

Field Hockey Basics

The U.S. Field Hockey Association



THE GAME

- Two halves, 25 minutes each.
- Eleven players per side, including the goal keeper
- Two umpires on the field officiate the match. An additional umpire may sit at the scorer's table.
- A goal is scored when an attacker strikes the ball into the goal from within the striking circle.
- Players may not shield the ball using their body or stick. All players must have an equal chance to play the ball.

BASIC RULES

- Ball must be passed or dribbled down the field with the flat side of the stick.
- Players may not shield or "obstruct" access to the ball with their body or stick.
- A goal can only be counted if the shot is taken from inside the shooting circle.

FOULS

A player may not commit any of the following actions:

- Shield or obstruct the ball from an opponent with the body or stick.
- Play the ball with the rounded side of the stick.
- Interfere in the game without a stick
- Charge, hit, shove or trip an opponent
- Play the ball in a potentially dangerous way.
- Use the foot or leg to support the stick in order to resist an opponent

- Raise the stick in a dangerous or intimidating manner while approaching, attempting to play or stop the ball
- Advance the ball by any means other than with the stick.
- Stop or deflect the ball in the air or on the ground with any part of the body
- Hit, hook, hold an opponent's stick

FREE HIT

A free hit is awarded to the non-offending side following an infraction and is usually taken at the spot the foul occurs. No player of the opposing team may be within 5 yards of the ball when hit.

PENALTY CORNER

Penalty corners are awarded against defenders for deliberately playing the ball over the goal line, committing a foul within the striking circle or committing an intentional foul within the 25 yard line. A penalty corner is a free hit awarded to an attacking player from a point on the goal line at least 10 yard away from the goal. All attackers must be outside the striking circle before the hit is taken. A maximum of five defenders may be behind the goal line, while the remaining defenders must be beyond the center line.

Typically, the attacking player taking the free hit passes the ball to a teammates positioned outside the striking circle. An offensive player will stop the ball with the stick while another player will strike the ball at the goal.

PENALTY STROKE

A penalty stroke is a one-on-one confrontation between an offensive player seven yards in front of the goal vs. a goalkeeper on the goal line. All other players must stand behind the 25 yard line. The goalkeeper must stand with both feet on the goal line and may not move either foot until the ball has been played. The offensive player may push, flick or scoop the ball from the penalty spot. A penalty stroke is awarded for any intentional breach by the defenders in the circle or for an unintentional breach by the defenders which prevents a sure goal.

New Rule - The attacking team will be awarded a 25-yard free hit instead of a long hit when a defender unintentionally causes the ball to go across the end line or if the ball glances off the stick/person of a defender in this area and goes across the end line. Play will be re-started with the ball on the 25-yard line that is in line with where it crossed the end line, and all procedures for taking a free hit will apply.

THE PUSH-IN/HIT-IN

A push-in or hit-in is awarded to the opposition if a player hits the ball wholly over the sideline. All other players and their sticks must be a least 5 yards away from the spot where the ball is put into play.

