

Simplified Rules for Indoor Hockey
For New Players, Parents, & other spectators
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Introduction

About this Guide

1. It was written to help parents and new players to understand and enjoy the game more. It is *not* a complete interpretation of the rules but a simple guide to help you understand the game a bit better
2.
 - The interpretations in this document are based on the Indoor Hockey rule book developed by the [International Hockey Federation](#). Yes, it's called 'hockey' everywhere else in the world except for North America!
 - Some of the interpretations were provided to me by the International Hockey Federation, Field Hockey Canada, and experienced international officials.
 - Coaches and players are advised to read the official rules of the game. A copy of the Rule Book and Interpretations is available from Field Hockey Nova Scotia's web site at www.fieldhockey.ns.ca. Go to the Indoor Hockey Rules & Interpretations page under the Umpiring page and click on the links to view different free publications, including this one.
 - Further interpretations are also available by contacting me at Mario@demello.ca. If I cannot answer your question, I'll get an interpretation from [Field Hockey Canada](#) or the [International Hockey Federation](#).
 - If you are viewing this document online, underlined text is a link to another part of the document or a web site which has further explanations. Click on the blue underlined text and it will take you to other sites or to the page within this document for more detail.

You missed a call! Not necessarily

Yes, we deliberately do not call some infractions!

Before you read these rules, I should explain why we do not make some calls that appear to be obvious fouls. Here are some reasons:

1. At the Junior High and High School levels a lot of infractions (fouls) take place. Technically, the umpires should call them but it would result in more whistles and simply slow the game down a lot. Therefore, it makes more sense to ignore some of the less serious fouls especially those where the offending player did not gain a big advantage from the infraction. *This is very difficult for umpires to do!* A good example is when the ball hits a player's foot or when a player attempts to stop a ball and it rises off the floor. If the player's action did not prevent an opponent from getting the ball and did not gain a significant advantage, we let the play go on. We tend to get stricter if the ball is closer to the scoring circle.
2. **Advantage.** The rule book states that the umpire does not have to call an infraction if the offending player did not gain an advantage or if the player who was offended re-gained possession of the ball. You'll notice that the umpire points one arm in the direction the benefiting team is playing or may say "play on" but does not blow the whistle. They are indicating that they have seen the foul but are playing advantage or are waiting to see if advantage is possible before blowing the whistle.
3. A lot of the umpires are learning to umpire. In fact, some of them are only umpiring because we are short of umpires and they are helping out. They will miss some calls. They are only human!
4. Umpires may get screened by the players and although they are pretty sure something happened, they must not guess. This is where the other umpire comes in. They work as a team and one umpire can help the other.

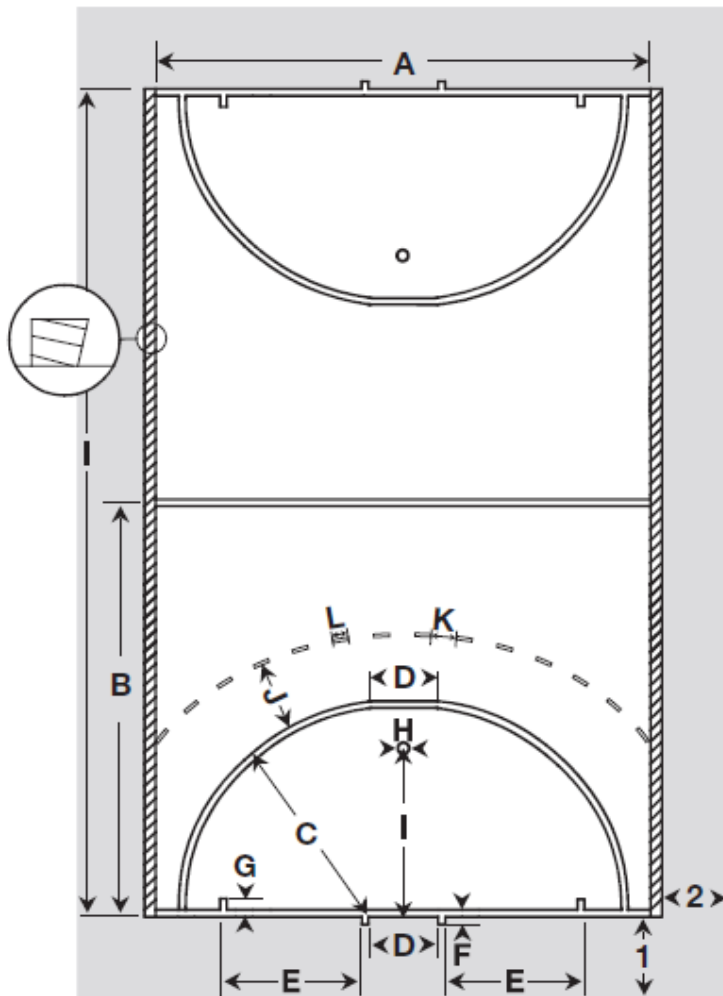
- The bottom line....the umpires are there to ensure that both teams enjoy themselves and sometimes it is better to not make a call.

Terminology

At the bottom of this publication is a [glossary of terms](#) used in the game.

The Pitch (“Court”)

Figure 1 : Indoor Pitch



Indoor Pitch Dimensions

Code	Metres	Code	Metres
A	22.00 (minimum 18.00)	H	0.10
B	22.00 (minimum 18.00)	I	7.00
C	9.00	J	3.00
D	3.00	K	2.00
E*	6.03	L	0.30
F	0.15	1	minimum 3.00
G	0.30	2	minimum 1.00

* Dimension E is measured from the goal-post line and not from the goal-post itself; the dimension from the goal-post is 6.00 metres.

Basic Rules & Penalties

Starting the Game. To **start the game**, re-start the game after half-time or after a goal has been scored:

- A [centre pass](#) must be played from the centre of the pitch. It may be played in any direction.
- All players other than the player making the pass must be in their half of the pitch.
- All opponents must be at least 3 metres from the ball
- The player may choose to do a [self-pass](#).

Common Penalties

A penalty is normally awarded only when a player or team has been clearly disadvantaged by an opponent's offence. You can tell which team committed the offence because the umpire points in their direction.

Hit – A [hit](#) is a long swinging action at the ball.

Back-Stick / Feet / Body – intentionally playing the ball with the back of the stick, feet or body is not allowed. If unintentional, no benefit must be gained so the umpire may ignore it.

Stick or Body Interference - Interference with the opponent's stick or body without playing the ball first. See [Obstruction](#) below.

Danger

Players must not:

- play the ball while lying on the pitch or intentionally placing a knee, arm or hand on the pitch, other than the hand in which the stick is held.
- play the ball deliberately and hard at an opponent's stick, feet or hands with associated risk of injury when a player is in a "set position". This is especially true when the defender is within 3m and has their entire stick along the ground in front of their body. This is to prevent a dangerous shot where the ball may bounce off the stick into the defender's body.

Ball hitting foot or body. It is not automatically an offence if the ball hits the foot or body of a player. It is only an offence if the player who was hit:

- Moved intentionally into the path of the ball, or
- Made no effort to avoid being hit, or
- Was positioned with the clear intention to stop the ball with the foot or body, or
- Gains benefit



Goalkeepers

1. Goalkeepers may, when the ball is inside their own circle:
 - Use their stick, kickers, or leg guards to propel the ball without lifting it or use any part of their body, including their hands, to stop the ball. They may even move the ball away with their hand to prevent a possible goal but may not propel it a long distance.
 - Not lie on the ball or cover it deliberately to prevent the attackers from playing it.
 - Play the ball while lying on the pitch as long as every part of their body is inside the circle while playing the ball
 - Stop or deflect the ball above their shoulder
2. Goalkeepers may not play the ball in a manner that is dangerous to the other players.

Ball Outside the Pitch

Over the side-board:

- The ball is placed 1 metre of the spot where the ball went out of play; if that spot is within the circle, the ball is placed outside the circle and 1 metre outside the circle and 1 metre from the side-board.
- A player of the opposing team must play the ball.



3.

Over the [back-line](#):

- If the ball was last *played by an [attacker](#)* and no goal was scored, the ball must be played by defender anywhere along a line parallel to the sideline and across from where it crossed the back-line and up to 9.1m from the goal-line.
- If the ball was last *played by a [defender](#)*:
 - *Unintentionally* by the defence when no goal is scored, it must be taken by the defence anywhere along a line parallel to the sideline and across from where it crossed the back-line and up to 9.1m from the goal-line.
 - *Intentionally* by the defence (subject to the rules applying to the goalkeeper) when no goal is scored, a [penalty corner](#) is awarded.



Raised Balls

1. A player may not:

- Raise the ball off the pitch except for a shot at goal from within the goal-scoring circle.
- Play the ball while it is in the air except that a [defender](#) may stop a raised shot at goal with their stick. This means that they can stop or deflect the ball – not hit it.
- A player of the team that did not raise the ball in the air may stop it.



2. If the ball is raised off a defender's stick but goes over the back-line without preventing an opponent from playing the ball and if the raised ball is not dangerous - no foul.

Note that if the ball rises not more than 100mm (about the height of the sideboards) and there is no opponent within playing distance or does not prevent the ball from getting to an opponent, it is not a foul. The umpires may even ignore balls that are raised higher if no significant advantage is gained.

Obstruction

1. This rule allows players to compete equally and to benefit based on their skills - not size.
2. A player may not prevent ([obstruct](#)) an opponent from *attempting to play* the ball by:
 - Backing into an opponent
 - Trap or hold the ball against the side-boards
 - Physically interfering with the stick or body of the opponent
 - shield the ball from a legitimate tackle with their stick or any part of their body
 - Moving between the opponent and a team-mate who has the ball to prevent the opponent from playing the ball (“pick”)



Note however, that to be obstructed, the defending player must:

- be in position to play the ball and;
- must attempt to play it and;
- the player who has possession of the ball must shield the ball.

4. **No Offside.** There is no offside in indoor hockey.

Substitution

1. Substitution is permitted at any time except within the period when a penalty corner is awarded and until after it has been completed. During a penalty corner, only an injured goalkeeper may be substituted.
2. There is no limit to the number of players who may be substituted at the same time nor to the number of times any player may substitute or be substituted.
3. Substitutes are not permitted for suspended players during their suspension.

Scoring a Goal

1. A goal is scored when the ball is played in the circle by an attacker and it enters the goal. *Note that the ball must completely cross the goal-line.*
2. The ball may be pushed along the pitch, **flicked**, scooped for a shot at goal. Attackers may not play the ball while it is in the air.
3. After a stoppage in play inside the circle, the ball must again be played inside the circle by an attacker before a goal can be scored.
4. If a defender is within 3 metres of the first shot at goal and is struck by the ball below the knee, another penalty corner is awarded. If a defender is within 3 metres of the first shot at goal and is struck by the ball above the knee in a normal stance, the shot is deemed to be dangerous and a free push is awarded to the defending team.



Free Push.

1. A **Free Push** is awarded for an offence by an opponent anywhere on the pitch other than for an offence by the defenders in their own circle.
2. It is taken close to where the offence occurred and with no significant advantage gained. The location is more precise when the offence is close to the circle.
3. If a defender commits an offence in their own half,
 - For safety reasons, the attacker **must not** push the ball directly into the circle. The attacker may:
 - carry the ball into the circle themselves (**self-pass**)
 - use a self-pass to move the ball for a total of 3m **before** playing the ball into the circle
 - play the ball off the stick of another attacker or defender who is outside the circle or
 - play it off the side boards first before moving the ball into the circle.
4. If free push awarded to the defence in their own circle may be taken anywhere in the circle or up to 9.10 metres from the back-line in line with the location of the offence, parallel to the side-board.
5. Opponents must be 3 metres from the ball. When a free push is awarded to the attack within the half they are attacking, all players other than the person taking the free push must be 3 metres from the ball. The game will not be delayed if the opponent is within 3 metres but are not interfering with play.



Penalty Corners

1. A **Penalty Corner** is awarded:
 - For an *intentional offence* by the defence within their half of the pitch but outside the circle

- For an *unintentional offence* by a defender in their circle which neither prevents a goal being scored nor deprives an attacker of actual or likely possession of the ball
 - Unless a goal is scored, a defender *deliberately* sends the ball across their own goal line from anywhere on the field
 - For a breach of the rules concerning substitution and
 - If the ball becomes lodged in a defender's clothing or equipment while in the circle they are defending.
2. The defenders must stand behind the goal line until the ball is played by one of the attackers from the goal line to the other attackers who are at the top of the circle. They must also stand on the opposite side of the goal from where the attacker will play the ball.
 3. If a defender breaks early (before the ball has been played by the attacker), that defender must go past the centre line and at least 9m from the top of the circle. The defense will play with one less player until the ball has been played by the attack.
 4. If an attacker enters the circle before the ball has been played by the attacker, that attacker must go past the centre line and at least 9m from the top of the circle. The attacker may be replaced by another attacker who is on the pitch.
 5. The initial pass to the attackers must go outside the circle before it is brought back into the circle for a shot at the goal.



5. Penalty Stroke

1. A [Penalty Stroke](#) is awarded for:
 - An offence by a defender in their circle which prevents the probable scoring of a goal.
 - An *intentional offence* by a defender in their circle against an offender who has possession of the ball or an opportunity to play the ball.
 - Persistent early breaking off the back-line by defenders at penalty corners
2. The attacker:
 - must stand behind the ball and plays the ball after the whistle is blown.
 - Must not hit the ball. Only a flick or scoop shot is allowed.
3. Once the ball is played, the attacker cannot play the ball again



Time

1. The match is prolonged at half-time and full-time to allow completion of a penalty-corner or penalty-stroke.
2. If a time-out is called or time expires just before an umpire would have made a decision, the umpire is permitted to make that decision immediately after the time-out is called or after the end of the period.

Glossary of Terms

Attacker: A player whose team has possession of the ball and is attempting to score a goal.

Back-line: The line indicating the end of the field and includes the goal line between the goal posts.

Bully: Similar to a face-off. The referee places the ball on the ground, and the two opposing players place their sticks on the ground and then tap sticks once before going for the ball. It is normally taken when it is uncertain who to give the ball to after an incident.

Centre line: The line that divides the field in half.

Centre pass: A pass that starts a half or following a goal. A player passes the ball to a team-mate at least one metre away from him or her. The term is also called a push back or pass back.

Defender: A player stationed in the defensive end of the field who tries to defend plays by the Attackers.

Dribble: Running or walking while controlling the ball with the stick. Stick-handling in Canadian terminology.

Goal-scoring circle (or circle or D): A D-shaped area in front of the goal. Also known as a striking circle or shooting circle. A goal can only be scored when the ball is in the circle and played by an attacker.

Flick or Scoop: When a player raises the ball into the air with the stick. In Indoor Hockey, a player is only allowed to flick the ball when within the Goal-scoring Circle and for a shot at goal.

Forward: A player positioned in the offensive end of the field who tries to score goals; also known as an attacker.

Free Push. When a player commits an offence outside the Goal-scoring circle, the other team is awarded a Free Push. It must be taken at least 3m from the opponent's Goal-scoring circle

Green card: The green card is issued by the referee for minor violations such as failing to keep a certain distance away on a free push, breaking down plays, etc. The player is suspended for 1 minute.

Hit: A hit is a swinging action where the stick makes direct contact with the ball. E.g. a long dragging motion along the floor or swinging directly at the ball from the air without a small sweeping motion.

Kicker: A protective piece of equipment worn by a goalkeeper that covers the front and side of the shoes and allows him or her to kick the ball.

Obstruction: An infraction called when players use their sticks or bodies to block other players from hitting the ball or when the goalkeeper lies on the ball.

Penalty corner: Awarded when a defender commits an intentional foul in their own half or an unintentional foul in their own circle. The penalty corner provides the attackers with a better scoring opportunity.

Penalty stroke: Similar to a penalty kick in soccer or penalty shot in ice hockey. The ball is placed 6.4 metres from the goal with only the goalkeeper defending. It is called when:

- The defending deliberately player fouls an attacking player attempting to score in the goal circle. Good examples are if defender hacks the attacker's stick or body checks the attacker (possible card too) or trips the attacker (possible card too)
- A defender commits an unintentional foul which prevents a goal. A good example is if the ball would have entered the goal but is stopped by the defender's foot.

Red card: The card issued by the referee, which ejects the offending player from the game. This occurs on intentional fouls, such as deliberate body contact to injure, or verbal abuse of the officials. The offending player is also normally suspended from the team's following game. The player may also get a red card for a repeated infraction after having received a yellow card earlier.

Self-pass: When a team is awarded the ball after a foul, the player may choose to make a self-pass which allows him/her to carry the ball without having to pass it. The ball must also be stationary before the self-pass is started and the action of carrying the ball must be two separate actions so that it is clear to everyone that a self-pass is being taken and where it commenced.

Tackle: When a player attempts to steal the ball from an opponent.

Yellow card: A card issued by the referee which suspends the offending player for at least two minutes or longer depending on the referee's judgement on the severity of the foul. The card is issued for intentional fouls, such as rough play, stick checks, body tackles, etc. A player may also receive the card for a repeated offence after having received a green card earlier.

Umpiring Signals

Umpires only indicate signals when necessary. For example, for some fouls like feet and raised balls, ball out of play, etc., players know what they have done so there is no need for a signal.

Timing

- **Start time:** turn towards the other umpire with one arm straight up in the air
- **Stop time:** turn towards the other umpire and cross fully-extended arms at the wrists above the head.
- **Two minutes of play remaining:** raise both hands straight up in the air with pointing index fingers
- **One minute of play remaining:** raise one hand straight up in the air with pointing index finger.

Ball out of play

- **Over the side-board:** indicate the direction with one arm raised horizontally. Ball must be taken 1m from the sideboard
- **Over the back-line** by an attacker and unintentionally by a defender. Umpire faces the centre of the pitch and extends both arms horizontally sideways at shoulder level.



Goal scored: point both arms horizontally towards the centre of the pitch.



Dangerous play: place one forearm diagonally across the chest

Misconduct and/or bad temper: stop play and make a calming movement by moving both hands slowly up and down, palms downward, in front of the body

Feet: slightly raise a leg and touch it near the foot or ankle with the hand



Raised ball: hold palms facing each other horizontally in front of the body, with one palm approximately 150 mm above the other



Obstruction: hold crossed forearms in front of the chest

Third party or shadow obstruction: alternately open and close crossed forearms in front of the chest (*similar to Obstruction*)



Stick obstruction (stick-checking): hold one arm out and downwards in front of the body half-way between vertical and horizontal; touch the forearm with the other hand



3 metres distance: extend one arm straight up in the air showing an open hand with all fingers extended.

Free Push: indicate the direction with one arm raised horizontally



Advantage: extend one arm high from the shoulder in the direction in which the benefiting team is playing. (*Similar to Free Push* but whistle is not blown). Umpire may also say something like 'play on'.

Penalty Corner: point both arms horizontally towards the goal



Penalty Stroke: point one arm at the penalty stroke mark and the other straight up in the air; this signal also indicates time stopped.



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