



Rules

A full game of hockey is played in two halves, each of 35 minutes. Junior games are often much shorter to ensure that young players are not waiting around to play.

- The game starts with the umpire's whistle and a pass from the halfway line.
- The ball can only be hit with the flat side of the stick.
- The left hand should always be above the right when dribbling, passing or shooting.
- There are no left-handed sticks. Left-handers need not worry, this will work to your advantage.
- The ball is pushed or flicked with the hands apart and the knees bent. The ball is hit with both hands placed together. The emphasis is on 'pushing', rather than 'hitting' because pushing is more accurate.
- The ball cannot be played with either feet or hands. This rule is judiciously applied at U8 and U10 level.
- The ball can be dribbled by running with the ball on the end of the stick ('straight dribble') or by rotating the stick over the ball ('Indian dribble').
- Sticks should be kept below the shoulder height at all times, including hitting.
- Body checking and stick checking ('stick tackle') are not permitted.
- The ball may not be raised or lifted into another player. Balls raised in the D will usually be considered as 'dangerous' and penalised.
- U8s and U10s play with a mini or light ball.
- There is no offside rule.
- The goalkeeper is protected by pads and a helmet. The goalkeeper must not fall on, or hold the ball.

- A player may not obstruct another when stationary, no matter which way they are facing; and the obstructed player must be trying to play the ball. Turning away is allowed when the ball is held in front and the player is moving away from the tackler.
- When the ball passes over the back line, if the last touch was from an attacker, the defenders restart the game from the 16-yard line. If the ball was last touched by a defender a long corner will be given; this is taken from halfway line. If the ball is deliberately knocked over the backline by a defender, a penalty corner will be awarded.
- When free hits are awarded within 5-yards of the D, everyone must be at least 5-yards away.
- When a penalty corner is awarded, five defenders must stand behind the goal line. The attacking team inject the ball from the back line. The ball must pass out of the D, before being taken back in for a shot on goal. The shot must not rise higher than the backboard (18").
- A penalty stroke is awarded for an infraction in the D which prevent a certain goal. When taken, all players stand behind the 25-yard line. When the player and goalkeeper are still and ready, the umpire will blow his whistle. The ball must be pushed or flicked. If the attacker misses or the goalkeeper saves, a 16-yard hit is awarded to the defending team.