

# FIELD HOCKEY BROADCASTER'S TOOLKIT

Brought to you by the National Field Hockey Coaches Association and Pitch Session, a field hockey podcast.

## NCAA FIELD HOCKEY GAME FORMAT

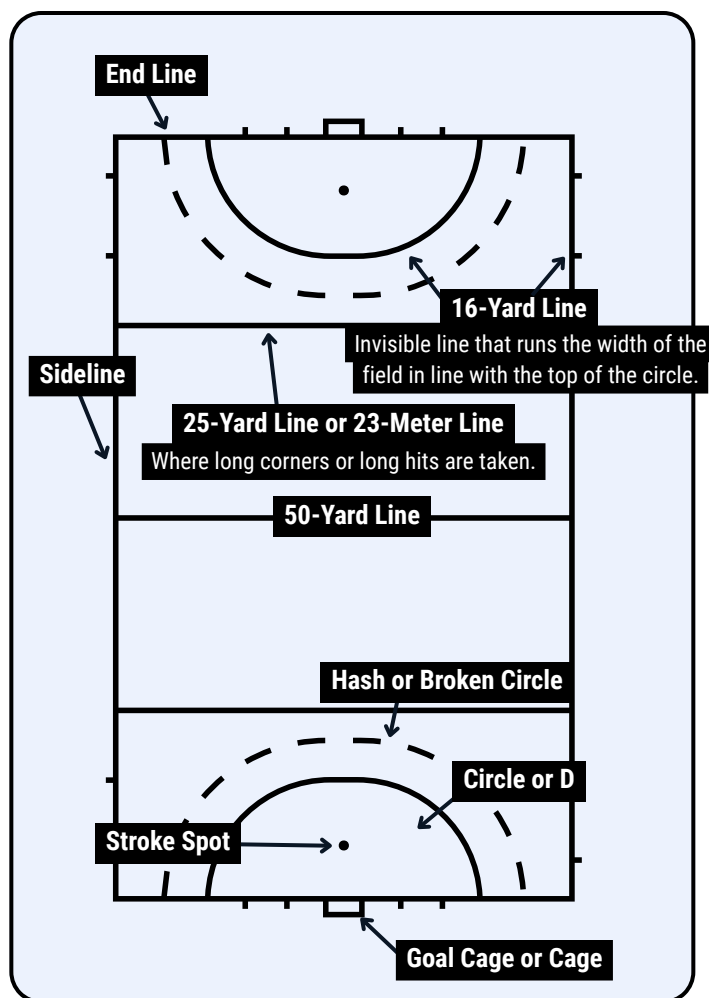
- Full contest = Four, 15-minute quarters.
- Two-minute break between quarters, with a ten-minute halftime.
- **NCAA Field Hockey matches do not end in ties.**
- If the game is tied after regulation, teams will play up to two, 7-on-7, ten-minute sudden-victory **overtimes**.
- If the game is still tied after two OT periods, the game will be decided by a **shootout**.

## FIELD OF PLAY

- “End lines” and “sidelines” set the boundaries.
- Players can only score within the scoring circle also called “the circle” or “the D” (NEVER “the crease”).
- If a free hit takes place between the 25-yard line and the end line, the attacking team cannot play the ball directly into the circle. They must move the ball five yards first.

## ON-FIELD PERSONNEL

- 11-on-11 (generally, 10 field players and 1 goalkeeper).
- Most teams play with:
  - 1 goalkeeper (rarely sub).
  - 3-4 defenders/back (sub less often).
  - 4 midfielders (sub more often).
  - 2-3 forwards/strikers (sub frequently).
- Rolling substitutions: players can sub throughout the game except during penalty corners. Time is stopped for a goalkeeper substitution.
- Something you may see: when little time is left and one team is down by one or two goals, teams may substitute the goalkeeper for an extra field player.



## EXTRA TIME

### Overtime

- Overtime is 7v7 (typically 6 field players and a goalkeeper).
- Same playing rules are applied.
- On penalty corners, a maximum of four defensive players can be in the goal cage. There is still no limit to the number of attacking players on the circle.
- Overtime is “sudden victory,” or “golden goal” — first goal wins and ends the game.

### TIMING AND PENALTY CORNERS (Don't be fooled by the horn!)

If time ever expires when the umpire calls a PC or during a PC, the quarter or game will not end until the Penalty Corner is completed.

Time will officially expire when the PC ends, which is when: 1) a goal is scored, 2) a free hit is awarded to the defense, 3) the ball goes out of bounds, 4) the ball crosses the broken circle.

If another Penalty Corner is called, the same criteria is applied and time continues.

### Shootouts (not strokes or PKs)

- In the case of no result after two OT periods, the game will be decided by a shootout.
- Five players from each team alternate playing one-on-one against the opposing team's GK (in rare cases, they may go against an opposing field player).
- Field players start on the 25-yard line and have eight (8) seconds to score.
- Goalkeepers start in the goal cage with their feet on the end line.
- Depending on fouls, results can be: goal, no goal, retake, or stroke. The umpires will signal the calls.
- If there is no decision after one round, another round of five will take place (same personnel), and continue until a team scores one more goal than the other.

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## PENALTY CORNERS (PC) EXPLAINED

- Players have 20 seconds to set up for a PC. Players from the defending team not involved must go to the 50-yard line.
- No one can enter the circle before the ball is in play, different penalties apply depending on who breaks early.

### The Attack - No limit on players.

- An **INSERTER** plays the ball in from the baseline to a **CASTLE** or **BATTERY**.
- The **BATTERY** is made up of a **STICKSTOPPER**, **HITTER**, or **FLICKER** at the top circle.
- **DEFLECTORS** line the circle and run in to scoring positions
- The arrangement of PC positions is variable and specialized to each team.
- A **HITTER** will shoot from the top of the circle. If they shoot using a backswing, the ball must stay below 18" (the height of the backboard) on the goal cage.
- Alternatively a **DRAG FLICKER** or **FLICKER** will shoot from the top of the circle with no backswing, there are no height restrictions with this type of shot – aside from dangerous play.
- This is where teams showcase their creativity and skill – some PCs will just be a straight shot while others will have lots of planned movement, passes, or deflections to trick the defense.

### The Defense - Maximum five players in goal.

- Personnel usually consists of four field players and a goalkeeper.
- Defensive units will all wear masks, and may wear gloves or knee guards for additional protection.
- When the ball is inserted, a **FLYER** rushes to the top of the circle to anticipate and disrupt the initial shot.
- **TRAILS** or **COVERS** hold in the middle distance to intercept passes and head off deflectors.
- **GOALKEEPERS** may block or deflect shots on goal either standing up or lying down, depending on the type of shot.
- **POST** players stay with the goalkeeper to block any uncovered or weak areas.
- Teams will use different formations depending on what they think the other team will do.
- Teams will also have a plan of how to outlet the ball if a PC is unsuccessful – they're looking for a quick counterattack.

## 11 THINGS THAT SET FIELD HOCKEY APART

<b>Scoring Only Inside the Circle</b> Goals must be scored from within the shooting circle. A shot that goes into the goal from outside the circle only counts if it is touched by an attacking player inside the D. You may see a GK allow the ball go into the goal if they believe no attacker has touched it.	<b>One-Sided Sticks</b> The flat side is the only legal playing surface. Using the rounded side of the stick is a foul and turnover – it will happen a few times throughout a game.	<b>No Offside Rule</b> Unlike soccer or ice hockey, field hockey does not have an offside rule, making the game much more end-to-end and fluid.
<b>"Free Hits"</b> Not throw-ins or free kicks, but "free hits." Players restart play quickly with a dribble or pass to restart. On ALL free hits, the opposing team must be 5 yards away or, if they are close, make no attempt to play the ball.	<b>Isn't it a Push BACK?</b> When play begins at the start of each quarter or overtime period, it's call the "push back," BUT in the modern game, many teams will start by dribbling forward or throwing an aerial pass.	<b>Penalty Corners are Huge.</b> These organized scoring chances are important elements of the game. Attackers line the edge of the circle and a limited defense starts in the cage. Teams practice PCs extensively and most players have a specialty penalty-corner skill or position.
<b>Advantage</b> Not every foul initiates a free hit (play continues without a whistle), "advantage" keeps the game exciting and dynamic. Umpires will attempt to keep the flow of the game by only blowing their whistle when there is a clear disadvantage due to a foul.	<b>Line is IN</b> The ball must pass completely over the line to be out-of-bounds. The same goes for goals – the ball must pass completely over the goal line to be a goal. Players' bodies can exit the field.	<b>Substitutions On the Fly</b> Unlimited and rolling substitutions (like ice hockey or lacrosse). Expect constant movement on and off the field, especially during hot early-season games.
<b>Not PKs, STROKES.</b> When the defense commits an intentional foul in the circle or fouls to prevent a goal, an attacker will step up to take a shot against the GK. The ball is placed on the stroke spot, and a shot is taken after the umpire blows their whistle. The attacker may not use any backswing in their attempt to score.	<b>Cards (with Consequences)</b> Unlike soccer, all field hockey cards trigger suspensions for players – suspended players must sit in a designated area and their team plays down.	<b>▲ Green = 2 Minutes</b> (Common, usually a player is too close on a free hit or poor tackling.) <b>■ Yellow = 5-10 Minutes</b> (Less common and reserved for dangerous play or intentional fouls.) <b>● Red = Ejection, team plays down.</b> (Rare, reserved for serious circumstances.)

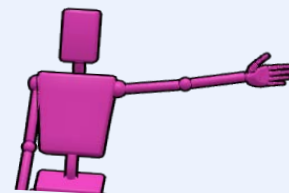
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## UMPIRING QUICK REFERENCE

Two umpires split the field — each umpire is responsible for half the field and one circle, while they tend to only make calls on “their end” they talk to each other throughout the game. The teams switch sides at halftime. (Also, similar to baseball, **they're umpires — not referees.**)

**The Big Rule:** Field players must not stop, kick, propel, pick up, or carry the ball with any part of their body. It is not always a foul if the ball hits the foot, hand or body of a field player. The player only commits an offense if they gain an advantage or if they position themselves with the intention of stopping the ball in this way.

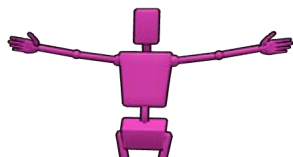


### FREE HIT / ADVANTAGE

You will see this signal a lot — it stands for many things: showing advantage, sideline free hit, or awarding a free hit without showing which foul.

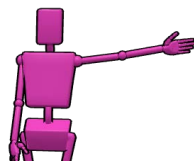
Hand direction indicates which team gets possession.

## Boundary Signals



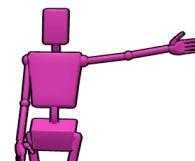
### 16-YARD HIT

Ball was played over the end line by the attacking team.  
Taken by defending team 16-yards up from where the ball went out.



### LONG CORNER

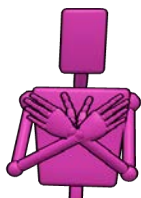
Ball was played unintentionally over the end line by the defending team.  
Taken by the attacking team on the 25-yard line, up from where the ball went out. (Teams cannot play the ball directly into the circle).



### SIDE IN

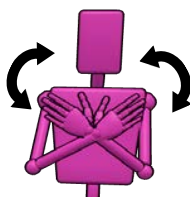
Ball was played over the sideline, other team brings the ball back in play from where the ball went out.

## Foul Signals



### OBSTRUCTION

A player used their body to block another player from playing the ball.



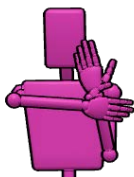
### THIRD PARTY

A player ran between two players causing an obstruction.



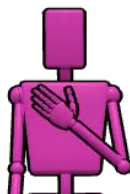
### STICK OBSTRUCTION

A player impeded another players stick to keep them from playing the ball.



### BACK STICK

The ball is played on the rounded side of a player's stick.



### ANGER

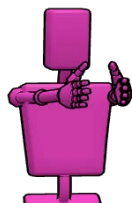
The ball is lifted dangerously or other dangerous play occurs.



### FOOT

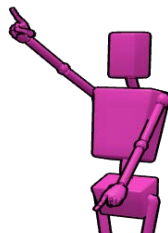
The ball hits a player's foot or another part of their body.

## Outcome Signals



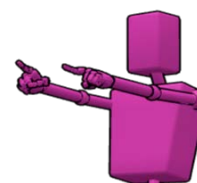
### PENALTY CORNER

The defending team has committed a foul inside of the circle.  
(The umpire will point to the goal.)



### PENALTY STROKE

The defending team has committed an intentional foul in the circle or commits a foul preventing a goal.



### GOAL

Look out. Someone scored.  
(The umpire will point back to the 50-yard line.)