



Lonsdale League Rules Season 2026/2027

These rules shall govern all competitions sanctioned by the Lonsdale League and apply to all member clubs, players, officials, and volunteers participating within its framework and competing in Lonsdale League competition.

- 1) On the scheduling of any league meetings, each club shall be entitled to have two representatives attending.
- 2) No applications for membership shall be accepted after the due date which will be given at the general meeting. The committee will reserve the right on what clubs are accepted into the league.
- 3) Clubs currently in membership must pay all League and guarantee fees (if applicable) prior to start of the season. Upon paying annual membership fees, member clubs are considered to be in acceptance of these league rules and conditions. Each club must have adequate public liability and player injury insurance in place before the season begins. Proof may be requested by the League at any time
- 4) Any Clubs with fees outstanding prior to start of season will be suspended from all matches under the jurisdiction of this League until all monies owing have been paid in full.
- 5) Any Club remaining suspended after 12.00 noon on the Thursday prior to a Saturday fixture or 48 hours prior to the Kick-off of a midweek fixture will forfeit the points or Cup-tie to their opponents.
- 6) The Management shall have the power to fine, suspend or expel any Club, any member Committee of a Club, or any player of a Club whose conduct shall be deemed or in connection objectionable with any match or fixture or continual disregard to the rules. Appeals under this rule must be received by the League Secretary via email within 48 hours of the cause, accompanied by £100 security which will be returned upon resolution of the matter. The Management Committee shall have the power to deal with offending Club or Clubs, Player or Players, Official or Officials as they may think fit, and to deal with any other matter not provided for in these Rules the Management Committee will appoint a Disciplinary Panel to hear misconduct cases and appeals.

- 7) Any Club fined under 6 above, will be notified in email of:-
- i) The nature of the Rule contravened.
 - ii) The amount of the fine.
 - iii) The due date by which the fine must be paid.
- 8) The Management Committee reserve the right to increase the fine for any Clubs who contravene the same Rule on more than one occasion during any one season.
- 9) Clubs who fail to pay fines by the due date will face possibility of increased fines, point deductions, suspension, and expulsion. The committee will apply the deemed necessary response to the situation.
- 10) a) Lonsdale League Campaigns - member Clubs will be divided in Divisions and number as the Management Committee decide.
All issues regarding promotion and Relegation will be determined annually by the Management Committee
The Champion Club will be declared as follows:
- Highest number of points at the end of the campaign
 - In the event of a points tie then goal difference will be the deciding factor
 - In the event of a further tie then goals scored will be the deciding factor
 - In the event of a further tie, a playoff match to crown the Champion Club will be arranged at a ground decided by the Management Committee.
- b) Lonsdale League Cup Campaigns – member clubs will be informed of the cups structure in advance of the season kick off.
- c) Should a team exit Lonsdale League Competition without having fulfilled all their league and cup fixtures, the Management Committee reserves the right to decide how this exit should be treated in terms of league standings and cup games played. The Management Committee will make a decision in the interests of protecting the integrity of the competitions.
The Management Committee will email all relevant member clubs to confirm and explain the conclusion reached.
- 11) a) All communications must be addressed to the Secretary at the email address: lonsdale@adrenalinesportswear.ie, who shall conduct the correspondence of the competition.
- b) Clubs must answer correspondence when required to do so. The Management Committee reserves the right to fine any Club who fail to answer Correspondence when directed to do.
- 12) a) All player registrations must be through the tally link (<https://tally.so/r/nWazqe>). Clubs should maintain a central list of their registered players with full name and date of birth of each player. The list for the start of the season must be received 24 hours before

the team's first game. All clubs must ensure any personal data collected or shared (e.g., player registration details) is processed in accordance with the UK GDPR. The League will store minimal necessary data and will not share it with third parties unless legally required

Any updates to a team's registered players list during the season must be received via email no later 24 hours before the fixture in order for any new players to be eligible.

- b) No club shall be allowed to register a player after 11.59pm on the 31st January.
- c) Any team playing an ineligible player or players in any Domestic League fixture or Cup tie (whether through non-registration or otherwise) will be fined a minimum of £30 for each ineligible player and a 3-0 win awarded to their opponents. In the case of a protest being upheld against a Club which has won a match by any violation of Rule, points so won will be deducted from them and will be awarded to their opponents.

In respect of domestic Cup matches, the Management Committee shall have the powers to reinstate a defeated team provided that the following round of the competition has not commenced.

In the case of a protest being upheld against a Club which has won a Cup Tie by any violation of Rule that Club shall be expelled from the competition and any successful appellants shall be re-instated. Protests under this Rule, giving particulars of protest must be received by the League Secretary within 2 days (Sundays not included) from date of the match enclosing a deposit of £30 which shall be forfeited in the event of protest not being sustained.

- d) If a team is in suspicion that their opponents are fielding an ineligible player they should obtain evidence and report to the League Committee via email. The best form of evidence would be the submission of a team photo both front and back (to be able to view kit numbers). This will then be viewed alongside the referees match card.
- e) The Management Committee shall have the right to investigate the subject and content of any protest or complaint whether or not the said protest or complaint is deemed in order and shall take any action they deem necessary in each individual case.
- f) In the case of a team registering a player under the age of 16, it is the responsibility of the club to obtain and hold signed permission from a guardian. The league will assume this is in order once the player is on a team's registered players list.

16) a) A Club may, at its discretion may nominate 5 substitute players, of which all 5 may be used at any time during any match, except to replace a player who has been suspended from the game by the Referee. In the case of cup finals, clubs may nominate 9 substitute players, of which 5 may be used in any time during the match. The substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. Only 5 substitutions by each side will be permitted any match and the substitute players shall be nominated prior to the commencement of the game.

17 a) The Fixtures Secretary, or any appointed assistant will be responsible for arranging all matches- League and Cup- that come within the jurisdiction of this League. These fixtures will be on the league's website the Monday morning for the week ahead (at the latest). Clubs must play fixtures as directed and may not amend, alter or postpone any matches without prior agreement from the Fixtures Secretary or any appointed assistant. No fixture may be arranged, altered or amended, later than 12.00 noon on the Thursday prior to a Saturday fixture or 48 hours prior to a midweek fixture without prior agreement between both Clubs and the Fixtures Secretary or any appointed assistant. In the event of any Club attempting to amend or alter fixtures as above, the Fixtures Secretary or any appointed assistant shall make a decision by which both Clubs shall abide. Clubs must play fixtures on these dates arranged by the League except if the pitch is unplayable and called off from the council. Clubs must notify the League immediately of pitch unavailability and provide evidence (e.g., photos or council notice) where possible. In extreme weather or emergency situations, the League reserves the right to cancel or reschedule matches with less than 24 hours' notice.

Clubs must play on all available Saturdays except in the case of exceptional circumstances when the permission of the Fixtures Secretary must be obtained.

Due to pitch availability clubs will have to kick off at 12 noon or 16:30 on a Saturday occasionally. Where possible a weeks' notice will be given to clubs in these situations.

b) Teams wishing to apply for a free Saturday date must do so via email at least one week in advance to the League Secretary via email (e.g. By 5pm on the Sunday prior to the following weeks fixtures). Teams will be permitted 2 free Saturdays per season

c) If for any reason a match has been terminated by a Referee, due to circumstances over which neither competing team has control, the result at the termination of play shall stand provided that the duration of the match has not been less than an hour. Any dispute regarding the outcome of the match shall be referred to the Management Committee for a decision.

d) All Cup matches will be scheduled to be played as two equal periods of 45 minutes. In the event of any cup match being terminated by the Referee, Rule (c) above will apply.

e) Should a team not turn up in reasonable time or fail to fulfil their fixture as arranged by the League, they will be dealt with by the Management Committee.

Fines and Point Deductions are to be expected by any team unable to fulfil their fixture.

Punishment will be communicated to the offending team via the committee.

If a team fails to fulfil more than two fixture in a season, a review will be held and they may be expelled from competitions at the committee's discretion.

Reasonable time shall be understood to mean that the Kick-Off should not be delayed for more than 20 minutes after the Official time for starting.

f) In the event that there is a backlog of games towards the season end, clubs may need to play for 6 pointers. We try to prevent this as best we can as we try to get games played in timely fashion.

18 a) Each team in the League shall register its colours with the Secretary. No two Clubs shall play in the same colour. In the event of two teams having the same, the away team must change their colours.

A Goalkeeper must wear a shirt or jersey of a distinctive colour from that of his own team and also his opponents.

b) All Shirts must be clearly numbered, and all Players and Substitutes shall wear the numbered shirt that corresponds with their name on the Match Card.

19 a) Both Clubs shall share and pay the Referee his fee and travelling expenses as agreed by the League annually. Where no play is possible owing to cases over which neither Club has control, the Referee, if present, shall be only entitled to half his match fee and travelling expenses.

b) Any Club paying a Referee more than his just fee or expenses shall be deemed guilty of misconduct and fined.

c) Prior to the commencement of the match, both teams must be afforded the opportunity to view their opponents' team sheet. Failure to do so shall be reported in the first instance to any Official Referee who shall note this fact on the Match card.

d) In all cases, where Teams have been denied the opportunity to view their opponents' team sheet, they should report this fact, in writing, Secretary within 2 days via email

e) Teams reported under (c) and (d) above will be dealt with by the Management Committee.

f) Any team making a spurious complaint under (c) and (d) above shall be deemed guilty of Misconduct and dealt with accordingly.

g) The match card must not be altered, amended defaced or falsified in any way. Any Club found guilty of altering, amending, defacing or falsifying any match card, once completed, will be charged with misconduct and dealt with by the Management Committee.

h) The home team shall be responsible for overseeing that all sections of the match card are completed. Both teams are to ensure the match card are completed correctly and the following information provided; Full name and number, the card is to be signed by the

person who fills the card out and if all this information is not provided, a fine of up to £20 will be imposed onto the relevant club

- i) The Management Committee reserve the right to fine any Team who fail to comply with any sections of this Rule.

20 a) In the case of a club having a First, Reserve and 3rd Team the allowances of bringing players into their team will vary. See Appendix 1 for 2026/2027 allowances.

20 b) Clubs are able to sign under 18 players from youth teams but as soon as those youth players play for their respective senior club (1st team or Reserve team) they are ineligible to play then within the Lonsdale league. An example would be Armagh City under 17 then playing for their senior team or reserve team.

20 c) Any player under the age of 16 must have a letter of approval from their guardian which should be obtained and held by the club.

20 d) Players can only play for one senior football team. Lonsdale League teams are not permitted to register or play any player that is actively registered with another senior team in another league.

21)

a) Proposals for changes to Rules to be considered at the General Meeting must be placed, in writing via email to the league Secretary ahead of the distribution of the next season's rules.

b) The Management Committee shall have the power to call a General Meeting where clubs must attend

(c) All Clubs must attend League meetings and must sign the attendance registers provided by the League. Clubs who fail to sign the Attendance Registers will be deemed to be absent and dealt with accordingly. Clubs who fail to attend meetings will be fined £10.

(d) At the Commencement of the next Management Committee subsequent to any League meeting, the names of all Clubs who have failed to sign the attendance registers will be read to the committee. The committee shall fine all Clubs deemed absent from any League meeting.

(e) The Management Committee shall have the right to fine a Club deemed to be absent from League meetings on more than One occasion throughout the course of any one season.

(f) The Management Committee shall have the right to charge any Club with misconduct should the said Club fail to attend League meetings on 3 consecutive occasions during the course of any one season.

22) In the event of the non-appearance of an Official Referee or injury to an Official Referee which prevents them from continuing, unless an individual can be agreed by both teams, the competing teams must toss a coin and the team winning the toss shall have choice of Referee.

a) Once chosen, the individual concerned should officiate for the duration of the entire fixture unless injury prevents them from doing so. In the event of such injury, the Club who initially won the toss of coin shall continue to have choice of Referee.

c) The person chosen to Officiate under (a) and (b) above shall have full powers under the Laws of the Game.

d) No team should seek to impose a match official upon their opponents. Any Club found to have attempted to act in this manner will be charged with misconduct and dealt with by the Management Committee.

24) Social Media – any club, player or official, who degrades the league in any way or form will be disciplined in the appropriate way. The League Committee shall determine whether comments are football-related

If a player or official makes comments in the media or social media in which (a) they imply bias, question integrity and/or bring the game into disrepute or (b) are abusive, offensive and/or insulting and such comments are considered to be football related, they will be sanctioned with a minimum 1 match suspension (where possible) and a minimum fine of £100 which will be imposed on their club

If a match official makes comments in the media or social media in which they (a) bring the game into disrepute or (b) are abusive, offensive and/or insulting and such comments are considered to be football related they will be sanctioned with a minimum fine of £100 and may be suspended. A reprimand may also be issued to players, officials and match officials in the case of inappropriate comments in the media or social media.

The committee may issue a sanction in the case of repeat offences by players, officials or match officials.

25) Inciting Hatred and Violence –

A player or official who publicly incites others to hatred or violence will be sanctioned with a suspension for no less than twelve months and with a minimum fine of £250 which will be imposed on their club.

In serious cases, in particular when the infringement is committed using the mass media (Such as the press, radio or television) or if it takes place on a match day in or around a stadium, the minimum fine will be £1000 which will be imposed on their club.

26) Discrimination –

Anyone who offends the dignity of a person or group of persons through contemptuous, discriminatory or denigratory words or actions concerning race, colour, language, religion or origin shall be suspended for at least five matches. Furthermore, a stadium ban and a fine shall be imposed. Where the perpetrator is a player a fine of at least £150 imposed on clubs. If the perpetrator is an official, the fine imposed shall be at least £250 on clubs.

Respect your audience. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the Lonsdale League. You should also show proper consideration for others privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory (like religion or politics). We all appreciate respect. All participants must adhere to the Lonsdale League Code of Conduct, which outlines expected standards of behaviour for players, coaches, officials and spectators

27) The above Rules cover League and Cup Competitions.

28) By participating in Lonsdale League competition, individuals consent to their name being displayed on occasion on associated league platforms (social media and website)

29) The Lonsdale League and its management committee shall not be liable to any member Club or player for any loss, damage or claims arising in connection with Lonsdale League Competition.

30) Withdrawal from the League

Should a club withdraw from the league during the season:

If the club has completed less than 80% of its scheduled league fixtures, all league results involving that club shall be declared null and void and removed from the league table.

If a club has completed **80% or more** of its scheduled league fixtures, all completed league results shall stand and any remaining unplayed fixtures shall be awarded to the opposing club by a score of **3–0**.

The League Committee reserves the right to apply this rule in exceptional circumstances where it considers it necessary to protect the integrity of the competition.

Appendix 1 – Player Allowances

The maximum allowance of MUFL players named within the match day squad for Reserve and Thirds teams competing in Lonsdale League 2026/2027

Ambassadors Swifts

- 1 player from Ambassadors Firsts (competing in MUFL Intermediate B) and 2 players from Ambassadors Reserves (competing in MUFL Reserve 1) OR
- 3 players from Ambassadors Reserves (competing in MUFL Reserve 1)

Caledon Rovers Reserves

- 3 players from Caledon Rovers Firsts (competing in MUFL Division 1)

Craigavon City Youth

- 1 player from Craigavon City Football Club Firsts (competing in MUFL Intermediate B) and 2 players from Craigavon City Football Club Reserves (competing in MUFL Reserve Championship) and/or Craigavon City Football Club Thirds (competing in MUFL Reserve Division 3) OR
- 3 players from Craigavon City Football Club Reserves (competing in MUFL Reserve Championship) and/or Craigavon City Football Club Thirds (competing in MUFL Reserve Division 3)

Donacloney Swifts

- 3 players from Donacloney Firsts (competing in MUFL Division 3) and/or Donacloney Reserves (competing in MUFL Reserve Division 3)

Dungannon Rovers

- 3 players from Dungannon Rovers Firsts (competing in MUFL Division 3)

Keady Celtic Youth

- 3 players from Keady Celtic Firsts (competing in MUFL Division 1)

Keady Celtic Oriels

- Mix of 3 players from Keady Celtic Firsts and/or Keady Celtic Youth (competing in MUFL Division 1 & Lonsdale D1).

Richhill AFC U23 Colts

- 1 player from Richhill AFC Firsts (competing in MUFL Intermediate A) and 2 players from Richhill AFC Reserves (competing in MUFL Reserve Championship) OR
- 3 players from Richhill AFC Reserves (competing in MUFL Reserve Championship)

Riverdale

- 3 players from Riverdale Firsts (competing in MUFL Division 2)

Red Star

- 3 players from Red Star Firsts (competing in MUFL Division 2)

Markethill Swifts Colts

- 1 player from Markethill Swifts Firsts (competing in MUFL Intermediate B) and 2 players from Markethill Swifts Reserves (competing in MUFL Reserve 1) OR
- 3 players from Markethill Swifts Reserves (competing in MUFL Reserve 1)

Timetable and games played for classification as an MUFL Intermediate A/B Player

August 2026 – October 2026	2 games
November 2026 – December 2027	4 games
January 2027- March 2027	5 games
April 2027 – Season 2026/2027 finish	6 games

**Timetable and games played for classification as an MUFL Division 1/2/3 Player,
MUFL Reserve Champ/1/2/3 Player & Lonsdale Division 1.**

August 2026 – October 2026	4 games
November 2026 – December 2027	6 games
January 2027- March 2027	7 games
April 2027 – Season 2026/2027 finish	6 games