

## Penalty corner review – Update July 2023

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Dear All,

As you know, over the last 12 months we have been reviewing the current penalty corner rules as is periodically done within the FIH, to ensure the balance between safety and an opportunity to score, is reasonably balanced. This process has occurred every 5 years or so and in previous reviews has resulted in new rules being introduced into hockey to rebalance the situation.

For example –

- 1987 Number of defenders reduced to 5 behind the back line (increased opportunity to score). Backboard introduced and the first hit at goal had to hit it (reduce danger)
- 1996 Ball to leave the circle and be stopped before a shot, leading to the introduction of the drag flick (reduce danger)
- 1998 No substitutions at pc (to remove specialists coming on only for pc)
- 2006 Reduced stick bow permitted (to reduce the speed of a flick and therefore danger for defenders)
- 2007 Permit additional equipment to be worn by defenders for pc (improve safety)

Last year, as well as discussing the penalty corner rule with many coaches, athletes and officials, we conducted a global online survey with the objectives:

1. To consult with the global hockey family regarding the current status of the penalty corner at all levels of hockey
2. To understand opinions about the safety of the current penalty corner
3. To understand whether there is a desire to change the current pc rules
4. To gather ideas and suggestions for changes that could be considered

This survey was completed by over 4,700 people around the world, with a spread of countries, genders and ages. More than 75% of respondents were players, with the vast majority being club level (unsurprising given this is where 95% of hockey is played). Contributions were received from elite players and coaches as well as officials of all levels including Olympic.

Whilst the results are not intended to be a statistically accurate representation of all hockey played everywhere in the world, there was an even split between those who perceived the current Rules to be “too dangerous” and those who believed there was a “good balance of safety and spectacle”, and a similarly even split between those who wish to maintain the current Rules and those who wish to make a change. As well as being divided, opinions were very strong at both ends of the spectrum, with perceptions understandably influenced by personal experience. Examples of repeated and serious injuries were given by some, whilst others believe the current rules to be safe as long as proper protective equipment is available.

Through internal discussion at the FIH and with the FIH Rules Committee, we have considered the feedback and the various options that were put forward for potential change, and it is clear that more data is needed to inform any decision, so we recently made a recommendation to the FIH Executive Board for a new rule to be trialled in a small number of competitions around the world, and statistics gathered to further inform future decisions.

As a reminder, if any change to the Rules is decided upon, no rule change will be brought in for all hockey until after the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

## Rule trial and request of National Associations

The rule that we wish to trial is described in detail in the attached document. In summary, it is that all attackers except for the injector must start at least 5m outside of the circle (the 5m dotted line) and the ball must travel outside of the 5m dotted line before it can re-enter the circle for a shot on goal.

We would like to conduct trials between August 2023 and May 2024, for an entire competition (league season or tournament) in as many countries as possible, and gather statistics and feedback on the occurrence and type of injuries that happen during penalty corners using this rule trial, as well as the goal conversion rates. We also need to collect the same data from a similar type and level of competition in each country where the new rule is being trialled, so that we can compare the two data sets to inform any decision to maintain or change the current rules. We need to trial across both genders, at junior, senior and masters levels.

**If you are interested in participating in this rule trial, please can we therefore ask you to email FIH Sport Director, Jon Wyatt [jon.wyatt@fih.hockey](mailto:jon.wyatt@fih.hockey) so that we can set up rule trials to start in the next few months.**

Please provide details of the Leagues or competitions that you are proposing within your country to participate in the rule trial. Both leagues or competitions that are being compared should be of the same gender, age group and level:

1. Gender (M/F)
2. Age group (junior/senior/masters)
3. Level (top domestic, national, regional, local)
4. League or competition that will trial the new pc rule and provide data to the FIH
5. League or competition that will collect data but continue to use the existing pc rule as a comparison

When we hear back from you, we will confirm to you all individually and will provide details of the trial, including the simple data collection tool that we will use to collect the data that can be filled in during or immediately after each match in the competition or league.

Thank you in advance for your support and help in this trial, which is essential in order to inform the decisions that need to be made. If you are keen to be involved but have not yet identified the particular league or competition, please just indicate this so that we know where trials are likely to take place and can look to fill any gaps in geography, gender, age group etc.

Many thanks for your attention.

Best regards,

Jon Wyatt  
FIH Sport Director