

BRIEFING Swiss Hockey Indoor Season 2016-2017

The most important agreements for Swiss Hockey umpires are defined in this document. In addition to the agreements in this briefing, it is important that everyone is aware of the latest version of the game rules. Please read both documents carefully so that you are well prepared for this year's indoor season.

RULES CHANGES

The main changes in this set of Rules aim at bringing, as far as is practical, a consistent approach between the Rules of Outdoor and Indoor Hockey.

- The rule of an attacking free push taken within the attacking half of the pitch, and in particular those taken within 3 metres of the circle, is amended so that it has essentially the same interpretation as the equivalent rule for Outdoor Hockey.

A free push close to the circle edge is not put back to three meters outside the circle, but taken at the place of infringement. Before the ball, is played into the circle it must:

- Have rolled three meters, or
- Touched by a defender, or
- Played off the side-boards into the circle, however it needs to travel at least 3 meters **before** it bounces off the side-board into the circle

On this basis, defenders who are inside the circle within 3 metres of the free push at the time of the infringement are therefore not interfering with play. They may shadow from **inside** of the circle a player who takes a self-pass, provided they do not play or attempt to play the ball or influence play till the ball is legally allowed to be played into the circle. All players other than the one who is going to take the free ball in the attacking half must stand at least three meters away; this includes all players inside the circle that were at the time of the infringement not within 3 metres of the foul.

Following a time stoppage after the award of an attacking free push inside the defending half, upon the restart all players other than the player taking the free push must be at least 3 metres from the ball.

- As of this season the long corner will be introduced Indoor as well. So when the ball has been played over the back-line and no goal is scored, and it was last played by a defender or deflected by a goalkeeper or player with goalkeeping privileges, play will now be re-started with the ball on the centre-line and in line with where it crossed the back-line.

It is anticipated that defenders will now have to keep the ball in play, or risk loss of possession, rather than shepherding the ball over the back-line and being rewarded with the re-start. The procedures for taking a free push within the attacking half will apply to the re-start.

- The one-minute suspension in case of a green card has now officially be added to the rules. Since we already adopted this in the past, nothing will change here for us.

GENERAL: SPECIAL FOCUS

The FIH has given the following rules an extra focus this year:

- If a ball is intentionally played over the back-line by a defender and no goal is scored. If it is clear that the action is intentional, umpires should not hesitate to award a penalty corner.
- Obstruction. Umpires should penalise shielding the ball with the stick more strictly.

- Obstruction. They should also look out for a tackling player who by **pushing** or **leaning on** an opponent causes them to lose possession of the ball.
- A ball held or trapped against the side-boards: When this action is clearly deliberate, umpires should treat this as an intentional offence and penalise it accordingly.
- Umpires are sometimes not strict enough on requiring the ball to be stationary, albeit very briefly, for a free push especially if it is taken using a self-pass. Please be stricter here since it will give an extra advantage to the player taking the ball if we allow it.

GENERAL OTHER

- Group protests
Every player can ask (within reason) a **normal question** (i.e. not in an aggressive way), and receive a normal answer.
- This does however not give the teams the freedom to come and approach the umpire in a group to protest against a decision. Since we only have 6 players on the pitch in Indoor Hockey the maximum number of players that are allowed to approach a umpire is one. All other players of the penalized team should remain at a clear distance from the umpire and the person asking the question to talk.
Any subsequent player approaching the umpire to discuss the decision will need to be penalised with a green card.

DIFFERENT RULES IN NLA MEN AND WOMEN

- In the NLA and the play-off games each team is entitled to one time-out of 1 minute per half. A timeout may be requested throughout the game, but is not allocated between the award and execution of a penalty corner or penalty stroke.

SET PIECES

- A set piece (free push, in push and initial push) may be taken with a self-pass. The taker of the free hit must clearly and visibly make an effort to stop the ball before he is allowed to re-start the game. If you notice that a re-start is not controlled or is likely to be in the wrong place, you can as a umpire rectify this before the ball is taken a **few** times in the game; this can be a good way to avoid having to give a push against. But if you're too late to correct it you only have two options; let play continue or give a free push against.
- According to the rules of a free push is taken "at or near" the place of the offense. Be alert and put the ball in the right place. With the introduction of the self-pass an attacker quickly gains an extra advantage if the ball is not taken in the right place.

FLOW OF THE GAME

- With the introduction of self-pass the game is faster and it is therefore important to consider whether blowing the whistle is a better option than letting play continue. Games benefit from not being unnecessarily interrupted by umpires. But be aware that this should never go at the expense of control of the match. Some games are just not suitable for the 'modern' way of umpiring. A physical game requires clear intervention by the umpires. What works very well and give a clear signal to the players is to still talk to or punish the offending player even though you played advantage at the time.
- Blowing the whistle after a physical offense sometimes gives a better signal than giving advantage.

- Be alert to offenses committed immediately after a team loses possession and there is a risk of a rapid break. These kind of fouls is what we call "breaking down of play". These at first glance minor offenses - often committed by an attacker or midfielder - have only one goal: **to ensure that the rapid break will not take place**. This often warrants blowing your whistle an extra time, reprimanding the player or giving a card.

USE OF BODY AND STICK

- The fact that an opponent places his stick on the ground does not mean that every pass is blocked in that direction. **But a hard pass consciously played from a close distance (3 meters) through an opponent who's stick is (almost) on the ground is not allowed** and must be penalised. This kind of action may well lead to injuries. It is important here to understand what the intention of the player was. Criteria are thus: **danger**, **intention** and the **distance** to the opponent. If the action is considered reckless than a personal penalty is the only option, to start with in the form of a green card. If this happens again yellow will follow immediately. We do not have a violation of the rules in the case that the ball is played into the stick of the opponent **unless all** of the above criteria are met.
- It must be clear that the stick was (almost) on the ground before the ball is played. If the player puts his stick on the ground after the ball is played, it can still hurt a lot when the ball hits his body, but there is no violation of the rules.
- A pirouette - the situation in which the player in possession of the ball makes a half or full turn and after coming out of the turn; from a close distance; plays the ball towards his opponent - is potentially dangerous and should be penalised.
- A defender at the side-board who clearly blocks that way through - with his stick and / or body – needs to be protected from an attacker that will try to force or play the ball through this block. If that way is closed the attacker will need to find an alternative way since the defender has legally closed of the route via the side-board.
- If a ball is trapped between the sticks of players and they make no attempt to break the deadlock play should be stopped and restarted with a bully. However, players who deliberately try to trap the ball against the stick of an opponent should be penalised and not 'rewarded' with a bully.
- It is not allowed to clamp the ball against intentionally against the side-board to make it impossible for the opponent to play the ball. If this happens and the player makes no attempt to end this, he commits an offense.
- A player must not be trapped with the ball in the corner of the field or at the side-board by opponents with their stick flat on the ground. Opponents must leave a reasonable seized gap through which the ball can be played. Defenders in their circle run the risk of a penalty corner if they leave no opening. If you see that this is going to happen warn the defenders that if they leave no opening, they will get a penalty corner against. If you warning is ignored, you should give a penalty corner. Also if this situation last too long break it off and restart the game with a bully.

PLAYING THE BALL

- We still see quite often that a ball is hit and not pushed. We talk about a push if the action was started **less than 50 cm** from the ball, in all other cases it is a hit.
- If during normal play, the ball leaves the ground, **the maximum allowed height is 10 cm**. An opponent can however be disadvantaged even if the ball is raised less than 10 cm. If this is the case a free hit should be awarded to the opposing team for a 'high' ball.

- When while trying to stop the ball the ball comes off the floor and no opponent in **playing** distance of the ball, play can continue, regardless of the height of the ball.
- High push on target coming back high from the keeper, should be judged solely on danger. The starting point is: you do not stop the game unless the ball comes back from the goal keeper in a dangerous way; in that case a penalty corner is awarded to the opposing team. A low push on target coming back high from the keeper is a penalty corner, except when the ball goes without hindrance or danger over the back-line or the side-board, or enters a completely free space.
- Field players must not play the ball while lying on the pitch or with a knee, arm or hand on the pitch, other than the hand holding the stick

GOALKEEPER

- The standard goalkeeper (so with full equipment), should wear his helmet at all time to prevent the risk of injury for the keeper will often defend his goal with his body. The standard goalkeeper may only play in their own half (except - of course without a helmet - to take a penalty stroke).
- A field player acting as goalkeeper must wear a different colour shirt and may wear protective headgear (but not leg guards and kickers or other goalkeeping protective equipment which includes goal keeping gloves). The helmet is mandatory while defending a penalty corner and penalty stroke. With the helmet on this kind of player is only allowed to play in his own half of the field. Without the helmet he is allowed to go anywhere on the pitch.
- A goalkeeper is only allowed to play the ball laying down when **both** goalie and ball are in the circle. In some situations, the supporting umpire is in a better position to see if this is the case. So agree before the game how to deal with this kind of a situation so that as a team you will take the right decision.
- The goalkeeper may move a ball with his **hand or arm** if his goal is threatened (which is almost always the case when the ball is inside the circle). If the ball is not propelled over a large distance and it does not lift from the floor while being played, there is no problem. A ball in the air, may be reflected by a goalkeeper, but not actively propelled.
- The number of times that a team has a fully equipped goalkeeper on the field and switches to a player with goal keeping privileges (or the other way around) is limited to twice per team per game. A fully equipped goalkeeper exchange for another fully equipped goalkeeper does not count as a substitution. Summary: there is no limit in exchanging a fully dressed goalkeeper for another fully dressed-keeper. There is no limit on exchanging a field player with goal keeping privileges for another field player with these privileges. Exchanging a fully dressed goalkeeper for a player with goal keeping privileges and the other way around can only be done twice per game.

PENALTY CORNER

- Intentionally playing the ball over your own back-line shall also in an indoor hockey be punished with a penalty corner. Deliberately is when the defender chooses consciously and actively the option of playing across his or her own back-line.
- When defending a penalty corner, field players are permitted to wear a face mask and some body protection including leg protection or knee pads as long as it is worn underneath normal playing clothing; knee pads, used for this purpose, may be worn outside the socks provided that their colour is exactly the same as the colour of the socks
- The goalkeeper must while defending the penalty corner initially stand in the goal **behind** the goal line. All other defenders can choose to either line up at the other side of

the goal from where the penalty corner is taken **behind** the back-line **or** to stand behind the centre-line.

- After a penalty corner has been awarded both defending and attacking teams should get ready **as soon as possible**. Urge the teams if necessary to hurry up (including putting on gloves and / or masks). In many cases long waiting times can be prevented by actively pursuing this as an umpire.
- If a defender breaks the line before the ball is played, the penalty corner has to be taken again. The offending defender must go and stand behind the centre-line. However, in the case a goalkeeper breaks the line before the ball is played, the team must immediately nominate another player who was behind the back-line to go beyond the centre-line. In both cases the team will defend the penalty corner with a reduced squad.
- An attacker entering the circle too soon; before the penalty corner is taken; will be punished and send to stand behind the centre-line. The attacker taking the corner should not pretend to play the ball. If he clearly makes a movement or waits an extremely long time to trick a defender from breaking the line too early, he must be replaced by another player and send to stand behind the centre-line.
- As long as the penalty corner situation has not ended in accordance with rule 13.5 and 13.6, it is a re-taken penalty corner and should be played with the reduced number of defenders or attackers. Only when the penalty corner situation is over and a new penalty corner is awarded all the defenders and attackers may participate in this new penalty corner situation.
- During the execution of a penalty corner a lot happens in and around the circle. In many cases you will require the assistance of your colleagues to observe what is happening. Clearly discuss with your colleagues before the match who watches what and how the communication will be if anything was noticed.

PERSONAL PENALTIES

- Especially indoors, distances are small, a verbal warning is often easy to give while passing a player. This can be either a gesture, an additional whistle or a properly timed remark.
- A well-timed green card gives a signal about where your limits are (for both teams!). This remains a warning, even though the player is expelled for a minute. The green card is not a substitute for a yellow card. You now have only an additional option in your sentencing structure.
- The way cards are given usually starts with a few green before a yellow card is given. However, in the case of a gross violation of the rules a yellow card should be given straight away, even if no green card has been given yet.
- The penalty for a yellow card is always two minutes with the exception of a physical challenge, focused on the body, this is penalised with a five minutes' suspension.
- The umpire has to make clear for **all** how long the suspension will be. This will allow the timekeeper to determine when the suspension of the player has ended.

ACT LIKE A TEAM

- Game preparation ahead of the game is also indoors an absolute must, the includes getting a common understanding and to come to clear arrangements with regards to game management. Because the distance between the two umpires is much smaller than on the field you have all possibilities to jointly make the right decision. One umpire is watching the things that are invisible to the fellow and vice versa. Good positioning adapted to the game situation makes taking the right decision and increases the acceptance by players and coaches.

Often at a glance or small gesture is enough for players and coaches to understand what a umpire wants. Use this communication and continuously show that you and your colleagues are following the game closely.

- Make proper arrangements with the timekeeper about who keeps time.

Good luck and have great time umpiring!