



## Report to Indoor Umpires on feedback from the initial use of the 2008 Indoor Experimental Rules

The following report is intended to assist Indoor Umpires officiating the 2008 Indoor season under the new experimental rules.

The report is submitted by Steve Horgan, the 2008 USA Field Hockey / FIH Indoor Rules Interpreter.

FIH Indoor Rules and the 2008 experimental rule questions should be directed to the umpire manager appointed to the event you are working. All other questions can be directed to [umpire@usafielddhockey.com](mailto:umpire@usafielddhockey.com).

This report is not intended to pass judgment on whether or not the World Hockey Rules board should implement these rules. It is intended to give USA Field Hockey members some guidance after the first weekend of trials at various tournaments. There are a number of Qualifying Tournaments in the next few months.

### **Trial Rule: One Player Must Always be Outside their Defensive Half of the Pitch**

**Rule:** Throughout a match, at least one player of each team must be outside the half of the pitch their team is defending.

**Penalty:** A penalty corner is awarded against the defending team.

**Advice:** A penalty should not be awarded if the player who would otherwise be or is trying to move outside their defensive half of the pitch is not interfering with or influencing play.

A team does not have to “nominate” a specific player for this role; it can be any player at any particular time.

The requirement also applies to defending a penalty corner or if a player is suspended (i.e. a team defends a penalty corner or plays the match with one less player than would otherwise be the case).

This trial rule was a huge adjustment to everyone. Many had trouble recognizing that a foul had occurred. Players were not used to being restrained in any way on the pitch. Some U16 and U19 coaches actually “Red Lined” a player who was the designated one-up player for that team. Others and most of the NAPL teams used different players depending on the defensive strategy. For the most part, umpires did a great job of trying to preventively inform a player that they were the last player at the halfway line. When players forgot or just disregarded the rule, penalty corners

were awarded. It only took one or two mistakes on this one and teams figured out that giving up a PC for this can be detrimental to their team.

This trial rule required much more communication between the umpires. They are not trained to call a PC as the trail Umpire. Some tried to give a help signal to their partner, some used a louder whistle getting the attention of their partner and then signaling. At the NAPL, umpires tried to signal to their partner by using the same signal that basketball uses for a back court violation (flipping the right hand back and forth. At the time there had been no guidance from the FIH Umpiring Committee on this. It seemed to work well. This rule was also sometimes confusing to umpires because most of the times they look for the last defender back.

Some players and coaches felt that the rule was to allow them to only play with four defenders at all times, even if they had a suspended player. The rule states quite clearly that “throughout the match” a team must have a player outside their defending half. So for the future, quite simply it is for the whole game no matter what happens.

At the NAPL, umpires were instructed to allow the one-up player to play at full speed until they hit the halfway line. At that point they must back off and if their momentum took them over the line, there was not foul unless they got involved in the play. They must also attempt to get back. Caution was also needed for the player who “drifted” across the halfway line. Even though they may not be directly involved with the play, they could very easily influence the play.

Some information now back from the FIH Rules Board:

1. The one-up player cannot reach back and interfere with the play.
2. Caution must be used by umpires when a player’s momentum takes them over the halfway line.

### **Trial Rule: Attacking Free Pushes must not be Played Directly into the Circle**

**Rule:** For a free push taken in the half of the pitch a team is attacking, the ball must not enter the circle directly (ie it must be touched by another player of either team before entering the circle).

**Penalty:** A free push is awarded against the team taking the free push.

**Advice:** This applies to all free pushes and so includes those taken by an attacking team within 3 meters of the circle.

The rule requiring all players to be 3 meters from a free push taken by the attacking team within 3 meters of the circle continues to apply.

Many questions were raised in a very short period of time on this trial rule. Communications were continually being sent to the FIH Rules Board to help clarify the “what if” situations that could occur. Due to little information on this rule, umpires at the

NAPL and the Richmond Qualifier were instructed to go by the strictest letter of the rule. Early in the youth tournament, umpires allowed a re-try coming into the circle. Once teams got the message it became much easier to administer and the game flowed better. At the NAPL, re-tries were not an option. The foul was called immediately and it took little time for teams to get the message. Again the game flowed once players adjusted. Re-tries should no longer be allowed at any level. Again, umpires were instructed to follow the strictest letter of the rule at both the Richmond Qualifier and the NAPL. This instruction seemed to work really well. It eliminated the “what if” thinking. As more guidance comes from the FIH Rules Board, information will be disbursed.

Some information now back from the FIH Rules Board:

1. The free push after this foul is called should be taken at the spot near where the original free push was taken.
2. It was not the intent of the Rules Board to allow playing the ball off the sideboards to negate the requirement of the ball having to “be touched by another player of either team before entering the circle.

These Trial Rules are just that...TRIAL. USA Field Hockey will be in constant communication with the FIH to have the latest guidance available. This information will be distributed as quickly as possible. During this trial the USA Field Hockey Rules Committee asks that personal interpretations be withheld so that the guidance is consistent. Guidance is being sought on a regular basis from the FIH Rules Board. Also, using the strictest “letter of the rule” will help with a consistency for players, coaches and umpires.

Questions should be directed to [umpire@usafieldhockey.com](mailto:umpire@usafieldhockey.com)