

## Field Hockey – The Game

**Stick:** All players must have an equal chance to play the ball.

**Use of Hands/Feet:** Only the goalkeeper is allowed to use their hands or feet to control or move the hockey ball while protecting their team's goal.

**Players/Positions:** At half time the teams switch ends of the field. Each team consists of ten field players and a goalie. Players can move anywhere on the field, but each player does have exact responsibilities on the field.

**Start of Game:** A coin toss with the team captains and referee decides which team has ball possession and field direction to start the game.

The game begins with both teams positioned on their own half of the field.

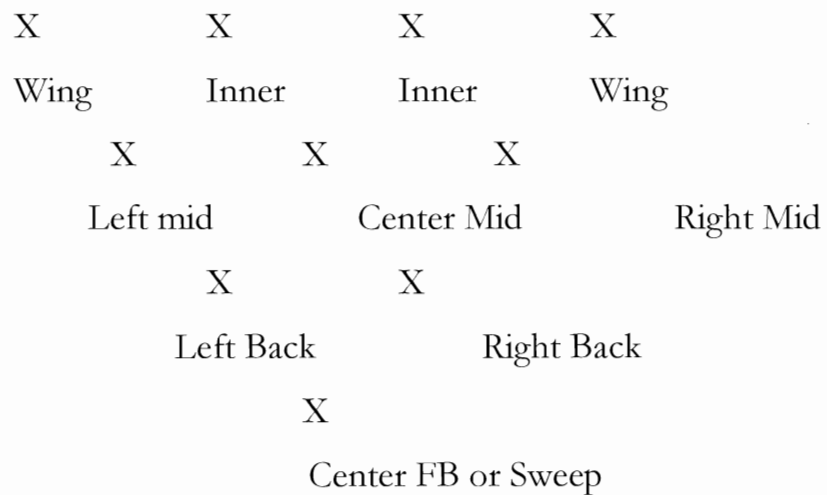
The game starts with a pass in any direction from the center of the field. The pass may be pushed or hit along the ground. All players other than the player making the initial pass must be in their half of the field and opponents must be at least 7 yards from the ball.

Once the game begins, play is continuous with the clock stopped only after a score, a penalty stroke or if the referee signals or a player injury.

After a goal is scored, play is restored at the 50 yard line and possession is given to the team that did not score.

When you score a goal, you retrieve the ball from the goal cage and run it up to the 50 yard line.

**Formation:** A widely used formation is four forwards , three midies, two backs, one sweeper and on goalkeeper. At the start of the game the team forms lines that begin on the 50 yard line with the four forwards, then approximately 10 yds. Behind the forward line are the midies, then 10 yards back are the backs and the sweeper is at the top of the circle and the goalie just outside the goal cage.



### POSITIONS

A widely used formation is four forwards , three midies, two backs, one sweeper and on goalkeeper. At the start of the game the team forms lines that begin on the 50 yard line with the four forwards, then approximately 10 yds. Behind the forward line are the midies, then 10 yards back are the backs and the sweeper is at the top of the circle and the goalie just outside the goal cage.



**Forwards: Wings and Inners.** – Players who occupy the front attacking position closest to the opponents goal. They are usually the high scoring players, fast and

hungry with a desire to Score!! Forwards should have good ball handling skills, quick feet and stamina.

**Mid fielders:** Midies must be fast thinking strategy players . Their role is to link attack / offense and defense. They must work well with their team defense and be able to “give and go” with the forward line. They play both offense and defense. They back up, “support” the forward line players but stay in front of the backs. Left mid stays primarily on the left side of the field, the center mid covers the center of the field and the right mid covers the right side of the field.

**Defenders:** Also known as **defensive backs**, these players are positioned nearer to the goalie, and their role is to prevent the opposition from penetrating their half of the field and goal. Defenders will attack for control of the ball, gain control and send the ball back up field to midfielders or forwards. They take a lot of 16 yd free hits so they should have good chokes and drives. Their primary role is defense and they primarily back up the mids. They generally do not go beyond the opposing teams 25 yd line (offensively). The left back covers the left side of the field and the right back covers the right side. They work very closely with the sweeper.

**Sweeper:** The last field defender used by teams to play behind the defensive backs. The sweeper provides additional defensive coverage and must be in constant communication with her goalie. Their area of coverage is primarily the circle. Any ball she plays should be cleared out to the side left or right, just not in front of or cross the goal.

**Key thoughts for Players:** Understand the game. The #1 thought you should have while on the field is: “where to be without the ball”. Anticipate where the ball is going to come out. Remember that each player on average will handle the ball for less than five minutes of the game. Be quick and mobile, be able to transition from offense to defense quickly. Offense is the first line of defense. Be calm under pressure, especially 1 v. 1. Think: “Am I in a position of successfully receive the ball?”. “Am I helping my player with the ball?” or “Am I standing behind a defender expecting to get the ball?”

### **FIELD OF PLAY:** \_\_\_\_\_

Dimensions and markings. The field of play is rectangular, 100 yards long and 60 yards wide. All lines are marked 3 inches wide and all lines are part of the file of play. So for a ball to be out of bound it must travel wholly over the line. The center line is 50 yard from the back lines, and two 25 yard lines are marked at either end of the

field. At each of the four corners a flag is placed to assist the players and referees. A 16 yard mark is placed inside the field of play on each side parallel to the back line and 16 yards from the back end line border. The 16 yard mark is 12 inches long. The shooting circle is a semicircle drawn from the back lines, 16 yards from each outer edge of the goal posts.

### WHAT IS & HOW TO:

**Hold a stick:** “V” Grip or shake hands. Place stick flat side down on the ground. Make a V with your left hand using your fingers and thumb. Grip the stick with the left hand almost at the top of the stick so the “V” is going down the rounded side of the stick. Place your right hand a little above 1/2 way down the stick near the end of the grip. Bend your knees. Look up. Left hand back, right elbow out, body low. Stick on ground. The left hand is the leading hand, the right hand moves the stick forward and back. Your trunk is bent slightly forward, right shoulder lower than the left. The stick should be held at a 45 degree angle to the ground to almost vertical, with a straight line formed from the elbow to the blade of the stick.

**Dribbling:** Ball is in front and to the right of the right foot and you should be on the balls of your feet with little steps. Moving the ball forward, using little taps, keep the stick in contact with the ball. The ball is touched the moment the right foot is on the ground. Moving the ball along the field. Ball control is #1 in field hockey. Being able to move a round the field in a controlled manner. Be able to dribble the ball with your head and eyes looking up. Keep the ball out in front of you. Keep the face of the stick open. Keep the ball in center of control box.

**Controlled:** Ball is pushed along the field keeping constant contact with the stick. Used when in close contact with a defender.

**Open.** Ball is tapped and comes off the stick. Used in open space to gain quick yardage up the field.

**Push Pass:** “Shake hands grip”. Stick stays in contact with the ball throughout the push. To execute a push pass point your left shoulder toward your target, position your body sideways to the line this will enable you to transfer your body weight. Push the ball using the head of the stick as you transfer your body weight to the left or front leg. You should feel as

if you are pushing through the ball while controlling the stick mainly with your right hand. The push pass is the most commonly used way to move the ball in a controlled manner to another teammate. The push pass does not lift off the ground at all and goes approximately 3-10 feet to your teammate depending on the playing surface. Arms work together, no whipping action. Knees bent. Step towards target and transfer weight. Left hand over left thigh. Follow through with toe of stick pointing to the target. “Toe to target”. Execute all passes with a drop, step and pass. Send a controlled push pass to a player on the run, send it to her stick side anticipating how far you need to pass it to reach her, receiver should have to reach for it, not back up or wait for the ball.

**The Drive:** This field hockey hit is meant for distance. The set up is very similar to the choke hit, your grip is high on the stick handle, bring the back to 2 o'clock and swing through the ball, and the stick should finish out in front of you at 9 o'clock. Step *into* this hit and strike the ball with a downward force. The drive should go between 50 – 100 yards. Keep your head over the ball for better control. Toe up. Contact in line with left foot, shoulder square to target, follow through, head down, don't pick up, step through ball to target.

**Choke Hit:** The choke hit can be executed on the run or in a stationary position. Your hands should be together at the top of the stick, similar to a baseball grip. Bring the stick back to approximately 3 o'clock and pull the stick through with accelerated force at the ball. The position of the ball should be in front of you and to the right. Put your body into this stroke and this hit should go about 20 – 40 yards.

**Receiving:** The key to receiving a ball on your field hockey stick is positioning. You must be light on your feet, up on the balls of your feet, with your body tipped slightly forward. Your stick is down on the ground and your head is looking up at the ball coming to you and look that ball right onto your stick. Your feet need to be quick to move as soon as you receive the ball and if you need to you can use the *whole* stick to stop the ball.

**Free Hits:** **Offensively:** Take all free hits quickly to prevent defense from setting up. Hit the ball to an open space so an attack player can run onto it. Offensive players must cut to get open. Do not stand behind a defender and ask for a pass – YOU ARE NOT OPEN. Do not try and hit the ball “Through” the defense. Chances are they will stop it!

**Defensively:** Defenders must have sticks on ground! Build a “wall” 7 yds away and hold your ground, not letting offensive players cut in front of you.

**Push Ins:** Or free hit. When the ball goes outside the field of play completely over the sideline, a free hit or push pass is taken on the sideline where the ball went out of play by a player of the opposing team. The ball must be stationary at the start, and may not be raised. Players from the opposing team must be at least 5 yards from the ball.

**16 Yard Hits:** Or defense hits, are taken by the defense when the attacking team plays the ball over the back line or there is an offensive foul committed inside the circle. The hit is taken from a spot exactly opposite from where the ball crossed the back line, 16 yards up the field, right outside the top of the circle. Take them on one side of the circle or the other, try not to take it directly in front of the cage and the defense should take it quickly, not allowing the other team so set up in an attempt to block the hit.

**Long Hit:** If the defense unintentionally hits the ball out of bounds over the end line, the offensive team gets a free hit from 5 yds in from the corner on the side line.

**Corner:** If the defense intentionally hits the ball over the sideline or a defensive infraction occurs inside the circle (example: stepping on the ball or hit in the shin guard with the ball), a corner is awarded to the offensive team. (See Corners Sheet with lineup and designated plays).



**To:** NC Field Hockey Travel 7/8

**Date:** 9/11/2009

**Re:** Practice Suggestions- Players always wear reversible pinnies for scrimmaging

---

Set up in Pairs on the 50 yd line, running drills out to the 25 yd line & back to your partner

Partner Passing:

Push Pass

Drive

Choke hit

Slap hit

Flick

Scoop

Dribbling:

Control/Speed dribble (ball on stick)

Loose dribble (tapping ball)

Indian dribble

Dodges:

Right Pull

Left Pull

Spin Strong (plant right foot)

Spin Weak (plant left foot)

Pull Back (w/2 ball checks back)

Set up Field for 2 half field scrimmages, new players on end, 2<sup>nd</sup> year players other end.

Using reversible pinnies