

HAMPSTEAD HOCKEY CLUB

January 1970

Dear Member,

In compiling and distributing the attached Notes I have two objectives.

First to encourage the member who is 'resting' to volunteer his services as an Umpire.

Secondly to increase a player's enjoyment of the game by inviting a fuller understanding of the Rules of Hockey and their interpretation/application by umpires during play. (Based on the principle that if a player knows what makes an umpire tick there will be less 'ticks' from players)

I would ask the reader to take kindly into account that my Notes are informal aides, scribed I believe, within the spirit of the Rules of the game.

The most important duty the rule book requires from an umpire is that he should act in good faith. The technical difficulties of application will disappear with practice. The rules are framed to encourage players to out-wit the opposition *not* the umpires.

It is speculative whether an abundance of advice makes for efficient umpiring but I would be willing to discuss queries anytime - except on the field of play.

Yours sincerely,

"Mac"

Club Umpire

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EFFICIENT UMPIRING

Efficient umpiring will do much to raise the standard of the game by training players to observe the rules. Efficiency does not, however, depend on penalising every breach- which would cause delay and irritation.

Do not blow the whistle just because a breach of the rules has occurred no matter how flagrant it appears to be. It is the play potential which provides the evidence for stopping the game and awarding a penalty.

The art of umpiring is to know when NOT to blow the whistle. To attain this skill make the fullest possible use of the "Advantage" rule (19d).

Never carry the whistle in the mouth. The elapse of a second or two will delay the decision sufficient to give the advantage rule time to operate.

Once the advantage rule has been put into operation the original breach must be considered as lapsed. But not necessarily condoned by the umpire.

Help the attacking forward (who is pestered by the defenders) to get his shot in. A goal is much more satisfying than a penalty.

Any infringement attracting the "Penalty Stroke" (Rule 18) should be penalised unless the attacker has a good chance of scoring a goal immediately.

Do not be too quick to 'blow' at roll-ins/free hits. It is often advantageous to the opposing side for the game to be allowed to continue unchecked.

When no advantage results to the offender it is unnecessary to penalize such minor breaches as slight handball, accidental rebound or knock-on. This instruction would NOT operate when the ball is in the circle.

Rebounds/deflections of the ball *which cannot be avoided* by the player should not normally be penalised if the umpire is satisfied they were not caused by any intentional use of the body (and legs).

There are 3 IHA Notes in the Rule Book on the *unintentional* breach of Rule 10e which well repay study 'cos their timely application will save endless whistle and frustration.

ARE YOU IN CONTROL

Hockey is a potentially dangerous game to be played in a reasonable safe manner.

Playing the man and not the ball must not be tolerated. This offense **MUST** be treated as an intentional foul, the severest penalty awarded, and the individual warned.

Insist that players learn to beat their opponents by skilful stickwork and accurate passing instead of trusting to luck, brute force and ignorance.

During the opening phase of the game the Umpire must obtain and retain:

- a. complete control of the game
- b. the confidence of all 22 players
- c. implant the conviction that he will never allow an advantage to be gained by a breach of the rules.

Be very strict for the first 10 minutes of a game while never overlooking the possibility of applying the advantage rule.

As soon as players realise that they have an umpire who means to enforce the rules it will generally be found that players accept it is the umpire's job to regulate the game.

Once let a game get out of hand and it will be difficult to pull it together again.

At the earliest sign of rough play developing introduce strict control especially watching for those breaches which are absolutely forbidden by the Rules such as sticks, striking at sticks, holding an opponent, charging, shoving and any other unsportsmanlike behaviour.

PENALISE RUTHLESSLY to prevent debasement of the game.

The temporary suspension of players, penalty corners and penalty strokes should help to bring the game under control should the Captain's eloquence prove on no avail.

An umpire should rarely be static. Anticipate the direction of play and position yourself as follows:

- At centre bullies - close in where you can get an uninterrupted view. If you are seen you may not have to be heard (with the whistle).
- Mid-field play - level with third defender (for off-side decisions).
- Attacking line ahead - as above but try to anticipate when the break will come (this will give you an uninterrupted view of developments).
- Ball in circle - move diagonally towards nearer goal-post between the ball and goal-line.
- Long corner - a few feet from nearer corner-flag, close to goal-line where you can take in striker, defenders and attackers.
- Penalty corner - The opposite side to which the hit is taken - on the edge of the circle halfway between the top of the "D" and the goal-line.
- Penalty bully - to one side and slightly behind the striker.

Finally, Rule 19c. When the whistle has to be blown, blow it **ONCE** only: **LOUD** and **LONG** so that the game is brought to an immediate standstill.

MISCELLANY OF OFFENCES

BULLIES. Ensure of the flat surface of the stick is used for making contact. If the ball is pushed between an opponent's legs there is no obstruction.

A "tap" over the ball is required by the rules. Remember striking at sticks is forbidden so particularly watch that 3rd "tap".

Watch for encroachments by either team within 5 yards *until the ball is played.*

All other players must remain behind the ball until it is in play.

OBSTRUCTION. Contrary to general belief distance from the ball is no bar. Provided a player was impeded in a legitimate approach to play the ball, an offence has been committed.

Ensure that the obstruction is caused by the player's own action and is not the consequential result of an opponent's play, e.g. an attacker should run round a defender *not through him.*

There is only one signal for 'obstruction' but it has many faces - Turning on the ball, charging, kicking at sticks, shoving, nudging, barging, striking at or holding an opponent (often with the stick supported by the leg). And then there are the goalkeepers favourites, falling down on or by the ball or sliding feet foremost into a melee in front of his own goal (which usually brings its just reward "Penalty Stroke").

Tackling from the left is very often a cause of obstruction. The attacker must touch the ball *before* he touches the stick or person of his opponent. But do not be too quick on the whistle - the player with the ball may not be too harassed to get his shot or pass in.

STICKS. Provided the game is well under control it is in the interests of the players that the umpire should not be over-zealous in the application of Rule 10b. Players should appreciate this license and cooperate.

However, it will be necessary to control some defenders clearing the ball and other players taking free-hits, corners and shots at goal who seem to think these are privileged occasions and wave their sticks in a most abandoned manner. Do not accept this attitude and award the appropriate penalty.

Also, do not allow any player to stop the ball above shoulder height with his stick.

HAND BALL. No player is allowed to strike at the ball with his hand (knock on). If the ball be caught it must be released immediately. Any attempt to carry the ball forward or down will be penalised.

FREE HIT. No player of either team within 5 yards other than the striker. The scoop stroke is not permitted nor undercutting the ball (which causes it to rise). At the moment when the ball is hit it shall be motionless. Do not delay the hit if an opponent is remaining within 5 yards in order to gain time. On the other hand, do not allow a member of the striker's team to rush in before the ball is struck.

ROLL IN. Again, do not be over-zealous in applying the technicalities of hands, feet and stick details. Provided no player obtained an unfair advantage let the game go on.

Do not permit the ball to be thrown or bounced into play and insist that the ball crosses the side-line where it went out of play.

Watch for off-sides.

ROUGH/DANGEROUS PLAY, or MISCONDUCT. The first two are self evident. Misconduct could include, persistent swearing, fisticuffs, intentional fouls, misleading calls and barracking by players.

I would also include under this heading the conduct of any player deliberately hitting the ball away after the whistle has been blown. It is not only undesirable but can be positively dangerous for a player to be permitted to indulge himself in this time wasting habit.

MANUFACTURED/ENGINEERED PLOYS. The common ones are:

- a. The defender deliberately lifting the ball into the path of the oncoming attacker or flicking the ball against the oncomer's legs. Do not award the free hit so deliberately sought.
- b. Guarding over the ball with the stick. Is obstruction.
- c. Bringing the ball close to the feet when passing an opponent on the right (opponent's left). Is also obstruction.
- d. Raising the stick slightly to make it appear that the reverse-stick player extracting the ball is hooking down. Be doubly careful when penalising for hooking down.
- e. Deliberately bouncing the ball against the feet of the oncoming opponent and picking up the ricochet. I consider this "unfair play contrary to the spirit of the Rules" but in the absence of an authoritative ruling would award a "bully" where the ploy was used.
- f. Remember forwards can 'engineer' short corners by manufacturing fouls in the circle.

The player who deliberately sets out to bend the rules often confounds himself and loses control of the ball. So be alert and apply the advantage rule when you can do so.

GENERAL

When an umpire is un-sighted or feels some doubt he should ask the player(s) concerned. The number of honest answers received is rewarding. When no clear answer emerges a bully on the spot where play ceases will settle the incident.

For an unsighted but apparently major incident consult the other umpire. Any information volunteered should be accepted in the spirit in which it is offered - even to the extent of altering a decision already given (Rule 19 "Notes").

Nobody likes to be told he has made a mistake but it is an occupational risk which umpires must be prepared to take.

Do not stay rigidly within your own half of the field. Walk a few yards into the other half and you will then be in a better position to see and advise should the occasion arise.

Assist at corners by controlling the defenders *beyond* the half-way line. As the whistle may interfere with the corner being taken control by signs or words.

Remember, you *cannot* award corner decisions outside your own half. There is nothing to stop you telling your colleague what you saw happen within his circle *but the eventual decision is his to make.*

It is not often realised that an *intentional* breach of the rules by a defender within his own 25 yard area ALWAYS merits a Penalty corner; a Penalty Stroke - whether a goal would definitely resulted or not - if within the circle.

Recognise early the difference between a robust player (he tries hard) and the one who fouls *intentionally* (he sums up the situation and decides to breach the rules). Gently chide the former when necessary but always penalise the latter.

MESSAGE ENDS