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## **FIELD HOCKEY**

### **Weekly Points of Emphasis for September 19, 2011 William Gardiner, Director of Development – Field Hockey Officiating**

#### 1. Identifying Offensive and Defensive Stick Interference:

Stick interference by definition “occurs when a player hits, holds, hooks, slashes or strikes her opponents stick (Rule 3 Sec. 4 Art 6 p. 28).”

On page 68 of the Officials Guide it states that: “Offensive stick interference most often occurs when a player attempting to hit the ball to a teammate misses the ball and hits the defender’s stick.” This can also happen when the attack shoots and her stick hits the ground or turf in front of the ball causing her stick to bounce over the ball and hit the defensive stick.

As umpires we need to determine which stick is actually hitting whose stick. When a defender’s stick is on the ground for a tackle and is stationary and the ball is in front of the defender’s stick it is virtually impossible for the defender to cause stick interference. If the attack hits the defender’s stationary stick then the attack should be penalized. Note, if the ball gets behind the defender’s stick, then the defender is causing a stick obstruction even though the attack hit the defender’s stick. The position of the ball is critical in determining stick interference vs. stick obstruction.

The attack may try to hit the defender’s stick out of the way from a legal position so they can play the ball. This can happen when a defender has her stick on the ground and is channeling the attack player. The attack player will hit the defender’s stick and then will play the ball.

Lastly, “an offensive player may not “create” stick interference by placing her own stick between the ball and the defender’s stick while the defender is making a legal challenge.

“Defensive stick interference occurs when a defender’s stick strikes or taps the offensive stick when attempting to play the ball. Defensive stick interference also occurs when a player attempting to tackle from behind hits the stick or body of the offensive player. This type of stick interference should be considered intentional and should be penalized accordingly. If it occurs between the 25-yard line, a penalty corner shall be awarded. If it occurs in the circle, a penalty stroke shall be awarded.”

A defender’s “jab from any direction is not stick interference when only the ball is contacted.” If the jab contacts the stick first then the ball, it should be called defensive stick interference.

And finally, “neither the attacker nor defender should be penalized when the attacker hits the ball away and the follow-through causes the sticks to hit together, unless it is being done in an intimidating fashion.” p. 69 NFHS Rule Book

2. Dribbling into the circle from the broken line circle on an attack free hit. When the attack is awarded a free hit on the broken line circle, “the player using the self-pass may dribble directly into the circle.” (p. 71 NFHS Rule Book) The player who is dribbling may use a series of taps to move the ball. The ball does not have to be in contact with the stick as she crosses the striking circle line. If she is tapping the ball the player needs to follow the ball into the circle and be the next attack player to touch the ball. The attack player is considered to have maintained possession. On the flip side, if the attack player dribbles 4 ½ yards then hits or pushes the ball to a teammate inside the circle, then that would be considered a pass, and the 5 yard requirement before playing the ball into the circle was not met. It would be perfectly legal for an attack player to dribble the ball from the broken line circle 2 or 3 yards and pass it to a teammate who is **OUTSIDE** the circle who then plays the ball into the circle. Remember, for an attack free hit, side-in, or long hit inside the 25 yard line the ball cannot be played directly into the circle. "The ball cannot be played into the circle by the taker (self pass) until it has been dribbled 5 yards" **OR** "the ball must be touched, deflected, hit or pushed by another player before it enters or can be played into the circle." p.72 NFHS Rule Book