



Introductory Date for FIH 2009 -10 Rules of Hockey in England

On Wednesday 4th February 2009 the FIH published a statement re: the new Rules of Hockey to be introduced for international hockey on May 1st 2009. National Associations are permitted to introduce these rules for domestic hockey at a date of own choice and the England Hockey Board has agreed that the new rules will be mandatory for all domestic hockey from **1st September 2009** after a phased introduction.

The new rules are printed below.

The reasons we have chosen to implement the new rules in this way are:

1. To ensure all 2008/2009 domestic season competitions can be completed without changing the rules mid way through
2. To ensure the new rules can be introduced safely
3. To allow time to communicate and educate schools, clubs, representative teams and coaches, umpires and officials on the new rules
4. It is a natural time to introduce the rules to formal competition at the beginning of the English domestic season

As part of the phased introduction and to ensure our international teams and officials are well prepared for this summer's international programme the following events will pilot the new rules prior to their formal introduction:

- Great Britain Super League (GBSL)
- The U16/18 Girls International Tournament at Easter in Nottingham (4 Nations)
- The U21 Women's International Test Series at Easter in Nottingham

We will begin dissemination and education of the new rules to all hockey providers and participants immediately. To allow schools, clubs, representative teams and coaches, umpires and officials the opportunity to become familiar with the new rules, England Hockey permits them to be used immediately in any non formal competition wherever all the participants and officials agree.

Appendix 1 Statement from FIH Rules of Hockey 2009: free hit

One of the objectives of the FIH and therefore of the Hockey Rules Board (HRB) is to decrease the number and duration of interruptions to the flow of play and to increase the length of time the ball is in active play. A “self-pass” from a free hit has therefore been introduced. It enables the player taking the free hit to play the ball again after taking the free hit which will encourage free-flowing hockey.

As with other actions on the hockey pitch, this must take place safely. Other aspects of the free hit rules have therefore been reviewed. The HRB is concerned that the ball is often played hard, indiscriminately and therefore potentially dangerously into the circle from free hits in the attacking 23 M area. In future, these free hits must not be played directly into the circle.

FIH believes these are indications of the way it wishes to see hockey develop. Exciting innovations will take place but there will also always be a concern that the game should be as safe as reasonably possible.

These Rules changes above are referred to as Mandatory Experimental Rules. They are mandatory because they must be played throughout hockey; they are experimental to show that they will be reviewed after experience before deciding if they become permanent Rules. When the full set of the Rules of Hockey is published, small changes to some wording and various additional notes will also be added to clarify certain current rules. It is anticipated that the full set of Rules will be published in the next month or so.

The text of the relevant free hit Rules will be as follows:

13.1 Location of a free hit:

a) a free hit is taken close to where the offence occurred

‘Close to’ means within playing distance of where the offence occurred and with no significant advantage gained.

The location from which a free hit is taken must be more precise inside the 23m area.

b) a free hit awarded within 5M of the circle to the attack is taken at the nearest point 5m from the circle

c) a free hit awarded outside the circle to the defence within 15m of the back-line is taken up to 15m from the back-line in line with the location of the offence, parallel to the side-line

d) a free hit awarded inside the circle to the defence is taken anywhere inside the circle or up to 15m from the back-line in line with the location of the offence, parallel to the side-line.

13.2 Procedures for taking a free hit, centre pass and putting the ball back into play after it has been outside the field:

a) the ball must be stationary

b) opponents must be at least 5m from the ball

If an opponent is within 5m of the ball, they must not interfere with the taking of the free hit or must not play or attempt to play the ball. If this player is not playing the ball, attempting to play the ball or influencing play, the free hit need not be delayed.

c) when a free hit is awarded to the attack within the 23m area, all players other than the player taking the free hit must be at least 5m from the ball

d) the ball is moved using a push or hit

e) the ball must not be raised intentionally directly from the free hit

f) if the player taking the free hit is the next player to play the ball, the actions of taking the free hit and of next playing the ball must be two separate actions

g) before another player of the team which took the free hit is allowed to play the ball, the ball must move at least 1 m

The ball does not have to move 1 m before the player taking the free hit may play the ball again.

h) from a free hit awarded to the attack within the 23m area, the ball must not be played into the circle until it has travelled at least 5m or has been touched by a player of either team other than the player taking the free hit.

England Hockey will order copies of the new FIH Hockey Rules 2009–10 book immediately they become available and an order form will be posted as a download to the website and emailed to all Regional and County Hockey Associations and Umpiring Associations.

ENDS