

STORY OF THE RULES OF INDOOR HOCKEY

Until 1966, the German Hockey Associations, in both West Germany and East Germany, had been producing a rule book for their domestic use which was used, after translation, by other European countries but not, at that time, in the British Isles.

The then Honorary General Secretary of the FIH, Rene Frank, later FIH President, was a keen supporter of the game not only in his native Belgium but also elsewhere in Europe. He regularly attended the Cities Tournament sponsored by the West Berlin Senate and also attended the meetings of the FIH Indoor Hockey Committee which usually also met in Berlin. At his initiative, he persuaded the Germans in 1966 to hand over responsibility for the rules to the FIH Indoor Hockey Committee, which at that time had several German officials as members. Accordingly in 1966 the FIH Office in Brussels produced the first FIH rule book in three languages, German, French and English. Significantly, in 1968 the FIH recognised the indoor game by decreeing in its Constitution that hockey included indoor hockey. The FIH Indoor Hockey Committee continued to be responsible for the indoor rule book and its printing via the Brussels office, until responsibility for the indoor rules was transferred in 1988 to the Hockey Rules Board. The FIH Indoor Hockey Committee was also abolished in 1988 and the European Hockey Federation took over its responsibilities for competitions in Europe.

The Rules of Indoor Hockey have always been described in metric terms.

Before setting out the rules' changes since 1966, it is only proper to reproduce here Rene Frank's Preface to the three-language edition.

The International Hockey Federation takes pleasure in presenting this booklet with the official Rules of Indoor Hockey in three languages: English, French and German.

In order to make these rules easier to study and to apply, their wording has been entirely modified by the FIH Indoor Hockey Committee. Many notes and explanations are also included in the new text.

The Game of Indoor Hockey which is 15 years old only, has spread quickly and its number of players is ever increasing. We want to stress the usefulness of this very fast and attractive game for Field Hockey players. As a matter of fact it gives them the opportunity to improve by playing more frequently and allows also those belonging to countries where it is difficult or impossible to play Field Hockey in the Winter to practise their favourite sport.

We hope that this first edition of the official Indoor Hockey Rules shall be welcomed, also that it will serve the Game and contribute to the improvement of umpiring.

Rene G. FRANK,
Hon, General Secretary,
FIH 1966

Basically the rules taken over by the FIH are still those in force today and included the provision that all rules of field hockey not mentioned or altered by the indoor rules shall also apply to indoor hockey. The specific indoor rules include the team number of six, including a goalkeeper and the substitution procedures which allowed for a maximum of six substitutes, but only at specific situations in the game; the size of the pitch and the circle, and the size of the goals (slightly smaller than those of field hockey); the make up of the side-boards; the requirement of space behind the goal lines; no hitting of the ball

(pushing only) and no lifting except when shooting at goal; goalkeepers not permitted to raise the ball when kicking it; at penalty corners only the defending goalkeeper was permitted to stand in the goal until the ball was pushed out, with the other five players being required to stand outside the goal behind the back line on the opposite side from where the ball was being played; these other players could, after the ball was played, move into the goal-mouth. If any team was reduced to less than four players, the opponents were declared the winners. The game was to be played on any hard, fast surface, players' footwear and equipment were specified and goalkeepers' gloves were to be the same as for field hockey. There was to be no offside and no corners. Playing time (originally 2 x 15 minutes) was increased to 2 x 20 minutes with lesser time for junior domestic matches. With some refinements these rule still apply today.

Several rules, of course, followed the basic principles of outdoor hockey including the stick and the ball although later the indoor ball was required to be seamless. However in 1986 when it appeared that the indoor game seemed to be departing in some respects from hockey in general the rule book was re-written to conform as closely as possible, where appropriate, to the rules and their wording of outdoor hockey.

Interestingly enough, one indoor rule in 1966 provided for a penalty stroke from 7 metres to be awarded for "any grave and unsporting behaviour by a team in its own half of the ground". Also, there was the rule providing that a penalty corner be awarded for a deliberate offence within a player's own half, and that still remains. In 1966 however, a player could be temporarily suspended "for unsporting behaviour" for two to five minutes or be suspended for the remainder of the game and an incapacitated or suspended goalkeeper had to be replaced by another goalkeeper. Finally, the use of the hand to stop the ball in the air during play or at penalty corners by players other than the goalkeeper was permitted until 1992.

Accordingly, what occurred in rule changes after 1966 fell into two categories. One for reasons of clearer interpretation and requirements of the game as it became more international and thus more sophisticated and two to keep in line with outdoor hockey rules but only where appropriate. The first FIH authorised tournament matches occurred in 1972, with a European Nations Cup for men in 1973 and a women's championship in 1975.

The next edition of the indoor rules was not published until 1974, which introduced the rule that players must not stand in their opponents' goalmouth. More significantly from 1974, time was to be prolonged at half-time and full-time to allow penalty corners to be completed, supported by a definition as to when such an award was ended. In 1975 a supplement was issued prior to a revised edition in 1976, which included the important provision to forbid substitutions after the award of a penalty corner or penalty stroke.

The 1975/6 alterations also included

- i) that a player's stick must be on the ground playing the ball for a shot at goal
- ii) a player may not hit or play the ball in the air (but could stop it)
- iii) players may not take part in the game whilst lying on the pitch except for goalkeepers within their own circles, introduced because players were lying on the pitch thus reducing the playing area and causing unwanted obstruction. See 1986 for extension to this rule

In 1978 an injured player was permitted to be substituted during normal play (but only the injured player) and it was also made clear that an umpire's jurisdiction also extended to all players including those occupying the team benches. In 1979 the rule book recognised what had been happening at games for some time by legalising the substitution of a goalkeeper by a field player with the privileges of a goalkeeper but who was required to wear a different coloured shirt from that of all other players. In the same year a provision was inserted to permit substitution of incapacitated goalkeepers at penalty corners and penalty strokes. Also in 1979 the coloured card procedure (red, yellow, green) was formally introduced into the indoor rule book and if a bench player received a yellow card, his team had to withdraw a player until the suspension time was completed. A red card meant that the team played

with one less player for the remainder of the match. As in outdoor hockey, the penalty corner stop caused some problems, finally resolved by permitting a shot on goal after the ball had been stopped (by hand or stick) either inside or outside the circle. At the same time the requirement, at a free push, that all opposition players should be at least 3 metres from the ball was introduced, thus giving the taker the opportunity to play to a colleague standing beside him/her. Also, for all free pushes within three metres of the circle, all players had to be three metres from the ball. Free pushes for the ball going over the side-boards could be taken up to one metre from the boards. In cases where the side-boards met the circle lines (narrow pitches) the push was to be taken from a spot outside the circle.

In 1984 Notes of Guidance for Umpires and a Code of Signals were added. Whilst in 1986 the total revision of the rule book appeared based on that of the outdoor rule book and included Guidance and Advice for Players and Umpires; Hockey Terminology; specifications on pitch marking, general and personal equipment; and many more notes and guidance on many of the rules.

The most important rule change in 1986 forbade the taking part in the game of any player (except the goalkeeper) having knees, arms or hands on the pitch in the act of playing the ball or stopping it at penalty corners. However in normal play the hand holding the stick was permitted to be on the pitch for tackling purposes. As a corollary to the rule, goalkeepers were not permitted to play the ball outside the circle whilst lying on the ground. As an extension to the previous rule, players were now not permitted to deliberately enter within (as well as stand in) an opponents' goalmouth, or run behind the goals.

The first edition, issued in 1988-90, under the authority of the Hockey Rules Board included further clarification of the legitimate stop at penalty corners and made minor amendments and clarifications, many again in line with developments in outdoor hockey. The 1990-92 edition saw the introduction to the indoor rule book of Technical Interpretations. In this edition the rule about the award of a penalty stroke for unsporting behaviour in a player's half of the pitch was deleted as it was agreed that umpires now had sufficient authority and rules' provision to deal with any eventuality. Also brought into the indoor game were requirements relating to personal equipment, including helmets used by goalkeepers, and permission for goalkeepers to stop the ball with their stick above their shoulder. Field players, when acting as goalkeepers, were not permitted to wear helmets, compulsory for defending penalty corners and penalty strokes, outside the circle.

In 1992 the Hockey Rules Board brought indoor hockey in line with the outdoor game by abolishing all use of the hand except by goalkeepers defending their goal, thus also abolishing the hand stop at penalty corners. This was somewhat controversial as it was pointed out by indoor hockey followers that this would prevent a legitimate high shot at goal being stopped by hand by a field player at penalty corners. However, the rule has now found general acceptance given the fact that hockey was to be regarded as a stick and ball game. In 1992 the push stroke was closely defined in order to stamp out the unwanted features of the dragged push stroke and dangerous follow through action.

For the 1996 edition the format adopted was that which had been successful for the 1996 outdoor rule book. Although the layout was extensively revised only minor changes were made to the actual indoor rules themselves, many of them just to confirm changes which had become necessary in the outdoor game. In this connection the most important alteration was to introduce the rule concerning blood injuries and blood on clothing which provided that players must leave the pitch for treatment and if necessary, change of clothing.

As to the other rule changes made in 1996 these included

- i) Centre pass to start or re-start the game to be made in any direction
- ii) The free push must move at least 10 centimetres before another player of the same team can play the ball and it did not need not be taken on the exact spot of the offence but within playing distance
- iii) Goalkeepers permitted to wear "hand protectors" no longer referred to as gauntlets or with any reference to fingers. Subject to measurements - 23 centimetres wide and 35.5 centimetres long;

iv) The obstruction rule was simplified and included holding the ball against the side-board as an offence

The new 1996 book also included Technical Advice, an innovation introduced to assist National Associations in their endeavours to start up or improve indoor hockey facilities. Advice was provided on such matters as flooring, lighting, pitch size and pitch furniture etc. One notable change to the outdoor rules not transferred to the indoor game was the continuous substitutions' provisions including permission to substitute at penalty corners and penalty strokes. It was decided that such a change would be detrimental to the control of indoor play and accordingly the existing substitution controls were confirmed.

Since the 1996 edition, some very minor alterations to the indoor rules have been made for clarification, but it was not deemed necessary to reprint the rule book itself. In 1998, the FIH decree, recommended by the Hockey Rules Board and the FIH Equipment Committee, that hockey sticks must no longer contain any metallic substances, was incorporated into indoor hockey. It was also decided to incorporate into the indoor rules the experimental but mandatory provision to permit the ball to be played by the edge of the stick in appropriate indoor situations.

In 1999 the FIH approved the proposal by the Hockey Rules Board that a year 2000 edition of the Rules of Indoor Hockey be published with the provisions coming into effect internationally in November 2000. At its February 2000 meeting the Board, apart from updating some of the text to conform to the current rules of outdoor hockey published earlier in the year, agreed the following new rules and alterations to existing provisions, again bringing the indoor and outdoor rules closely together.

The Stick The rule relating to the make-up of the stick was amended and manufacturers and retailers were notified of the new requirements. Only FIH approved sticks will be acceptable from January 2001 at international level and from January 2003 at all other levels. A diagram of the stick is now in the indoor rule book. Also to be continued for indoor hockey, where relevant, is the Mandatory rule relating to play with the edge of the stick.

Substitution Substitution of an attacker or defender is now permitted at the award of a Penalty Stroke. The captain's responsibility for team discipline was increased to include substitutes.

Additional Penalty For a further offence before the awarded penalty has been taken, the penalty may be progressed up to five metres, upgraded and/or dealt with as misconduct, or reversed if committed by the previously benefiting team.

In any story of rule changes not everything can be covered and, as mentioned in the text, many alterations and amendments were made to the indoor book which followed previous action taken for hockey as a whole. All this in line with the policy of keeping the indoor game as near as possible, where appropriate, to the rules of the game of hockey.

Note Editions of the Indoor Hockey Rule Book were issued as follows:
FIH 1966, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1986-88
HRB 1988-90, 1990-92, 1992, 1996 and 2000

*Ernest Wall - November 2000
Member - Hockey Rules Board
Member/Secretary - FIH Indoor
Hockey Committee 1969 - 1988
Committee abolished (1988)*