NCCA GENERAL COMPETITION RULES 2026

1. COMPETITION FORMAT

1.1 There shall be three competitions: T20, One Day Trophy and Championship.

2. MANAGEMENT

2.1 Control of the competitions shall be undertaken by National Counties Cricket Association Ltd ("NCCA") acting by its Board of Directors ("Board"), and all decisions relating to these rules or matches played in the competition shall be final and binding on all concerned.

2.2 NCCA retains ultimate discretion over the Regulations for NCCA Competitions and Playing Conditions and shall be entitled at any time to amend, vary, or add to them on reasonable notice to interested parties, as well as in exceptional or urgent circumstances when they shall be entitled to do so immediately upon notification to the interested parties. If any such decision is made on the day of or during a match in relation to which a referee has been appointed, the decision shall be notified to the referee, who shall give the notification to the interested parties.

2.3 In the case of exceptional or urgent circumstances as referred to in 2.2, the powers of NCCA may be exercised on its behalf by the Operations Director, or if he/she is not available or is conflicted, by the Chair or by a Director nominated by the Chair.

3. REGISTRATION & QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS

3.1. All players must be registered on the NCCA registration website, which may be accessed via the main NCCA website www.nationalcountiesca.co.uk or directly at www.nccaregistrations.co.uk

3.2 All players must qualify to play for England as determined by the ECB, and they may be registered under one of the following two categories:

i. **County qualified, England qualified through birth**
   a) British citizenship (in possession of a UK passport)
   b) Born in England or Wales **and**
   c) Not played as a local player in professional, international or domestic cricket in a Full Member Country within the last three years.

ii. **County qualified, England qualified through residence**

a) British citizenship (in possession of a UK passport) **and**
b) Three years residence (a total of 210 days/year, April to March) **and**
c) Not played as a local player in professional, international or domestic cricket in a Full Member Country within the last three years.

3.3 A National County Cricket Club wishing to register a player under (ii) above must provide a copy of the player's passport and proof that the player has been a resident for a minimum of 210 days/year in each of the last three years between April and March before the registration may be approved.

3.4. A qualified cricketer already registered for a National County Club may be registered for a Professional County Club, or vice-versa, with the consent of the National County Club or the Professional County Club with whom they are already registered and without cancellation of the registration for that National County Club or Professional County Club being required.

3.5. All players must be registered before they play in any of the three competitions under the jurisdiction of NCCA. It is acknowledged that, on occasions, due to late withdrawals for injury or other unforeseen reasons, a player may be brought in to play on the morning of a match. Under these circumstances, the player must be registered within 24 hours of completion of the match.

3.6. A player shall only be eligible to play for one County in NCCA competitions in any one season, whether in the same or different competitions.

3.7. A player, currently registered for a National County Club, may not be registered for another National County Club without the consent of the National County Club that holds their registration. Permission may only be refused if the player owes money to the National County Club they are leaving or is under suspension for a disciplinary offence committed whilst playing in a competition played under the jurisdiction of NCCA

3.8 In all competitions played under the jurisdiction of NCCA, National County Clubs must include a minimum number of **EIGHT** "Home Grown" players (as defined by NCCA) in every game. (See appendix for definitions and dispensations).

3.9 In all competitions played under the jurisdiction of NCCA, the total aggregate ages of the **EIGHT** youngest players in each team must not exceed 200 years.

3.10 A National County Club that is found to be in breach of 3.8 and 3.9 above in any of the competitions played under the jurisdiction of NCCA will be deemed to have played an ineligible player and subject to the sanctions listed in section 12.

3.11 Each National County Club shall be restricted to playing in any one match not more than one former Professional County Club player who has played a total of 40 or more

games consisting of any of the following: Professional County Championship matches, List A matches, Test matches home and overseas, representative matches home and overseas recognised as First Class matches and First Class matches overseas. For clarity: matches involving University teams do not count towards the total, regardless of which side the player was representing.

Counties may apply for Home Grown status for players who have played more than 40 games, as described above in 3.11. Each player will be dealt with individually on a case-by-case basis. If players are granted this Home-Grown status, it will allow them to play with another player who has played 40 or more games.

3.12 No player who, during the current season, is or has been registered for a Professional County Club shall be eligible to participate in any NCCA competition unless they have been registered no later 5.00 p.m. on the Friday before the County's first game in that competition.

3.13 Players must participate and be present at the ground throughout any match for which they are selected unless prevented from doing so by a genuine and unforeseen emergency. Specifically, no player may play in another match during a Championship, One Day Trophy or T20 match, if this prevents them from participating fully in that match.

4. DEVELOPMENT GAMES

All Counties must organise and play a minimum of five days of Development XI cricket (unless abandoned due to poor weather or conceded by the opposition) during the season.

5. COACHES:

Each County is required to have an ECB Level 3 Coach or above in attendance at every game.

6. VENUES:

6.1 In the event of it becoming apparent before a match commences that no play will be possible because the ground and/or pitch is unfit, an alternative venue shall be permissible, subject to the agreement of both counties.

6.2. Counties are to submit their venues for the forthcoming season by 31st December of the year preceding the relevant season.

6.3 All Counties hosting venues must comply with the NCCA Venue/Ground Requirement Policy.

6.4 Catering Requirements – All Counties will cater for 34 people (16 per team plus 2 umpires) as a minimum. Arrangements for paying for or sharing the cost of any additional guests must be agreed upon between Counties before the match commences.

6.5 County Representatives - There must be at least one non-match team member of the County in attendance at each match.

6.6 The host County must ensure that a qualified first aider is in attendance at all games hosted by that County.

7. MATCH OFFICIALS

7.1. The selection and appointment of umpires for all competitions and Finals will be administered by ECB.

7.2. NCCA may, in its absolute discretion, appoint a match referee for any match in any competition, as it considers appropriate. Match referees will act as instructed by the Board.

7.3. Each County shall provide a scorer for each match, and all scorers are to use PCS Pro.

7.4. For T20 and One Day Trophy matches, all Counties will use Duckworth/Lewis/Stern integrated with PCS Pro Scorer.

8. MATCH REPORTING

8.1 Both scorers shall complete and agree on an online official result sheet, which the home County shall upload to the relevant area of the County portal on the NCCA website, within 72 hours of the end of each match.

8.2 Each captain, home and away, shall submit an assessment report using the online form provided, within 72 hours of the end of each match.

8.3 Any injury during the match that requires on-field attention, or the injured player to leave the field, must be reported on the play-cricket.com site of the relevant County.

8.5 Any County that fails to meet these requirements shall be subject to a financial penalty, as referred to in section 12.

9. LAW 21.2 – FAIR DELIVERY – THE ARM

The principles set out in the 'Procedure to address a suspect bowling action in NCCA Competitions' shall apply to all matches. This procedure, to be followed by umpires and the competition organisers, can be found on the NCCA website.

10 GROUND ADMISSION

The home County shall be responsible for the match arrangements and shall retain any gate receipts. The home County or the club whose ground is being used for any match may, at its discretion, charge for admission and/or parking.

11 REGULATIONS AND DIRECTIVES

All Counties must adhere to the following processes, guidelines and/or regulations:

- ECB General Conduct Regulations
- Anti-doping and anti-corruption
- ECB directives relating to fast bowling
- Wearing of protective equipment*

*Stem guards are advised but NOT mandatory in NCCA cricket.

12. SANCTIONS AND PENALTIES FOR BREACH OF COMPETITION RULES

12.1 Any County playing an ineligible player in a T20 match will lose 2 points, and in a 50 Over match will lose 4 points.

12.2 Any County playing an ineligible player in a Championship match will forfeit the points earned from that match.

12.3 Any County playing a First Class registered player who has not been registered for that County within the agreed time periods (3.12), in a T20 match will lose 2 points, in a 50 Over match will lose 4 points or if in a Championship match, they will forfeit the points earned from that match.

12.4 If a County fails to submit any Scorer's report or Captain's report within the timescales allowed (72 hours), a financial penalty of £50 will be imposed for each late report.

12.5 If a County fails to live-stream (using at least one camera) any white-ball games, a financial penalty of £250 per game will be imposed.

12.6 If a County fails to organise one or more of its development games, a financial penalty of £1000 per game will be imposed

13 BONUS PAYMENT

Counties will accumulate points throughout the season across all formats. Points will be attributed for wins and finishing positions in each competition. At the end of the season, all Counties will be given a position from 1-20 and receive a bonus payment relating to that position.

Total Fund = £42,000

Position 1 = £4000

Position 20 = £200

Each County from 2-19 will receive an amount reduced in increments of £200 per position.

Appendix 1:

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Age criteria – the average age of the eight youngest players in a team in all NCCA competitions must not exceed 25 years and 0 months on 1st April in the current season.

2. Eligibility criteria – eight members of each team in all NCCA competitions must fulfil one of the following criteria: -

    a. Born in the County

    b. Educated in the County between the ages of 13-19, i.e. Senior School, College

    c. Played in a County Age Group team from Under 13 upwards for the relevant County

    d. *Bona fide* playing member of a club affiliated to the relevant County Cricket Board

    e. University Criteria – Players who attend a university within a National County will be deemed eligible for that National County for the duration of their university course. Once the course is completed, the player must meet any one or more of the other criteria, 2. a-d, to be eligible as a Homegrown

player. The university eligibility status changes at the end of the season when that player's university course finishes.

NB: the eight players in 1. and 2. above do not have to be the same players!

Dispensations and Exceptions

1. Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire

   The following dispensation is permitted: -

   a. A player who, currently, meets any of the four eligibility criteria to play for Huntingdonshire may be regarded as a "Home Grown" player by Bedfordshire or Cambridgeshire provided that, in the case of a player qualifying by virtue of his playing for a Huntingdonshire club, that club pays a secondary affiliation fee to Bedfordshire/Cambridgeshire Cricket Board as the case may be.

2. Herefordshire

   The following dispensations are permitted: -

   a. A player from the Worcestershire C.C.C. Academy may be regarded as a "Home Grown" player by Herefordshire.

   b. A player from any club affiliated to Worcestershire Cricket Limited may be regarded as a "Home Grown" player by Herefordshire, provided that the club pays a secondary affiliation fee to Herefordshire Cricket Limited.

3. Northumberland

   The following dispensation is permitted:-

   A player from the Durham C.C.C. Academy may be regarded as a "Home Grown" player by Northumberland.

4. North Wales

   The following dispensation is permitted:-

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A player from North Wales may be regarded as a “Home Grown” player by Shropshire or Cheshire.