Field Hockey Points of Emphasis - 2018
By nfhs on June 14, 2018

PROPERLY MARKED PROTECTIVE EYEWEAR

All equipment should be worn appropriately and in line with how the manufacturer intended it to be worn. When purchasing eyewear from manufacturers, ensure that the eyewear is labeled with ASTM 2713 even though it is not mandatory until 2019 to prevent having to purchase equipment unnecessarily in 2019 when the rule takes effect.

GOOD SPORTING BEHAVIOR

Officials and coaches need to work together to provide a positive learning environment for student-athletes to learn both the sport of field hockey and good sporting behavior. The positive values that are learned will serve the players long after their field hockey experience has concluded. Players, coaches and officials should pay special attention to specific points of emphasis as delineated below:

Players

- Throughout the game, players should demonstrate good sportsmanship. This includes huddling before a penalty corner in a timely fashion and conducting themselves after a goal is scored in a positive, respectful manner.
- All equipment should be worn appropriately and in line with how the manufacturer intended it to be worn.
- Goggles must be worn to cover the entire eye as intended.

Coaches

- Coaches need to participate in a pregame meeting with captains of both teams and officials and ensure that their players are properly attired and legally equipped.
- Coaches should remain in their designated areas of the field during play and model positive language and appropriate sportsmanlike behavior with an emphasis on coaching the players and not interfering with official’s responsibilities.

Officials

- Officials should approach the game with a positive attitude and use cards as a means to manage the play and safety of the players.
- Officials should strictly adhere to the NFHS rules of the game and not use personal interpretations of the rules.

ROUGH AND DANGEROUS PLAY
Overly aggressive play and lack of regard for everyone’s safety is unacceptable in the sport of field hockey. In both practice and game play, coaches need to teach the safe use of the stick and good body control. Rough and dangerous play, such as deliberately/blindly hitting the ball into players who have been properly instructed and in good position to play defense should be addressed by both coaches and officials. Players need to accept the possibility they could inflict serious injury. **Officials must be able to recognize dangerous play and penalize it appropriately.** Although it is recognized that the possibility of injury is inherent in field hockey, all participants have the obligation to minimize risk whenever possible.

**FREE HITS WITHIN 5 YARDS OF THE CIRCLE**

To avoid delaying the restart of play, all hits awarded to the attack within the 25-yard area will be taken at the spot of the foul. All players not taking the free hit still need to be 5 yards away from the ball and the ball must not be played into the circle until the ball has amassed a dribbling distance of 5 yards or has been touched by another player of either team. If the opponent is within 5 yards of the ball she must not interfere with the taking of the free hit or must not play or attempt to play the ball or influence the play.

**AERIAL DRIBBLING**

As skills advance, more balls are being played, passed and received off the of the ground, officials should review and understand this style of play so that they can discern between dangerous play and correct execution of the skills to avoid taking away any of the advanced play from players.

The player who is carrying the ball on her stick is responsible for the safety of play when an opponent(s) is within marking distance. Please note that in the officials’ guide in the NFHS rulebook there are three definitions for distance.

- Open Space is defined as no one being within playing distance of the ball.
- Playing distance is defined as a minimum of five yard around the ball as compared to US Hockey that defines playing distance as a stick’s length.
- Marking distance is defined as being within stick’s length of your opponent.

If the player who has the ball in the air does not lower the ball to the ground before the opponent is within marking distance, or does not attempt to go around the opponent, the foul is on the air dribbler for dangerous play. Officials should not be waiting to see if the air dribbler “runs into a defender”. When the opponent has established a proper defensive position and the air dribbler has approached within marking distance the air dribbler has an obligation to either go around the opponent or put the ball to the ground. There is no requirement that a defensive player who has established their position on the field, play a ball in the air within “marking distance”.

**OFFICIAL MANAGEMENT OF AERIAL BALLS**

Please review the Officials Guide Section V. Aerial balls carefully to ensure correct management of this skill. This section should be reviewed often and if needed, review of education videos provided by the NFHS.