

The Rules of Field Hockey

The playing field (also referred to as the **Pitch**):

The Game:

- The game starts with a free hit in the middle of the pitch at the centerline. The team that takes the hit is determined by a coin toss. Opposing players are outside of the circle on their half of the pitch.
- There are 22 players total: 10 field players and 1 goalie per side.
- In high school play, there are two 30-minute halves.
- The clock can be stopped for free hits, timeouts, and penalties.
- The object of the game is to get the ball up the field with the flat side of your stick and score a goal within the opposing striking circle. If the ball is shot from outside of the striking circle and goes in the goal without being touched by another offensive player, it does not count.

Fouls occur when a player:

1. Raises her stick above her shoulder when playing or attempting to play the ball.
2. Plays the ball with the rounded side of the stick
3. Undercuts the ball, wildly hits the ball into an opponent, or plays the ball in such a way as to cause it to rise dangerously.
Strikes, hits, holds, hooks, or interferes with the opponent's stick.
4. Touches the ball with her foot or shin guard. *
5. Stops the ball on the ground or in the air with any part of the body. *
6. Picks up, throws, or carries the ball or propels it in any manner or direction, except with the stick
7. Trips, shoves, pushes, charges, strikes at, or in any way personally handles an opponent.
8. Obstructs by running between an opponent and the ball by interposing your body or the stick as an obstruction.
9. Interferes in the game in any way unless the stick is in her hand.
 - Rough or dangerous play will not be permitted.

*with exception to the goalie.

Free hits:

A free hit is awarded when the opposing team gets a foul outside of the circle. Generally, the free hit is taken where the foul occurred.

- a. All other players except for the striker must be 7 yards away.
- b. The striker cannot play the ball again until it has been touched or played by another player (if the ball does not move 1 yard a defender must touch it first).
- c. The ball must be stationary and shall be hit or pushed along the ground. A flick or scoop shall not be permitted.

Penalty corners:

When a foul is committed inside of the striking circle by a defender, a penalty corner or a penalty stroke will be given to the attacking team. A penalty corner can also be awarded if the defender intentionally commits a foul the within the 25 yard line or intentionally hits the ball over the end line. In a penalty corner:

- A maximum of 5 defending players can remain ahead of the 50-yard line. All other defending players must run to the 50-yard line and remain there until the ball is hit. The attacking team can have as many players as they wish right outside the circle, but they cannot enter the striking circle until the ball is hit.
- The striker who has one foot on the field and the other foot out-of-bounds hits the ball from the end line at the hash mark 10 yards away from the goal. The striker must hit or push the ball along the ground to another player outside of the circle.
- The defenders and the goalie remain in the goal until the ball is hit, with the exception of one defender who stands out-of-bounds 5 yards between the goal and the striker. This player is called the “flyer;” she is to run at the player that receives the ball in hopes to stop the shot.
- The first striker cannot directly score a goal. The ball must be stopped before a shot can be taken.

The opposite of penalty corners: when the attacking team commits foul inside of the striking circle, a free hit is awarded to the defending team at the 16 yard line.

Penalty stroke:

This can be awarded to the opposing team when the goalie stops the ball and prevents the play of the game. For example, it gets stuck in her pads or she steps on it and holds it there. A penalty stroke is one shot against the goalie from one player.

- All other players must be behind the 25-yard line.
- The shot is taking from a hash mark 7 yards away from the goal.
- The shooter may push, flick, or scoop the ball into the goal, but she may not move both of her feet. Her stick must start on the ball, and the shot should be one fluid motion.
- The goalie must stand ready behind the goal line.
- If the ball goes past the goal line, a score has been made, a point is awarded, and the game resumes with a free hit at the centerline.
- If the ball is stopped by the goalie, play is restarted with a free hit at the 16-yard line.

Push-ins/hit-ins:

These occur when the ball completely crosses the sideline. The team that did not hit the ball over the sideline gets a free hit from where the ball was hit out. The hit must follow the same guidelines as any other free hit.

- If the attacking team hits the ball over the end line inside of the circle, then a 16-yard free hit is awarded to the defending team.
- If the defending team unintentionally hits the ball over the end line inside of the circle, then a long corner is awarded to the attacking team.
 - Long corners are taken on either side of the goal on the sideline 5 yards away from the end line. Again, the hit must abide by the guidelines of a free hit.

Offenses, misconduct, and dangerous play will result in:

1. A warning or caution
2. A green card: a recorded warning
3. A yellow card: temporary suspension for no less than 5 minutes
4. A red card: permanent suspension from the game

Indoor play:

- Typically drives, or powerful free hits, are not allowed
- Penalty corners are replaced with free hits at the 16-yard line
- Less players are usually used, depending on the space