



The International Hockey Federation (FIH) recently announced changes to the rules of hockey. Hockey Ireland has confirmed that all new rule changes to the domestic game will take effect from 1st August 2019.

The changes will be introduced at all levels of adult hockey and there will be some impact for the grass roots of hockey. It is therefore important for all participants and officials that we understand the concept of these changes so that their introduction is as smooth as possible.

The changes are as follows: -

1. Introduction of the match format of four quarters as standard

Like in international matches, all adult matches at all levels will change to a four quarter format. Hockey Ireland has received a *special dispensation* from the FIH, meaning that all quarters will be **17.5 minutes** in length. During this time the clock will not be stopped for the award of penalty corners or the celebration of goals.

NOTE: The wording of rule 5.1 within the FIH Rules of Hockey 2019 regarding 15 minute quarters, will NOT apply to hockey within Ireland.

2. Removal of Goalkeeping privileges for substitute field player

Teams now only have two options: -

- (i) Either play with a goalkeeper who wears full protective equipment comprising at least headgear, leg guards and kickers and who is also permitted to wear goalkeeping hand protectors and other protective equipment,
- (ii) Or play with only field players.

Any change between these options should be treated as a substitution. It is hoped that this experimental rule will enhance safety as field players will no longer have goalkeeping privileges so will not be entitled to use their body to stop shots at goal and it also enhances the promotion of the sport by eliminating the issue of outfield players wearing other shirts to indicate goalkeeping privileges.

3. Defending free hits within 5 meters of the circle

The explanation for how to treat free hits for the attacker close to the circle has been changed in Rules 13.2.f. It has now been made clear that players other than the attacker taking the free hit must be at least five metres away, including when they are in their circle. If the attacker however chooses to take the free hit immediately, then defenders who are inside the circle and within five metres from the ball may shadow around the inside of the circle as per the explanation of the rule before 2019. This has the advantage of not preventing the quickly taken free hit which has been widely welcomed by coaches and players, whilst maintaining the 5m rule used everywhere else on the pitch to provide space for the free hit taker.

4. Free hits awarded inside the defensive circle

A defender may now take a free hit awarded in the circle anywhere inside the circle or up to 15 metres from the back-line in line with the location of the offence, parallel to the side-line.



5. Taking a penalty corner

If 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 re-taken. Attackers who are sent beyond the centre-line may not re-return for the re-taken penalty corner, but may do so for a subsequently awarded penalty corner.

6. Completion of a penalty corner

Rule 13.6 that described the completion of a penalty corner for substitution purposes and for a penalty corner at the end of a period, has been deleted. The option that a penalty corner is completed when the ball travels outside the circle for the second time, no longer exists.

7. Facemask Removal Variation

The guidance to Rule 4.2 (e) now states, that a defender may wear their facemask for a Penalty Corner which includes the immediate taking of a free hit awarded after a penalty corner when passing the ball to another player. This will hopefully prevent unwanted interventions. Please note that this only relates to a defender passing the ball from a free hit; players are still not allowed to self-pass while wearing the facemask nor is wearing the facemask allowed if the ball passes over the backline from a Penalty Corner when no offence has occurred i.e. 15 metre re-start.

End.