

HOCKEY IRELAND BAD WEATHER PROCEDURE 2023/24

The procedure outlined is to guide clubs participating in all Hockey Ireland organised competitions of the appropriate actions to take in the event of bad weather being anticipated prior to match day or experienced on the match day.

Both clubs may have incurred costs related to the staging or travel and accommodation for the planned date. To avoid /minimise any loss, every effort should be made to play the match on the date planned. Early and good communication and planning will support this objective.

Whilst it is accepted that no system of match postponement can be perfect, clubs are requested to try and ensure that matches are postponed in sufficient time for visiting teams and officials to be saved the time and expense of wasted journeys.

Tournaments are under the auspices of the Tournament Director who will make any decisions regarding Bad Weather.

The Hockey Ireland Bad Weather Procedure does not detract in any way from the responsibilities of IHL Match Technical Assistants (MTAs) outlined in the Rules and Regulations of the IHL or of Technical Officials (TOs) as outlined in other Hockey Ireland regulations. It should be seen as a complement to the regulations as MTAs / TOs may live some miles from a pitch and can give no view on conditions until they have arrived at the pitch.

The following procedure should be followed by both clubs where there is the possibility of bad weather affecting a match.

1. BAD WEATHER PROCEDURE

1.1 Anticipated Bad Weather (up to 24 hours prior to match)

- The weather forecasts for the time and place of the match should be monitored in the days prior to the match.
- For matches involving interprovincial travel (including umpires and MTAs / TOs), the home club should ascertain the departure time of the away team (and umpires / MTAs / TOs).
- The home club must ascertain what realistic alternatives are available to give every opportunity for the match to proceed on the planned weekend.

Options to consider:

- Would a change in the start time give a better chance of the match proceeding? (It may be that swapping an earlier planned club match would be less inconvenient /cost all round?)
- Is there an alternative pitch nearby that is less likely to be affected by the adverse weather conditions (e.g. not impacted by fog or frost)?
- If the match is scheduled for Saturday, would a change to Sunday or Friday night be an option?
- Any realistic options must be explored and either dismissed as unviable or identified as a new plan or as a contingency plan for the match to take place on the scheduled weekend. The identified options should be discussed with the away club and any appointed MTA / TO. The clubs may consult with local provincial fixtures secretaries or the Hockey Ireland Office to help identify alternative venues if required. The options explored and dismissed should be noted by clubs, should the information subsequently be requested by the competition organising committee. Note for clarification: For the EYHL, it is not expected that the host team has to give up their home advantage and play at the away teams venue unless it is the first round of the home/away and it is a within province game, or b) both teams agree
- A decision on how to proceed should be agreed between the clubs and if appointed, the MTA / TO.
- If a new plan is agreed or if the weather forecast is such that a postponement from the scheduled weekend is inevitable then the home club must notify the Hockey Ireland Office, the away club, the umpires, the MTA / TO (if appointed) and spectators of the new plan or the postponement.

1.2 Anticipated Bad Weather (less than 24 hours prior to match)

- If the match is not postponed and bad weather is still anticipated then the two clubs should agree a plan including when any pitch inspections should take place.
- If interprovincial travel is involved, this would be better in advance of the departure time of the travelling team / umpire / MTA / TO or it can be mutually agreed to be during the travel time. The two clubs should discuss whether and when any contingency plans should be enacted.
- The away club must confirm their team's departure time and provide match day contact details for it.

- The home club must confirm their match day contact details to the away club, must advise the umpires of the plans and must arrange any inspections of the pitch.
- Pitch inspections must be performed in conjunction with either a locally based umpire or MTA/ TO affiliated to the Irish Hockey Umpires Association (IHUA) or Hockey Ireland office. The official should be contacted to ascertain if they can be available to make the decision and if so, an inspection time agreed with them.
- A realistic view must be taken at the time of the pitch inspection and taking into account the weather forecast at that time.
- If the pitch is unplayable and is likely to remain so and there is no viable contingency plan in place then the match should be postponed and the home club must notify the away club, the umpires, the MTA / TO (if appointed), the Hockey Ireland Office and spectators of the postponement.
- If there is a viable contingency plan in place, then this should be enacted and the home club must notify the away club, the umpires, the MTA / TO (if appointed), the Hockey Ireland Office and spectators of the updated plan.
- Note for clarification: For the EYHL, it is not expected that the host team has to give up their home advantage and play at the away teams venue unless it is the first round of the home/away and it is a within province game, or b) both teams agree

1.3 Match Start (Pitch Unplayable / Adverse Weather / Floodlight Failure)

- Before the match starts, the decision on whether or not the pitch is playable shall be the responsibility of the Umpires unless a MTA / TO has been appointed for the match.
- Once a match has started, the decision on whether it should be abandoned rests with the umpires. A match is considered abandoned if it cannot be completed on the same day that the match was started. For the avoidance of any doubt, if a match is suspended temporarily and completed later in the same day, the match will resume at the same score line and elapsed time as when it was suspended, with the same team of players. If a match is suspended temporarily the MTA / TO (if one is in place, otherwise the umpires) may then decide to abandon the match, at their discretion.
- In the case of floodlight issues or failure, sufficient time must be given to the re-starting of the lights for technical reasons and every effort must be made to re-start the game.

2. ABANDONED MATCHES

- When a match has been abandoned, the umpires or MTA / TO (if appointed) should ensure the match report is completed and signed in line with the procedure for completed matches. An abandoned match is deemed null and void.
- In the event of a match having to be abandoned as a result of adverse weather or safety reasons (either before or during the match) the re-fixture must be arranged through the Hockey Ireland Office or competitions organising committee as appropriate.
- The re-scheduled match will be played in its entirety, from the start. The home team retains home advantage for the re-scheduled match.

3. RE-FIXING POSTPONED OR ABANDONED MATCHES

- The competitions organising committee will set the re-fix date for any postponed or abandoned matches.
- The competition organising committee will attempt to communicate the new date within 3 days of the match being abandoned. This commitment maybe delayed due to the need to fully establish conflict in the Calendar. If this situation does arise, the clubs will be informed of a date by when the new match fixture date will be communicated.
- Once the re-fix date has been notified to both clubs, the home side must lead the process to agree the new time and ensure it is published on the HI website and copied to the competition organising committee no later than 14 days before the match date or within 48 hours of being notified of the new time, if the match is within 14 days. .

4. FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE BAD WEATHER PROCEDURE

- If a club fails to follow the Hockey Ireland Bad Weather Procedure
- and when all parties arrive it is clear that the pitch was, and patently has been unfit prior to the match time, the Umpires, or MTA / TO (if appointed), may be asked to submit a report for the consideration of the competition organising committee;
- by not communicating appropriately with their opposing club;
- by not putting appropriate contingency plans in place or by not following them;
- by not sufficiently considering or exploring alternative options for the game to be played on the weekend;

- then the competition organising committee may take action as it deems appropriate (as below), including a report to the Chief Executive of the Hockey Ireland in accordance with the Hockey Ireland Discipline process outlined in the Hockey Ireland Constitution.
- Sanctions imposed by the competition organising committee for failure to follow this Bad Weather Procedure may include, but is not limited to, reversal of the fixture, monetary fine, contribution towards travelling costs of opposition, forfeiture of match.
- If a club is found guilty by the Hockey Ireland Discipline Committee (or, on appeal by the Appeals Committee) of not following these procedures, the club may be liable to a fine of up to €5,000.