

**Rules of hockey in Scotland for the  
2019-2020 Season.**

The FIH published the new [Rules of Outdoor Hockey in December 2018](#)

These took effect internationally from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019, but we communicated on 15th January 2019, [\(click here\)](#) to inform everyone we chose to implement the changes during the 2019-2020 season.

Scottish Hockey now confirms the implementation of all rule changes with the exception of one.

The following major changes will be implemented at all levels of the sport from the start of the 2019/2020 season:

- **Removal of Goalkeeping privileges for substitute field player**

The option for teams to play with a field player with goalkeeping privileges has been removed. Teams have now two options: they either play with a goalkeeper who wears full protective equipment comprising at least headgear, leg guards and kickers and who is also permitted to wear goalkeeping hand protectors and other protective equipment, or they play with only field players. Any change between these options should be treated as a substitution. It is hoped that this experimental rule will enhance safety as field players will no longer have goalkeeping privileges so will not be entitled to use their body to stop shots at goal and it also enhances the promotion of the sport by eliminating the issue of outfield players wearing other shirts to indicate goalkeeping privileges.

- **Defending free hits within 5 meters of the circle**

An explanation for how to treat free hits for the attacker close to the circle has been changed in Rules 13.2.f. It has now been made clear that players other than the attacker taking the free hit must be at least five meters away, including when they are in their circle. If the attacker however chooses to take the free hit immediately, then defenders who are inside the circle and within five meters from the ball may shadow around the inside of the circle as per the explanation of the rule before 2019. This has the advantage of not preventing the quickly taken free hit which has been widely welcomed by coaches and players, whilst maintaining the 5m rule used everywhere else on the pitch to provide space for the free hit taker.

- **Free hits awarded inside the defensive circle**

As in Indoor Hockey a defender may now take a free hit awarded in the circle anywhere inside

the circle or up to 15 meters from the back-line in line with the location of the offence, parallel to the side-line.

- **Completion of a penalty corner**

Rule 13.6 that described the completion of a penalty corner for substitution purposes and for a penalty corner at the end of a period, has been deleted. The option that a penalty corner is completed when the ball travels outside the circle for the second time, no longer exists.

Scottish Hockey strives to apply a consistent set of rules throughout all levels of the sport, however, the proposed change to 15-minute quarters has caused considerable concern.

- **Introduction of the match format of four quarters**

Scottish Hockey's Management Committee **agreed to apply 17.5 minute quarters (without the clock stopping at Penalty Corners) to Premiership (Men and Women) only** for season 2019-2020. In this format, there are 2 minutes break between quarters 1 and 2, 3 and 4 with a 5 minute half time. Also a suspended player, whose suspension has completed, may not resume play until a penalty corner has been completed or another penalty corner is awarded.

All remaining leagues will continue to be played as halves, 2 x 35 minutes (or shorter formats in the junior game as appropriate). The implementation of quarters in other leagues will be considered during the 2019/2020 season while gathering evidence from participating teams.

Support is available online for players, coaches, umpires and officials who wish to learn more about these rule implementations on [Hockey Hub](#). This will be shared with District Committees, Clubs and Umpires to enhance the learning of their members ahead of the new season. Due to the variation in rules for the domestic game, Hockey Hub will host both versions of the rules Scottish Hockey will play during the 2019/2020 season.

As previously stated, there are a number of changes to the Outdoor Rules. These are all marked with a vertical line in the margin of the [Rule Book](#).

The other key rule changes are summarised below, but players, coaches, umpires and officials are encouraged to read the full text of the new rules rather than relying on this document.

## **Other key rule changes**

6 – Wording change around the start and re-start of the match to reflect the change to quarters in the rule book.

9.12 – Very minor clarification of third party or shadow obstruction during a penalty corner on defenders (and goalkeeper).

11.6 – Wording added to this rule to show that umpires blow the whistle for the start / end of each quarter and for the stopping / re-starting of time around a Penalty Corner.

12.4 – Clarification added to the awarding of a Penalty Stroke if the ball hits a piece of equipment lying in the circle and a probable goal is prevented, a penalty stroke may be awarded.

13.3g – Clarification on defending team's responsibilities when defending a Penalty Corner when playing with no Goalkeeper.

13.5 – Removal of previous rule of when a Penalty Corner is finished if time has already lapsed and clarification that if play during a Penalty Corner is stopped because of an injury or for any other reason during the taking of a penalty corner at the end of a quarter or half and a bully would otherwise be awarded, the penalty corner must be taken again.

13.6e – change to current rule, now if an attacker enters the circle at a Penalty Corner before permitted, the player taking the push or hit from the backline is required to go beyond the centre-line and the Penalty Corner is taken again.

13.7e – if a team has chosen to play with eleven outfield players and no goalkeeper, if they concede a Penalty Stroke then this explains what protective equipment is permitted for the defender.