

PMHHA UMPIRE'S COACHING TIPS

INTRODUCTION

Umpiring Hockey is more than just the rules of Hockey. This seminar is designed in 3 sections; first as an introduction to the more “practical” side of being an umpire and secondly to discuss the 3 key rules of hockey; and finally a look over the new 2015 rules.

Why do we umpire? What makes a good Umpire? etc

- To officiate a match,
- Fitness,
- Travel,
- Friendships,
- Knowledge of the rules,
- On-field presence,
- Personality types,
- Good communicator, etc

PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF UMPIRING

THE 3 BASIC PRACTICAL ELEMENTS OF UMPIRING

Umpires are on the field primarily to **make a decision**; right or wrong but a decision nonetheless. To do this, umpires need to understand the **appropriate use of their whistle**, voice and signals, and consider their **positioning and proximity to the play**.

If an umpire can master these 3 basic elements, then they are in a better situation to “sell” their decision to the players; whether this decision is perceived as right or wrong by the players, coaches or spectators.

ELEMENT 1 – MAKE A DECISION

For beginner and less advanced umpires the key catchphrase here is “see it – blow it”. Don’t um and ahh, don’t hesitate, don’t play advantage, and don’t look for second or third breaches or more serious breaches. See the first offence and blow your whistle to make a decision!

ELEMENT 2 – APPROPRIATE USE OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- Whistles, signals, voice and eventually cards!
- The sound your whistle makes must be loud enough for not only the players nearby to hear, but all the players on the field as well as the players / coaches in the dug outs and the spectators on the side lines.
- Long, loud, hard whistle tone should be saved for the more serious infringements of the rules; poor tackling and severe / deliberate stick obstructions and “hacks”, physical play, “BIG” decisions such as penalty corners, penalty strokes and goals.
- Short, loud, hard whistles for the less serious breaches. This should be your “standard” whistle tone for most decisions. Short and Sharp!
- Signals must be clear and as per the rule book. All signals for the attackers (i.e. the team attacking “your” goals) MUST be made with your right hand. Conversely, all decisions to the defenders or the team running towards the other umpires goals MUST be made with your left hand.
- Don’t be scared to talk to your players. Let them know what you want to happen without using your whistle, “Blue team, one step back for the 5 meters” etc. “Red team, free hit is back beyond the 23m area” etc etc

ELEMENT 3 – POSITIONING

Good positioning is the key to being able to;

- positively “sell” your decisions to the players,
- see the ball and the play on the field,
- see EVERY player on the field,
- boosting your confidence on the field and among the players, and
- readily anticipate the next play that teams may make.

Once you master your positioning, it allows you to concentrate solely on the rules of the game and game management. The basic positioning for any umpire should be a reverse “J” or hockey stick type shape along their side of the field; from approximately the half-way line to their 23m line umpires should be approx. 5m infield. Once past the 23m line, umpires should start to head towards the near side goal post.

When running this pattern, umpires should be ahead of the play and should remember the phrase “the ball, the umpire, the goals”. 95% of all umpires positioning should be in this pattern – “the ball, the umpire, and the goals”. Alternatively you may wish to remember that the ball should always be on your left or over your left shoulder.

SOME ADVANCED “TIP’S” FOR CONTROLLING THE MATCH

Generally speaking, if the direction of the play is coming towards you as the umpire, then you should be the lead umpire, or the primary umpire making the decisions. When the play is moving away from you, your role becomes more of a support umpire to your colleague.

ALL decisions in your circle ARE ONLY MADE BY YOU...!!! The other umpire has no authority or control in “your” circle (this doesn’t prevent them from helping you and you helping them however).

ALL decisions along your sideline ARE ONLY MADE BY YOU...!!! The other umpire has no authority or control along “your” sideline (this doesn’t prevent them from helping you and you helping them however).

Don’t react to on-field incidents...!!! Be pro-active to avoid them...!!! Often if a player “blows up” at you as an umpire, it is because of a few earlier decisions that you could have probably handled better and sold more positively...

As an example; Player 1 has been “hacked” about 4 or 5 times in the last few plays and you have done nothing about it apart from playing advantage. Player 1 then loses his / her cool... Perhaps if you were a little more “pro-active” in dealing with the hacks that this player was on the receiving end of, then they may not have lost their cool at you.

Don’t engage in prolonged conversations with the players over a decision. A quick “it was for the foot, stick obstruction, dangerous ball etc” will suffice if a player seeks clarification.

Set your standards early in each half – for the first 5 – 7 minutes, forget advantage...!!! Let the game flow for the next 25 minutes and then reinforce your standards in the last 5 – 7 mins of a match if need be.

Most importantly; treat the players with respect, have fun and enjoy your umpiring. There is a rewarding career out there for hockey umpires at local state, national and international levels.

THE 3 BASIC RULES OF HOCKEY

Whilst hockey is indeed a fairly technical game, there are 3 simple rules that beginner and local umpires should really concentrate on; Feet, Danger and Obstruction.

FEET

It is NOT always an offence if the ball hits the foot of a player – even the foot of a defender in the circle is not necessarily reason to award a penalty. Generally speaking if there are other players in close proximity then yes a breach has occurred. If there are no players nearby and the player has not deliberately stopped the ball with their feet nor have they “trapped” the ball with their foot then no breach has occurred. The premise of the advantage clause in the rules is ***that for any breach to occur, the other team must be disadvantaged in some way.***

This interpretation can also be freely applied to the back of the stick rule as well.

DANGER

Danger does not simply refer to a ball that is lifted off the ground. Danger may occur in many ways;

- wild swinging sticks,
- shoulder charges and physical play,
- playing the ball whilst laying on the ground (only in some instances),
- deliberately running into players at free hits (the old manufactured offence – this is now obstruction or moving bodily into an opponent), and
- the list may go on. Think of your own examples that you may think are dangerous.

You as an umpire have a duty of care to “look after” the players on the field by making the game as safe as possible – the Danger Clause is your chance to do so.

Lifted balls v Danger

FORGET LIFTED – THINK DANGER...!!!

Even though the rules state that the ball may NOT intentionally be lifted from a hit, it invariably is lifted to some degree. Of course the overhead or aerial ball is allowed in the game! Some considerations when the ball is lifted off the pitch are:

- A ball is dangerous if it causes legitimate evasive action,
- The height and speed of the ball should also be considered in this decision,
- A low height ball (shin pad height) travelling at high speed may be considered dangerous yet a slow moving ball at head height may not be considered dangerous; the converse may also be true...!!!

The overriding consideration in the dangerous (high ball) debate should be are the players skilled enough to SAFELY control the ball at the height that it has travelled. Is a C Grade player just as capable of controlling a ball off the ground as what a top level local A Grade player is...???

OBSTRUCTIONS

Yes it still exists...!!!

- A player obstructs by turning / moving bodily into another player – including running directly into another player,
- A player obstructs by turning in front of a player that was about to make a legitimate tackle or attempt at a legitimate tackle – i.e. they must be in a position to make a tackle, their intention must be to make a tackle and their timing of the tackle must be spot on.

Obstructions may also occur by;

- players being “pushed” off the ball (bodily obstructions)
- a player being interfered with – their sticks hooked, arm / leg grabbed or hooked,
- their stick being hooked or interfered with from another stick (hack / stick obstructions), and
- the ball being shielded by a stick (sometimes a tricky one to officiate on)

OTHER “STICKY” RULES

Aerial Balls – The ‘Overhead’

- The intended receiver (or player under the falling ball) has the right to the ball... The opposition must let the intended receiver receive the ball and get it on the ground and under control! That is they must stay outside of 5m from the intended receiver until this has occurred.
- Ball into 2 or more players should be penalised before it drops into the group. The free hit goes the team that DID NOT raise the ball via the overhead.
- Ball bounces after a missed aerial trap – this scenario should be judged on the danger aspects alone and not necessarily on the “aerial ball” interpretations.

Stick above Shoulders

- Players may play the ball with their sticks when the ball is above shoulder height.
- Danger is the overriding aspect in the interpretation of this rule along with the Aerial Ball interpretation.

First Shot at Goal on PC V Dangerous

- If the defender is within 5m of the attacker and the ball strikes the defender **BELOW** the knee, a PC shall be awarded on the proviso that the ball was travelling towards the goals had it not hit the defender.
- If the defender is within 5m of the attacker and the ball strikes the defender **ABOVE** the knee then a free hit shall be awarded to the defence for danger
- In general terms;
 - all other high flicks are OK at a PC, and
 - if the flick would have missed the goals, the play should be judged on the danger aspects alone and not necessarily the height issues.

High Shots at Goals in General Play

- Often controversial...!!! If a defender has placed themselves in the line of the shot then it is them who have created the dangerous play. This action often results in a PC or PS if it hits the body of the defender,
- If players are in the line of the shot, within 5m of the striker and the ball hits the defender high on the body (above knees) then you **MAY** consider the danger rule and award a free hit to the defence,
- If a ball is raised at the goals and it needs to go through 3 or 4 players to get there, who all then take legitimate evasive action, then you should consider the danger rule and the awarding of a possible free hit to the defence.

NEW 2015 FIH RULES

“LONG” CORNER’S

- Play is now restarted on the attacking 23m line, in-line with where the ball crossed the back-line when played unintentionally over the back-line by the defence - A “reverse” 15m restart.
- The ball should be played on the 23m line. The 23m line is considered inside the attacking 23m area and therefore the 5m and not directly into the circle rules apply,

FREE HITS WITHIN 5M OF THE ATTACKING CIRCLE

- The free hit is taken where the infringement occurred. The ball MUST travel 5m or be touched by a defender prior to it entering the circle.
- Defenders in the circle should still be 5m away from the hit, though if they are not “set” and not influencing play, there is no need to award a Penalty Corner. If a defender is already within the 5m and inside their circle, they are allowed to “shadow” the ball around the circle. They can only play at it once it has gone 5m or been touched. Players are not allowed to come from out-side 5m away and set-up within the 5m. Common sense should prevail...

STICKS ABOVE SHOULDERS

- DANGER – This is not an open licence for tennis smash style hits. Players can’t do this with their sticks below their shoulders so why allow it above their shoulders...???
- The Aerial Ball rules still apply; it is just that players can now trap the ball above their shoulders
- Think Danger, initial receiver, 5m rule, DANGER
- Remember that the initial receiver may not be the player you expect as players can now trap above their shoulders in the middle of the flight path...

OTHER NEW RULES

Mostly technical – metal face masks, length of stick etc

VIDEO FILES OF HOCKEY DECISIONS

www.dartfish.tv/fih

or find appropriate one from you tube or other sources

DISCUSSION TIME – OPEN FLOOR

HOCKEY UMPIRES CAREER PATHS

- Local “Badge” – Hockey Ed Community Umpire
- CvC COD Programme – Hockey Ed Community Umpire
- Underage HNSW State Championships 13’s and 15’s – Hockey Ed Community Umpire
- Invite to a HA Under 13’s & 15’s National Championships – Hockey Ed Level 1
- Invite to overage HNSW State Championships (Under 18’s and Opens) – Hockey Ed Level 1 or 2
- HNSW Masters Championships – Hockey Ed Level 1or 2
- Invite to HA Under 18’s National Championships – Hockey Ed Level 2
- Invite to HA Under 21’s National Championships – Hockey Ed Level 2 or Australian Umpires
- Invite to HA Australian Hockey League – Hockey Ed Level 2 or Australian Umpire
- Invite to HA Australian Country Championships – Hockey Ed Level 2
- Invite to HA Australian Over 35’s National Championships – Hockey Ed Level 2
- Invite to HA Australian Masters National Championships – Hockey Ed Level 1 or 2