



This is a brief synopsis of the new rules for the season, and a number of small amendments designed to clarify interpretation.

You can get a complete up-to-date set of FIH rules as PDF from the FIH website [here](#)

NB: For season 2019-20, all of the League and Cup club games will continue to be played as halves, usually of 2x35 minutes. (Only National League matches will be played in 17.5m quarters\*\*).

### Major Rule changes

The following (major) changes will be implemented at all levels from the start of the 2019/20 season:

- Removal of Player with Goalkeeper Privileges (PwGKP) Rule 2.2
- Defensive Free Hits awarded within the defensive circle Rule 13.1
- Amendments to Attacking Free Hits within the 23m Rule 13.2f
- Amendment to ruling around Attackers entering the circle early at a Penalty Corner Rule 13.6e

#### *The amended rule shown in italics*

**Rule 2.2** – Teams can only play with a GK and 10 field players, or 11 field players. If playing with 11 players and a penalty corner of penalty flick is awarded, the defending player(s) may wear a face mask.

- *2.2 only field players; no player has goalkeeping privileges or wears a different colour shirt; no player may wear protective headgear except a face mask when defending a penalty corner or a penalty stroke; all team players wear the same colour shirt.*  
*Any change between these options, must take place as a substitution. NB: If a team has only field players, no substitution is permitted at a penalty corner until it has been completed.*

**Rule 13.1b** – A defensive Free Hit, awarded within the defensive circle, can be taken anywhere within the defensive circle, or upto 15m from base line in line of the offence, parallel to the side-line. NB ball must be stationary prior movement.

- *13.1 b) a free hit awarded to the defence within 15 metres of the back-line is taken up to 15 metres from the back- line in line with the location of the offence, parallel to the side-line. A free hit to the defence awarded in the circle may be taken anywhere in the circle.*

**Rule 13.2** – Attacking Free Hit awarded within 5m of defensive circle. The introduction of a quick self-pass for these Free Hits allows the defenders to stay within the circle, within 5m and not interfere with play until the ball can legitimately enter the circle. **If there is no quick self-pass**, then **ALL** defenders, regardless of location in the 23m, have to retreat 5m if they wish to legitimately play the ball once the Free Hit is taken.

- *13.2 f) At an attacking free hit awarded within 5 metres of the circle, the ball cannot be played into the circle until it has travelled at least 5 metres or it has been touched by a defending player. If the free hit is taken immediately the defenders who are inside the circle within 5 metres of the free hit may shadow around the inside of the circle a player who takes a self-pass, provided that they do not play or attempt to play the ball or influence play until it has either travelled at least 5 metres or alternatively been touched by a defending player who can legitimately play the ball. If the attacker chooses not to take the free hit immediately, all other players must be at least 5 metres from the ball before the free hit is taken.*



Rule 13.6.e –If an attacker enters the circle at a Penalty Corner before permitted, **the player taking the push or hit from the backline** is required to go beyond the centre-line and the Penalty Corner is taken again

- *13.6 e) an attacker enters the circle before permitted, the player taking the push or hit from the backline is required to go beyond the centre- line : the penalty corner is taken again  
Attackers who are sent beyond the centre-line may not return for re-taken penalty corners, but may do so for a subsequently awarded penalty corner*

### Minor Changes

Rule 9.12 – Very minor clarification of third party or shadow obstruction during a penalty corner on defenders (and goalkeeper).

Rule 12.4 – clarification added to the awarding of a Penalty Stroke if the ball hits a piece of equipment lying in the circle and a probable goal is prevented, a penalty stroke may be awarded.

12.4 A penalty stroke is awarded:

- *for an offence by a defender in the circle which prevents the probable scoring of a goal  
If the ball hits a piece of equipment lying in the circle and a probable goal is prevented, a penalty stroke may be awarded.*

Rule 13.3.g – Clarification on defending team’s responsibilities when defending a Penalty Corner when playing with no Goalkeeper:

- *13.3 g) not more than five defenders, including the goalkeeper, must be positioned behind the back-line with their sticks, hands and feet not touching the ground inside the field  
If the team defending a penalty corner has chosen to play only with field players, none of the defenders referred to above has goalkeeping privileges*

Rule 13.5 – Removal of previous rule of when a Penalty Corner is finished if time has already lapsed and clarification that if play during a Penalty Corner is stopped because of an injury or for any other reason during the taking of a penalty corner at the end of a quarter or half and a bully would otherwise be awarded, the penalty corner must be taken again.

Rule 13.7.e – if a team has chosen to play with eleven outfield players and no goalkeeper, if they concede a Penalty Stroke then this explains what protective equipment is permitted for the defender.

13.7 e) if the player defending the stroke is otherwise taking part in the game as a field player, they may wear only a face mask as protective equipment

- *If the team defending a penalty stroke has chosen to play only with field players and not to use a substitute goalkeeper to defend the penalty stroke, the defender may only use their stick to make a save.*

Further information and support will be available for players, coaches, umpires and officials in learning these rule implementations can be accessed on the Hockey Hub Page - ([www.hockeyhub.englishhockey.co.uk](http://www.hockeyhub.englishhockey.co.uk)) and this will be shared with Leagues & Umpiring Associations to enhance the learning of their members ahead of the new season.



**\*\* Rule changes relating to the playing of matches in quarters are shown below for completeness.**

5 – timing of matches to be more closely aligned with the international game as seen at the Vitality Hockey Women's World Cup or FIH Pro-League. See above / below for further details.

6 – wording change around the start and re-start of the match to reflect the change to quarters in the rule book.

11.6 – wording added to this rule to show that Umpires blow the whistle for the start / end of each quarter and for the stopping / re-starting of time around a Penalty Corner.

5.1 A match consists of four quarters of 15 minutes, an interval of 2 minutes between quarter 1 and 2 and between quarter 3 and 4 and a half- time interval of 5 minutes between quarter 2 and 3.

6.2 Direction of play is reversed in the third quarter of the match.

13.4 The match is prolonged at the end of each quarter to allow completion of a penalty corner or any subsequent penalty corner or penalty stroke.

14.3 Temporarily suspended players are permitted to rejoin their team at a quarter break and at half time interval after which they must return to a designated place to complete their suspension.