



2023

FIELD HOCKEY PRESEASON GUIDE



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HIGHLIGHTS

01

Jewelry

The change allows players to wear jewelry to aid officials in consistent enforcement.

02

Time-out

Permits the playing captain to call a time-out.

03

Loose Equipment

The rule change defines loose equipment in the field of play as a foul and clarifies that throwing of equipment is a misconduct penalty.

04

Player Re-entry

Defines the penalty application regarding player re-entry during suspension time.

WELCOME TO THE 2023 PRESEASON GUIDE FOR HIGH SCHOOL COACHES AND OFFICIALS

As we look forward to the fall field hockey season, the NFHS wants to thank the high school coaches, administrators and officials who dedicate their time and professionalism to the students involved in the sport of field hockey. The purpose of this preseason guide is to highlight the rules changes for the year and to offer tools and tips for coaches and officials.

The NFHS and USA Field Hockey have partnered to help support, sustain and grow high school field hockey across the nation. The community surrounding the sport is positive, supportive, and enthusiastic and we hope to build on that support to continue to grow the sport at the high school level.

Fans:

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Bad behavior at high school athletic events has gotten OUT OF CONTROL. Are YOU part of the problem? Always be respectful, encouraging and positive. Let's come together to **#BenchBadBehavior** for good!

BenchBadBehavior.com



01 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Card Progression
2. Proper Field Markings and Grass Length
3. Play Inside the Circle – Corner vs. Stroke
4. Delay of Game

Card Progression

Card progression is an important tool for officials in game management as a method of de-escalation, fairness and reducing risk of injury during the game. A verbal caution to both teams may serve to ward off a potentially volatile situation. However, when one player or team commits repetitive fouls, it is not appropriate game management to include both teams in the card progression. Both teams have their own card progression.

Proper Field Markings and Grass Length

It is imperative that fields are properly marked, including all side markings for team area, team line, substitution area and spectator line. These ensure the safety of players, coaches, spectators and officials. The tableside official must have a clear line of sight. If there is no line 5 yards from the sideline designating the team area, or if this line is ignored, coaches or players who are within 5 yards of the sideline are blocking that official's view and creating a potentially dangerous situation to the officials, coaches or players.

Additionally, for grass fields, to minimize risk for all participants and ensure a more consistent and uniform playing surface, the grass should be cut to a maximum height of 1½ inches.

Play Inside the Circle – Corner vs. Stroke

It is vital that officials recognize that breakdown fouls by the defense in the circle that interfere with the opponent's possession of the ball or their opportunity to score require more than the awarding of a penalty corner. If the official deems the foul to be deliberate, the foul must be penalized by awarding a penalty stroke to the opponent [Rule 11-1-1b]. Additionally, for an egregious foul, a misconduct penalty may be awarded using the card progression.

Delay of Game

Managing the flow of the game without hurrying a team is a necessary skill for all officials. For repetitive, non-dangerous fouls, the appropriate card should be issued. Some examples of delay include but are not limited to: hitting the ball away after the whistle; not moving 5 yards away in order to slow the restart of play; or prolonged huddling by a team prior to a penalty corner.

Officials are encouraged to practice preventive officiating to help limit delays in the game and maintain the spirit, flow and safety of the game. Coaches and players should also understand the importance of their role in maintaining the flow of the game.



Photo provided by Kgraft@udoh.org.

02 BE A CHAMPION

By Sally Goggin, USA Field Hockey National Development Director

If you are reading this, chances are that you are a leader in your field hockey community. On behalf of USA Field Hockey and the NFHS, thank you for all you do for your student-

athletes and the great sport of field hockey. High school sports can't exist without dedicated coaches, umpires, administrators and leaders like you.

As preparations for the 2023 season are underway, we recognize that not everyone can be a state champion. However, we can all be champions of field hockey and its stakeholders.



Photo provided by Brian Livergood, Liberty High School.

Did you know that:

- Field hockey is the third-most popular sport in the world and an Olympic sport for both men and women, played in 135+ countries?
- Field hockey was the first women's NCAA college sport, and a scholarship sport played in close to 300 of the top NCAA DI, DII and DIII colleges and universities?
- Collegiate field hockey student-athletes have one of the highest-grade-point averages (GPAs) of all sports? In many schools, it's the largest female participation sport in the fall season.

Here are the ABC's of being a Field Hockey Champion.

A is for Advocacy

Field hockey athletes are smart, strong, independent game-changers on and off the field. Make sure your community recognizes the many contributions your program and its people make to your school.

- Advocate for your program, your participants and for the sport of field hockey.
- Actively recruit new people and programs to get in the game.
- Activate your alumni network. Stay in touch with your field hockey alums and welcome them back to campus to support your program. Host an annual alumnae game. Ask past players to speak to your team about their college experience and to mentor players in business and beyond.
- Appreciate those who support the game – your principal, athletic director, umpires, school board members and more. Make sure they know that you appreciate their support. Have them as an honorary coach one game.
- Achieve and make your program indispensable; an example for others to follow. Inspire your student-athletes to be exemplary on and off the field, regardless of your record. Excellence is the culture and tradition of this great sport.
- A positive field hockey experience isn't just about winning. Honor and celebrate your program's history and traditions.

B is for Building and Believing

Field hockey needs champions with a growth mindset. Cultivate believers to help you. USA Field Hockey has many resources to help.

- Build elementary school and middle school exposure by working with PE teachers, parks and recreation

departments as well as other local multi-sport organizations. Host a fall playday, scout day or summer camp. Invite youth programs to your games and welcome them to be ball girls or boys.

- Be proactive in working within your school, community and state to encourage neighboring communities and schools to add field hockey if they don't already have it. Invite leaders from neighboring communities to attend your games and camps. Ask your athletic director for support in reaching out to fellow athletic directors to promote the value of field hockey programs in increasing student-athlete participation.
- Be welcoming to new programs and help them develop. Mentor new coaches, new umpires, new programs and new players. Development takes time, but positive life lessons and growth can start from the first time a player picks up a stick.

C is for Community. Communication. Culture. Cultivating Champions.

The field hockey family is a tight-knit group. Our sport is evolving, improving and growing.

- College hockey is exciting! Bring your team to a local college game to support your local college teams.
- Coordinate a TEAM USA watch party. At the end of October, the U.S. Women's and Men's National Teams will be competing in the Pan American Games to qualify for the Paris 2024 Summer Olympic Games. Watching higher-level hockey is exciting and a great way to learn and improve your own game.
- Connect with nearby clubs or start a club if there isn't one close by, following your state's coaching policies around off-season contact. Clubs provide year-round playing, coaching, umpiring and development opportunities for all.
- Challenge parents, teachers, administrators and other teams at your school to a fun day of field hockey. Many may have never picked up a stick and will love a chance to try the game in a recreational setting. Walking Hockey is a great format to play. Check out the [Walking Hockey Guide](#).
- Connect your top players to Nexus, USA Field Hockey's Olympic Development Pathway Program. Nexus provides great exposure, development and tryouts for Team USA. Scholarships are available.
- Communicate with your players and parents about opportunities to umpire, coach and play. All youth sports rely on coaches and umpires, and it's a great way to get

or stay in the game. Adult field hockey opportunities exist throughout the country for all levels. Coach and umpire training is available.

- Continue your field hockey journey. Coach and umpire education is available for all levels, from grassroots volunteers to high performance. Many additional roles are available in hockey, and we welcome you to learn more.

Thank you for being a champion of field hockey and best of luck in the 2023 fall season!

Resources to Support Field Hockey Champions Abound!

USA Field Hockey and the NFHS are strong partners, investing more resources than ever before toward sport development, promoting, and developing field hockey for all to enjoy. USA Field Hockey's sport development team is eager to help you and to hear from you.

Resources:

GENERAL – sportdevelopment@usafieldhockey.com

American Development Model (ADM) Tools and Resources

– Age and stage appropriate resources in English and Spanish for introducing and teaching field hockey, including:

- **Field Hockey 101** – Basic facts about field hockey in printable PDF for distribution to players, parents, administrators, everyone.
- **Core Skills PDF download** – Essential skills including grips, with video support.
- **GO CARDS** – 50 fun field hockey games to play with kids of all ages, with ideas on how to make them easier or harder depending on skill level.
- **Challenge Cards** – 30 great training exercises to keep your practices fun, engaging and effective (free to USA Field Hockey Members).
- **USA Field Hockey's – FIND A CLUB** – Find Clubs closest to your school
- **USA Field Hockey Membership** – BECOME A MEMBER of USA Field Hockey to receive communication, valuable benefits, access to the [Member App In the Circle](#) and savings. All members support the growth of the sport and TEAM USA as we strive for international and Olympic success.

COACHING SPECIFIC – coaching@usafieldhockey.com

USA Field Hockey believes as a core value that trained and certified coaches deliver a more effective, fun and safe developmental field hockey experience. The Coach Education Pathway incorporates best practices from across sports that focuses on a learner-centered approach to development.

The game of field hockey has changed significantly during the past decade. Continual innovations have sped up the game, inspiring new tactics, techniques and rules to accommodate the faster play. Whether you coach on grass, field turf, water or sand-based turf, teaching the skills properly in a fun engaging way will enable you and your team to develop and succeed. Sign up today!

- **Coaching Field Hockey Online Course** – This NFHS/USA Field Hockey course, available on [NFHSLearn.com](https://www.nfhslearn.com), was created for high school coaches, and is free to USA Field Hockey members. Includes training exercises and resources.
- **Coaching Field Hockey: Goalkeeping Online Course** – Also available on [NFHSLearn.com](https://www.nfhslearn.com) and free to USA Field Hockey members, this course provides the basics on coaching goalkeepers and includes suggested training exercises to keep young goalkeepers active and involved in practice.
- **Coach Clinics, Workshops and Events** – Want to schedule a Level 1, Level 2 or Workshop in your community? USA Field Hockey offers Level 1, Level 2 and the following 3-hour workshops: Technical Skills, Goalkeeping, Goal Scoring, Attacking Principles, and Defense Principles Workshops.

Level 1 Certification Program – The [Level 1 Online Coaching Course](#) and Instructional Coaching Clinic Program is specifically designed for individuals that already possess a basic knowledge and understanding of the game of field hockey. Requires two registrations.

Level 2 Coaching Program – The Level 2 Program will challenge participants to further define and evaluate their individual coaching philosophies, styles and techniques, while encouraging self-assessment. Requires one registration and includes the Level 2 Online Course.

Level 3 Coaching Program – The Level 3 Coaching Course is a 27-hour course over 2.5 days and is the highest-level certification that USA Field Hockey currently offers, building on the Coach Education Pathway to elevate professionalism in the sport of field hockey.

Level 3 Interest Form

UMPIRING SPECIFIC – umpire@usafieldhockey.com

- **Become an Umpire** – Umpiring field hockey is a great part-time job. USA Field Hockey can help people learn how to get started and progress.
- **Umpiring Opportunities** – There are many opportunities to develop and work as an umpire.

INCLUSION – sportdevelopment@usafieldhockey.com

- **USA Field Hockey's Walking Hockey Guide** – Walking Hockey is hockey, but walking! This is a great game to play for fun and for parent/child/alum events.
- **USA Field Hockey's All Starz Handbook** – All Starz is disability inclusion hockey. Unified and Hockey ID (for intellectual disabled) is growing around the globe. Hockey ID will be a demo sport at the 2023 Special Olympics World Games and we'd like partners to help drive ability-inclusive offerings in the USA.

- **Adult and Master Information** – Hockey is a sport for all, sport for life, with recreational and competitive playing opportunities for adult men and women.

STARTER GUIDES AND OFFERINGS –

sportdevelopment@usafieldhockey.com

- **Discover Clinics** – Want to introduce field hockey in your community? Partner with USA Field Hockey to host a 90-minute Discover Clinic that includes right-sized equipment and insurance.
- **School Starter Packages** – Goals and goalkeeping equipment are the highest price items for starting a team. USA Field Hockey has partnered with sponsors AAE and Longstreth to provide significant savings for new school programs.
- **Goals** – AAE offers special pricing off their quality goals and field equipment for affiliated high school programs.
- **PE Packs** – Bulk sets of equipment featuring all sizes of wood or plastic sticks and balls are available and affordable via USA Field Hockey's online store.
- **Foundations Course** – Run a Field Hockey Foundations Course in your community to fuel feeder programs and enlist volunteers.



Photo provided by Great Lakes Regional Field Hockey Organization.

03 BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COACHES AND UMPIRES

By Amada Combs Warford

As the sport of field hockey continues to grow, so does the need for critical roles that can help foster this growth of the sport we all love. The two roles that are needed to make the field hockey world go round are coaches and umpires.

Coaches are the leaders of the team, teaching not only their wealth of field hockey knowledge to their players, but also teaching important life skills that athletes can take with them into their futures. The commonly forgotten but critically important role of umpires is also needed for the growth of our sport. Without umpires, games cannot be played or played in a fair and safe environment for our athletes. Both of these positions are in dire need of increasing numbers in order for areas throughout the United States to continue to grow field hockey, like so many other sports experienced!

Every area is different in how it recruits coaches and inspires people to join and learn how to umpire field hockey, but one thing in common with both roles is their desire to give back to their communities and foster an environment for athletes to thrive. These young kids and young adults are why we do what we do! We want them to have opportunities to be outside, be active, and learn about hard work, perseverance, grit, sportsmanship and teamwork. Coaches and umpires, when it comes down to it, want very similar things and these commonalities need to be remembered as we interact on game days.

As with every work environment, there are different personalities that a person will interact with day to day. There are big personalities that are loud and make their presence known. There are quieter personalities that might do things a different way but are just as effective. There are flexible personalities and there are stubborn personalities. All of these personalities can be present in the coaching and umpiring side of field hockey. What is important to understand, just like in everyday life off the field, is that there is a way to communicate and interact with others to have the most successful outcome. At the end of the day, coaches want from umpires what they want from their players, 100% effort and consistency in the game. Umpires want coaches to respect their calls and understand they are doing the best they can

while making split-second decisions. But like all humans, no one is perfect. No umpire will get 100% of calls correct and no coach will have their team play a game to absolute perfection.

It's important to understand that both sides need to have a critical line of communication and respect given to both parties. If we want field hockey to grow, we need the recruitment and retainment of umpires to grow. We cannot allow them to be berated by players and spectators, and especially coaches. Coaches are the ones person on the field that everyone looks to as a role model. The coach's attitude can determine the attitude of their players and what they allow or disallow can set the tone of the teams and spectators.

It's also important for umpires to give respect to coaches. Coaches may understand the game in ways that differ from umpires. It's vital that there can be a line of communication between the two parties that allows each party to listen and feel heard. Without both of those aspects, the line of communication is closed and frustrations on both sides can increase.

We've all been there on game day: the coach and umpire don't see eye to eye, the line of communication is closed, and frustrations build. It could be a situation where a passionate coach wants to be heard and the umpire won't listen. Or an umpire speaks and gives their reasoning, but the coach doesn't respect what's said and continues vocalizing their frustrations for all to see and hear. We need to learn from these experiences and understand that it all comes down to communicating. It's impossible to build a relationship without communication. To foster the relationship between coaches and umpires, there first needs to be a level of respect. We are not enemies; we need to remember that both parties love field hockey at the end of the day.

There are different approaches for each umpire, but most of the time, umpires need to be the calm, cool and collected party. While they should hear out the coach and diffuse situations, that does not mean umpires should take the brunt of the yelling and frustrations of the coach. A coach

should be able to, at the proper time, talk with the umpires and let them know what they are seeing and feeling. Umpires should listen so the coach feels heard, and then the umpire can process and decide how to work through this going forward in the game. Most of the time, in any type of disagreement, whether it is on or off the field, a person just wants to be heard and validated. The other party can decide how to move forward and choose what they want to take into consideration. We need to continue to respect each other as humans and understand that each person has their own personality traits that differ from others. The best coaches and

the best umpires are good communicators and can effectively interact with different personalities day to day.

As this article emphasizes, in order to build relationships between coaches and umpires, we need to realize we have more in common than our differences and if we can properly communicate with one another, only good things will happen which will help our sport continue to grow and thrive. Because that's what we all want, right? Field hockey, the sport we all love, to grow and be a place for athletes to thrive!



04 TACKLING – THE GOOD, BAD AND UGLY

By Sean Rapaport, USA Field Hockey Director of Umpiring

There is no wrong side to tackle from.
There is no wrong side to tackle from.
There is no wrong side to tackle from.

While we process that statement and leave Bart Simpson to write it out another 97 times for further emphasis, let's add some context and color to the idea.

The rules of field hockey include the following provisions:

- Players are expected to act responsibly at all times;
- Players on the field must hold their stick and not use it in a dangerous way;
- Players must not lift their stick over the heads of other players;
- Players must not touch, handle or interfere with other players or their sticks or clothing;
- Players must not intimidate or impede another player;



Photo provided by Great Lakes Regional Field Hockey Organization.

- Players must not play the ball with the back of the stick;
- Players may play the ball in a controlled manner in any part of the field when the ball is at any height including above the shoulder unless this is dangerous or leads to danger;
- Players must not play the ball dangerously or in a way which leads to dangerous play;
- Players obstruct if they physically interfere with the stick or body of an opponent;
- Players must not tackle unless in a position to play the ball without body contact;
- Reckless play, such as sliding tackles and other overly physical challenges by field players, which take an opponent to ground and which have the potential to cause injury, should attract appropriate match and personal penalties;
- Goalkeepers are not permitted to conduct themselves in a manner which is dangerous to other players by taking advantage of the protective equipment they wear.

It's worth highlighting just how much there is to process and how many boxes must be clicked or crossed in the minds of umpires with every tackle situation that a game presents. Hundreds of events in every match, each needing to be observed, considered and ruled on with split-second timing.

But there is nothing saying that you can't tackle from the left. Nada about the right being off limits. Not a peep about tackling from behind. So where is this fable there that one supposedly can't tackle from? It simply doesn't exist.

The good

It's not about where a tackle is made from, it's all about how it is made. Hours, seasons and years are spent coaching tackling techniques and best practices. Front-on tackling, jab tackles from the side, shave tackles from behind – options exist to tackle an opponent from any and every angle. A player executing a tackle in such a way that they don't violate any of the rules of hockey referred to above, is a player executing a good tackle.

The bad

A tackle that breaks any of the above rules is the yin to the yang of a good tackle. It's as simple as that, if it's not a good tackle, then it's a poor tackle. One or the other. Never both.

The ugly

These are the tackles that go further than a simple 'technical' breach of the rules. They are dangerous. They are deliberate. They intentionally break down play. They are reckless. They are overly physical. They take an opponent to the ground. They have the potential to cause injury. Judge them for what they are, not where they originate. Umpires must deal with them appropriately, sending a clear message, protecting players and ensuring that the game is played safely and fairly.

There is no wrong side to tackle from...only wrong ways to tackle.

Best of luck to all players, coaches and officials for the 2023 season!



Photo provided by Kgraft@udoh.org.

05 FIELD HOCKEY INJURY SURVEILLANCE STUDY

As high school sports participation in girls field hockey continues to increase in the United States, the number of sports injuries may also increase. The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and the various NFHS sports rules committees use information from the National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study (High School RIO™) to monitor rates and patterns of sports injuries among high school athletes. High School RIO is currently collecting the 15th year of sports exposure and injury data.

In the 2021-22 academic year, girls field hockey had the fifth-highest overall injury rate (2.09 injuries per 1,000 athlete exposures) and the fourth-highest practice injury rate (1.54 injuries per 1,000 athlete exposures) out of the 20 sports currently under surveillance in High School RIO. Injury rates in girls field hockey have remained relatively stable over time. Girls field hockey also had the fifth-highest overall, competition, and practice concussion rates. In competition, concussions most often resulted from contact with the ball (47%) and contact with another player (33%), while in



practice, concussions most often resulted from contact with the stick (43%) and contact with the ball (29%). The rate of ACL injuries in girls field hockey has fluctuated over time with a notably lower rate in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21. The most common diagnoses in competitions were concussions (28%), sprains (19%) and contusions (15%), and the most common

diagnoses in practices were contusions (20%), concussions (14%) and strains (14%). In 2021-22, 50% of dislocations/subluxations were recurrent injuries. Understanding patterns of injury in girls field hockey is one important tool when considering injury prevention efforts to keep field hockey athletes as safe as possible.

If you are interested in more information about the High School RIO Study or you are a certified athletic trainer who is interested in becoming a reporter for girls field hockey, please email the High School RIO team at highschoolrio@datalyscenter.org. Please visit <http://datalyscenter.org/resources/high-school-rio-annual-reports/> to access the annual summary report.



Photo provided by Brian Livergood, Liberty High School.

06 COACHING AND OFFICIATING EDUCATION



Three Course!

Photo provided by California Interscholastic Federation.

Coaching Field Hockey

Course Objectives

- Help users learn and teach individual and team skills of field hockey at a fundamental level.
- Describe the various grips and demonstrate ball handling and elimination skills.
- Teach various scoring techniques that are used.
- Explain in detail basic gameplay strategies and attack and defensive principles.

Units

- About Field Hockey
- Grips and Grip Management, Ball Control and Elimination Skills
- Passing and Receiving Skills
- Scoring Techniques
- Individual Defense
- Small Unit Play
- 11v11 Formations: Attack and Defense Principles

Coaching Field Hockey: Goalkeeping

Course Objectives

- Provide an overview of proper equipment and how to wear it.
- Introduce goalkeeping skills from a fundamental level.
- Illustrate various common goalkeeping techniques with video examples.
- Explain the goalkeeper's role on a team at various stages of the game (open play, set plays, etc.).

Units

- Equipment
- Basic Principles of Positioning
- Kicking Skills
- Aerial & Glove Saves
- Communication, Set Plays and Coaching Tips

Officiating Field Hockey: **FREE**

Units

- Field Hockey Officiating Basics
- Umpire Necessities
- Signaling
- Positioning

Available at [NFHSLearn.com](https://www.nfhslearn.com)





The NFHS has partnered with USA Field Hockey to support existing field hockey programs and grow the sport across the country. The partnership included a High School Advocacy Group that is meeting to discuss tools, resources, leadership course and much more.

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*Left photo provided by Brian Livergood, Liberty High School and
Photo below provided by Great Lakes Regional Field Hockey Organization.*



**National Federation of State
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