

Memorandum

Date: 04 February 2011
To: Hockey Community
From: Craig Gribble
Re: Changes to the rules of hockey for 2011

The FIH Rules Board has made a series of changes to the rule book that will take effect from January 1 2011. Hockey New Zealand will implement these rules immediately and they will be played at all tournaments on the Hockey New Zealand domestic calendar. In general, the changes are converting a number of experimental rules into full rules of hockey, for example, the autopass rule, and therefore there is no change to the current interpretation in New Zealand. However, there are some significant changes to small details associated with offences at penalty corners and penalty strokes that will have impact on a game situation so therefore require careful consideration.

Changes to the Rules of Hockey (with reference to the numbered Rules in the 2009 edition) are as follows:

Rule 9.15: "players must not force an opponent into offending unintentionally". This rule is deleted.

Rationale and commentary: 'Forcing the obstruction' and deliberately playing the ball onto an opponent's foot are well discussed topics in hockey. In modern hockey, we have a clearer understanding of playing distance and the general intention of the obstruction rule. With regard to 'feet,' in most cases when the ball is stopped by the foot, then the player should be penalised. However, a player is not allowed to play the ball dangerously into the foot or body of another player – but in this instance, the player should be penalised under 'danger' rather than the previous Rule 9.15.

Rule 13.1: location of a free hit. This former Mandatory Experimental Rule becomes a full rule of hockey.

Rationale and commentary: This rule has a number of parts. However, in principle this rule converts the previous experimental rule into a full rule of hockey. The essential part is the requirement for an attacking free hit close to the circle to be taken back to the 5 metre dotted line.

Rule 13.1.d: "a free hit awarded inside the circle to the defence is taken anywhere inside the circle or up to 15 metres from the back-line in line with the location of the offence, parallel to the side-line". The option of taking the free hit "anywhere inside the circle" is deleted.

Rationale and commentary: Previously, when awarded a defensive free hit inside the circle, the defender was able to take the free hit from anywhere inside the circle. The rule now makes a defensive free hit like a 16 yard hit. The hit can be taken anywhere up to the top of the circle, as long as it is on the same line (parallel to the sideline) as where it was awarded.

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Rule 13.2: taking a free hit, centre pass and putting the ball back into play after it has been outside the field. This former Mandatory Experimental Rule becomes a full rule of hockey.

Rationale and commentary: This rule has a number of parts. However, in principle this rule converts the previous experimental rule into a full rule of hockey. The rule covers both the 'autopass' situation and also the restriction on playing the ball directly into the circle from an attacking free hit from inside the attacking 23 metre area.

Rule 13.3.h: "taking a penalty corner ... 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". When an attacker enters the circle before permitted, the penalty corner is taken again except that when attackers persistently enter the circle before permitted, a free hit is awarded to the defence. In the full printed set of rules, the penalties that apply for an offence during the taking of a penalty corner are listed in detail.

Rationale and commentary: This rule has a number of parts. Previously, an attacker entering the circle before a penalty corner was taken resulted in an immediate free hit to the defence. In the new rule, the penalty corner is replayed. In the new 2011 rule book, Rule 13.7 covers the penalties for offences by both attackers and defenders.

Rule 13.9.a: "for an offence during the taking of a penalty stroke". If the stroke is taken before the whistle has been blown and a goal is scored, it is taken again.

Rationale and commentary: This rule has a number of parts. Previously, if a stroke was taken before the whistle was blown by the umpire, then a free hit was awarded to the defending team. The new rule allows the stroke to be replayed. The new 2011 rule book covers a range of scenarios in Rule 13.10.

Rule 13.9.c: "for an offence during the taking of a penalty stroke ... for any other offence by the player defending the stroke which prevents a goal being scored". Instead of a goal being awarded, the penalty stroke is taken again. This means that Rules 13.9.c and 13.9.d both now lead to the penalty stroke being taken again.

Rationale and commentary: This change is linked to the change above. Rule 13.10 should be consulted in the 2011 rule book for clarity around offences and penalties during the taking and defending of penalty strokes.

Additional note:

There has been considerable interest in the green card suspension and breaking rules that have been trialled at key FIH tournaments during 2010. These rules will not be included in future rule books but will remain as tournament regulations for particular FIH tournaments. The FIH Rules Board does not consider that these two rules have application across all grades of hockey, and so do not intend to add them to the rules of hockey governing non-international events. The application of these two rules is problematic with inexperienced umpires and in particular when there is no technical bench in operation. In addition, the guidance as to application of the rules is incomplete in their current form, for example, what happens to a goalie when they break? However, it is realised that our top players need to understand the rules for international competitions, so applying these rules at both the NHL and U21 tournaments will occur. At these tournaments, a technical bench is in operation, which allows for easy application of the green card suspension rule.

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