

Further Information Rules of Hockey 2015

It is the intention of the Rules and Competitions Committees to try and reduce as far as possible the number of variations to the Rules of Hockey which occur through Tournament Regulations. These differences have led to some confusion on the part of players, officials, spectators and TV audiences.

The Rules of Hockey and FIH Tournament Regulations will apply to all International Hockey. The FIH Executive Board has approved that the same Rules and FIH Tournament Regulations which vary the Rules of Hockey also apply to the top domestic League level of National Association Hockey. This will become mandatory at top domestic League level, with effect from 1 September 2015, unless a National Association wishes to opt out of particular Rules or Regulations which vary the Rules of Hockey by applying to FIH to do so.

The Rules of Hockey apply to all levels of the game, and are effective from 1 January 2015 at International level. National Associations have discretion to decide the date of their implementation at National level. Additionally, National Associations may apply to FIH to opt out of particular Rules at levels below their top domestic Leagues and/or for particular age groups, should they so wish.

This approach helps bring the Rules and Regulations closer together, as well as negating the need for either Mandatory or Non-Mandatory Experimental Rules or Rules trials.

A limited number of variations to the playing conditions through Regulation will continue to exist in top level International matches played at FIH Tournaments. Specifically, these include the countdown clock for penalty corners and the use of 4 x 15 minute quarters, which require additional technical table and equipment resources, which are not available at the majority of hockey pitches. Similarly, Video Umpire will only be used at FIH World level Tournaments where the contracted full television coverage and facilities enable a viable system. All other matches must be played in accordance with the Rules of Hockey unless otherwise agreed by the FIH Rules Committee after submission by a National Hockey Association.

The procedure for National Associations to apply to FIH to opt out of particular Rules or Regulations which vary the Rules of Hockey will be available from the FIH website in due course.

The FIH Tournament Regulations which have been incorporated into the Rules of Hockey for 2015 are breaking at a penalty corner, the two minute green card and the use of the stick above the shoulder.

The breaking at penalty corners Regulation has effected a significant reduction in the number of breaks at Tournaments, by both attackers and defenders. As a consequence, the requirement that a penalty stroke be awarded for defenders persistently crossing the back-line before permitted has been deleted. Breaking at penalty corners can now be managed with this new Rule, noting that the penalty stroke provision was only rarely invoked.

The two minute green card will now provide an additional management aid to umpires at all levels.

The ability to play the ball with the stick above the shoulder has been in top level International Hockey and domestic National Leagues for well over a year. The skills of players to be able to control and play the ball above shoulder height have dramatically improved over a short period of time, and adds another dimension and set of skills to the game. Any safety fears at various levels or age groups in competitions below top domestic National League level may be allayed by the possibility for National Associations to opt out of this particular Rule.

Two Rules changes have been included, both of which are easily implemented and should make the Hockey more attractive to play and watch. The first is the ability to take attacking free hits, awarded within 5 metres of the edge of the circle, from the point of the offence. The ball still has to travel at least 5 metres before it can be played into the circle, or alternatively has to be touched by another player of either team, other than the player taking the free hit. Having to take the ball back to the 5 metres dotted line slowed the play and was seen as a real disadvantage to the attacking team and the flow of the game.

The second change concerns the re-start after the ball has unintentionally been played over the back-line by a defender or deflected by a goalkeeper or player with goalkeeping privileges, and no goal is scored. Play will now be re-started with the ball on the 23 metres line and in line with where it crossed the back-line. The previous re-start, commonly known as a corner, was seen as an inefficient and ineffective re-start with the ball often becoming trapped in the corners of the pitch. Taking the re-start from the 23 metres line opens up the play and gives more passing options.

Another Rules deletion is that of the ability to progress a free hit by up to 10 metres. This has become redundant with the new free hit Rules and the ability to self-pass, while any other misconduct can be managed using other Rules or personal penalties.

There is a slight adjustment to the stick specification, with a maximum length being specified for the first time, which brings this into line with the Indoor Rule and FIH Regulation changes.

There is also a lifting of the ban on certain types of facemasks, in particular those with metal grills, recognising that the primary objective of wearing a facemask to defend a penalty corner should be for reasons of safety. Nevertheless players wearing facemasks are not permitted to conduct themselves in a manner which is dangerous to other players by taking advantage of the protective equipment that they wear.

Otherwise, all other changes in this edition of the Rules are clarifications of existing Rules.

The full list of changes to the Rules of Hockey 2015 is as follows: -

- i. Date of implementation
The Rules of Hockey 2015 should be effective at International level from 1 January 2015. National Associations have discretion to decide the date of their implementation, depending upon the dates of their 2014-2015 seasons.
- ii. Terminology
 - i. Team - maintain the definition of a Team as consisting of a maximum of 16 players, but noting that this could be amended by Regulation to 18 players
 - ii. Hit – to be amended to ‘Striking or ‘slapping’ the ball ...’ with the guidance from page 33 to be moved to this section
- iii. Composition of teams
 - i. Rule 2.1 – guidance to be changed *from ‘A personal penalty should be awarded ...’ to ‘A personal penalty may be awarded ...’* to take account of teams inadvertently having 12 players on a pitch for a short period of time which does not materially affect the game
 - ii. Rule 2.3a – last paragraph of guidance to be changed from *‘If the goalkeeper or player with goalkeeping privileges is suspended, the offending team plays with one less player’* to *‘... plays with one fewer player’*
- iv. Players’ clothing and equipment
 - i. Rule 4.2 – there is a lifting on the ban on certain types of face masks, including those with metal grills, to defend penalty corners. This recognises that the primary objective of wearing a face mask to defend a penalty corner is safety; wearing of face masks which are consistent with the underlying spirit of this guidance should be allowed
- v. Ball outside the field of play
 - i. Rule 7.4b – when the ball is played unintentionally by a defender or deflected by a goalkeeper or player with goalkeeping privileges, play will be re-started with the ball on the 23 metres line and in line with where it crossed the back-line and the procedures for taking a free hit will apply. This prevents the ball from being played directly into the circle
- vi. Match and Result
 - i. Rule 5.2 – guidance to be amended to read *‘Information about a shoot-out competition as a way of reaching a result in a drawn match is included in Competition Regulations which are available, if required, from the FIH website’*
- vii. Method of Scoring
 - i. Rule 8.1 – following the removal of Own Goal, this returns to its previous wording: -

A goal is scored when the ball is played within the circle by an attacker and does not travel outside the circle before completely passing over the goal-line and underneath the cross-bar.

The ball may be played by a defender or touch their body before or after being played in the circle by an attacker
- vi. Conduct of play: players
 - i. Rule 9.7 – the stick above the shoulder Regulation will be incorporated into the Rules such that ‘Players may stop, receive and deflect or play the ball in a

controlled manner in any part of the field when the ball is at any height including above the shoulder unless this is dangerous or leads to danger’.

- ii. Rule 9.11 – Guidance to be adjusted from ‘*The player only commits an offence if they voluntarily use their hand, foot or body to play the ball ...*’ to ‘*The player only commits an offence if they gain an advantage ...*’
- iii. Rule 9.13 – Guidance to be added to emphasise that reckless play, such as sliding tackles, which take an opponent to ground should attract suitable match and personal penalties

vii. Penalties

- i. Rule 12.1 – Guidance that ‘*If awarding a penalty is not an advantage to the team which did not break the Rules play must continue*’ is deleted, since it does not add anything to the Rule
- ii. Rule 12.4c – given that the Regulation concerning Breaking the line at Penalty Corners will be adopted as a Rule, the requirement that a penalty stroke is awarded ‘for defenders persistently crossing the back-line before permitted during the taking of penalty corners’ is deleted. Breaking at Penalty Corners can now be managed using other Rules, noting that the penalty stroke provision was only very rarely invoked
- iii. Rule 12.5 – the provision, if there is another offence or misconduct before the awarded penalty has been taken, to progress a free hit by up to 10 metres is deleted. This has become redundant with the new Free Hit Rules and the ability to self-pass, whilst any other offence or misconduct can be managed using the other provisions in Rules 12.5b, c and d, and/or Rule 14 Personal penalties.

viii. Procedure for taking penalties

- i. Rule 13.1b – is deleted, and attacking free hits awarded within 5 metres of the circle will now be taken from the point of the offence.
- ii. Rule 13.3h – the Rule that ‘until the ball has been played, no attacker other than the one taking the push or hit from the back-line is permitted to enter the circle and no defender is permitted to cross the centre-line or back-line’ will be supplemented by the adoption of the Breaking at a Penalty Corner Regulation as a Rule
- iii. Rule 13.3k – the guidance regarding ‘slap’ hitting is deleted and inserted in the terminology section
- iv. Rules 13.7b, 13.7c, 13.7d, 13.7e and 13.7f – to be adjusted for the Breaking at a Penalty Corner Regulation
- vi. Rule 13.10d – the guidance that ‘*if the player defending the stroke prevents a goal being scored but moves either foot before the ball has been played, this player must be warned (green card) and for any subsequent offence must be suspended (yellow card)*’ is amended to ‘*if the player defending the stroke prevents a goal being scored but moves either foot before the ball has been played, this player may be awarded a personal penalty and for any subsequent offence must be suspended*’

ix. Personal penalties

- i. Rule 14.1b – the Regulation that a green card indicates a temporary suspension of two minutes of playing time is adopted as a Rule

- ii. Rules 14.1c and 14.1d – the guidance to be adjusted from ‘... one less player’ to ‘... one fewer player’
- x. Umpiring signals
 - i. 4.6c Penalties – as a result of the proposal for the deletion of Rule 12.5a and advancing a Free Hit up to 10 metres, it follows that the signal should also be deleted
- xi. Field and Equipment Specifications
 - i. 1.1 Field and field equipment – the correction of the run off distances in the guidance gives *‘the respective recommended areas being 3 plus 2 metres and 2 plus 1 metres (that is, a total of 5 metres at the ends and 3 metres at the sides of the field)’*
 - ii. 2.18 Stick – in view of the use of a longer than normal stick being used by goalkeepers in Shoot-out competitions and the indication that manufacturers were looking into producing such sticks, the stick specification is adjusted to include a maximum length provision, ‘the length of stick, as measured from the top of the stick to the bottom of the head of the stick (line X in Figure 3 on page 58 of the Rules of Hockey), shall not be more than 105cm’