

GMCL JUNIORS NEWSLETTER-

2026 SEASON

WELCOME TO THE 2026 SEASON

As we prepare for the new season, this newsletter brings together the essential information clubs, coaches, managers, and volunteers need to ensure a smooth and well-organised year across all junior age groups. Opening with a message from our Junior Director, it sets out key priorities for the season ahead and reaffirms our ongoing commitment to player development, participation, and enjoyment.

Over the winter, the league has worked closely with clubs to finalise competition structures, fixtures, and operational processes.

This edition provides a clear overview of what to expect in 2026, including key rule updates, changes to player eligibility, registration, and transfers, guidance on Performance League qualification, and important Play-Cricket registration requirements. Further sections offer clarity on loan and multi-club playing rules, an Interleague update, and details of Competition Managers and key dates to support effective planning.

Thank you to all clubs and volunteers for your continued commitment to junior cricket within the GMCL. We look forward to another successful season focused on development, organisation, and enjoyment for all our young players.



A WORD FROM OUR JUNIOR DIRECTOR- GARY PEACE

Welcome to the Junior newsletter as we all prepare for what promises to be a great summer of junior cricket and player development across the GMCL.

The junior set up has been extremely busy over the winter implementing a new structure across both the league and interleague. Hopefully this work has set the foundation for the delivery of continual progress for the GMCL junior set up for 2026 and beyond.

I'd like to put on record my thanks to those who have helped the GMCL junior set up historically for their hard work and dedication. In any organisation such as this, good people giving up their time voluntarily is crucial and it is appreciated greatly. I'd specifically like to thank Nigel Stock, my predecessor in this role, and also Tony Potter, outgoing Head of Interleague, for their efforts and commitment to Junior cricket in the GMCL.

On that note I'd like to welcome in the new faces, on the league side we have Joe Pattison as Head of League, supported by our new competition managers Lily Greaves and Harvey Tammam, and our new rules secretary Matt Hilton.

This team has worked tirelessly over the winter to ensure competitions and rules reflect the best interests of those clubs committed to the GMCL junior competitions, and specifically to ensure that games are as fair and competitive as possible to enable the correct environment for developing cricketers.

I am sure there will be a few challenges along the way but I am extremely confident this committee will work alongside clubs and coaches, to ensure the fairest outcomes possible with the development and safety of junior cricketers as their primary focus.

On the Interleague side I am delighted that Paul Connelly stepped up to take the vacant Head of Interleague role at the end of last season. Paul has vast experience in development of junior sports people and has a great team of coaches in the set up. It's been a privilege getting to know these coaches over the various selection sessions and meetings that have taken place over the winter. We have added 3 new coaches to the Interleague set up, Matty Davies, James Thompson and Neil Casey have joined the coaching team, adding to an excellent set of existing volunteers who are leading our representative teams and administration function.

To end, I wish all clubs and coaches the very best in their endeavours to develop the next generation of cricketers at their clubs, and to give them opportunities to shine in this game that has given so much to us.

Best wishes

Gary Peace
GMCL Director of Junior Cricket



MAIN RULE UPDATES

We have updated all junior rules for the 2026 season to ensure clarity, consistency and smooth operation across every age group. Clubs are asked to familiarise themselves with the changes ahead of the new campaign. You can view the full set of updated rules by visiting the GMCL website or by clicking the link provided.

Key Rule Updates for the 2026 Season

- **Minimum of Six Bowlers (U13, U15, U18)**

- All teams must now use a minimum of six bowlers in every league match.
- Applies to U13, U15 and U18 age groups.
- Exception only if a team is bowled out before completing their overs.
- This ensures wider participation and more development opportunities for young bowlers.

- **Pink Balls Introduced for All Junior Cricket**

- All fixtures must be played with a pink ball, including spare balls held by the home side.
- This standardises match conditions and improves visibility, especially in evening games.

- **Coloured Clothing Permitted**

- Clubs may use coloured clothing, but it is not mandatory.
- Teams can adopt it at their own pace depending on resources and preference.

- **100-Ball Format for the Summer Cup**

- The Summer Cup will now be played using the 100-ball format.

- **Duckworth–Lewis–Stern (DLS) Introduced for Rain-Affected Games**

- The DLS method will now be used to determine results in rain-affected junior matches.
- This provides a fair, standardised approach when overs are lost due to weather.
- Clubs should ensure scorers and managers are familiar with the process before the season begins.

- **FAILURE TO HONOUR A FIXTURE**

- If a team fails to honour a fixture, they will be deducted two points and the opposition awarded two points; if both teams agree to replay and the match is later abandoned, the original decision stands, with no points deducted unless a team forfeited the original date.

- **Under 9's Cricket**

We have changed Under 9's Cricket to 12 over an innings game on a Sunday morning.



ALL RULES

We have updated all junior rules for the 2026 season to ensure clarity, consistency and smooth operation across every age group. Clubs are asked to familiarise themselves with the changes ahead of the new campaign. You can view the full set of updated rules by visiting the GMCL website or by clicking the link provided.

[CLICK HERE FOR ALL JUNIOR RULES](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR DUCKWORTH LEWIS STERN GUIDE](#)

WE ARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

GMCL Juniors is active on both Instagram and X (Twitter) under the handle @GMCLJuniors. We'll be posting regular updates throughout the season to keep clubs, players, and supporters informed and connected.

Make sure you're following us to stay up to date with everything happening across junior cricket in the GMCL.



PERFORMANCE LEAGUES AND QUALIFICATION

Qualification for all age groups performance leagues has now been confirmed for the 2026 season. Teams will progress into their respective performance divisions based on results within their qualifying zones, with placements determined at the end of the opening phase. Full details for each age group are outlined below

Under 11's

Qualifying Zone Structure

U11'S (Monday)							
PREMIER TIER							
EAST				WEST			
A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Stand Royton Greenfield Woodhouses	Droylsden Mottram Glossop Denton West	N/A	N/A	Clifton Swinton Moorside Roe Green Monton	Edgworth Horwich RMI Heaton Greenmount A	Brooksbottom Elton Walsshaw A Woodbank	N/A
CHAMPIONSHIP TIER							
EAST				WEST			
A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Heyside Royton B Shaw Glodwick	Saddleworth Greenfield Stalyke Micklehurst	Dukinfield Stalybridge DSL/Woodley Ashton	Middleton Milnrow Thornham Heywood	Edgworth B Egerton Greenmount B Ramsbottom A	Bury Tottington St Johns Prestwich Walsshaw B	Walkden Worsley Winton Friends Sporting Club	Bolton Indians East Lancs Paper Mill Heaton B Clifton B
DEVELOPMENT TIER*							
			A Friarmere Hadfield St Andrews Uppermill Milnrow B DSL/Woodley B	B Heywood B Unsworth Stand B Elton B Edgworth C Prestwich B	C Flixton Little Hulton Monton B Worsley B		

Premier Division

East

- The top two teams from East A and East B will qualify for Premier East 1.
- The bottom two teams from each will form Premier East 2.

West

- The top two teams from West A, West B and West C will qualify for Premier West 1.
- Teams will play five matches, facing each opponent once (you will not play the team from your own qualifying group twice).

Championship (East & West)

For both East and West:

- 1st place → Championship 1
- 2nd place → Championship 2
- 3rd place → Championship 3
- 4th place → Championship 4

Play 5 fixtures in the group. There will be no playoff at Championship level. Each region will crown its own East Championship winner and West Championship winner.

Development Leagues

There is no performance qualification for Development divisions.

Teams will simply play the other sides in their division again in the second phase.

The fixtures for the second half of the season will be announced alongside the performance league fixtures.

Play offs and Champions

There will be a play off between the Winner of East Premier 1 and West Premier 1 on Thursday 16th July (reserve date Friday 17th July) with the winner deemed as Champions for the Age Group. All other tiers there will be a champion from each region with no play game .

Under 13's

Qualifying Zone Structure

U13'S (Wednesday)							
PREMIER TIER							
EAST				WEST			
A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Prestwich Stand Woodbank Greenfield A Royton Shaw	N/A			Clifton Heaton Horwich Roe Green	N/A		
CHAMPIONSHIP TIER							
EAST				WEST			
A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Glodwick Greenmount Walshaw A Elton	Saddleworth DSL Mottram Micklehurst	N/A		Edgworth A Ramsbottom Brooksbottom Egerton	Walkden Swinton Monton Woodhouses A	N/A	
CONFERENCE TIER							
EAST				WEST			
A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Moorside/Heyside Minrow Royton B Friends Sporting Utd	Friarmere Uppermill A Greenfield B Stayley	Droytsden Dukinfield Denton West Glossop	N/A	Edgworth B Bolton Indians Worsley Walshaw B	Middleton Bury Heywood Thornham	N/A	
DEVELOPMENT TIER*							
				A Hadfield St Andrews Stalybridge Uppermill B Woodhouses B	B Stand B Tottington St Johns Monton B Unsworth Winton Flitton		

Premier Division

Premier 1

- The top 2 teams from Premier A and the top 2 teams from Premier B will qualify for Premier 1.
- Teams will play each other home and away, except the team they qualified with from their own qualifying zone, who they will play once.

Premier 2

- 3rd-6th from Premier A and 3rd-4th from Premier B will form Premier 2. Play 5 games.

Championship – East & West

- The top 2 teams from both Championship A and Championship B (in East and West) will qualify for Championship 1 in their own region. Eg Championship East 1 and Championship West 1

- Teams will play five matches, facing each opponent once, and will not play the team they qualified with twice.
- 3rd and 4th from both A and B will form Championship 2 in their own region eg Championship East 2 and Championship West 2
- Again, teams will play five matches, facing each opponent once, and will not play the team they qualified with twice.

Conference

East

- The top 2 teams from Conference A, B and C will qualify for Conference East 1 and will play five matches (each opponent once).
- 3rd–4th from A, B and C will qualify for Conference East 2, also playing five matches.

West

- The top 2 teams from West A and West B will qualify for Conference West 1.
- Teams will play five matches, facing each opponent once, and will not play the team they qualified with twice.
- 3rd–4th from West A and West B will qualify for Conference West 2, following the same structure.

Development Leagues

- There is no performance qualification for Development divisions.
- Teams will simply play the other sides in their division again in the second phase.
- The fixtures for the second half of the season will be announced alongside the performance league fixtures.

Play offs and Champions

- There will be no playoff matches at U13 level.
- The U13 champions will be the team that finishes top of Premier 1

Under 15's

Qualifying Zone Structure

U15'S (Monday)							
EAST				WEST			
A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Bacup Woodbank Elton Milnrow	Prestwich Woodhouses Friends Sporting Club Hyde	Shaw Royton Saddleworth Greenfield A	N/A	Heaton Horwich Edgworth A Ramsbottom	Roe Green Clifton Swinton Moorside Monton	N/A	
EAST				WEST			
A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Middleton Thornham Heywood Werneth	Heyside Glodwick <i>Moorside/Micklehurst</i>	Denton West Mottram Glossop <i>DSL/Woodley</i>	N/A	Bury Brooksbottom Tottington St Johns Edgworth B	Bolton Indians Egerton Flixton Walkden	N/A	
DEVELOPMENT TIER*							
				A	B		
				Greenfield B Droylsden Dukinfield Saddleworth B Stayley	Walshaw Stand Winton Worsley Greenmount		

Premier Division

East

- The top 2 teams from East Premier A, B and C will qualify for Premier East 1 and will play five matches (each opponent once).
- 3rd-4th from A, B and C will qualify for Premier East 2, also playing five matches.

West

- The top 2 teams from West Premier A and West Premier B will qualify for Premier West 1.
- 3rd-4th from A and B will qualify for Premier West 2,
- Teams will play five matches, facing each opponent once, and will not play the team they qualified with twice.

Championship

East

- The top 2 teams from Championship A, B and C will qualify for Championship East 1 and will play five matches (each opponent once).
- 3rd-4th from A, B and C will qualify for Championship East 2, also playing five matches.

West

- The top 2 teams from West Championship A and West Championship B will qualify for Championship West 1.
- 3rd-4th from A and B will qualify for Championship West 2,
- Teams will play five matches, facing each opponent once, and will not play the team they qualified with twice.

Development Leagues

- There is no performance qualification for Development divisions.
- Teams will simply play the other sides in their division again in the second phase.
- The fixtures for the second half of the season will be announced alongside the performance league fixtures.

Play offs and Champions

- There will be a play off between the Winner of East Premier 1 and West Premier 1 on Thursday 16th July (Reserve Date as Friday 17th July) with the winner deemed as Champions for the Age Group. All other tiers there will be a champion from each region with no play off game .

Under 18's

Qualifying Zone Structure

U18S (Wednesday)							
PREMIER TIER							
EAST				WEST			
A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Heyside Werneth Woodhouses Shaw	Todmorden Littleborough Heywood Norden	Glossop Flowery Field A Droylsden Stalybridge	N/A	Walshaw Prestwich Middleton Elton	Edgworth Ramsbottom Heaton Tottington St Johns	Roe Green Swinton Clifton Monton	N/A
CHAMPIONSHIP TIER							
EAST				WEST			
A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Mottram Flixton Woodley/DSL Denton West	Milnrow Glodwick Royton Greenfield		N/A				N/A

Premier Division

East

- The top 2 teams from East Premier A, B and C will qualify for Premier East 1 and will play five matches (each opponent once).
- 3rd-4th from A, B and C will qualify for Premier East 2, also playing five matches.

West

- The top 2 teams from West Premier A, B and C will qualify for Premier West 1 and will play five matches (each opponent once).
- 3rd-4th from A, B and C will qualify for Premier West 2, also playing five matches.

Championship

- The top 2 teams from Championship A and Championship B will qualify for Championship 1.
- 3rd-4th from A and B will qualify for Championship West 2,
- Teams will play five matches, facing each opponent once, and will not play the team they qualified with twice.

Play offs and Champions

- There will be a play off between the Winner of East Premier 1 and West Premier 1 on Thursday 16th July (Reserve Date as Friday 17th July) with the winner deemed as Champions for the Age Group. All other tiers there will be a champion from each region with no play off game .

NOTE For All age Groups - Where the GMCL junior board feels a team have been entered into a league where they are not playing competitive cricket, then they maybe moved into another level at the end of the first set of fixtures.

PLAY CRICKET REGISTRATION

Clubs are reminded of updated GMCL junior registration, nomination, and transfer rules for the 2026 season. These apply with immediate effect and must be followed to ensure player eligibility.

Play-Cricket Profiles (Age 13+)

All players aged 13 and over must have a FULL Play-Cricket profile, including a passport-style photo. No exceptions apply, except for safeguarding concerns, which must be reported promptly.

Players turning 13 during the season must upgrade their account on their birthday (temporary accounts can be merged).

League Nomination (Age 13+)

All players aged 13+ must be nominated to the league via Play-Cricket, whether or not they play senior cricket. This includes players who have not previously registered as seniors.

Transfers & Registration (Age 13+)

The GMCL Google Transfer Form must be completed where:

- A player is new to a club for 2026 and leaving another club.
- A player transfers before 31 July from any other club (junior or senior).
- All GMCL transfer rules apply including approval from Old Club
- Players do not need to complete the form if they are playing junior cricket only and are not playing senior (open-age) cricket at the club.
- However, players must still be correctly nominated with both clubs on Play-Cricket.
- The form is required only where a junior player is also playing senior cricket. ie Making a full move.
- For player transfers to be eligible all steps of the transfer process must be fully completed before playing.

Key Eligibility Rules

- Players have to play 1 league game before being eligible for the Summer Cup
- All under-13 players must still be named in squads on Play-Cricket.
- No player may play senior cricket for more than one club.
- Clubs with more than 1 team at an age group are asked to keep squads consistent.

Failure to comply may result in points deductions or results being overturned.

All eligibility matters for juniors are at the discretion of the GMCL Junior Board. If unsure, please seek guidance before completing registrations. For more information please visit <https://www.gtrmcrcricket.co.uk/pages/transfers>

CLARIFICATION OF JUNIOR LOAN & MULTI-CLUB PLAYING RULES

For the 2026 season, the GMCL has clarified rules covering junior players playing for more than one club and the use of loan players. These rules balance player development, welfare, and fair competition.

- Players cannot play for two GMCL teams at the same age group, but can play for another GMCL club at a different age group IF their club does NOT field a team at that age
- A player may represent only one senior club per season, unless officially loaned or transferred.
- Juniors registered with a GMCL club may also play for one other club outside the GMCL during the season - no more.

Loan Players

- Junior players may be loaned under the GMCL loan system to support short-handed teams.
- Use of loan players must be agreed by both team managers before the match.
- If agreement is not reached, the team using loan players forfeits (or the match is abandoned if both sides use loans).

Restrictions

- Players who have represented inter-league, district, or county cricket may not be loaned.
- For loaned players aged U13 and above:
 - They must not bat in the top seven
 - They must not bowl more than two overs

Failure to follow these rules may result in forfeits or further sanctions. Clubs unsure about eligibility should seek guidance before arranging loans.

INTERLEAGUE UPDATE FROM HEAD OF INTERLEAGUE PAUL CONNOLLY

After a busy few months, we have been coaching the squads selected to represent the League in this season's Interleague competitions, alongside arranging fixtures.

The squads were selected following assessment sessions held at PA Cricket in Bury before Christmas. These assessments were conducted in a professional manner, and we were able to utilise the qualified coaches at PA Cricket as independent assessors, adding their expertise to support the lead coach and ensuring every player had the opportunity to be seen. With the large number of players involved, this is clearly a challenging task, and we are very aware that assessments provide only a snapshot of potential.

We worked hard to provide feedback to players to support their ongoing development, and it is important that we are kept informed of their progress. Player development remains our key aim. With this in mind, the following performance factors formed part of the assessment process:

Technical, Tactical, Physical, and Mental, alongside playing statistics.

All of these elements are critical to a player's development, particularly as Interleague cricket represents another step on the performance pathway.

One area of concern identified was the physical capacity of players. Physical development is essential—this does not mean weight training, but instead using body-weight exercises such as sit-ups and planks to develop core stability. Further guidance is available for coaches, so please ask. Equally important is encouraging players to consider the volume of cricket they play and to take appropriate rest. Their bodies are still maturing and developing, and as coaches we all have a duty of care to our players.

Finally, the coaching team is working closely with clubs to reinforce that nominated players need to be of an appropriate standard. The coaches are also engaging with Lancashire and the ECB to gain clarity on what the county system is looking for within its selection processes, ensuring messaging is aligned and consistent across the pathway.

For parents, the opportunity to support your child in their development is vital. We wish all players a successful and enjoyable season.

Best Wishes
Paul Connolly
Head of Interleague



COMPETITIONS MANAGERS FOR 2026

To ensure queries are dealt with quickly and efficiently, clubs are asked to contact the appropriate Competition Manager using the dedicated email address for each age group.

General Junior Enquiries

Juniors@gtrmcrcricket.co.uk

Under 9s (U9)

Competition Manager: Harvey Tammam

U9@gtrmcrcricket.co.uk

Under 11s (U11)

Competition Manager: Matthew Hilton

U11@gtrmcrcricket.co.uk

Under 13s (U13)

Competition Manager: Joe Pattison

U13@gtrmcrcricket.co.uk

Under 15s (U15)

Competition Manager: Matthew Hilton

U15@gtrmcrcricket.co.uk

Under 18s (U18)

Competition Manager: Joe Pattison

U18@gtrmcrcricket.co.uk

Junior Summer Cup

Competition Manager: Lily Greaves

Juniorsummercup@gtrmcrcricket.co.uk

CLUBS ARE KINDLY REQUESTED TO USE
THESE EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR ALL
COMPETITION-RELATED MATTERS,
INCLUDING FIXTURES, AND ELIGIBILITY
QUERIES



KEY DATES FOR 2026

Clubs are asked to note the following important dates for the 2026 junior season and to plan fixtures and player availability accordingly.

Qualifying Zone - Play-By Dates

- Under 11s: Wednesday 10 June
- Under 13s: Friday 5 June
- Under 15s: Wednesday 10 June
- Under 18s: Friday 5 June

Performance League - Play-By Dates

- Under 11s: Wednesday 15 July
- Under 13s: Sunday 12 July
- Under 15s: Wednesday 15 July
- Under 18s: Sunday 12 July

League Championship Play-Offs (Under 11s, Under 15s & Under 18s)

- Thursday 16 July
- Reserve date: Friday 17 July

Junior Summer Cup - Start Dates

- Under 11s & Under 15s: Monday 20 July
- Under 13s & Under 18s: Wednesday 15 July

Clubs are reminded that failure to complete fixtures by the relevant deadlines may impact qualification or progression within competitions. No leeway will be granted on play-by dates under any circumstances or to any club.



NECK PROTECTORS

Neck protectors are not compulsory under ECB Recreational Cricket Safety Regulations, but their use is strongly recommended whenever a helmet is worn.

The Greater Manchester Cricket League (GMCL) follows ECB guidance and has not introduced any additional requirement making neck protectors mandatory.

Accordingly, while optional, players—particularly juniors—are strongly encouraged to wear a neck protector during matches and training.

LCF QUALIFIER CUPS

We are running LCF Qualifier Cup competitions at U11, U13 and U15 levels, with all participating clubs graded Level 2 or above.

The draws for all competitions are available on Play-Cricket.

Please note that the U13 and U15 competitions have tight turnarounds due to LCF entry deadlines, so clubs are reminded to adhere strictly to the play-by dates. Clubs are reminded to let us know when games have been arranged so we can ensure play cricket is up to date

GAMES WITH GROUND CLASHES

There were a number of fixtures that had to be moved from their original scheduled nights due to ground clashes, primarily involving B teams. Clubs are reminded that it is the home club's responsibility to liaise with the opposition to confirm revised arrangements and to notify the league of any changes, so that Play-Cricket can be updated accordingly.

JUNIOR BALLS

We have now received the match balls from the supplier and will be delivering them to clubs over the next week.

Clubs with outstanding invoices are reminded to settle payment with Gary Kershaw as soon as possible to ensure smooth distribution.

SUMMER CUP FINALS

We are delighted to confirm plans for the 2026 Junior Summer Cup Finals, which will take place on Sunday 23 August, with a reserve date of Sunday 30 August in case of poor weather.

There will be two competitions in each age group:

Main Cup

Challenge Cup

All Junior Summer Cup finals will be held on the same day, creating a festival atmosphere to celebrate junior cricket across the league.

We are pleased to confirm that our hosts for the 2026 finals will be Milnrow CC, Heywood CC, and Bury CC.

Further details regarding timings and arrangements will be shared closer to the event.

UNDER 9'S FIXTURES

Under 9 fixtures will be released on a monthly basis to provide clubs with greater flexibility. This approach allows clubs to add or remove teams as needed throughout the season, helping to support participation and development at this age group.

Clubs are reminded that where more than two Under 9 teams are entered, fixtures are likely to be split across different venues to accommodate the competition structure.

SAFEGUARDING

The GMCL is committed to ensuring a safe and positive environment for all young people involved in junior cricket. Safeguarding is taken seriously across all the GMCL.

The league has a dedicated Safeguarding Officer, Cath Knowles, who is available to support clubs with any safeguarding concerns or queries. Clubs are encouraged to report concerns promptly and confidentially.

For safeguarding support or advice, please contact:

Safeguarding@gtrmcricicket.co.uk