

Hockey Nelson Bylaws (2026)

UPDATED VERSION (April 2026)

This version includes a Board-Approved Dispensation adopted March 2026

These Rules shall override any previous rules.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These Bylaws are the rules under which Nelson Hockey Association 1993 inc. (referred to as Hockey Nelson) is run.

2. AMENDMENTS

- 2.1 Hockey Nelson may make amendments to these Bylaws at any time by a majority vote by The Governance Board.

3. REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS

- 3.1 Before any player may take part in any of the open competitions of the Association, she/he must be registered as a member of an affiliated Club and must not be in arrears of money owing to a Club or the Association, unless special arrangements have been put in place.
- 3.2 No player shall belong to more than one affiliated Club or Association at the same time (unless this player has been granted dual registration or a season permit in PlayHQ), nor shall a player play for one Club while in arrears to another Club.
- 3.2a Dual Registration – a developing player aged 18 or under, currently playing in a Clubs top team which is not already playing in a higher grade, can be granted dual registration. This allows the player to play in another Clubs higher grade team. The player must apply for approval to Hockey Nelson via the Dual Registration form or through the PlayHQ Season Permit application, before the commencement of the season. The dual registration must be approved by both Clubs and by Hockey Nelson. Hockey Nelson reserves the right to not grant approval for any reason. A Club can apply to dual register as many U18 players as they want to (unlimited).
- 3.3 Should any Club fail to secure the registration of any player(s) in accordance with the Rules, such Club shall default the match in which the un-registered player(s) took part.
- 3.4 Secretaries of affiliated Clubs shall complete all required details of all playing members in their respective registered grades at a date notified by Hockey Nelson. Any Club failing to register its players by this date will forfeit all competition points from that date until it complies.
- 3.5 Each Club must register a minimum of 13 players including a goalkeeper (GK) who shall be identified on the Team Registration form in the 11 aside grades.
- 3.6 Clubs are not permitted to register new players within four weeks of the finals.
- 3.7 GKs – it will be at the discretion of Hockey Nelson as to whether a person can be registered as both a field player and GK in two separate grades.

4. GRADING

- 4.1 Senior Grades shall be named Premier 1, Premier 2, and Premier 3, and Junior Grades shall be named Secondary (Division 4), Intermediate (Division 5), and Primary (Division 6). The number of teams in each grade shall be decided by Hockey Nelson.
- 4.2 Hockey Nelson retains the right to determine the grade in which each team shall compete and may also determine in which grade any registered member of an affiliated Club shall play.
- 4.3 Clubs will register teams in the grade that they believe reflects the team skill level. This will be monitored by Hockey Nelson to ensure each grade is as competitive as possible. This may involve a promotion/relegation

process or the regrading of teams into more appropriate grades. Team placement in Senior Grades will be skills based, and Clubs should use their best endeavours to ensure players have the skill levels appropriate to the registered grade.

4.4 Should it be necessary to change the number of teams in any grade, the positioning of any team in any grade shall be at the discretion of Hockey Nelson. In reaching a decision, two or more teams may be required to play grading game(s).

4.5 **Floating Player Rule**

Any player 18 or over may float to any higher ranked Club team up to a maximum of four times within a season. If the player floats up a fifth time, they will be re-registered into the higher ranked team.

4.5a Any under 18 player may float up unlimited times within a season but cannot play more than three (3) Club games (in total) within a seven-day period, calendar week Monday to Sunday. The intention of this bylaw is to allow development pathways for junior players. NHA may at any time require an under 18 players to register with a team in another grade.

4.5b Players may not float between teams registered in the same grade, including under 18 players.

4.6 **Floating Player Rule (ONLY FOR SECONDARY BOYS AND GIRLS / MIXED)**

This rule only applies for Secondary grade competition and overrides "4.5b".

4.6a Each player may participate in up to four matches for other teams. These matches may be for one, two, three, or four different teams at the player's discretion.

4.6a(I) Upon playing their fifth match, the player will be officially assigned to the team they represented the most as a floating player.

4.6a(II) If the number of matches played for two or more teams is equal, the NHA will conduct a draw to assign the player to a team.

4.6a(III) Once assigned, the player can no longer compete for their original team.

4.6b Team managers are required to register floating players on the match card by listing their name with the designation "(FP)." No additional notification is necessary.

4.6c Players may only float within teams of the same grade. Floating between boys, girls, or mixed teams is not permitted.

4.6d For semifinal and final matches, only players from teams ranked 5th or 6th are eligible to float to other teams.

4.7 Any Goalkeeper may float up as many times within a season but cannot play more than two Club games (in total) within a seven-day period, calendar week Monday to Sunday. Teams are to ensure they comply with rule 3.5.

4.7a Where there is no suitable goalkeeper in the lower divisions to float up, any goalkeeper may float across teams/clubs – only in the grade that they are nominated in – a written request must be received by Hockey Nelson 24 hours beforehand where practical and approved in writing in advance of the commencement of the game. GKs will not be permitted to float across teams/clubs in any final's fixtures.

4.8 No player, having been registered in a grade or team, shall be permitted to transfer to a lower grade or team during the current season without the prior permission of Hockey Nelson. No re-grading will be permitted within four (4) weeks of the finals.

4.9 Hockey Nelson policy is that players participating in 11 aside Club competition teams may play only in same-gender teams unless stated otherwise, or on a case-by-case basis, this will be approved by Hockey Nelson.

4.9a Within the Club Secondary Competition Mixed Gender Grade or the Combined Girls/Mixed Gender Grade, Mixed teams must always have a minimum of 4 female players on the field during the game.

4.10 Board-Approved Dispensation – P1 Women’s Competition (2026 Season Only)

4.10 Board Approved Dispensation – P1 Women’s Competition (2026 Season Only)

Notwithstanding Clauses 3.5 and 4.1, and pursuant to Clause 2.1 of these Bylaws, the Nelson Hockey Association Governance Board has approved a dispensation for the 2026 season only to allow Waimai United Hockey Club to enter a P1 Women’s Team with reduced initially committed player numbers.

This dispensation is granted subject to the following conditions:

- a) The team may complete its playing numbers through approved dual registrations and season permits, in accordance with Clause 3.2a.
- b) Players from other affiliated Clubs may participate only where properly approved and registered through PlayHQ prior to taking the field.
- c) Under 18 players may float in accordance with Clause 4.5a.
- d) All other players’ eligibility, floating limits, and registration requirements under the Hockey Nelson Bylaws 2026 remain fully applicable.
- e) This dispensation applies only to the 2026 season and does not create precedent for future seasons.

The Governance Board reserves the right to review or revoke this dispensation should the conditions of approval not be met.

4.10(f) Dual Registration for Players Without a P1 Women’s Team in Their Own Club (2026 Season Only)

For the 2026 season only, and solely for the purpose of enabling Waimai United Hockey Club to field a P1 Women’s team under the approved dispensation:

f) Players from affiliated Clubs that do not field a P1 Women’s team may be granted eligibility to participate for the Waimai United P1 Women’s team under the following provisions:

Under 18 Players (U18):

- U18 players remain subject to Clauses 3.2a and 4.5a.
- The player must be a developing player aged 18 or under and currently playing in their Club’s top team which is not already playing in a higher grade.
- Dual registration must be approved by both Clubs and by Hockey Nelson prior to the commencement of the season.
- U18 players may float up unlimited times but may not exceed three (3) Club games in total within a Monday–Sunday week.
- All participation must be recorded through PlayHQ prior to taking the field.

Senior Players (18 years or over):

- The player remains fully registered with their home Club in accordance with Clause 3.1.
- The home Club does not have a team entered in the P1 Women’s grade.
- Dual registration must be approved by both Clubs and by Hockey Nelson, following the processes outlined in Clause 3.2a.
- Once dual registered, the player may play for the Waimai United P1 Women’s team without restriction on the number of matches for the duration of the 2026 season.
- All participation must be recorded through PlayHQ prior to the player taking the field.

Scope of Allowance:

- This allowance applies only to the Waimai United P1 Women’s team and does not extend to any other grade or team.
- This clause is intended solely to support the viability of the Waimai United P1 Women’s team for the 2026 season and does not create precedent for future years.

4.11 Board-Approved Dispensation – Division 4 Mixed Grade (2026 Season Only)

Notwithstanding the mixed-gender requirements outlined in Clause 4.9a, and pursuant to Clause 2.1 of these Bylaws, the Nelson Hockey Association Governance Board has approved a dispensation for the 2026 season only to allow Waimai United Hockey Club (2014) Inc. to enter a Division 4 Mixed Grade team without meeting the minimum on-field gender ratio requirement.

This dispensation is granted based on the following circumstances provided by the Club:

- The team is composed entirely of Year 9 students aged 13–14 years old.
- Seven players (four girls and three boys) are completely new to hockey, with only limited social summer hockey experience.
- Six additional players are boys transitioning from Division 5 (half-field hockey) and have no prior experience with full-field hockey, including rules such as penalty corners, lifted ball play, and 11-a-side positional structures.
- Only one player has any previous full-field hockey experience.
- Enforcing the minimum gender ratio would not provide any competitive advantage and would restrict equal playing opportunities for all participants.
- The primary purpose of the request is to support player development, ensure equal game time, and provide a positive and inclusive introduction to full-field hockey.

Accordingly, the following dispensation applies:

- a) The Waimai United Division 4 Mixed Grade team is exempt from the minimum on-field gender ratio requirement for the duration of the 2026 season.
 - b) All players must remain properly registered and eligible under the Hockey Nelson Bylaws 2026.
 - c) This dispensation applies only to the Waimai United Division 4 Mixed Grade team and does not extend to any other team, grade, or Club.
 - d) This dispensation applies only to the 2026 season and does not create precedent for future seasons.
- The Governance Board reserves the right to review or revoke this dispensation should the conditions of approval not be met.

5. TRANSFERS

- 5.1 If a player is transferring from another Association, Hockey NZ rules apply.
- 5.2 Before any player is eligible to transfer from one affiliated Club to another, an inter Club transfer will be carried out. No player may play for another Club until transfer has been correctly completed.
- 5.3 No transfers between Clubs will be approved within four (4) weeks of the finals.
- 5.4 Players who play for another Association and are visitors to Nelson (e.g. University students) cannot be registered with a Club in Nelson and play in the Nelson competition unless an Association-to-Association transfer is completed, or Season Permit is applied for and granted. These players will NOT be considered eligible to play in any final's fixtures.

6. COMPETITION RULES

- 6.1 Matches shall take place between teams of affiliated Clubs under conditions arranged by Hockey Nelson who shall determine the format of competition each year.
- 6.2 Hockey Nelson shall fix dates and times of all games, allocate turfs, and decide the number of rounds to be played in each grade. No game shall be played, altered, or postponed without the permission of Hockey Nelson.
- 6.3 Hockey Nelson shall have the power to alter any dates fixed or turfs allocated, to postpone and re-schedule matches and generally direct and govern matches.
- 6.4 Notwithstanding 6.2 and 6.3, no games shall be played without the consent of both teams involved if notice of that game is given to those teams less than 36 hours before the proposed hit-off time.
- 6.5 Any Club or team desiring to change or postpone any match must obtain approval from Hockey Nelson at least **14 days** before the date of the game. Hockey Nelson will not be under an obligation to grant all requests.
- 6.6 A Club may apply for a match deferral two weeks prior to a scheduled fixture if a team has five (5) or more players or management within one team absent representing a Representative (U15 and higher) hockey team at a national event. This includes all Regional (Nelson, Tasman Districts) and National (NZ) hockey teams.
- 6.7 Teams shall be divided into grades based on their rankings at the completion of the previous season. For teams that did not participate in the previous season or where special conditions or anomalies exist, grades/ranking will be decided by Hockey Nelson.
- 6.8 Match points will be awarded as follows for Championship games:

Standard
 Win or Default Win: 3 points
 Draw: 1 point
 Loss: 0 points
- 6.9 When teams are equal on points the current Hockey NZ Tournament Rules shall be applied for the purpose of ranking the teams for the Finals.
- 6.10 Matches against teams subsequently withdrawing from the competition shall not be counted.

- 6.11 Hockey Nelson shall appoint umpires for each match based on information received from each Club/Umpires Committee. Each Club is expected to umpire on average one game per week for each team they have in the competition. Every endeavour will be made to supply neutral umpires.
Should a Club umpire fail to turn up for the umpire duty, the Club will be fined \$50.

7. MATCH PLAY

- 7.1 Unless a team has at least seven (7) players on the field within 10 minutes following the start time set down for the match, that team loses the match by default.
- 7.2 Each team has either a GK or plays only with field players.
Each team may play with:
- **a GK wearing a different colour shirt and full protective equipment** comprising at least headgear, leg guards and kickers; this player is referred to in these Rules as a GK; or
- **only field players**; no player has goalkeeping privileges or wears a different colour shirt; no player may wear protective headgear except a face mask when defending a penalty corner or a penalty stroke; all team players wear the same colour shirt.
Any change between these options must take place as a substitution.
- 7.3 In Senior grades a maximum of **eighteen** (18) players may be used by a team in a match, of whom **two** (2) must be goalkeepers wearing full protective equipment.
- if one of the goalkeepers becomes injured or is suspended during a match, that team can continue to use **seventeen** (17) players including **one** (1) GK.
- if a team chooses not to include a second GK in the 18 players, they are limited to using sixteen (16) players in a match.

All Junior grades a maximum of sixteen (16) players may be used by a team in a match.

All field player substitutions are to be made near the centreline on the dugout side of the turf.

- 7.4 Each team shall complete the same team card and leave in the umpires' dugout prior to commencement of the match. Players shall be identified on the card by a minimum of first initial and surname and players' numbers must be listed. No player or substitute may take the field unless their name is on the team card prior to the commencement of the match.
- 7.5 Following completion of a match, the umpire is responsible for ensuring the completed team card is placed in the scorecard box in the umpire's dugout.
- 7.6 Each team shall supply a ball according to the rules of hockey, for each Championship or other match in which it is engaged.
- 7.7 Any team wishing to default any match must notify Hockey Nelson at least 48 hours before the time of play. Teams who default a game will be deemed to have lost the game and the opposing team will be awarded three (3) points and a score line of 3-0.
- 7.8 If default notice has not been received by Hockey Nelson in accordance with rule 7.7, the defaulting team will meet the full cost of the artificial surface. No charge will be incurred by the team defaulted to.
- 7.9 Any team defaulting two matches in succession, or three at intervals, may at the discretion of Hockey Nelson, be deemed to have withdrawn from the competition.
- 7.10 All teams playing on the artificial surfaces shall comply with the rules relating to their usage.
- 7.11 In cases of unforeseen circumstances such as light failure, weather etc. games may have to be rescheduled at the discretion of Hockey Nelson.
- 7.12 Finals Day. In the event of a draw at full time on finals day current HNZ and FIH practices shall determine the winner.
- 7.13 Players competing in a semi-final or final game must have played, (recorded on the game card and taken the field) in a minimum of 20% of the regular club season games for that team. If a Club has a specific request

that falls outside this bylaw, i.e., injured player returning to play, the request must be emailed to Nelson Hockey Association by 3:00 pm of the preceding Wednesday.

- 7.14 Each team must have a nominated nonplaying representative in the dugout during all Club games. The representative is to be recorded on the game card as the 'Manager'.

8. CARD SYSTEM/SUSPENSIONS

- 8.1 Hockey Nelson has adopted the Hockey NZ card system for use by umpires, which forms the basis for a system which triggers an automatic penalty or indicates that a participant may be summoned to appear before the Judicial Committee (Judiciary) or Operations Manager. Each card will carry penalty points as follows:

Green	1 to 2 Points.
Yellow	3 to 6 Points as determined by the umpires at the end of the match.
Red	Automatic suspension of one match. The suspension may be increased if additional sanctions are applied through the outcome of a judicial process.

- 8.2 Any participant receiving a red card in a match (International, Provincial, Club or School) automatically receives 12 points and suspended for the next authorised hockey match. This suspension will run concurrent with any imposed as a result of an accumulation of points and will commence at the conclusion of the match in which the card is issued. A participant so suspended may not take part in any game prior to appearing before the Judiciary. The Judiciary may impose whatever additional penalty/suspension they consider appropriate.

9. UNIFORMS

- 9.1 All teams must play in their approved Club uniform as registered with the Association.
- 9.2 Any alteration to the registered uniforms, including the addition of sponsors labelling; logos etc. must receive the prior approval of Hockey Nelson.
- 9.3 Any player appearing in other than the recognised Club uniform shall be permitted to play only on receiving agreement from the umpires and the captain of the opposing team.
- 9.4 Clubs who have two or more teams in the same grade are to supply an alternate strip.
- 9.5 All players shirts are to be numbered on the back with figures at least 175mm high. The corresponding number must then be shown beside each player's name on the scorecard.

10. FEES AND FINES

- 10.1 Fees and fines, including all fees for the use of the artificial surfaces, incurred by the Clubs, teams or individual members must be paid by the due date shown on the account tendered from the Association.
- 10.2 All turf fees will be charged monthly.
- 10.3 All the fees and fines prescribed in these Bylaws relate to the winter competition and Hockey Nelson shall have the power to set fees and fines for any other competition under its control.

11. PAVILION AND TURF

- 11.1 Damage to any part of the Pavilion and Turf (i.e., buildings, windows, turfs, roads, fences, dugouts etc) that is caused by intentional or reckless behaviour will result in the person(s) responsible being charged for any necessary repair work.
- 11.2 Saxton Field is a Smoke Free area. Under no circumstances is smoking permitted within the building or surrounding ground - this includes the use of e-cigarettes & Vape devices.
- 11.3 Turfs and dugouts are to be left free of drink bottles and any other rubbish on the completion of each match or training session. It is the responsibility of every team to ensure the facilities are left tidy for following teams. It will be at the discretion of Hockey Nelson if a fine is levied against any team not abiding to this rule.
- 11.4 Dogs or cats are not permitted within the Hockey turf enclosure at any time.

12. ALCOHOL

- 12.1 In accordance with the conditions of the alcohol license held by the Nelson Hockey Softball Pavilion Society, only alcohol purchased on the premises may be consumed on the premises. The premises are defined as the top floor of the Pavilion including balconies and the concrete pad area where the marquee is when it is set up. No alcohol can be consumed anywhere outside these defined areas **i.e. no BYO and no alcohol on the turf or side lines, in the dug outs or in the changing room.**
- 12.2 Any infringement under this rule will be dealt with under the provisions of the Nelson Hockey Code of Conduct and may result with the offender(s) being evicted from the turf complex.

13. GENERAL

- 13.1 All Clubs are responsible for Turf Duty as prescribed from time to time, and duties may include operation of the electronic scoreboards.
- 13.2 Entry onto the turf – Entry onto the turfs is only for those people that have a valid reason for being on the turf. No spectators or other members of the public are allowed entry unless the reason for entry is for emergency purposes.
For the purpose of this rule “valid reason” means but is not limited to – for the purposes of games/trainings/trials/sanctioned Hockey Nelson events. At all times Hockey Nelson will have the discretion as to the use of the term “valid reason”. If at any stage, there is a dispute as to entry onto the turf or turfs Hockey Nelson will have the sole discretion as to whether the entry was deemed valid or not.
Players named on the card, the Coach/Coaches and manager are the only ones allowed in the dugouts. Please remember that one Coach per team can be inside the turf fence within the vicinity of the dugouts during games and must stay out of the way of umpires.
- 13.3 Turf fences – you must use gates provided and no-one is to sit on the fences or climb over the fences around the turfs.
- 13.4 Car parks – parking your car in the car parks around the hockey turfs is not always a safe option as balls are deflected over the fences. **Hockey Nelson is not responsible for any damage to any vehicles parked in these areas.**
- 13.5 Hockey Nelson shall have the power to deal with all matters not provided for in these Bylaws which may arise out of any contest played under these Bylaws.
- 13.6 If there is any rule not covered in these Bylaws, the applicable Hockey NZ rule will apply.

14. CHILD PROTECTION

- 14.1 By the first game of the senior season, all Clubs must have filed with Hockey Nelson their completed Child Protection Policy.
- 14.2 All Clubs must undertake Police Vetting of all their volunteers that will be undertaking any role with a team/s that has people under the age of 18 years old in them.