

London Academicals Hockey Club

TEAM SELECTION



LONDON ACADEMICALS

TEAM SELECTION: OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

London Academicals Hockey Club exists to provide opportunity for club members to play hockey on a regular basis, at a level that fits their ability.

We also aim to support all our teams to be successful in any competition that they are involved with, whatever the level. This means that squads must be filled using the best players available each week and that no team should be left short of players where this can reasonably be avoided.

To support these objectives, there are some established principles behind the Club's approach to team selection, which all members should be aware of:

- London Academicals takes a **merit-based approach** to selection, with the best quality of players available being selected for each squad on a weekly basis, beginning with the 1st teams. If a player is not selected for a higher team, they will become available for selection for the next highest team, and so on.
- All members of the Accies are first and foremost members of the Club, rather than an individual squad. Selection is therefore **managed on a club wide-basis** and must be coordinated and applied consistently by all teams.
- Most members are likely to be selected for the same team most weeks but should also expect to move up or down occasionally as availability and their performances dictate.
- Competition for places and **movement between teams is encouraged** as a great way to maintain depth of squads at all levels and to drive continual improvement in the standard of play.
- Selection decisions will always be based on **an overall balance of the abilities and commitment levels of the players under consideration (see below)**. Responsibility for making decisions on this basis is given to team captains, who are expected to work with each other and club coaches to aid the selection process.
- All members have a right to be selected on their abilities and the qualities that they can bring to the team. Selections will be made on their individual merits, based on the criteria set out in this policy. These principles will be upheld, even if doing so results in longstanding players sometimes being selected for a 'lower' team than they are used to.

- The Club always aims to field the correct number of teams so that regular match play opportunities are available to all members. League entries are reviewed ahead of each season with this in mind. If demand increases significantly during a season, then the Club will look to create additional fixtures where possible and the ***principles of merit-based selection will continue to apply.***
- On occasions where availability across the club is lower than expected, captains and players are asked to show flexibility in the best interests of the club as a whole. The first priority is that all teams are able to fulfil their league fixtures. A 'higher' team should not take a large squad (e.g. 14 players plus), if this would result in the team immediately below being unable to field a minimum 11 players.

APPROACH TO TEAM SELECTION

Team selection is based on the following criteria. Club Requirements indicated must be satisfied. The Player Attributes are listed in no particular order, but are considered as a blend in the best interest of the Club and the teams.

CLUB REQUIREMENTS

- Paid up membership
- Up to date match fees

PLAYER ATTRIBUTES

- Commitment to availability on Saturdays
- Experience and Skills
- Attendance and effort at training
- Prompt / pro-active / reliable communication as requested by Club or Captains
- Punctuality
- Fitness and pace
- Enthusiasm and positive attitude
- Willingness to learn, be flexible, and to adapt
- Position the team requires filling
- Discipline* - in terms of playing ability, and also respect for the umpires, the opposition and team mates.

*All players are expected to conduct themselves on and off the pitch in accordance with the Club 'Code of Conduct' available on the website.

CREATION OF NEW / ADDITIONAL TEAMS

If the Club regularly experiences an inability to provide weekend hockey match play opportunities for all its members, due to increased demand, then it may be necessary to create a new team or enter additional competitions (of a friendly or competitive nature).

When deciding whether to increase the number of club teams, the following factors need to be considered by the Committee:

- **Demand:** is there currently a level of availability most weeks that exceeds the capacity of current teams? (A one off occurrence of good availability is unlikely to be enough)
- **Recruitment:** Will forming a new team help to grow the number of members in the club?
- **Leadership:** Has a potential captain (or captains) been identified to help lead the team?
- **Facilities:** Does the club have access to the pitch slots required to play additional home matches?
- **Fixtures:** Are there suitable competitions or friendly matches available for the new team? (Most leagues require notice of entry in May for the coming season).

It may not always be possible for additional playing opportunities to be created during a season, though the Committee will always aim to do so where there is a recognised need. In all cases, selection decisions will be made as set out in this policy and in rare circumstances this may result in member(s) not being selected for a club team on a particular weekend. Membership of the club does not guarantee selection for league hockey.

PROCESS AND COMMUNICATION OF SELECTION

The Team Captains, supported by coaches where applicable, will conduct team selection (based on the criteria listed above).

The 1st team will be selected first, followed by the 2nd team, and so on.

Captains are responsible for assessing likely availability for players well in advance of the match (with an understanding that considerations affecting availability can arise all the way up until final selection). Captains will confer on a Monday around the availability forecast for the coming weekend, and discuss likely selection considerations and options in light of this.

The Captains will communicate final selection for a weekend game to players as soon as possible **following that week's training session** (to be able to incorporate attendance, performance and other training considerations into selection where applicable). Where a player is selected for a 'lower' team than on previous occasions, the 'higher' team captain will contact the individual concerned before any communication to the wider squad.

CONCERNS OR DISPUTES

As referred to above, the objective of London Academicals HC is to provide opportunity for a hockey match for all club members on any given weekend, at a level that is appropriate for them. We also try to give all our teams the right tools to succeed and aim to select the best players available across all squads in order to achieve this.

The above selection guidance is intended to ensure that selection is made with a merit-based approach and given appropriate consideration. In all cases, strong communication is encouraged between team captains, and between captains and players.

The Club expects its members to take selection decisions with a positive mindset, and to discuss concerns or opportunities for improvement if not selected for the team they aspire to play in,

directly with their captain and coaching group. Captains should be able to and willing to discuss the selection criteria with their players and offer honest, constructive feedback.

It is hoped that the above will mitigate concerns or frustrations around weekend team selection. However, if a club member feels strongly that the above criteria are not being adhered to, or have not been given fair and considered feedback, then this dispute can be raised to the Committee, for discussion by the relevant parties (team captains, coaches and club captain).

NB. The Club adheres to a strictly non-discriminatory policy around selection, in line with the Club Equity Policy (available on the club website).