



Advice for Umpires

This summary is aimed at helping individuals understand their responsibilities as an umpire when getting back on a hockey pitch safely. This is an extract of the full England Hockey Getting Back on the Pitch – Step 4 Guidance, which is available [here](#). We recommend reading the full guidance if you have wider responsibilities or would like to gain a greater understanding of the requirements and measures in place.

Introduction

England Hockey is delighted to be able to reintroduce Recreational Hockey in a cautious and methodical manner, based on the best available evidence to optimise participant and community safety. A full overview and detail on the restrictions being put in place for the safety of all is available [here](#).

In order to align to England Hockey's overarching "Return to Play" considerations, the below is intended to offer support to individuals undertaking umpiring opportunities within the game, whilst keeping within the FIH Rules of Hockey and the England Hockey Code of Ethics and Behaviour.

At England Hockey we are determined that everyone is able to enjoy hockey in the safest way possible. The changes to the Code of Behaviour are there to ensure the safety of umpires and to support umpires educating players about the appropriate behaviours of the sport. We hope that these help build confidence in the umpiring community with the planned changes.

In appointed umpiring spheres (HUA and/or pool umpires) some changes in practice may need to be made either on a systematic or individual basis to adapt to the needs of umpires. Encouraging more local approaches to appointments may well be necessary for the foreseeable future – even if umpires or officials are required to see the same clubs more often than normal.

Pre-Match protocols

Ensure that you have visited the England Hockey website to complete the Participation Agreement prior to leaving home. This can be found [here](#).

Be aware that the club house / changing facilities at the venue you are umpiring at may have restrictions and one-way systems to help minimise the likelihood of transfer of COVID-19.

We would recommend that you arrive at the venue changed, ready to umpire and maintain your Social Distancing during your Pre-Match Chat.

If indoor facilities are available, ensure you wash or sanitise your hands at your earliest opportunity when arriving on site and do this regularly throughout your time at the venue.

Kit taken pitch side should be kept to a minimum and left within designated areas by the pitch provider.

If a coin toss is required (e.g. starting a game, starting shootouts, etc) then the coin should be tossed by one umpire with a team captain/representative to call accordingly. Also take this opportunity to remind captains of the Participant Agreement all have signed for hockey to return safely.

During Game:

Social distancing during breaks in play or Half Time

To minimise the risk of transfer of COVID-19 during the game, if the clock is stopped for treating injuries, retrieving of ball from outside of the playing area, etc, then all individuals are to resume Social Distancing measures until the game can recommence.

Natural breaks in play (such as at Penalty Corners) do occur but umpires are encouraged to restart play promptly.

Umpiring Tip

Whilst players will be educated on this, umpires are reminded to use their voice and low-level management skills for the safety of yourself and the players in the first instance and only to resort to stricter levels of management if absolutely required.

Player Spitting & Nose Blowing

Spitting or nose blowing (where there is no handkerchief or tissue is used) is a practice that unfortunately occurs in our sport and must stop as it poses a significant risk to other participants.

New Guidance for the 2020/21 Season

A 2-minute suspension (Green Card) to be issued to any player or participant caught spitting or nose blowing without a handkerchief or tissue. These areas should be cleaned by the offending player before play can continue.

Repeat offenders (i.e. player(s) offending more than once) subject to further personal penalties as prescribed in section 14 of the 2019 FIH Rules of Hockey.

Consistent repeat offenders will be subject to due process under the England Hockey Code of Ethics and Behaviour, Red Card, MMO and/or Disrepute policies.

Umpiring Tip

Apply this rule consistently to all participants. Safety is always a key consideration. Ensure players and team management are aware of new rule changes before starting a match. Proactive and preventative education to players is key in the enforcement of this guidance and ensure this has been covered within your Pre-Match conversation with colleagues and captains.

Suspended Players

It is probable that in some cases technical benches, suspension seating (or similar) may not be in use. Accordingly, in these situations, suspended players should be allowed to serve their suspension in their respective team dugouts, in line with Social Distancing guidelines. If there are no dugouts present, then aligning suspended players to the 23m line would be advisable. All other existing suspension rules are to apply.

Umpiring Tip

Agree what to do in your pre-match chat so you are clear when informing captains and players during the game.

Interaction between Players and Officials

Whilst not a frequent occurrence within our game, situations do occur in matches where players surround or crowd umpires. Due to the importance of safety in these cases, umpires are advised to follow guidelines from the FIH to avoid crowding and offending players are to be given a 2 minute (Green Card) temporary suspension.

Players using Bad language towards, shouting towards or any other activity that is against the EH Code of Ethics and Behaviour towards an umpire will be liable to reporting and due process through the appropriate England Hockey Red Card / MMO / Disrepute process.

Umpiring Tip

Be proactive in your management and utilise your range of “low level” management by varying your body language, whistle tone and voice giving decisions during the game. If it is clear that players are going to approach, advise them that you will only speak to one of them and to maintain social distancing.

Also, try to avoid touching the ball or any other equipment with your hands to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Post-Match:

Players are being encouraged to say thank you by tapping their sticks whilst maintaining social distancing measures. For umpires, using gestures such as a thumb up or waving to say thank you would be appropriate.

Any match paperwork that is required to be completed should be done using your own pen.

Hospitality at clubs will vary due to the government guidelines concerning the use of indoor facilities, however, we would recommend you wash or sanitise your hands as soon as practical. Also, be aware that changing facilities may not be available.

Ensure any kit or equipment you have used is either cleaned properly when you return home or left for a minimum of 72 hours in line with government advice.

For more advice or guidance on the above, please visit hockeyhub.englandhockey.co.uk or contact David Elworthy (Officiating Relationship Manager – England Hockey) david.elworthy@englandhockeyco.uk.