ENGLAND HOCKEY

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RULES OF HOCKEY 2009-10 FREE HIT GUIDANCE ISSUED TO UMPIRES (May 2009)

For free hits (including centre passes, corners and all sideline restarts after the ball has been outside the field)

- All **opponents** must be at least 5 metres from the ball

For free hits awarded to the **attack** within their attacking 23 metre area

- All **players** must be at least 5 metres from the ball

In all situations - if taken quickly and a player is within 5 metres of the ball but is not playing, attempting to play the ball or influencing play, the taking of the free hit does not need to be delayed – be consistent in your judgment of this

Attacking free hits awarded **within 5 metres** of the circle must be taken **back to the nearest point 5 metres from the circle**

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A player taking a free hit, centre pass, corner or sideline restart can be the next player to play the ball – a '**self-pass**': -

- Taking the free hit and the next playing of the ball must be **two distinct and separate** actions. The ball does **not** have to move 1 metre before the player may play the ball again.

At a free hit, which is not a 'self-pass', the ball must move at least **1 metre** before it can be played by a teammate of the player taking the free hit

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For free hits (including corners and sideline restarts) taken by the **attacking team inside the 23** metre area the ball **cannot** be played **directly into the circle**

- At a 'self-pass' the ball **must travel** at least 5 metres from the point of the free hit (not necessarily in a single direction) before the taker himself can play the ball into the circle.

- Alternatively the ball must be touched, deflected, hit or pushed by **any** other player **before either it enters or can be played** into the circle

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For free hits (including corners and sideline restarts) taken by the **attacking** team inside the 23 metre area

- Be **pro-active** and use your common sense regarding the **placement** of free hits either close to the circle or the 23 metre line

- Be flexible, only penalise if the 'wrong spot' for the free hit is chosen in order to either **gain an unfair advantage** or for reasons which are **against the spirit and aim of the Rules**

- Intentionally moving the location of an attacking free hit outside the 23 metre area to create an opportunity to play the ball directly into the circle **must** be seen as an unfair advantage and **penalised accordingly**

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For a free hit taken by the **attacking** team within their attacking 23 metre area which is played directly into the circle

- Do **not** penalise **unless and until** the ball actually enters the circle. A free hit is awarded to the opposing team from the spot where the free hit was incorrectly executed

- Award the appropriate penalty for infringements and be aware of break down play situations, intentional interference with free hits etc. Use technical and personal penalties as required or appropriate.

ENDS