

UMPIRES

HOW AND WHY WE CAN ALL ACHIEVE MORE

by
Jane Nockolds (EHA Umpire Development Manager)

Ongoing areas of concern

1. The use of the **stick**. There is no edge! There is a front-side and a back-side. Let the players play, be aware of danger, but don't imagine things.... interpret the Rule correctly - as it is intended.
2. **Obstruction on the goalkeeper** (especially during a penalty corner). More evident/practised in the higher levels of the game. Will more flexible (less traditional) positioning on the part of the umpires, improve recognition and increase the penalising of this offence?
3. **Breaking down play**. It is not exclusive to the attacking 23 metres area. The players repeatedly tell us that the majority of umpires fail to consider/recognise this very destructive element of the game, particularly in the central areas of the pitch. Umpires should be aware of it in all areas and penalise consistently in all areas. It is **not** exclusive to the 23 metres area.
4. **Bad language**. There are a number of umpires who turn a 'deaf ear' (unless it is a blatant outburst directed at the umpire) and there are a number who issue a warning or occasionally, a temporary suspension). The players want and deserve a more consistent approach. Umpires need to give clearer messages.....then and only then will the players (majority of) understand and learn.
5. **Raised ball**. Legitimately the players accuse us of inconsistency, not only from game to game, but also incredulously from half to half. The main area of concern is in **open play** with the ball travelling fast across the pitch, into the circle at about 15+ centimetres above the ground. This pass should be judged **only** on danger or potential danger.

Too many umpires blow the whistle purely because the ball was above the ground; this is completely wrong. It should be judged no differently to any other pass on the field (i.e. a pass that does not enter the circle).
6. **Feet**. The Rule has not changed but the interpretation **must**. Look at the Rules Book, particularly the Preface! This change will require huge effort and tolerance on behalf of us all ... umpires, coaches and players. Let 1999 be the year that we seriously address this issue and make the game a faster **flowing** and less interrupted affair!



THE FOOT RULE.....

Don't be stubborn, it's time to make the change!

The **ONLY** word to consider is **DISADVANTAGE**.

Distance is a factor, skill being destroyed or cancelled be it accidentally or intentionally is a factor and the spirit of the game must feature!

Technical Skills - How good are you?

It's widely acknowledged that the most important areas of umpiring are:

- To have a thorough knowledge of the current **Rules** of hockey.
- To remember that the **spirit** of the Rule and **common sense** should govern your interpretation of any Rule.
- To **support and encourage** skilful play.
- To deal **promptly and firmly** with foul play.
- To allow the **maximum** of advantage to assist a flowing open game.
- To **establish control** and use all the available penalties effectively.

Co-operation and support (refer to the pitch diagrams below)

The speed of the modern game and the tactics of the players mean that umpires need to work very much more as a **team** to ensure that the game is umpired to a high standard.

There is no such thing as a 'disengaged umpire'. Both umpires need to be totally focused for the whole match. **Co-operation** and **positioning** are very important aspects of teamwork.

In open play, the umpire should move well over the centre line to assist his/her colleague. The removal of 'offside' means that the circles often get crowded and this makes it more

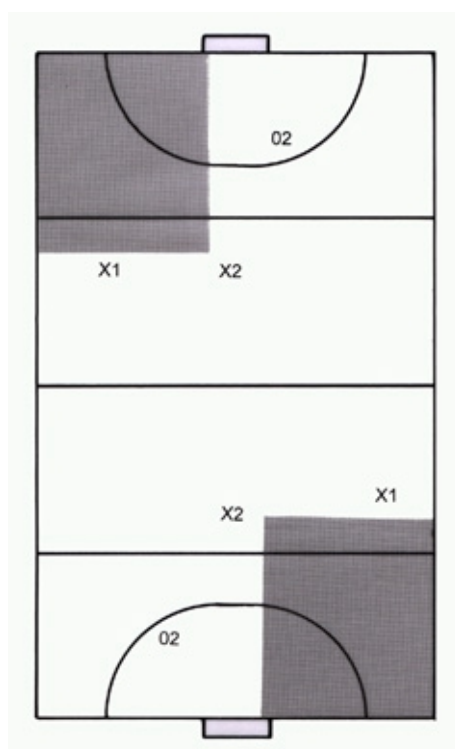
difficult for the umpire controlling the attack to see into the shaded area. Umpire **XI** is well positioned to see and essentially, **assist**.

When supporting a penalty corner, position **X2** is recommended and will provide the umpire with a better view of obstruction down the line of the ball (i.e. on the goalkeeper?). In addition, it will allow him/her to see whether a shot was going inside or outside the post. It is essential that quality advice such as this is available if sought.

Positioning (refer to the pitch diagrams below)

When there is a crowded circle, the traditional position (close to the near side post) will not always give the umpire the best view. Throughout hockey (nationally and internationally) we now recommend that umpires adopt a more **flexible** approach, where the **position of the players is the factor that dictates the position of the umpire**.

Very often, especially at penalty corners, being somewhere around **02** will provide a much better view of the play and if the umpire **reads the game** well, he/she will not get in the way of the players.



More mistakes are made in the shaded areas (in the corners of the pitch and the far side of the circles) than in any other area of the pitch. These mistakes are due to poor vision and lack of co-operation.

It is very common (because of tradition), when an attack develops, for the umpire to quickly go towards the back-line even though the game is still being played outside the circle or close to the 23 metres line. This means that an umpire is often trying to make decisions looking back through bodies and legs and is simply too far away to make good

decisions. When the attack develops, try not to move ahead (in front of play) every time. Look at the position of the players and the potential of play; read the game..... very often the better view will be from behind the play as opposed to in front of it. We recommend that you experiment with a wider position and then follow (move with) the play as it develops. (Refer to umpire 01 in diagram below).



Less tradition...more flexibility...why not?

Positioning is a very personal part of your umpiring and it is inevitable that from time to time you will get advice from umpire coaches and umpire managers.

**DO NOT BE AFRAID TO EXPERIMENT TO FIND OUT
WHAT WORKS FOR YOU.**

This is a period of change.

The removal of offside has created new opportunities for umpires to take up new positions which give better vision, which in turn, will provide the game with better quality decisions.