

# South Coast Hockey Association



Senior Competition

Pool Player Assistance Program

Season 2026 – Trial Program

Referred to as SCHA Pool Player Supplement Document

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## 1. Introduction

The Senior Competition Pool Player Assistance Program has been introduced to support teams experiencing permanent player shortages throughout the season.

The aim of the program is to maintain the integrity and continuity of the competition by allowing SCHA registered players from other teams or clubs to temporarily fill in for teams that do not have sufficient numbers available for a particular match.

By providing a structured and transparent process for accessing Pool Players, the program helps ensure that matches can proceed as scheduled while also supporting the ongoing development and sustainability of all teams within the competition.

This initiative recognises that player availability can fluctuate during the season due to injuries, work commitments, travel, and other personal circumstances. The Pool Player Assistance Program provides a fair and consistent framework that prioritises participation, player development, and the overall strength of the competition.

This program will operate as a trial for the 2026 season, with its effectiveness reviewed periodically by the South Coast Hockey Association (SCHA) Executive.

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## 2. Purpose

The Pool Player Assistance Program is designed to support teams that are unable to field eleven (11) players due to genuine player shortages.

The program allows approved players from other teams or clubs within the competition to temporarily assist teams so that matches can proceed while maintaining fairness across the competition.

The program is intended as a support mechanism, not as a strategic tool to strengthen teams beyond 11 players. Teams that are able to field a full team from within their own playing group should do so without seeking Pool Player assistance.

### **3. Program Participation and Approval**

- Participation in the Pool Player Assistance Program requires approval from the SCHA Committee.
- Both the team requesting assistance and the player wishing to act as a Pool Player must submit an application and receive approval before participating in the program.
- Applications from teams and players may be submitted at any time during the season and will be reviewed by the SCHA Committee, generally at the monthly Committee meetings.
- All approvals granted under the program remain subject to monthly review by the SCHA Committee, who reserve the right to amend, suspend, or withdraw approval if the approval is not being used in the spirit intended.
- The Pool Player Assistance Program is open to all eligible SCHA registered teams and SCHA registered players within the senior competition, provided they meet the eligibility requirements and receive approval.

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### **4. Eligibility of Teams Requesting Pool Players**

For a team to be eligible to utilise Pool Players they must:

- Submit a written application to the SCHA Committee requesting approval to access the Pool Player program.
- Provide the reason for the request, such as:
  - A developing team
  - Consistent player shortages
  - Limited junior player availability
  - Other genuine circumstances impacting player numbers.
- Demonstrate that reasonable efforts have been made to recruit or source players from within their own club.
- Approval to access Pool Players is granted at the discretion of the SCHA Committee, and the Committee's decision is final.
- Receive approval from the SCHA Committee

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## **5. Eligibility of Pool Players**

To be eligible to act as a Pool Player, individuals must:

- Be a financial and registered member of one of the participating clubs within the competition.
- Be registered to play in the same grade as the team requesting assistance.
- Be available only when their own nominated team does not require their participation for that round.
- Apply for and receive approval from the SCHA Executive to be included in the Pool Player program.
- Acknowledge that their contact details may be provided to clubs, coaches, and team captains for the purposes of organising player availability.
- Understand that while participating as a Pool Player they may be exempt from certain SCHA by-laws, and subject to additional laws formed under the Pool Player Supplement Document.
- Remain subject to all disciplinary procedures, cards, and sanctions in accordance with SCHA competition rules.

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## **6. When Pool Players May Be Used**

Teams may request Pool Player assistance only when the following conditions are met:

- The team has received approval from SCHA to utilise Pool Players.
- The team has fewer than eleven (11) available players for the scheduled match.
- The club has exhausted reasonable internal options to fill the team, including:
  - Contacting other registered players within the club
  - Actively seeking new members where possible
  - Utilising eligible junior players where appropriate.
- Pool Players may only be used to bring a team up to the minimum playing number of eleven (11) players.

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## **7. Limits on Pool Player Numbers**

To ensure fairness and maintain the integrity of the competition, the following limits apply:

- Pool Players may only be used to bring a team up to a starting line-up of eleven (11) players.
- A team must not exceed the number of players fielded by the opposing team through the use of Pool Players.
- A team may field a maximum of three (3) Pool Players in any one match.
- Pool Players are not permitted to participate in Major Round matches or Finals, unless approved through the official SCHA permit process.
- Under no circumstances may Pool Players be used to create a numerical or competitive advantage beyond the intent of this program.

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## **8. Pool Player Restrictions**

To maintain fairness within the competition, the following restrictions apply:

- Pool Players may only play in the grade in which they are registered.
- Pool Players cannot replace available rostered players or be used for tactical advantage.
- The same Pool Player may assist the same team a maximum of two (2) times during the season.
- Under no circumstances may a Pool Player participate in a match against their own registered team.
- Pool Players must wear the correct playing uniform of the team they are assisting, including appropriate shirt and socks. Umpires reserve the right to stop players due to incorrect uniform.
- Pool Players may not give up a scheduled umpiring appointment in order to participate in another match as a Pool Player.
- In the event that a regular team player(s) arrive after the match has commenced, and the team is fielding Pool Players, a one for one substitution must take place at the next suitable stoppage, pool player(s) must cease participating in the match and take no further part in the match.

## **Men's Competition Provision**

- If Pool Players are unavailable, men's teams retain the ability to field women from their own club if necessary. However, teams may not utilise both women players and Pool Players in the same match.
- This rule exists to reduce reliance on women to sustain men's teams while still allowing flexibility where necessary.

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## **9. Requesting a Pool Player (Process and Timing)**

Teams seeking to utilise the Pool Player Assistance Program must follow the process below to ensure transparency and fairness.

Request Process:

- The Team Captain, Coach, or Team Manager must notify the Match Recorder, that they are using pool players
- Use the contact list of approved pool players published by SCHA to find eligible players for the game
- Ensure the scoresheet is filled out correctly

### **Timing**

- Teams may apply for entry into the Pool Player program at any stage during the season.
- Requests for Pool Players should be made as early as possible once a team becomes aware they may be short of players.

### **Communication and Recording**

- The opposing Team Captain must be informed of any Pool Players prior to the commencement of the match.
- The names of all Pool Players must be recorded on the match sheet and marked with "PP" next to their name.
- Pool Players are not eligible for Umpire's Votes, and any goals scored will not be recorded for individual statistics.

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## **10. Spirit of the Program**

All clubs and teams are expected to utilise the Pool Player Assistance Program in good faith and in the spirit of supporting participation and fair competition.

The intention of the program is to assist teams facing genuine player shortages while ensuring that all clubs continue to develop and utilise their own playing lists wherever possible.

The SCHA Committee reserves the right to review, refuse, or revoke Pool Player approvals and team approvals if the program is not being used appropriately or in accordance with its intended purpose.