

## UMPIRE WHISTLING, SIGNALS & COMMUNICATION:

### **Whistling:**

Whistling is an umpire's primary form of communication. How it is used and the timing of use plays a huge part in how much control you have over the game. Varying the length and tone of blasts should communicate clearly the seriousness of an offence. This sets out clear expectations of all players.

Often we see play continuing after an indecisive whistle blow. Apart from not being heard and therefore advantage being reduced or removed from being able to move off quickly from the offence, timid whistling can also communicate to players that an umpire is not confident in their decision. Whistle with confidence to reduce confrontation and challenge from players.

\*it is recommended that a Fox40 pea-less whistle is used for a consistent sound type and reliability. Cork pea whistles can fail and cause delays to a game.

#### Extra tips:

This may seem silly, but how you hold your whistle can influence quality of umpiring. Hold your whistle down by your side rather than in or near your mouth. The extra second or so to bring the whistle up can often be enough to see advantage develop and prevent an umpire from blipping everything too quickly, interrupting flow and slowing the game.

For a more technical game at a higher, faster level try ditching any lanyard on your whistle. Change the hand you hold your whistle in regularly so that your hand on the side of attacking direction is free. In general, more fouls are committed on the ball carrier by a tackler, having your signal hand free in the direction of attack means you can whistle and signal concurrently, giving the advantage to the fouled attacker to move off quickly with a self-pass having seen your signal.

### **Signals:**

Here are the FIH signals as per the rules guidance. Others should not be used.

*"Umpiring signals"*

#### *4.1 Timing:*

*a) start time: turn towards the other umpire with one arm straight up in the air*

b) stop time: turn towards the other umpire and cross fully-extended arms at the wrists above the head

c) two minutes of play remaining: raise both hands straight up in the air with pointing index fingers

d) one minute of play remaining: raise one hand straight up in the air with pointing index finger.

Once a timing signal has been acknowledged no further time signal is needed.

4.2 Bully : move hands alternately up and down in front of the body with palms facing each other.

4.3 Ball out of play:

a) ball out of play over the side-line: indicate the direction with one arm raised horizontally

b) ball out of play over the back-line by an attacker: face the centre of the field and extend both arms horizontally sideways

**\*16 hit signal – we all know this one. Umpires should signal correctly for a 16, using both arms extended. One arm extended for a defence hit means you are signalling a foul. It may not matter to the game, but you can get coaches/ the side line asking what the foul was. Signal accurately to remove any doubt.**

c) ball out of play over the back-line unintentionally by a defender: point one arm at the corner flag nearest where the ball crossed the back-line.

**\*the new way of taking a long corner does not change this signal! We often see umpires extending an arm to the 23m line – you are actually signalling a free hit to defence. Please still signal to the corner.**

4.4 Goal scored: point both arms horizontally towards the centre of the field.

4.5 Conduct of play: Signals for conduct of play offences must be shown if there is doubt about the reason for the decision.

a) dangerous play: place one forearm diagonally across the chest

b) misconduct and/or bad temper: stop play and make a calming movement by moving both hands slowly up and down, palms downward, in front of the body

c) kick: slightly raise a leg and touch it near the foot or ankle with the hand

d) raised ball: hold palms facing each other horizontally in front of the body, with one palm approximately 150 mm above the other

e) obstruction: hold crossed forearms in front of the chest

f) third party or shadow obstruction: alternately open and close crossed forearms in front of the chest

g) stick obstruction: hold one arm out and downwards in front of the body half-way between vertical and horizontal; touch the forearm with the other hand

h) 5 metres distance: extend one arm straight up in the air showing an open hand with all fingers extended.

#### 4.6 Penalties:

a) *advantage: extend one arm high from the shoulder in the direction in which the benefiting team is playing*

**\*advantage is signalled with one arm in play direction; do not use both arms raised in direction of play – this is widely accepted as “play on, nothing seen” signal – not for advantage.**

b) *free hit: indicate the direction with one arm raised horizontally*

c) *penalty corner: point both arms horizontally towards the goal*

d) *penalty stroke: point one arm at the penalty stroke mark and the other straight up in the air; this signal also indicates time stopped.”*

### **Communication:**

Communication over and above use of the whistle and signalling is a critical part of umpiring. Cooperation with your colleague and building rapport and trust with the players are key to a successful game.

#### Cooperation:

- Prepare for your match together. Discuss how you will ask/look for help when unsighted/undecided – this is even more important when not connected by radios/earpiece. Agree when each other should intervene when play is in each other’s half and circle.  
\*it is a common misunderstanding that a supporting umpire cannot give a PC in the other circle. You can, but should discuss this in preparation.  
Typically umpires will agree only to give an outright PC in another’s circle when play is coming away from goal with defence in possession.  
The best etiquette is to stop play, discuss in person or on the radio, and the umpire who’s circle it is then gives/signals the PC.

The most critical thing to remember is that umpires are there to apply the rules. If you see a PC/PS offence, do not let it pass just because your colleague didn’t spot it. It can seriously impact a tight match’s result and we should not shy away from prioritising accurate decisions in favour of not denting a colleague’s ego. Likewise, if you spot something to overrule a PC decision – confer with your colleague. Don’t avoid it just because it’s easier.

\*if you are the umpire whose decision is being challenged by a colleague – don’t take it personally. Be open minded and prioritise the right decision together.

#### Communication with players:

Equally important is communicating with the players. We are encouraged to talk through decisions clearly and with confidence as you signal and give the free hit/penalty. If you routinely advise on what you’ve seen, or why something being appealed isn’t given, before being challenged you absolutely won’t have as much verbal to deal with. Allow polite discussion, penalise excessive challenge/dissent.