



## RETURN TO PLAY - RULE CHANGES FOR SAFE HOCKEY

Community hockey is being reintroduced in a cautious and methodical manner, based on the best available evidence to optimise participant and community safety. Aligned with FHC's "return to play" protocols; the following rule changes have been put into effect immediately:

### SPITTING AND BUSHMAN NOSE BLOWING

Spitting and bushman nose blowing (blowing your nose without a handkerchief or tissue etc.) is a practice that unfortunately occurs in our sport and must stop as it poses a significant risk to other participants

#### **New Rule:**

- A 2 min suspension (green card) to be issued to any player or participant caught spitting or bushman nose blowing.
- Repeat offenders (i.e. player(s) offending more than once) to be shown a yellow card (10 mins).
- Consistent repeat offenders will be subject to disciplinary review process under the local sport organization Conduct Policy. In extreme cases, Field Hockey Canada will review.
- Standard suspension rules to apply

#### **Umpiring Guidance/tips:**

Apply this rule consistently to all participants (i.e. no exceptions). Safety is always a key consideration. Ensure players and team management are aware of new rule changes before starting a match. Proactive and preventative education of health and safety requirements is a key action/step.

### OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

#### **Application of Rules:**

When umpiring hockey, it is important to have technical appreciation of a rule and it is just as important to understand the intent/spirit of the rule to ensure the best practical implementation. Apply common sense, context, and a consistent application of the rules at all times.

Under the current Covid-19 environment, wherever practical the safety aspect now needs to be extended to include new procedures to reduce contact by players and participants to an absolute minimum. All participants have a personal responsibility to identify and adhere to the best health and safety protocol's pre, during, and post a hockey match. Accordingly, the following measures are mandatory until further notice:

#### **Protective Equipment & use of face masks at Penalty Corners**

It is recommended that all protective equipment, including face masks, gloves, (and any other defensive PC equipment to be used) should not be shared where practical. Accordingly, it is recommended that defenders at penalty corners need to have their own identified equipment (e.g. coloured marking) to be allocated and worn by themselves.

#### **Umpiring Guidance/tips:**

Defensive players are now going to need sufficient time to identify and put on their own protective equipment. Additionally, there may be a requirement for face masks to be cleaned at penalty corners as well. Umpires need to allow players an acceptable time to do this. Umpires must still proactively manage the PC set up process.



### **Goalkeeping Gear**

No rule changes, however, it is recommended that all goalkeeping gear be cleaned and sanitized at home/away from the turf venue prior to every match.

### **Players Equipment**

No rule changes, however, it is recommended that individual players gear (sticks, shin pads, gloves) is not shared with other players. Mouthguards obviously cannot be shared, and players are strongly recommended to keep mouthguards in their mouth during the entirety of the match. Removal of mouthguards on the turf needs to be reduced to an absolute bare minimum. Mouthguards should be cleaned at home/away from the turf venue prior to every match.

### **Cleaning of Players Equipment**

Individual players are strongly recommended to clean all their equipment (water bottles, mouthguards, face masks, gloves, etc.) at home/away from their respective hockey venue wherever practical (both prior to and after each match).

### **Injuries & Blood Protocols**

No rule changes, however, to minimize contact the following protocols are recommended:

- Where practical any injured players should be treated by their own team members/management or medical professional
- Team Managers (or equivalent) should prepare and preplan what actions they need to undertake for injury situations
- We also recommend that umpires and team management review and understand rules that apply to injuries and blood protocols, and also to check in with your Associations and turf venue to ensure that local procedures are in place and to have an awareness of what these protocols and guidelines are.

### **Match Balls**

To minimize the number of touches/contacts to hockey balls, we recommend: Match ball to be cleaned prior to and at the end of every match. Players are recommended to use sticks rather than handling hockey balls wherever practical

### **Coin Toss**

Where a coin toss is required (e.g. starting a game, starting shootouts etc.), then the coin should be tossed by one umpire with a team captain/representative to call accordingly.

### **Match Card**

The use, format, and completion of match cards will differ within Associations. Consider arrangements that will again limit touches/contacts by individuals such as:

- Team names and numbers are pre-printed
- Umpires fill out cards only from details provided by team managers
- Use of electronic match recording where practical

Wishing the best of success to all our hockey communities, enjoy the return to play, and keep safe everyone.