



## **Rules of Beach Hockey including explanations**

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### **Responsibility and Liability**

Participants in Beach Hockey must be aware of the Beach Hockey Rules and of other information in this publication. They are expected to perform according to the Rules unless explicitly agreed by FIH, a Continental Federation, a National Association or all persons participating in a match.

Emphasis is placed on safety. Everyone involved in the game must act with consideration for the safety of others. Relevant national legislation must be observed. Players must ensure that their equipment does not constitute a danger to themselves or to others by virtue of its quality, materials or design.

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) does not accept responsibility for any defects or non-compliance of facilities and is not liable for any consequences resulting from their use. Any verification of facilities or equipment conducted before a match is limited to ensuring an overall appearance of compliance and sporting requirements.

Umpires exercise an important role controlling the game and ensuring fair play.

### **Implementation and Authority**

The Beach Hockey Rules apply to all Beach Hockey players and officials. National Associations have discretion to decide the date of implementation at national level. The date of implementation for international competition is 1 June 2016.

The Rules are issued by the FIH Rules Committee under the authority of the International Hockey Federation. Copyright is held by the International Hockey Federation.

### **Availability of the Rules**

Information about the availability of the Rules and other information on the FIH website is included at the end of this publication.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Beach Hockey

Hockey played with eleven players on a full size outdoor field will continue to be the main format of the sport with Indoor Hockey, Hockey5s and now Beach Hockey being alternative versions of the game which supports both the global development of hockey and enhancing the skills and enjoyment of the players.

How Beach Hockey can be adapted and played flexibly will be explained later in this introduction.

Any matters not explicitly dealt with in the Rules of Beach Hockey are covered by the eleven-a-side Rules of Hockey. Among other things, this enables this document describing the Rules of Beach Hockey to be brief.

Beach Hockey is a new version of the sport so FIH recognises that some changes might occur in the detailed Rules. If this happens, the changes will be published on the FIH website [www.fih.ch](http://www.fih.ch).

### Adapting Beach Hockey

For international competitions such as the World Beach Games, the Rules must be very precise and followed by everyone taking part. However, outside of international competitions, Beach Hockey is designed to be adaptable to the available facilities and for players of all ages and abilities.

For example, if the playing area is less than specified in these Rules, it might be appropriate to play with only four players of each team on the field. It might not be possible to provide the pitch perimeter boards, in which case the ball outside the side-lines could be dealt with in the same way as it is in eleven-a-side hockey. Other playing Rules can be adapted as necessary with these published Rules of Beach Hockey providing a reference point and framework.

In these ways, Beach Hockey can be played virtually anywhere where there is sand, at any time. It is therefore an ideal introduction to the sport which enables core skills to develop and the game to be enjoyed with simple Rules in more informal surroundings.

### Developing Beach Hockey

The FIH will be promoting Beach Hockey as a complementary version of the sport to traditional 11-a-side hockey, Indoor Hockey and Hockey5s. It therefore welcomes suggestions for development of the Rules or for clarification of them especially from National Hockey Associations. National Associations are an important primary source of advice and guidance but, if appropriate, Rules suggestions or questions can be sent by email to [info@fih.ch](mailto:info@fih.ch) or to the FIH postal address.

## TERMINOLOGY

### **Player**

One of the participants in a team

### **Team**

A team consists of a maximum of eight persons composed of a maximum of five players on the field and up to three substitutes.

*This may be amended by Regulation to a maximum of ten persons.*

### **Field Player**

One of the participants on the field other than the goalkeeper.

### **Goalkeeper**

One of the participants of each team on the field who wears a single coloured shirt which is different in colour from that of both teams.

### **Attack (Attacker)**

The team (player) which (who) is trying to score a goal.

### **Defence (Defender)**

The team (player) which (who) is trying to prevent a goal being scored.

### **Back-line**

The shorter perimeter line.

### **Side-line**

The longer perimeter line.

### **Defensive areas**

The area enclosed by the imaginary line across the field 10 metres from each back-line, indicated either by marks on the perimeter boards or flag-posts.

*This may be amended by Regulation to 8 metres areas.*

### **Goalkeeper areas**

The area enclosed by the imaginary line across the field 5 metres from each back-line, indicated either by marks on the perimeter boards or flag-posts.

### **Playing the ball : field player**

Stopping, deflecting or moving the ball with the stick.

### **Shot at goal**

The action of an attacker attempting to score by playing the ball towards the goal.

### **Offence**

An action contrary to the Rules which may be penalised by an umpire.

## PLAYING THE GAME

***For any matters not explicitly dealt with in these Rules of Beach Hockey, see the Rules of Hockey.***

### 1 Field of Play

*The information below provides a simplified description of the field of play.*

- 1.1 The field of play is rectangular, 30-35 metres long and 20-25 metres wide.  
*The maximum size is 35 metres long and 25 metres wide, however the pitch size may be varied according to available location, age, size, strength and skill level of the players.*
- 1.2 Side-lines mark the longer perimeters of the field; back-lines mark the shorter perimeters of the field.
- 1.3 The goal-lines are the parts of the back-lines between the goal-posts.
- 1.4 Inflatable perimeter boards, ideally with a height of maximum 100 cm, mark the side-lines and back-lines but not the goal-lines; the boards are placed against the outside of the lines.  
*Beach Hockey may be played with different size perimeter boards or even no boards at all.*
- 1.5 Lines are marked on the perimeter boards to denote:  
The centre line: the middle of the field.  
The defensive area lines: 10 metres from each back-line.  
*These may be amended by Regulation to 8 metres.*  
The penalty stroke spots, 8 metres from the centre of each goal-line.  
The goalkeeper area lines: 5 metres from each back-line.  
*If there are no perimeter boards, flag-posts between 1.20 and 1.50 metres in height are placed at each corner of the field and at both sides of the 5 and 10 metres lines.*
- 1.6 The goals, 4 metres wide and 2 metres high, are positioned outside the field of play at the centre of and touching each back-line.

### 2 Composition of Teams

- 2.1 A maximum of five players from each team take part in play at any particular time during the match.  
*If a team has more than the permitted number of players on the field, time should be stopped to correct the situation. Decisions taken prior to correcting the situation cannot be changed, if time and/or play has already been re-started.*  
*Play and time is restarted with a penalty stroke awarded against the team responsible.*
- 2.2 Each team has a goalkeeper on the field throughout a match.
- 2.3 Each team is permitted up to three substitutes.  
*This may be amended by Regulation to up to five substitutes.*
- 2.4 Each team is permitted to substitute from its players not on the field of play:

- a substitution is permitted at any time
  - b there is no limit to the number of players who are permitted to be substituted at the same time or to the number of times any player is permitted to substitute or be substituted
  - c substitution of a player is permitted only after that player has left the field
  - d substitutions are not permitted for suspended players during their suspension
  - e after completing a suspension, a player is permitted to be substituted without first returning to the field
  - f time is not stopped for substitutions except for the substitution of an incapacitated or suspended goalkeeper.
- 2.5 Players must leave or enter the field for substitution or any other purpose within 3 metres of the centre-line on a side of the field agreed with the umpires.
- Players substituting for each other must do so within touching distance of each other.*
- 2.6 No persons other than field players and goalkeepers are permitted on the field during the match without the permission of an umpire.
- 2.7 Players on or off the field are under the jurisdiction of the umpire throughout the match including the intervals.
- 2.8 A player who is injured or bleeding must leave the field unless medical reasons prevent this and must not return until wounds have been covered; players must not wear blood stained clothing.

### **3 Captains**

- 3.1 One player of each team must be appointed as captain.
- 3.2 A replacement captain must be appointed when a captain is suspended.
- 3.3 Captains must wear a distinctive arm-band or similar distinguishing article on an upper arm or shoulder or over the upper part of a sock or leg.
- 3.4 Captains are responsible for the behaviour of all players on their team and for ensuring that substitutions of players on their team are carried out correctly.
- A personal penalty may be awarded if a captain repeatedly fails to exercise these responsibilities.*

### **4 Players' Clothing and Equipment**

- Tournament Regulations available from the FIH provide additional information and requirements about players' clothing, personal equipment and advertising. Refer also to Regulations established by Continental Federations and National Associations.*
- 4.1 Field players of the same team must wear uniform clothing.
- 4.2 Players must not wear anything which is dangerous to other players.
- Field players:*
- *are highly recommended to wear mouth protection;*
  - *are not permitted to wear protective headgear (face mask or other protective head covering).*
- 4.3 Goalkeepers must wear a single coloured shirt or garment which is different in colour from that of both teams.

- 4.4 The stick has a traditional shape with a handle and a curved head which is flat on its left side:
- the stick must be smooth and must not have any rough or sharp parts
  - inclusive of any additional coverings used, the stick must be able to pass through a ring with an interior diameter of 51 mm
  - any curvature along the length of the stick (the rake or bow) must have a continuous smooth profile along the whole length, must occur along the face side or the back of the stick but not both and is limited to a depth of 25 mm
  - the stick must conform with the specification agreed by the FIH Rules Committee.

*A detailed specification of the standard stick is provided in the Rules of Hockey.*

*It is also permitted to use an official Beach Hockey stick.*

- 4.5 The ball is spherical, with a circumference of approximately 45cm and a weight of between 140 & 250 grams and a colour which contrasts with the playing surface.

## **5 Match and Result**

- 5.1 A match consists of an agreed number of periods, length of periods and intervals between the periods.

*In general, matches consist either of four periods of 6 minutes each with a 1 minute interval between the first & second and third & fourth periods, with a half-time of interval of 4 minutes; or two period of 7 minutes with a 1 minute half-time interval; other periods and intervals may be agreed as specified in Regulations for particular competitions.*

*If an incident arises immediately before the end of a period or the end of the match which requires review by the umpires, the review may be conducted even though time has subsequently been completed and signalled. The review should take place immediately and action taken to revert to and correct the situation as appropriate.*

*Time is not stopped except to deal with an injury, or for a substitution of an incapacitated or suspended goalkeeper.*

- 5.2 The team scoring the most goals is the winner.

*Information about a penalty stroke or shoot-out competition as a way of reaching a result in a drawn match is included in Competition Regulations which are available, if required, from the FIH website.*

## **6 Start and Re-start the Match**

- 6.1 A coin is tossed:
- the team which wins the toss has the choice of which goal to attack in the first period of the match or to start the match with a centre pass
  - if the team winning the toss chooses which goal to attack in the first period of the match, the opposing team starts the match
  - if the team winning the toss chooses to start the match, the opposing team has the choice of which goal to attack in the first period of the match.

- 6.2 Direction of play is reversed in the second period of a match consisting of two periods; and in the third period of a match consisting of four periods.

- 6.3 A centre pass is taken:



- a to start the match by a player from the team winning the toss if they chose this option; otherwise by a player from the opposing team
  - b to re-start a two period match at the start of the second period by a player of the team which did not take the centre pass in the first period
  - c to re-start a four period match at the start of the third and fourth periods by a player of the team which did not take the centre pass at the start of the first and second periods
  - d after a goal by a player of the team against which the goal was scored.
- 6.4 Taking a centre pass:
- a taken at the centre of the field
  - b it is permitted to play the ball in any direction
  - c all players other than the player taking the centre pass must be in the half of the field which includes the goal they are defending
  - d the procedures for taking a free hit apply.
- 6.5 A bully takes place to re-start a match when time or play has been stopped for an injury or for any other reason and no penalty has been awarded:
- a a bully is taken on the centre line
  - b the ball is placed between one player from each team who face each other with the goal they are defending to their right
  - c the two players start with their sticks on the ground to the right of the ball and then tap the flat faces of their sticks together once just over the ball after which either player is permitted to play the ball
  - d all other players must be at least 4 metres from the ball.

## 7 Ball Outside the Field

- 7.1 The ball is out of play when it passes completely over the perimeter board on the side-line or back-line.
- If there are no perimeter boards, the ball is out of play only if it touches the ground, or any person or equipment, outside the side-line or back-line.*
- 7.2 When the ball travels over the side-line:
- a play is re-started not more than one metre from where the ball crossed the side-line
  - b if the ball crossed the side-line within the defensive area and was last touched by a defender, play is re-started with the ball on the nearest defensive area line and not more than one metre from the side-line
  - c play is restarted by a player of the team which was not the last team to touch or play the ball before it went out of play.
  - d the procedures for taking a free hit apply.
- 7.3 When the ball is played over the back-line by an attacker, unintentionally by a defender or deflected by a goalkeeper, and no goal is scored:
- a play is re-started with the ball up to the nearest defensive area line and in line with where it crossed the back-line
  - b play is re-started by a player of the defending team
  - c the procedures for taking a free hit apply
- 7.4 When the ball is played over the back-line intentionally by a defender, unless deflected by a goalkeeper, and no goal is scored:

- a play is re-started with the ball on the nearest defensive area line, 1 metre from the side-line nearest to where the ball crossed the back-line
- b play is re-started by a player of the attacking team
- c the procedures for taking a free hit apply

## 8 Method of Scoring

- 8.1 A goal is scored when the ball is played completely over the goal-line and under the cross-bar.

*A goal may be scored when the ball has been touched by an attacker or defender (including a goalkeeper) anywhere on the field, including directly from a free hit taken by either a field player or goalkeeper.*

- 8.2 Goalkeepers must not use their body, hands, legs or feet to score a goal for their team.

## 9 Conduct of Play: Players

*Players are required to act responsibly at all times.*

- 9.1 A match is played between two teams with not more than five players of each team on the field at the same time.

- 9.2 Players on the field must hold their stick and not use it in a dangerous way.

- 9.3 Players must not touch, handle or interfere with other players or their sticks or clothing.

- 9.4 Players must not intimidate or impede another player.

- 9.5 Players must not play the ball with the back of the stick.

- 9.6 Players may stop, receive, play or deflect the ball in a controlled manner in any part of the field when the ball is at any height including above the shoulder provided that this is not dangerous or leading to danger.

- 9.7 Players may keep the ball in the air on their stick for no longer than 5 seconds, provided that this action is not dangerous or leading to danger.

- 9.8 Field players must not stop, kick, propel, pick up, throw or carry the ball with any part of their body.

*It is not an offence if the ball hits the hand holding the stick but would otherwise have hit the stick.*

- 9.9 Players must not obstruct an opponent who is attempting to play the ball.

*Players obstruct if they:*

- *back into an opponent*
- *physically interfere with the stick or body of an opponent*
- *shield the ball from a legitimate tackle with their stick or any part of their body.*

*A stationary player receiving the ball is permitted to face in any direction.*

*A player with the ball is permitted to move off with it in any direction except bodily into an opponent or into a position between the ball and an opponent who is within playing distance of the ball and attempting to play it.*

*A player who runs in front of or blocks an opponent to stop them legitimately playing or attempting to play the ball is obstructing (this is third party or shadow obstruction).*

- 9.10 Players must not tackle unless in a position to play the ball without body contact.
- Physical play by field players, such as sliding tackles, which take an opponent to ground and risk causing injury should attract suitable match and personal penalties.*
- 9.11 Players must not throw any object or piece of equipment onto the field, at the ball, or at another player, umpire or person.
- 9.12 Players must not delay play to gain benefit by time-wasting.

## **10 Conduct of Play: Goalkeepers**

- 10.1 When the ball is inside the imaginary five metres goalkeeper area, nearest to the back-line of the goal they are defending, and they have their stick in their hand:
- a goalkeepers are permitted to use their stick, feet or legs to propel the ball and to use their stick, feet, legs, or any other part of their body to stop the ball or deflect it in any direction including over the back-line.
  - b goalkeepers are permitted to use their arms, hands and any other part of their body to push the ball away.
- The action in rule b above is permitted only as part of a goal saving action or to move the ball away from the possibility of a goal scoring action by opponents. It does not permit a goalkeeper to propel the ball forcefully with arms, hands or body so that it travels a long distance.*

- 10.2 Goalkeepers must not lie on the ball.
- 10.3 When the ball is outside the imaginary five metres area of the goal that they are defending, goalkeepers are only permitted to play the ball with their stick.
- 10.4 Goalkeepers can only score a goal for their team using their stick.

## **11 Conduct of Play: Umpires**

- 11.1 One umpire controls the match, applies the Rules and is the sole judge of fair play.
- Subject to the pitch area and having suitable run offs, it is possible to officiate the match from a tennis umpire's chair, situated outside the pitch at the centre-line.*
- 11.2 Umpires have responsibility for all decisions during the match and are also responsible for keeping a written record of goals scored and of suspension cards used.
- 11.3 Umpires are responsible for ensuring that the full time is played and for indicating the end of time for each period.
- 11.4 Umpires blow the whistle to:
- a start and end each period of the match
  - b start a bully
  - c enforce a penalty
  - d start and end a penalty stroke
  - e indicate a goal
  - f re-start the match after a goal has been scored

- g stop the play for the substitution onto or off the field of an incapacitated or suspended goalkeeper
  - h stop the match for any other reason and to re-start it
  - i indicate, when necessary, that the ball has passed wholly outside the field
- 11.5 Umpires must not coach during a match.
- 11.6 If the ball strikes an umpire, unauthorised person or any loose object on the field, play continues.

## 12 Penalties

- 12.1 Advantage: a penalty is awarded only when a player or team has been disadvantaged by an opponent breaking the Rules.
- 12.2 A free hit is awarded to the opposing team:
- a for an offence by any player between the two defensive areas
  - b for an offence by an attacker within the defensive area their opponents are defending
  - c for an unintentional offence by a defender within the defensive area they are defending, including when the ball becomes lodged in a player's clothing or equipment.
- 12.3 A penalty stroke is awarded:
- a for an offence by a defender within the defensive area they are defending which prevents the probable scoring of a goal
  - b for an intentional offence by a defender within the defensive area they are defending against an opponent who has possession of the ball or an opportunity to play the ball.
- 12.4 If there is another offence or misconduct before the awarded penalty has been taken:
- a a personal penalty may be awarded
  - b the penalty may be reversed if the subsequent offence was committed by the team first awarded the penalty.

## 13 Procedures for Taking Penalties

- 13.1 Location of a free hit:
- a a free hit is taken close to where the offence occurred
 

*'Close to' means within playing distance of where the offence occurred and with no significant advantage gained.*
  - b a free hit awarded to the attack within the defensive area of their opponent is taken on the defensive area line at the nearest point to the offence
  - c a free hit awarded to the defence within their own defensive area can be taken anywhere in that area.
- 13.2 Procedures for taking a free hit, centre pass and putting the ball back into play after it has been outside the field:
- a the ball must be stationary
  - b opponents must be at least 4 metres from the ball
 

*If an opponent is within 4 metres of the ball, they must not interfere with the taking of the free hit or must not play or attempt to play the ball. If this*

*player is not playing the ball, attempting to play the ball or influencing play, the free hit need not be delayed.*

- c the ball is moved using a push, hit, scoop or flick
- d the ball may be played or shot directly at goal

13.3 Taking a penalty stroke:

- a time and play is stopped when a penalty stroke is awarded
- b all players on the field, other than the player taking the stroke and the goalkeeper defending it, must stand beyond the centre-line and must not influence the taking of the stroke
- c the ball is placed on the penalty stroke spot nearest to the goal of the defending goalkeeper
- d the player taking the stroke must stand behind and within playing distance of the ball before beginning the stroke
- e the goalkeeper must stand with both feet on the goal-line and, once the whistle has been blown to start the penalty stroke, must not leave the goal-line until the ball has been played
- f the whistle is blown when the player taking the stroke and the goalkeeper defending it are in position
- g the player taking the stroke must not take it until the whistle has been blown

*The player taking the stroke or the player defending it must not delay the taking of the stroke.*

- h the player taking the stroke must push, flick, scoop or hit the ball and is permitted to raise it to any height
- i the player taking the stroke must play the ball only once and must not subsequently approach either the ball or the player defending the stroke.

13.4 The penalty stroke is completed when :

- a a goal is scored
- b the ball comes to rest, lodges in the goalkeeper's clothing, is caught by the goalkeeper, or goes outside the defending goalkeeper area or pitch

13.5 For an offence during the taking of a stroke:

- a the stroke is taken before the whistle is blown and a goal is scored: the stroke is taken again
- b the stroke is taken before the whistle is blown and a goal is not scored: a free hit is awarded to the defence
- c for any other offence by the player taking the stroke: a free hit is awarded to the defence
- d for any offence by the goalkeeper including moving either foot before the ball has been played : the penalty stroke is taken again

*If a goal is scored even though there has been an offence by the player defending the stroke, the goal is awarded.*

- e for an offence by a player of the defending team, other than the goalkeeper, and a goal is not scored : the penalty stroke is taken again.
- f for an offence by a player of the attacking team other than the player taking the stroke and a goal is scored : the penalty stroke is taken again.

## 14 Personal Penalties

- 14.1 For any offence, the offending player may be:
- a cautioned (indicated by spoken words)
  - b temporarily suspended for 1 minute of playing time (indicated by a green card)  
*For the duration of each temporary suspension of a player on or off the field, with a green card, the offending team plays with one fewer player.*
  - c temporarily suspended for a minimum of 2 minutes of playing time (indicated by a yellow card)  
*For the duration of each temporary suspension of a player on or off the field, with a yellow card, the offending team plays with one fewer player.*
  - d permanently suspended from the current match (indicated by a red card).  
*For each permanent suspension, the offending team plays for the remainder of the match with one fewer player.*  
*A personal penalty may be awarded in addition to the appropriate penalty.*
- 14.2 Temporarily suspended players must remain in a designated place until permitted by the umpire who suspended them to resume play.
- 14.3 Temporarily suspended players are permitted to re-join their team during intervals after which they must return to a designated place to complete their suspension.
- 14.4 The intended duration of a temporary suspension may be extended for misconduct by a player while suspended.
- 14.5 Permanently suspended players must leave the field and its surrounding area.

## FIELD AND EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

### FIELD AND EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

- 1.1 Field and field equipment**  
The field of play is rectangular, ideally 30-35 metres long bounded by side-lines and 20-25 metres wide bounded by back-lines.
- The playing surface must continue (to create "run-off" areas) for a minimum of 5 metres at the back-lines and 2 metre at the side-lines, taking into account whether inflatable perimeter boards are being used or not.*
- 1.2 Markings :**  
a no marks other than those described in these Rules are to be made on the playing surface  
b lines are 50 mm wide and must be clearly marked along their entire length  
c the side-lines and back-lines and all markings enclosed between them are part of the field
- 1.3 Lines and other marks :**  
a side-lines: 30-35 metres long perimeter lines  
b back-lines: 20-25 metres long perimeter lines  
c goal-lines: the parts of the back-lines between the goal-posts  
d centre-line: the imaginary line across the middle of the field
- 1.4 Goals:**  
a two vertical goal-posts joined by a horizontal crossbar are placed at the centre of each back-line on the external marks.  
b the distance between the inner edges of the goal-posts is 4.00 metres and the distance from the lower edge of the cross-bar to the ground is 2.00 metres. The goal must be at least 1.00 metre deep.
- 1.5 Flag-posts (if no perimeter boards):**  
a flag-posts are between 1.20 and 1.50 metres in height  
b flag-posts are placed at each corner of the field and at the 5 and 8 or 10 metre lines  
c flag-posts must not be dangerous
- 1.6 Stick**  
a the stick has a traditional shape which will be retained, as per the Rules of Hockey  
b An official Beach Hockey stick may also be used
- 1.7 The ball:**  
a is spherical.  
b has a circumference of approximately 450mm.  
c weighs between 140 grams and 250 grams.

## Additional Information

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) can provide information on various topics to assist participation in the sport.

In particular, **the Rules of Hockey** are referred to in the Beach Hockey Rules and are available from the FIH.

**The Rules of Hockey and much more information about hockey are available on the FIH website:**

[www.fih.ch](http://www.fih.ch)

**or from the FIH Office:**

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