

FIH Mandatory Experimental Rules

Hockey Australia has introduced experimental rules Australia wide for 2009 and Hockey WA is using them in all grades. They will be reviewed at the completion of AHL competition.

New Rule Interpretations: The Self-play Free Hit

The objectives of the new rules for 2009: *To speed up the game & reduce the possibility of danger at 'dead ball' situations in the 23m area of the field*

Note: The free hit, centre pass, and putting the ball back into play, (sideline "long corner" and 15m hit). All these are now grouped together and shall be interpreted in a similar manner.

Note: the ball still has to move 1 metre if passed directly to a "team mate" from a free hit.

The team taking the free hit:

- A player must make two clear motions.
- A small hit or push is needed then they can play on.
- A free hit is not taken if a player just dribbles off with the ball.
The player must stop the ball before taking a free hit – this indicates that the free hit is to be taken. (Some leniency in open play as per "old" rule).
- The ball does not have to move a metre before the second motion.
- It is possible for a player to "self-pass" and "throw an overhead pass" as the second motion

Note: Players from the same team do not have to be 5m from the free hit except in the attacking 23m area.

Note: A team with the free hit does not have to wait for opposition players to move 5 metres from where the free hit is to be taken.

Opposition Players:

- Opposition players must move 5 metres from where the free hit is to be taken. This must be done with out any delay.
- Opposition players cannot interfere with the play until they have retreated the 5 metres from where the free hit is to be taken.

Note: Playing the ball in any way, "getting in the way" or "running next" to the ball carrier who has taken a self play free hit is not acceptable.

Free hits taken inside the Attacking 23 metre area:

- All players other than the player playing the ball must be 5 metres from the ball when the free hit is taken. This includes bringing the ball back into play.
- Before the ball can enter the circle, it must be touched by another player.
- At a self play free hit, the ball must travel at least 5 metres before it is played into or through the circle.

Note: Hard hits or pushes passing the ball to a team mate who deflects the ball into the circles is permitted. The second player must be outside the circle and 5 metres from the free hit when it is taken.

The new FIH rule is outlined in the following pages.



International Hockey Federation

Rules of Hockey 2009: free hit

The text of the free hit rules which will apply in international hockey from 1 May 2009 is provided below.

One of the objectives of the FIH and therefore of the Hockey Rules Board (HRB) is to decrease the number and duration of interruptions to the flow of play and to increase the length of time the ball is in active play. A “self-pass” from a free hit has therefore been introduced. It enables the player taking the free hit to play the ball again after taking the free hit which will encourage free-flowing hockey.

As with other actions on the hockey pitch, this must take place safely. Other aspects of the free hit rules have therefore been reviewed. The HRB is concerned that the ball is often played hard, indiscriminately and therefore potentially dangerously into the circle from free hits in the attacking 23 metres area. In future, these free hits must not be played directly into the circle.

FIH believes these are indications of the way it wishes to see hockey develop. Exciting innovations will take place but there will also always be a concern that the game should be as safe as reasonably possible.

These Rules changes above are referred to as Mandatory Experimental Rules. They are mandatory because they must be played throughout hockey; they are experimental to show that they will be reviewed after experience before deciding if they become permanent Rules. When the full set of the Rules of Hockey is published, small changes to some wording and various additional notes will also be added to clarify certain current rules. It is anticipated that the full set of Rules will be published in the next month or so.

The text of the relevant free hit Rules will be as follows:

13.1 Location of a free hit:

- a a free hit is taken close to where the offence occurred

‘Close to’ means within playing distance of where the offence occurred and with no significant advantage gained.

The location from which a free hit is taken must be more precise inside the 23 metres area.
- b a free hit awarded within 5 metres of the circle to the attack is taken at the nearest point 5 metres from the circle
- c a free hit awarded outside the circle 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

- d a free hit awarded inside the circle to the defence is taken 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.
- 13.2 Procedures for taking a free hit, centre pass and putting the ball back into play after it has been outside the field:
- a the ball must be stationary
 - b opponents must be at least 5 metres from the ball
 - If an opponent is within 5 metres of the ball, they must not interfere with the taking of the free hit or must not play or attempt to play the ball. If this player is not playing the ball, attempting to play the ball or influencing play, the free hit need not be delayed.*
 - c when a free hit is awarded to the attack within the 23 metres area, all players other than the player taking the free hit must be at least 5 metres from the ball
 - d the ball is moved using a push or hit
 - e the ball must not be raised intentionally directly from the free hit
 - f if the player taking the free hit is the next player to play the ball, the actions of taking the free hit and of next playing the ball must be two separate actions
 - g before another player of the team which took the free hit is allowed to play the ball, the ball must move at least 1 metre
 - The ball does not have to move 1 metre before the player taking the free hit may play the ball again.*
 - h from a free hit awarded to the attack within the 23 metres area, the ball must not be played into the circle until it has travelled at least 5 metres or has been touched by a player of either team other than the player taking the free hit.



Guidelines for 2009 AHL Competition – New Rule Interpretations

The following information is provided for teams and officials participating in the 2009 AHL Competitions. Hockey Australia will review these interpretations following the conclusion of these competitions.

It is important to keep in mind the objectives of the new rules for 2009:
To speed up the game & reduce the possibility of danger at 'dead ball' situations in the 23m area of the field

Note: The free hit, centre pass, and putting the ball back into play, (sideline "long corner" and 15m hit). All these are now grouped together and shall be interpreted in a similar manner.

Note: the ball still has to move 1 metre if passed directly to a "team mate" from a free hit.

13.2 g The Self-play free hit

The team taking the free hit.

A player must make two clear motions.

- A small hit or push is needed then they can play on.
- A free hit is not taken if a player just dribbles off with the ball.
- The player must stop the ball before taking a free hit – this indicates that the free hit is to be taken. (some leniency in open play as per "old" rule).
- The ball does not have to move a metre before the second motion.
- It is possible for a player to "self-pass" and "throw an overhead pass" as the second motion (Be sure the ball is safe on the way up. This includes safety to players who have not had time to move 5 metres.).

Note: Players from the same team do not have to be 5m from the free hit except in the attacking 23m area.

Note: A team with the free hit does not have to wait for opposition players to move 5 metres from where the free hit is to be taken.

Penalties: If a free hit is not taken correctly a free hit the other way can be given (Be proactive – avoid replays & reversals).

Opposition Players

Opposition players must move 5 metres from where the free hit is to be taken. This must be done with out any delay.

Note: Umpires must take action for players deliberately “standing over the ball” or “hitting the ball away” to prevent a free hit from being taken – this is “gamesmanship”.

Penalties for such actions will be the same as we have enforced in the past. A warning (Verbal or green) may be appropriate unless the action is clearly intentional and affects the game the temporary suspension should be enforced (5 minute Yellow card). Please do not use the 10m penalty – gamesmanship must be penalised firmly

Umpires must be very proactive in moving players 5 metres from free hits (Verbal and whistling) - avoid replays & reversals

Opposition players cannot interfere with the play until they have retreated the 5 metres from where the free hit is to be taken.

Note: Playing the ball in any way, “getting in the way” or “running next” to the ball carrier who has taken a self play free hit is not acceptable.

Note: Be aware or teams taking a self-play free hit manufacturing interference from opposition players.

Penalties for interfering with play or manufacturing will be the same as we will use for preventing free hits from being taken.

13.1 Location of a free hit

(Proximity to the breach of the rules and the taking of a free hit.)

1. Very open play (not in the attacking 23 area):
If there are no opposition players directly contesting the free hit - allow the free to be taken in the general proximity of the area.
2. Opposition players contesting the free hit.
The free hit must be taken within playing distance from where the breach occurred.
3. Inside the 23m area:
The free hit must be taken close to the spot where the free hit occurred.
4. Inside the dotted circle:
The ball must be taken back to the nearest point 5 metres from the circle.
5. Sideline hits and "long corners"
Players taking the free hit must attempt to put the ball on the line.
6. Defensive free-hits & 15s are as per the previously existing rules.

Penalties: This is the same as umpires have done for several years. Players who intentionally take free hits when the ball is clearly too far away from the true location can have the free hit reversed.

Free hits taken inside the Attacking 23 metre area.

Note: This is very simple and should be applied as directed:

- All players other than the player playing the ball must be 5 metres from the ball when the free hit is taken. This includes bringing the ball back into play.
- Before the ball can enter the circle, it must be touched by another player.
- At a self play free hit, the ball must travel at least 5 metres before it is played into or through the circle.

Note: Hard hits or pushes passing the ball to a team mate who deflects the ball into the circles is permitted. The second player must be outside the circle and 5 metres from the free hit when it is taken. Be aware of dangerous/ out of control high deflections

Note: Bringing the ball back into play is included in these interpretations (sideline and “long corner”)

Note: A player can “self pass” and then dribble directly into the circle, or pass the ball into the circle once the ball has moved 5 metres from where the free hit was taken.

Note: Umpires must be proactive – if the ball is in the wrong spot communicate this to the players before they have the chance to take the free hit. (avoid replays/reversals)

Hockey Australia Officiating Commission
25th February 2009