponed or awarded to the non-withdrawing club by a score of 10-0. In order to comply with this rule, all teams are obliged, when registering, to provide contact details for at least 2 people who other teams, the CC, and the OHI may contact in the event as outlined above.
59. The CC shall only award points when an agreement cannot be reached and when all reasonable steps to replay the match have been exhausted. The CC shall be the final arbiter and shall have the authority to:
- a. Order the match to be replayed at any venue (within 100km of the original venue) at some other time
 - b. Allocate points as is deemed appropriate and
 - c. Deduct points and apply sanctions as is deemed appropriate.

The Playing of Matches

60. All players shall wear numbers on both the front and back of their shirts in the prescribed manner as per IHF regulations. Where referees note on the score sheet that there have been breaches of this rule, the club will have 2 weeks from the date of the match to remedy the issue. Failure to do so will result in referral to the SAC.

61. Only official score sheets may be used and it shall be the responsibility of the referees to ensure that table officials
- a. Complete score sheets accurately and
 - b. Adhere to all additional instructions
62. In any match, the competing teams shall wear colours which allow referees to discern a member of one team from a member of the other. Where such a situation occurs, the home team shall be required to change their kit. If necessary, the first named referee shall make the final decision. Each club should nominate a colour prior to the season and the CC will determine which jersey shall be worn.
63. Matches shall be of 2 x 30 minutes duration with stipulated breaks as per IHF rules.

Points Awarded

64. The League championship points system shall be as follows:
- a. 2 points for a win
 - b. 1 point for a draw
 - c. 0 points for a loss
65. The final positions shall be determined by (and in the following order):
- a. Goal difference, taking into account the results of the head to head matches between the clubs concerned.
 - b. Overall goal difference
 - c. Goals scored
 - d. Disciplinary record
 - e. The drawing of lots
66. The top four team will play a Final 4 tournament with the format
- A) 1st vs 4th

B) 2nd vs 3rd

C) Lsr A vs Lsr B

D) Win A vs Win B

Matches played with the format 2x30min. In case of equal score after the 60 min 2 halves of 5 min extra time will be played. In case of equal score after the extra time 5 penalties will be taken by each team if necessary, followed by 5 more chance single penalty.

Fielding an Ineligible Player

67. An ineligible player shall be deemed to be one or more of the following:

- a. have not completed an official registration with the OHI;
- b. serving a current suspension (either with the OHI or another recognised federation)
- c. under the age of 18 years and not having completed a supplementary registration.

68. Where a club is found to have fielded an ineligible player, the offending player and the club shall be liable to the following sanctions:

- a. A score of 10-0 awarded to the opposing team or the goal difference of the match if that is greater than 10 to the benefit of the opposing team, along with the appropriate number of points awarded to the opposing team by the CC
- b. A suspension of three matches for the offending player. The suspension is deemed to commence once the player's registration has been received and verified by the OHI. Until registration has been confirmed, the player concerned will be ineligible to play in any league/cup match
- c. Where it is found that the club has fielded an ineligible player, the club shall be fined €100.

69. Where a suspended player interacts with their team in a significant way during matches (for example: coaching from the stands) the matter

shall be reported to the SAC.

70. Should a club commit the offence of fielding an ineligible player on a second occasion, the club will be subject to further sanctions at the discretion of the CC, SAC and OHI. Such sanctions could include the club being deducted up to twenty points (or whatever the maximum number of points which a club may win in a given competition), fined, and barred from European competitions and expulsion from the OHI for a maximum of 24 months. Registered club officials may be prohibited from holding any representative office for a maximum of 24 months. (Note: this regulation shall also apply to club coaches. In particular, a second breach of this regulation shall be considered a second offence even when the offences are committed with two different clubs.)
71. Players registered with a recognised overseas federation should refer to EHF and IHF International Transfer Regulations (ITR's) (see Appendix F).

National Transfers

72. Players are permitted to transfer their registration from one club to another on one occasion during the period from the start of the official playing season until the hr 23:59 of the 31st of January of the competition year.
73. Players shall also have the right to register with any club before the start of the official playing season regardless of the club with which they were registered in the previous season. In both of the above cases, contracted players should also refer to articles 78 and 79.
74. The procedure applied to the transfer of players (contracted or not) during the period from the start of the official playing season until the transfer deadline of the following calendar year is as follows:
- a. Three copies (one for each club and one for the OHI) of the Domestic Transfer Request Form shall be completed by a registered official of each of the clubs concerned and by the player concerned.
 - b. Completed forms shall be returned to the OHI and, provided the fee required by the OHI has been paid and that there is agreement by both clubs, the transfer shall be approved. A period of five working

days shall be allowed for the OHI to process and confirm the new registrations.

- c. A fee of €10 shall be paid to OHI by the club to which the player is to be transferred.
- d. Point 74 a,b,c would be replaced by an online form if GAMEDAY provide such service

75. Where the releasing club is in dispute with a player, coach or official for any reason, the releasing club must notify the OHI who may prevent a transfer until such time as the situation is deemed to be resolved. This apply also for new registration before season starts. However, a player, coach or official shall have the right to object directly to the SAC against a club who has withheld their registration subject to the player notifying the OHI in writing. The SAC shall have the right to investigate the matter. The club shall notify the SAC of the following:

- a. circumstances of the offence;
- b. the procedures employed;
- c. the action taken by the club and;
- d. the appeal process accorded to the offender.

76. Contracted players shall only be permitted to transfer if their contract has expired or the club to which they are contracted agrees to the release of the player.

77. In the event of a contracted player wishing to be released from the contract to play for another club, the club to which he/she is contracted is permitted to demand a compensation fee from the receiving club, before agreeing to any release from contract. Where a player is contracted to a club which is affiliated to another recognised federation, the ITR's shall always be applied.

78. At the end of the season (this shall be deemed as June 30th), non-contracted players are considered free to register with a new club for the following season subject to the player meeting the conditions to register with another club.

79. Players who have transferred from one club to another and have participated in a knockout competition for their original club are not permitted to represent their new club in the same competition in the same season (i.e. they are considered to be cup tied).
80. Where a transfer is requested outside the designated time allowed by these rules and regulations, the CC shall determine if it is in the interest of the competition to allow such a request.
- a. Where the CC refuses permission for a transfer under such circumstances, appeal may be made to the SAC, the cost of which shall be determined by the rules and regulations of the SAC.

National Cups Sept with European Sport Week

81. Each season, cup competitions will be organised by the CC in collaboration with the OHI office and a Ad Hoc committee. New players may only play in cup competitions if they have been registered by the appropriate date which will be notified to the clubs prior to the competition in question. The format and rules of these competitions will be notified to all clubs by an agreed date.
82. Any club registered with the OHI may participate in cup competitions organised by the CC, subject to the rules and regulations and any other requirements as set by the CC. Furthermore, clubs registered with other national associations under the jurisdiction of the IHF may also apply to participate in such competitions.

Inter-Varsity Competitions

83. Each season, the CC (or a sub-committee empowered by same) shall organise competitions open to institutes which are members of Student Sport Ireland (SSI). Any university registered with SSI may participate in competitions organised by the CC, subject to the rules and regulations and any other requirements as set by the CC. Furthermore, clubs registered with other national associations under the jurisdiction of the IHF may also apply to participate in such competitions.

Reporting Scores and Match Reports.

84. For all matches, where a digital scoresheet was not available, the match referees with the collaboration of the table officials and the home team shall be responsible for sending the match reports to the OHI office, the CC and the Referees Committee (RC) by 22:00 on the first Monday after the match through the online system.
85. Where possible, matches shall be recorded by the home team. Any such footage will be owned by the home club, who shall, however, make it freely available to the OHI for use in promotional material or for use in disciplinary procedures. Where a club refuses to release such footage to the OHI, they shall be subject to financial penalties as decided by the CC, with recourse to appeal to the SAC.

Referees and On Court Sanctions

86. The OHI Referee Committee shall appoint referees to matches. The appointed referees shall be notified to the competing clubs no later than 72 hours prior to the match. Where no referee is available, Teams may agree to appoint one qualified referee from each club to officiate the game. However, where an agreement cannot be reached, the home team shall be responsible to provide one referee. A match may commence with one referee if no alternative can be found. This referee must officiate the entire match.
87. The Home team shall nominate two table officials (scorer and timekeeper). The home team shall provide a match sheet, at least two timekeeping devices and an audible signaling device (horn or whistle). The match referees must bring at least one unused score sheet. For the purposes of definition, where a match "Team A vs. Team B" is played, the home team is Team A regardless of where the match is played. This definition applies to all sections of this document.
88. So that registration can be verified, players, coaches and officials must, where possible, be in possession of approved photographic identification whilst participating in OHI approved competitions. Such can be a passport, a national identification card, a driving licence, an armed forces identification card or any identification card which bears

a “Pass” hologram along with a photograph of the carrier. Match referees and/or officials may check the identification of any player to determine eligibility. Where it is found that i. a player is not registered, ii. the registration is not valid for the season in question or iii. a person is participating under a false identity, the offending club will be penalised according to the rules.

89. Where referees are appointed to take charge of any match which forms part of an OHI approved competition, all IHF rules of the game are to be applied, notwithstanding dispensations allowable under these rules and regulations, the rules and regulations of the IHF, EHF or OHI, or whereby the competition in question is designated to have different rules by the CC.
90. Referees are expected to arrive at venues at the commencement of the hall booking at the latest and shall make themselves known to the host organiser/home team.
91. All OHI approved matches shall be governed by two qualified referees and it shall be the responsibility of the host club to provide score and timekeeper, in the absence of nomination in compliance with article 91.
92. Whenever a disqualification with report takes place (blue card), the referee must notify the official of the team(s) concerned at the end of the match that a report will be submitted. The referees shall provide a brief statement on the match report indicating the offence, the rule applied and that the sanction imposed carries an obligatory report. The referees should only explain the facts without making any further judgements or giving personal views and should refer to the rule(s) which they have applied.
93. Referees shall be responsible for bringing score sheets to the match, ensuring the match report is signed and that any obligatory report relating to red cards is completed on the back of the score sheet. Referees must send the score sheets and reports via the online system to the OHI office by 22:00 on the first Monday after the match. Reports will always be sent to the SAC by the OHI CC by 12:00 on the first Tuesday after the match.
94. Where a player, coach or official is disqualified by the referees, he/she is

entitled to sit in the area designated for spectators. However, should the offender attempt to influence the match, the referee shall order the player, coach or official concerned to leave the hall and an obligatory report of the incident is to be submitted which shall be subject to a disciplinary hearing with a sanction in accordance with disciplinary sanctions. Where a player, coach or official refuses to leave the hall, the match shall be suspended until the referees' instruction has been carried out. The offender shall be reported to the CC and SAC. If the offender does not leave the hall after the instruction is given, the match is to be stopped and the team to whom the offender belongs will be penalised with a 100 loss. If the process of removing the offender takes an unreasonable amount of time in the opinion of the referee, the match shall be abandoned.

95. Regarding incidents which occur in an OHI approved competition which may result in disciplinary sanctions, any involved person who is registered with the OHI shall be subject to sanctions, no matter in what capacity they were attending such event. Such persons must be clearly identified. Any person attending a match shall also be deemed to have subjected themselves to the rules and regulations of the OHI for such a time as they are present at an OHI event.
96. Where, during the course of a match, a player's action leads to a direct disqualification, but the referees do not write a report, no further disciplinary action shall be deemed necessary.
97. Players disqualified with an obligatory report shall be deemed to have committed an offence which will carry an automatic 1 match suspension or equal to the minimum tariff according to disciplinary procedures. The referee will inform the club on the day of the match of the automatic ban, which will come into immediate effect from the next official match, and include this in the official report. By signing the scoresheet, clubs are acknowledging the notification of the automatic ban and will be expected to apply this from the next official match to be played. (Note: where the referee indicates in his written report a more serious offence, the OHI will refer the report to the SAC to consider the offence. This could result in a disciplinary hearing and the penalty being increased in accordance with the disciplinary sanctions. A player shall only have the right to appeal against the increased period of suspension but not

against the automatic suspension carried by the offence).

98. The OHI shall not tolerate violent conduct of any kind. Where a person registered with the OHI is convicted of committing an assault on another player, a coach, official, referee and/or/spectator, the person concerned shall be suspended in accordance with disciplinary sanctions herein. Where required, the OHI shall also supply names of officials and/or witnesses to national authorities should legal proceeding be instigated. Where available, video evidence will be used by the SAC.
99. The OHI shall honour any disciplinary action which might be instigated by international federations as if the offence were committed in a competition or other event under the control of the OHI. Where disqualification is occasioned through an assault upon a referee or an OHI official, the extent of the penalty shall be decided upon by the OHI. Where such an assault is proven, a period of suspension of 12 to 24 months from all OHI approved competitions could be awarded. When the offender is a club official, the sanction shall be disqualification from the holding of any office within a club affiliated to the OHI or the OHI itself for the same period. The OHI will also seek prosecution through the courts against any individual assaulting an OHI referee and/or one of its officials (see assaults on officials appendix).
100. As stated elsewhere, a club shall have the right to appeal to the OHI in the appropriate manner. Any such appeal shall be in writing within the timescale set within the disciplinary processes and shall include a fee of €50.00 required by the OHI. (Note: where the sanction is in the form of an automatic suspension, the decision of the disciplinary panel is final and no appeal should be filled).
101. Where a player, coach or official is suspended for a period of 12 months or more, the appellant shall have the right to apply to Just Sport Ireland.

Referees' Fees and Expenses

102. Referees' match fees shall be paid by both Clubs calculated according to the OHI Travel Expenses Policy and fixed by the CC.

Disciplinary and Appeals

103. The OHI, through the SAC, shall have responsibility for disciplinary matters relating to clubs, players, coaches and officials where such a matter falls within the authority of the OHI.
104. In all cases where a disciplinary process results in sanctions, the club, player, coach or official concerned shall always have the right to appeal (unless the offence committed carries an automatic ban).
105. Clubs, players, coaches and officials shall have, in specific circumstances, the further right of appeal to arbitration, which shall be conducted through Just Sport Ireland. Such an appeal shall be sanctioned upon an appeal being received in writing and accompanied by a deposit of €300. Such an appeal must also be received within seven days of the outcome of the original appeal.
106. Where the original decision is upheld, all monies shall be forfeit. Where a decision is overturned, all monies deposited with the OHI shall be returned. Where discipline is exercised under different regulations, for example standing orders or for other league regulations, then those regulations shall take precedence. However, in all instances a financial deposit must be paid by appellants, except where regulations elsewhere state otherwise. Appellants shall be entitled to be represented at a disciplinary hearing and shall undertake to meet any expenses incurred during arbitration. More information on disciplinary processes is to be found in Appendices B and C.
107. Exclusion of protests and/or complaints. In all matches of the OHI league and Cup, there shall be no valid reasons for protests and/or complaints, and protests and/or complaints shall be inadmissible if relating to:
- scheduling of and drawing for matches
 - nomination of referees and delegates
 - referees' decisions on facts in accordance with the Rules of the Game, including those based on OHI Delegate's recommendations

Discrimination

108. A player, coach or official shall not carry out any discriminatory act based on ethnic origin, skin colour, race, nationality, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability. This rule also applies to spectators who are deemed to be under the supervision of the home team when playing in a designated home match. If such person is found to have carried out such an act, they will be subject to the appropriate sanctions.

Gambling

109. A player, coach or official shall not, either directly or indirectly:

- a. Bet;
- b. Provide information to a third party which enables that party to benefit from betting;
- c. Permit or enable any person for the participant's benefit to bet on the result, progress or;
- d. Conduct of a match/competition in which the participant is participating or in which the participant has any direct or indirect influence.

110. Such a person shall not use or provide to any other person any information relating to handball which the participant has by virtue of his position within the sport and which is not publicly available for, or in relation to, betting.

111. If such a person is found to have carried out such an act, they will be subject to the appropriate sanctions.

European Competition Qualification

112. The league and cup competitions run by the CC provide an opportunity for teams to qualify to participate in EHF organised competitions during the following season (as determined by the EHF). Qualification is not automatic and is subject to criteria as laid down by the OHI and EHF.

National Teams

113. Only players registered with clubs affiliated to the OHI shall be eligible for selection for national teams. (Note: for this regulation, Irish Citizens resident abroad and registered as players with a recognised federation shall be deemed to be registered with the OHI. However it might be incumbent for the OHI to insure such players separately.) All players being considered for selection must be in possession of or entitled to an Irish passport. Without this, they will be excluded from selection. Players in possession of an Irish passport but holding dual nationality will be considered for selection. However, if they have represented another nation in any official competition, they may be required to serve an extended period of residency before being considered.
114. Persons shall only be eligible for national team selection after having registered as a player with the OHI or with any other recognised federation. (Note: such a person should always be referred to as a "registered player".)
115. National coaches shall call upon the services of registered players from clubs affiliated to the OHI. Clubs shall not refuse a player's release where the dates involved fall on official, international dates as designated by the EHF/IHF, or otherwise agreed by the OHI and CC in consultation with clubs.
116. Clubs may appeal to the national coach for release of players required to attend national team events if they feel they have club commitments.
117. If three or more of the players, coaches and/or officials of one club are involved, clubs may make a request to the CC to have league matches rearranged, if an appeal is unsuccessful.
118. It shall be the duty of the CC and the Performance & National Team Group (P&NTG) to ensure that the training calendar and the official competitions calendar do not conflict and is in line with EHF/IHF international dates. This shall be set prior to the commencement of the season, although changes may be negotiated if required by either party for reasons unknown at the time of the original negotiation. In the month prior to national team competitions, and following

consultation with the CC, the national team shall normally have precedence.

119. Players are eligible for selection for national teams if they meet the criteria laid down in the IHF regulations.

Antidoping Rules, Procedures and Control

120. The OHI condemns the use of performance enhancing drugs and doping practices in the sport of handball and fully supports the position of the International Olympic Committee, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), Sport Ireland, EHF and IHF against the use of banned substances and methods.

121. The OHI considers that the following is unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- a. The use, possession and/or trafficking of banned substances or methods;
- b. Taking measures to mask the use of banned substances or methods by a participant in the OHI's sphere of influence and other events over which the OHI has jurisdiction.

122. All players participating in OHI approved competitions shall be liable to doping control testing.

123. An antidoping rule violation shall be considered a breach of the OHI's Code of Conduct and of the OHI's Anti-Doping Policy.

Comments Made in the Public Domain

124. The OHI expects certain standards to be upheld in relation to public comments made by such persons representing the OHI or who is a member of any club registered with the OHI.

125. Public comments are hereby defined as those which are made in any type of interview, on public sections of social networking sites, public forums or in any other place which would typically be defined as public. By way of general guidance, the following types of public comment may lead to disciplinary charges, (though the list is not exhaustive):

- a. Comments which imply bias;
 - b. Comments which question the integrity of club, player, coach or another person associated with the sport;
 - c. Comments which are personal or offensive where a comment is personal in nature such that it causes, or may cause, offence and;
 - d. Comments which are not of detriment to the sport the concepts of “disrepute” and “best interests of the game” are inherently broad and cannot be precisely defined.
126. Charges may be made where comments cause, and/or may cause, damage to the wider interests of handball and/or to the image of the sport.
127. The SAC is responsible for investigating such matters and deciding whether or not charges should be made. Consideration will be given to the actual comments made.
128. Where the SAC finds that an offence has been committed, the person concerned shall be notified and the SAC shall take further action.

Appendix A – Concerning Nominated Venues

So that the OHI may gather a database of venues in which matches are permitted be played, clubs must provide the following information:

- The exact dimensions of the court and hall
 - The use of resin (whether forbidden or allowed) ;
 - Spectators' areas;
 - Changing facilities for players and referees ;
 - The availability of electronic scoring and timing;
 - Cost and cancellation policy and fees;
 - First aid provision
1. This information must be provided to the CC at a date set down by the CC which shall be no later than 2 weeks prior to the scheduled commencement of league play.
 2. Failure to supply this information may result in the venue being removed from the list of permitted venues.
 3. If teams wish to apply for dispensation they must do so no less than four weeks prior to the aforementioned deadline imposed on all clubs by the CC.
 4. All clubs should note the requirement to send the information required by the set date (this will also apply where a number of clubs use the same venue where each club must send the information). All venues must be approved prior to the start of the season. If a club plays at a non-approved venue it shall incur punishments from the OHI.
 5. The CC has discretion to review requests for dispensation and subsequently grant such dispensation in cases of emergency (what constitutes an emergency shall be at the sole discretion of the CC).

Appendix B – Disciplinary Tariffs for a Disqualification

Classification of Penalty	Examples	Additional Sanctions	Financial Penalty
Inappropriate Conduct	● Repetitive complaints to referee(s) ● Loudness ● Provocative behaviour	n/a	n/a
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	● Obscene gestures ● Protests ● Insults (verbal)	12 match	n/a
Extremely Unsportsmanlike Conduct	● Threatening behaviour (verbal/physical) towards players and officials ● Spitting ● Attempting to hit someone ● Discriminatory abuse	36 matches	€30
Common Assault	● Unlawful use of force (pushing, barging, hitting, head butting etc)	58 matches	€50
	● Repetitive acts of violence	8 matches to	
Actual Bodily Harm	● Third ban for punching ● Assault leading to physical harm (broken tooth, bone, cuts, bruising)	three years (Possibility of life ban)	€200

Appendix C – Fit for Purpose Criteria

Clubs competing and aspiring to compete in OHI competitions shall:

1. Be constituted and have an active board and be able to provide club's AGM minutes.
2. Have the appropriate administrative standards in place to be able to respond to league administration in a timely manner.
3. Each club shall provide one member of the CC (or sub-committee responsible for a competition run by the CC), who shall be an active member of the committee.
4. Have its own bank account and be able to finance a bond that may be required by the OHI to cover any defaults.
5. Be able to fulfil all fixture commitments. See penalties for default in clause 61, 62, and 63 of the OHI Rules and Regulations.
6. Be able to fulfil public health requirements, including contact tracing, as required by the OHI, CC or public health bodies.
7. To train and provide competent match officials for games as required by league rules.
8. To have a home venue approved by the CC, suitable for national league matches with adequate court markings, proper handball goals with unbroken nets, visible scoreboard and timer.
9. To have an appropriately qualified first aider and first aid equipment present at games or provide proof that the sports centre has an available and suitably qualified person trained in first aid.
10. Provide a list of the club's coaches with their qualification.
11. Provide information about the club's playing venues as per Appendix A of the OHI Rules and Regulations.
12. Referees shall decide not to start or to abandon a game should the standard of requirements 6., 7., 8. not be met. All additional costs for this due to the above will be paid by the home team, including in the event

of a rematch.

13. Clubs shall ensure that they arrange their home games in approved playing venues as per rule of the OHI Rules and Regulations (and other series of rules under Playing Facilities and Conditions)
14. Clubs shall ensure that they have their coaches acquiring the required level of qualification. All coaches must hold at least one qualification. If a nominated coach does not hold a coaching qualification a dispensation to allow them to coach in the league must be sought from the CC. Such dispensation shall only be valid for one year or until the next coaching course is provided by the OHI (whichever is the shorter time). Further dispensation may be applied for to the CC if required.
15. Clubs shall ensure that they provide a number of match officials to the league, the number to be determined by the CC from time to time, normally prior to the start of the playing season.
16. The OHI shall work with clubs to achieve and/or maintain national league status, however, the OHI Board shall have the final say as to whether a club has achieved the standards above and the Competitions Committee, in consultation with the SAC, can apply any administrative and financial sanctions if any criteria is not met, including exclusion from the any competition.
17. A club shall have the right to appeal a SAC decision. Appeals are heard by an appeal board made up of three persons, with an independent chairman (normally an OHI director) and other members selected from a list of previously registered coaches, players or officials, not related to the club in question.
18. New clubs applying for membership of a league under the aegis of the CC shall be required to fulfil a number of criteria as set down by the CC. The aforementioned criteria are a benchmark that all clubs should achieve and maintain, irrespective of league status. It forms a part of a process to assess the club's capacity to meet the demands of playing in a national league. In order for a club to be considered for entry into the top level competition run by the CC, they shall fulfil the following criteria:
19. In the PREVIOUS season the team CANCELLED a number of games

equal to 50% of the TOTAL number of games a Competition Committee Vote shall be taken to address the matter.

20. The club is capable of meeting all of the criteria already set out in Appendix C
21. If, in the opinion of the CC, the above criteria are met, a general vote of the clubs competing in the league concerned shall be arranged. A simple majority of the clubs is required for the new club to be permitted to compete in the next season, or whichever season following this may have been agreed prior to the vote.
22. The CC may organise secondary competitions in which clubs, or the competition in general, may be given dispensation from these rules. The competitions in which the CC allows clubs to compete under such dispensation shall not be designated as a top level competition, nor shall these competitions allow teams to be eligible for qualification to EHF competition.

Appendix D – Reporting of Match Reports and Score Sheets

Match reports and score sheets shall be sent to:

- IOHA@olympichandball.org
- competitions@olympichandball.org

This shall be done within the time frame set down by the CC in the rules and regulations.



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