

Field Hockey Canada

Rule Changes and Guidance for return to play



Community hockey is being reintroduced in a cautious and methodical manner, based on the best available evidence to optimize participant and community safety. In order to be aligned to the FIH's overarching "return to play" considerations; FHC is recommending that the following rule change is put into effect immediately:

Spitting & Nose Blowing

Spitting and nose blowing without a handkerchief or tissue (known as bushman nose blowing), is a practice that unfortunately occurs in our sport and must stop as it poses a significant risk to other participants.

New Rule:

- A 2 min suspension (green card) to be issued to any player or participant caught spitting or bushman nose blowing.
- Repeat offenders (i.e. player(s) offending more than once) to be shown a yellow card (10 mins).
- Consistent repeat offenders will be subject to a disciplinary process under the Local Sport Organization's Code of Conduct Policies. In the event of continued offences to disregard rules and safety of others, the behaviour should be elevated to the Provincial Sport Organization. In the extremely rare cases, matters will be escalated to Field Hockey Canada to review.
- Standard suspension rules to apply.

Umpiring Guidance/tips:

Apply this rule consistently to all participants (i.e. no exceptions). The rule applies to all players and team staff on the field, in the bench area and on the sidelines. Safety is always a key consideration. Ensure players and team management are aware of new rule changes before starting a match. Proactive and preventative education of health and safety requirements is a key action/step.

Other Important considerations/protocol

Application of Rules

When umpiring hockey, our 2 key pillars are to keep the game fair and safe. As well as the understanding the technical application of a rule, it is just as important for umpires to understand the intent/spirit of the rule to ensure the best practical implementation. Apply common sense, consider the context, and ensure consistent application of the rules at all times.

Under the current Covid-19 environment, wherever practical the safety aspect now needs to be extended to include new procedures to reduce contact by players and participants to an absolute minimum. All participants have a personal responsibility to identify and adhere to the best health and safety protocol's pre-, during, and post-match. Accordingly, the following measures are mandatory until further notice:

Protective equipment & use of face masks at Penalty Corners

It is recommended that all protective equipment, including face masks, gloves, (and any other defensive PC equipment to be used) **should not** be shared. Accordingly, it is recommended that defenders at penalty corners have their own clearly identified equipment (e.g. coloured marking).

Umpiring Guidance/tips:

Defensive players are now going to need sufficient time to identify and put on their own protective equipment. Additionally, if it not possible to allocate personal protective equipment to each player, teams may be required to clean their face masks at each penalty corners. Umpires need to allow players an acceptable time to do this. Umpires must still proactively manage the PC set up process.

Goalkeeping Gear

No rule changes, however, it is recommended that all goalkeeping gear not be shared among players and be cleaned and sanitized at home/away from the turf venue prior to every match.

Players Equipment

No rule changes, however, it is recommended that individual players gear (sticks, shin pads, gloves) is not shared with other players. Mouth guards obviously cannot be shared, and players are strongly recommended to keep mouth guards in their mouth during the entirety of the match. Removal of mouth guards on the turf needs to be reduced to an absolute bare minimum. Mouth guards should be cleaned at home/away from the turf venue prior to every match.

Cleaning of Players Equipment

Individual players are strongly recommended to clean all their equipment (water bottles, mouth guards, face masks, gloves, etc.) at home/away from their respective hockey venue wherever practical (both prior to and after each match).

High 5's/Handshakes

We understand that some members of our community will be looking for alternative ways to thank an opponent following a match. Please see the "hockey handshake" as an alternative option.

<https://twitter.com/Xenioshockey/status/1235819830562832384>

Injuries & Blood Protocols

No rule changes, however, to minimize contact the following protocols are recommended:

- Where practical any injured players should be treated by their own team members/management or medical professional
- Team Managers (or equivalent) should prepare and preplan what actions they need to undertake for injury situations

We also recommend that umpires and team management review and understand rules that apply to injuries and blood protocols, and also to check in with your Associations and turf venue to ensure that local procedures are in place and to have an awareness of what these protocols and guidelines are.

Match Balls

To minimize the number of touches/contacts to hockey balls, we recommend:

- Match ball to be cleaned prior to and at the end of every match
- Players are recommended to use sticks rather than handling hockey balls wherever practical

Coin Toss

Where a coin toss is required (e.g. starting a game, starting shootouts etc.), then the coin should be tossed by one umpire with a team captain/representative to call accordingly.

Match Sheet (Game Sheet)

The use, format, and completion of match sheets will differ within Associations and Local Organizations. If using a game sheet, consider arrangements that will limit touches/contacts by individuals such as:

- Providing pre-printed list of team names and numbers with starters clearly indicated
- Umpires fill out cards only from details provided by team managers
- Use of TMS/Altius to record match results where practical

Monitoring and Enforcement

It is assumed that monitoring and enforcement will not just be the responsibility of the officials and will be supported by local and provincial health authorities, Provincial Support Organizations, local associations, club personal, athletes and parents, and coaches and team staff.

General

The above one rule change and recommended measures have been put in place under the current environment of COVID 19. This has been a rapidly changing landscape and a further review or update may occur.

Wishing the best of success to all our hockey communities, enjoy the return to play, and keep safe everyone.