

COVID-19 Return to Play

Advice for Umpires



This document is aimed at enabling individuals who are members of the WHUA to get back to officiating games of hockey and helping them understand their responsibilities as an umpire.

Pre-match

- Be aware that changing facilities / club houses at the venue you are umpiring at may have restrictions in place such as one-way systems. It is important that these are always followed.
- You should arrive at the venue changed and ready to umpire and be prepared for the fact that the usual changing facilities may not be available.
- If indoor facilities are available, you should try to ensure that you wash or sanitise your hands at your earliest opportunity and regularly through out your time at the venue.
- Kit taken to the pitch should be kept to a minimum and left within a safe area.
- Pre-match chat with your colleague should be done while maintaining social distancing.
- Your pre-match chat with the captains should be done while also maintaining social distancing and the coin toss should be completed by one umpire with the team captain calling accordingly.

During the Game

- Should the game be stopped for any reason e.g. treatment of injuries, retrieving the ball from outside of the area of play etc then all individuals are to resume social distancing measures until play can continue.
- Natural breaks in play (PC's etc) do occur but umpires are encouraged to keep these breaks down to a minimum.
- **Player Spitting and Nose Blowing**
 - Spitting or nose blowing (where there is no handkerchief or tissue used) is something that regrettably takes place in our game, this must be stopped as it poses a significant risk to those participating.
 - If an umpire sees this happening on the pitch then a green card (2 minute suspension) is to be issued to that player or participant. The area of the pitch that the offence took place in will need to be cleaned. Note – it is not the umpires responsibility to clean the pitch only to ensure that it is cleaned before the game continues.
 - Repeat offenders (i.e. player(s) offending more than once) will be subject to further personal penalties prescribed in section 14 of the 2019 FIH rules of hockey.
 - Consistent repeat offenders will be subject to processes outline in Hockey Wales Disciplinary (Red Card / MMO / Disrepute) Regulations.
 - If spitting or nose blowing is directed at a player/umpire/participant, or if a player threatens to do this then this should be treated as a red card offence and report as such (see below).
- **Suspended players**
 - All existing rules regarding suspended players are to apply, however, in venues where there is a lack of dug out facilities then suspended players should be sent to stand on the respective 23m line. If there are dug outs available then suspended players should be allowed to serve their suspension in their respective team dugouts, in line with social distancing guidelines.

COVID-19 Return to Play Advice for Umpires



- **Interaction between players and officials**
 - There are situations that occur in matches where players surround or crowd umpires. It is advised that umpires follow the advice given from the FIH to avoid crowding, offending players are to be given a 2-minute temporary suspension.
 - Guidance on the use of bad language or abuse of officials has not changed and any player found guilty of this will be liable to sanctions set out in the Hockey Wales Disciplinary (Red Cards / MMO / Disrepute) Regulations.

Post Match

- Umpires should avoid contact with players as far as possible, players are encouraged to say thank you to umpires by using friendly gestures such as a wave or a thumbs up.
- Any match day paperwork should be completed using your own pen.
- Hospitality at clubs may vary, and umpires should be prepared for changing facilities not being available after games.
- Any kit or equipment you have used is either cleaned properly when you return home or left for a minimum of 72 hours in line with government advice.

Notes:

- Red Card / MMO / Disrepute form has been updated and there is a box on there to report any COVID-19 related incidents that happen on the pitch.
- Red Card / MMO / Disrepute regulations have been updated to outline minimum sanctions handed out to anyone deliberately attempting or carrying out any COVID-19 related incidents i.e. threatening / deliberately coughing / sneezing etc at an umpire / player during the game.
- These two documents will be uploaded to www.whua.org.uk/downloads in time for the start of the new season.

Umpiring Tips:

1. During your pre-match chat with captains remind them of the new sanctions, their COVID-19 officers should have already told them, but there is nothing wrong with re-enforcing the message.
2. During the game use your voice and low-level management skills for the safety of yourself and the players, only resort to stricter levels of management if absolutely required. Vary your body language, whistle tone and voice giving decisive direction during the game. If it is clear players are going to approach you then advise them that you will only speak to one of them and even that one should remain socially distant.
3. Ensure that the guidance for spitting / sneezing is applied consistently and fairly towards all players. Be proactive and preventative to educate players as this is the key to the enforcement of these guidelines.
4. In your pre-match chat with your colleague agree what is going to happen to suspend players – be clear and inform the captains.
5. Avoid touching the ball or any other equipment with your hands to help reduce the risk of transmission.

Should you require more advice or guidance on the above then please email umpires@hockeywales.org.uk