
THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME UMPIRES BRIEFING

This briefing covers all matches in the National Programme, inclusive of the EHL. It has been issued to try and ensure transparency and consistency at the top level of the game in England.

The content is the same as has been used at a number of recent international major events including the Champions Trophies, the Olympic Qualifying Tournaments and the Olympic Games in Athens. The only changes are the removal of specific tournament regulations such as the two minute rule when a player receives treatment on the pitch. We believe that, by adopting internationally approved standards, hockey in England can and will benefit.

A great deal of emphasis is being placed on **flow** (removing unnecessary whistle) and **management** (using managerial skills to prevent problems and enhance communication). Both these factors were very evident in Athens at the Olympic Games and demonstrated that players and umpires were pulling in the same direction. We seek the same partnership here in England, and hope that this briefing (along with the DVD) will help us to make a quantum leap forward together.

The Briefing is therefore being issued to every club/team participating in the EHL and every NPUA umpire, assessor and coach. It is also being widely disseminated through England Hockey and the NPUA web site.

THE BRIEFING

1. PREPARATION

Be thorough in your preparation - Make sure you understand the briefing - this is our match plan for every match.

You are expected to umpire to this briefing every match.

Have a personal action plan -try to **improve** something in every match.

2. THE MATCH

- Be yourself at all times.
- Help the players - the players need to **understand** what you want.
- Teamwork and cooperation are critical – let's help and support each other.
- Be aware of areas on the pitch where your colleague could need assistance (for example around and in the far side of his / her shooting circle.
- If you have to, take time in making decisions.
- Try to get decisions correct and consistent between the two of you.

Use Common sense.

3. MANAGEMENT

- Be **proactive**. Prevention is better than the cure.
- Set standards early - **Talk** to the players. This doesn't mean just the voice; it means the way you talk through your whistle. Use your whistle to express yourself and give clear and strong messages.
- Make it easy on yourself. Get them 5 metres at free hits from the very beginning.

- Recognise early when the ball is on the wrong spot for the free. Use your voice and/or whistle to manage and avoid replays.
- Ensure free hits are taken correctly.
- Change your game plan if you need to – do not assume that your game plan will suit the entire 70 minutes. You must be prepared to react to changes in the game (tactics) and the tempo.
- Communicate with your colleague.

4. FLOW

- Encourage the game to flow by **only interfering when necessary** but don't let the game slip out of your hands because you let play flow for too long. Physical offences may need intervention although play should be allowed to flow as much as possible. Don't forget the possibility of issuing a delayed personal penalty!
- Allow the players to **contest** the ball. Allow as much advantage as **possible**.
- Read the game - do not ball watch.
- Sometimes a free hit is a better advantage and causes less frustration.

Timing is critical

5. TACKLING

- Watch tackles carefully - be sure the tackler breaks the rules before penalising.
- Do **not** penalise just because there is a noise or "it looks bad" or "the tackler is in an impossible position".
- Watch which direction the ball travels. This often indicates if it was an attempt to play the ball.
- Be strict on **breaking down play** and intentional stopping tackles from individual players but also as team tactic. Identify these early in the game.
- Be aware of intentional shielding and body blocking

6. OBSTRUCTION

- Are the players trying to play the ball- they have to be.
- Is there a possibility to play the ball – there must be.
- Is there active movement, to prevent the playing of the ball – there must be.
- Be aware of "professional" illegal use of the body to block.

7. BALL OFF THE GROUND

- Blow **only** in dangerous situations everywhere on the pitch.... **Forget** "LIFTED" think "DANGER"
- Low balls lifted over defenders sticks in a controlled manner that hit a player at half shin pad height are **not** dangerous.
- Use common sense and show an understanding of the play.

Be consistent as an individual and as a team.

8. OVERHEAD BALLS.

- Set up free hits correctly. Make sure the players are 5 metres.
- Watch the ball on the way up. -The ball can not be flicked dangerously directly towards an opposing player
- The ball landing - the players must stay 5 metres away until ball is safe **on the ground**.

- Penalise poor skill by the receiver when the receiver makes the ball dangerous.

9. MANUFACTURED FOULS

- Be aware of the ball carrier manufacturing free hits.
This upsets defenders - think through where the ball carrier is likely to do this.
- Be aware of Manufacturing of Obstruction and Foot when there is no chance of any other play.

10. DRAGGING THE BALL AT FREE HITS AND PENALTY STROKES

- At free hits near the circle, do not permit attackers to release the ball in the circle - this is sometimes done to manufacture PC's.
- Midfield - show common sense and allow the game to continue...to flow.
- At penalty strokes allow the stroke if it looks natural - even if there is a minor drag. Remember that the Penalty Stroke is a major decision for a major foul.

11. MAJOR DECISIONS

PENALTY CORNERS:

- Positioning is critical - sell decisions.
- Apply the Drag flick interpretations.
- **Cooperation** needed if runner is hit - below or above the knee?
- When the ball is clearly missing the goal and the defender is hit high on the body, decision = free hit for danger.
- Manage the "set up" – the "meetings on the top of the circle or in defence.
- Breaking at pc's - allow the same for the whole match, but manage early.

PENALTY STROKES:

- No personal interpretations!
- Stick to rules and guidance and sell your decisions.

12. APPEALING

- Appealing for free hits - abuse or shouting by the players spoils the game.
- Make it easy on yourself - stamp it out early. Use your skills.

We all need to do this in **every** match!

13. APPROACH TO INJURIES

- Quickly go to the player and **ask them** if they need attention.
If you get no response ask the captain if the doctor/physio is required.
- If bleeding or obviously serious - call doctor / physio **immediately**.

14. THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Good Communication

- To the players
- With your colleague