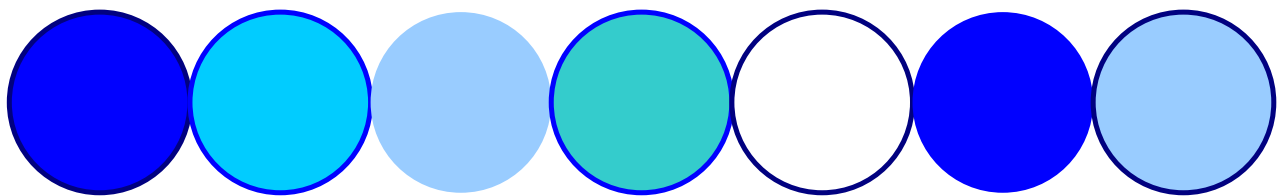


THE 2004 RULES OF OUTDOOR HOCKEY

Frequently asked Questions



INTRODUCTION

As the National Governing Body for hockey in England it is our responsibility to provide support and guidance for all of England's hockey's participants, be they players, coaches, umpires or administrators. Our aim is to succeed in ensuring that the game is played, coached and officiated fairly, with the spirit of the game always being upheld and the Rules applied accurately and consistently in all games at all levels.

The purpose of this Paper is to share Rules related question that are regularly sent to England Hockey. In all cases prior to answering the questions submitted we first check with the Secretary of the FIH Hockey Rules Board so as to ensure absolute accuracy.

In January 2004, a new Code of Rules was published by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) and National Associations were invited to introduce them. In England we chose to introduce the Rules at exactly the same time as the FIH – the 1st January. In addition to the new Code of Rules, there are currently two Mandatory Experimental Rules (see below). These have been in operation in England since 1st September 2003.

The Mandatory Experiments are:

1. "Players shall not play the ball above shoulder height with any part of their sticks except that defenders may use their sticks to stop or deflect a shot at goal at any height unless dangerous or likely to lead to dangerous play."

This change is intended t be fair to defenders. It gives defenders the opportunity to save high shots at goal, which they otherwise cannot do legitimately.

2. "Penalty corner - no shot at goal shall be made until the ball has travelled outside the circle."

This means that the ball is not required to be stopped before a shot at goal at a penalty corner. All other requirements for taking a penalty corner continue to apply.

This change is intended to make the game simpler for everyone to understand and enjoy. It will also lead to more variation in the options employed by attackers at penalty corners and therefore, to more interesting play.

The impact of these two changes on the game will be monitored by England Hockey along with all other National Associations/Organisations and, at the end of the Season, a report shall be sent to the FIH detailing the outcome. The FIH Hockey Rules Board will consider whether the changes should become substantive Rules rather than Mandatory Experiments.

The Rules of Hockey 2004

The full Code of Rules 2004 is available from England Hockey. It is published as a book and order forms can be found on the England Hockey website – www.englishockey.co.uk

A Summary of the Changes introduced on 1st January 2004.

1. The specification of how a penalty corner is completed has been simplified and standardised. Completion for **substitution purposes** is now consistent with completion at the end of half-time and full-time and is as follows:
 - a. A goal is scored
 - b. An attacker commits an offence
 - c. The ball travels more than 5 metres outside the circle
 - d. The ball travels outside the circle for the second time
 - e. The ball is played over the back-line and another penalty corner is not awarded
 - f. A defender commits an offence and another penalty corner is not awarded
 - g. A penalty stroke is awarded.

In relation to substitution, the penalty corner is also completed when a bully is awarded. However, in relation to completion at the end of half-time and full-time, if play is stopped because of an injury or for any other reason and no penalty has been awarded, the penalty corner must be taken again.

2. Field players who leave the field for injury treatment, refreshment, to change equipment or for some reason other than substitution are permitted to re-enter **only** between the 23 metres areas.
3. How the result of a match is decided is now specified: the team scoring the most goals is the winner but if no goals are scored, or if the teams score an equal number of goals, the match is drawn.
4. Procedures for starting and re-starting play have been rationalised. The Rules specify that the procedures for taking a free hit now apply to the centre pass and to putting the ball back into play after it has passed completely over the side-line or back-line.
5. The fundamental characteristics of the bully have been retained but it has been simplified by requiring sticks to **touch only once**.
6. The former Rule which specified that a ball must not be raised intentionally so that it lands directly in the circle has been **deleted**. Wherever it lands, any ball must not be dangerous.
7. The obstruction Rule has been simplified by referring in the Rule itself only to the fundamental principle that players must not obstruct an opponent who is attempting to play the ball. Explanatory notes indicate that players obstruct if they back into an opponent, physically interfere with the stick or body of an opponent or shield the ball from a legitimate tackle with their stick or any part of their body.

8. Players must not tackle unless they are in a position to play the ball **without** body contact.
 9. The "advantage Rule" is specified more simply and clearly: a penalty is awarded only when a player or team has been disadvantaged by an opponent breaking the Rules. If awarding a penalty is not an advantage to the team which did not break the Rules, play must continue.
 10. The player taking a penalty stroke must start by standing **behind and within playing distance of the ball** and must not approach either the ball or the goalkeeper after taking the stroke. The former limitation of taking only one step forward has been deleted.
 11. The Rules now specify that the whistle must be blown to start a penalty stroke when both players are in position (rather than requiring the umpire to confirm that both are ready which can cause confusion in the absence of a common spoken language).
 12. How offences at a penalty stroke are dealt with has been rationalised. It is now clear that the penalty stroke is **taken again** if a goalkeeper prevents a goal being scored but leaves the goal-line or moves either foot before the ball has been played. For any other offence by the goalkeeper which prevents a goal being scored, a goal is awarded.
 13. To improve control of player conduct and therefore to protect the image of hockey, the intended duration of a temporary suspension may be **extended for misconduct** by a player while suspended.
 14. New **umpiring signals** have been introduced to indicate dangerous play (place one forearm diagonally across the chest) and 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).
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Questions...

- ☺ **Question:** At a PC there is a height restriction on a hit shot at goal if it is the 1st shot at goal. When is this restriction no longer applicable? In other words when does the restriction cease to apply?

Answer: Immediately the ball has passed beyond 5m of the circle edge. Do not get this confused with when a PC is deemed over for substitution purposes (when the ball comes out of the circle a second time etc – see number 1 in the ‘Summary of Changes’ earlier).

- ☺ **Question:** Now that the one step restriction is removed at a PS, can the taker take as many steps as they like - a “run-up”?

Answer: No! The taker has to be behind the ball and within playing distance of it. He/she is unlikely to be able to run at the ball if it is in playing distance! (Playing distance is the length of the outstretched arm and extended stick).

☺ **Question:** What exactly is stick obstruction?

Answer: Stick obstruction is when the player in possession of the ball places the stick over the ball as the tackler moves his/her stick towards the ball (i.e. attempts to tackle). The possessor is measured as attempting to prevent the tackler from getting access to the ball and must therefore be penalised.

☺ **Question:** I have been told by an experienced umpire in my Region that if I stop a high shot at goal with my stick at above shoulder height (I am a defender - not a goalkeeper) and that shot is considered by the umpire to be going wide of the goal, he will award a PS – for an intentional offence in the circle!

Answer: Completely wrong! It is considered an offence but it must be penalised with a PC – not a PS. As a defender you are currently permitted to stop the ball with your stick at above shoulder height only if the shot is on target ('Ohh that we could have eyes in the back of our heads too! It's so difficult to judge).

☺ **Question:** Is it an offence if the ball hits my hand while I am holding my stick? I am confused and three times now I have been penalised for it?

Answer: It is NOT an offence if the ball hits the hand holding the stick.

☺ **Question:** I am concerned about the change that allows the raised ball to fall directly into the circle (unless it is dangerous). Can you confirm exactly who has "right of way"?

Answer: The initial receiver has a right to the ball. Who is the initial receiver? The player who is the closest to it's landing area. If it is not clear which player is the initial receiver, the player of the team which raised the ball must give way and allow the opponent to receive it. That means 5m of space and time to receive it and control it on the ground.

☺ **Question:** Why are our team continually penalised when we lift the ball into the circle? It isn't an offence to lift it in is it? Please confirm – we're getting tired of it!

Answer: You are right. It is not an offence to raise the ball into the circle. To be precise the umpire should only blow it if it is dangerous or considered to be leading to dangerous play...no other reason. And what is the definition of dangerous? A ball is considered dangerous when it causes legitimate evasive action by players.

☺ **Question:** Can I use a drag shot at a PC? I am collecting the ball centimetres outside the circle and dragging it in – it's all one movement and the ball does not leave contact with my stick until I release it (the shot).

Answer: Yes of course you can. This is a very skilful piece of play and it must not be penalised unless it is dangerous.

☺ **Question:** What is the correct decision if I slap the ball when shooting at goal during a PC?

Answer: Slapping the ball involves a long pushing or sweeping movement along the ground with the stick before making contact with the ball. The slap is regarded as a hit and it will therefore if it is the 1st shot at goal, be restricted in terms of height. It must not cross the goal-line at above the height of the backboards.

☺ **Question:** Can I use a drag shot at a PS?

Answer: No

☺ **Question:** Most of the umpires we have for competitions are not as good as those in our club. Why can't we use our own umpires - it'd be cheaper too?

Answer: The Regions are responsible for the appointment of umpires to most early rounds of competitions. They may elect to task the responsibility to counties or indeed direct to clubs – however, the latter is usually not the case so as to avoid accusations of bias. If you are unhappy with the standard of any umpire that is appointed to your games, you really should express your concerns in writing and address them to the local County Umpires Association. They will always take complaints seriously and training and assessment of umpires is ongoing in all counties.

☺ **Question:** If I am lying on the ground blocking a shot at goal (I am a goalkeeper) and the ball re-bounds off my body and is ½ a metre in front of me and an attacker hits it hard and fast directly at me without making any attempt to draw it back first or lift it over or around me, why is it that I am penalised and a PS is given? It's happened twice now and I am getting tired of it!

Answer: I am sure you are! This is completely the wrong decision. The umpire should be awarding a free hit to the defence.

☺ **Question:** What's the difference between a flick and a drag-flick at a PS and why is a flick permitted but a drag flick is not?

Answer: A flick is “pushing the ball so that it is raised off the ground” (absolutely what it says in the Rules book) and it is permitted at a PS. The drag-flick is not permitted specifically when taking a penalty stroke - because the stroke is intended to be taken from a specific spot and not from a point in front of that spot which is essentially what happens when a dragging action is used!

☺ **Question:** Can I tackle from behind? Some umpires say yes and mysteriously others say no! I am completely confused.

Answer: Yes you can tackle from behind. To be precise you can tackle from the front, the sides or the back of an opponent – but only if you can play the ball without body contact.