

In2Hockey 7-A-Side Rules valid from September 2021

RULE 1 – TEAMS

- a. The game is played between two teams. They shall each have a maximum of ten players. Seven are permitted on the pitch at any one time.
- b. They are six outfield players and one goal-keeper.
- c. The remaining three players are substitutes.
- d. Every team must play with a fully kitted goalkeeper.
- e. When playing in the England Hockey In2Hockey Championships there are special regulations relating to the composition of teams. For full details please refer to the latest regulations on the England Hockey website

RULE 2 – SUBSTITUTIONS

- a. Substitutions are made on the centre line, and are allowed at any time, except following the award of a penalty corner or penalty stroke, until its completion, when only the defending goalkeeper may be substituted if injured for another fully kitted goalkeeper.

RULE 3 – DURATION OF THE GAME

- a. Match durations can vary, depending on the type of activity and the nature of the competition. Matches are usually two halves (of approximately 12-15 minutes each) with an interval (half-time) of not more than 5 minutes. For specific guidance on suggested match durations for different ages please see appendix 1.
- b. b. Following half-time the two teams change ends.

RULE 4 – CAPTAINS

- a. The Captains toss a coin for choice of ends or possession of the ball at the start of the game.
- b. Team Managers and / or coaches are responsible for the conduct of all players in their team, including those on the bench (the substitutes).

RULE 5 – THE PITCH

LENGTH	55 metres
WIDTH	43 metres
SHOOTING CIRCLES	Radius of 14.63 metres (the same as a full-size hockey pitch)
PENALTY STROKE SPOT	5 metres from the goal-line into the pitch
PENALTY CORNER MARKERS	10 metres from each goal-post on the back-line

Please refer to the In2Hockey Advisory Guidelines for full diagram of pitch and markings

RULE 6 - THE GOAL

- a. Width: 3.6 metres. It must be positioned against the outer edge of the back-line in line with the centre of the pitch (goals are the same size as those used in 11-a-side hockey).

RULE 7 – THE BALL

- a. For matches involving younger, inexperienced players, it is preferable to use an In2Hockey ball. The ball is the same size, but weighs 100 grams (4ozs) so is lighter than a standard hockey ball.
- b. This recommendation is very much dependent on the standard and experience of the players. If they have been playing hockey for a period of time, they may well be comfortable with a standard ball, but the age and ability of all players involved should be taken into account.

RULE 8 – THE STICK

- a. The stick shall be a standard regulation hockey stick. It shall have a flat face side and a rounded side.
- b. The ball may be played with the flat face side of the stick or the edge of the rounded side, on condition that the flat side is visible (i.e. not flat to the turf/pitch). It should be noted that playing the ball with the edge of the rounded side is always subject to dangerous play (i.e. it will be penalised by the umpires if it is measured to be dangerous or is leading to dangerous play).

Note: The umpires shall forbid the use of any stick that does not comply with the Rules of Hockey.

RULE 9 – PLAYER EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

- a. In line with England Hockey's Safety Guidance FAQs ([here](#)), it is strongly recommended that shin/ankle protection and mouth-guards are worn by all outfield players at all times (inclusive of training sessions/games) and that face masks should be worn across all age groups and playing formats when defending a penalty corner (inclusive of training sessions/games).
- b. Players must not throw any object or piece of equipment onto the field, at the ball, or at another player umpire or person. Following a penalty corner, if the ball hits any discarded equipment, such as a hand protector, knee pads or a face mask, a free hit should be awarded if this occurs outside the circle, and a penalty corner awarded if this occurs inside the circle.
- c. No player shall wear any equipment that may be dangerous to themselves or other players. This includes raised jewellery, baseball caps with a stiffened peak and / or any sharp object.
- d. The use of appropriate footwear for the playing surface (trainers or turf shoes) and suitable warm clothing (track-suit) is encouraged.

Note: The umpires shall forbid the wearing of any equipment that does not comply with this Rule.

RULE 10 – GOALKEEPER EQUIPMENT

In the interest of safety, goalkeepers must wear full goalkeeping equipment including:

- > Full helmet with throat guard
- > Body protector (groin and chest areas)
- > Hand protectors
- > Leg protectors
- > Feet protectors (kickers)
- > Abdominal guard or box

Goalkeepers must also have a stick.

Note: The umpires will not allow any team to play with a goalkeeper who is not properly protected

RULE 11 – FAIR PLAY

- a. Rough or dangerous play shall not be allowed, nor any behaviour which in the opinion of the umpire, amounts to misconduct. Note: The Umpires shall administer a personal

penalty to any player who persists in breaking this rule.

- b. Players must not intentionally use any part of their body to play the ball (except the hand to protect themselves in a dangerous situation).
- c. Players must not play at any high ball with the stick held at above shoulder height unless they are attempting to prevent a goal from being scored (i.e. to defend a shot on goal). The shot must be on target. If it is going wide of the post or over the cross bar the defending player is not permitted to try to play at it with the stick at above shoulder height.
- d. Goalkeepers are also permitted to use a high stick when defending a shot on goal. In both cases (i.e. outfield players and goalkeepers) it is essential that the stick is used safely and wisely.
- e. Players must not use the rounded side of the stick when playing the ball and when striking the ball, the stick must in no way cause danger, nor lead to dangerous play, or be intimidating to any opponent.
- f. Players must not kick the ball.
- g. Players must not obstruct by running between an opponent and the ball, thereby unfairly preventing the opponent from playing the ball. Neither must they use any part of their body or stick to obstruct another player.
- h. Players must not hold, charge, kick, shove, intentionally trip, or strike any player or umpire

RULE 12 – STARTING & RE-STARTING THE GAME

- a. A centre pass is taken:
 - 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.
 - to re-start the match after half-time by a player of the team which did not take the centre pass to start the match.
 - after a goal by a player of the team against which the goal was scored.

Taking a centre pass:

- it is taken at the centre of the field
- it is permitted to play the ball in any direction
- 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
- the procedures for taking a free hit apply

RULE 13 – SCORING A GOAL

- a. A goal is scored when the ball has been struck by, or deflected off, an attacking player while it (the ball) is in the shooting circle. It must cross completely over the goal-line between the goal-posts and under the cross-bar.

RULE 14 – BALL OUTSIDE THE FIELD OF PLAY

Over the side-line:

- a. When the ball passes completely over the side-line it shall be put back into play in any direction by a hit, push, scoop or self-pass taken by an opponent of the player who last touched it. The ball may be raised immediately using a push, flick or scoop but must not be raised intentionally using a hit. This is called a side-line hit-in.
- b. In the half that the team is defending: until the hit-in is taken no opposition player shall be within 5 metres of the ball.
- c. In the half that the team is attacking: until the hit-in is taken all players except the taker must be a minimum of 5 metres from the ball and, once the ball has been played, it must move a minimum of 5 metres (in any direction), or be touched by a player of the defending team, before it can be played into the circle.

Over the back-line off an attacking player:

- d. When the ball passes over the back-line off one of the attacking players and no goal is scored, the game is re-started with a hit to the defence. This is called a hit-out. The ball can be hit, pushed, flicked, scooped or a self-pass can be played. The ball may be raised immediately using a push, flick or scoop but must not be raised intentionally using a hit. It is to be taken level with the top of the shooting circle and in line with the place where it crossed over the back-line.

Over the back-line off a defending player:

- e. If the ball is accidentally played over the back-line by a defending player and no goal is scored, the game is started with a hit to the attacking team on the half-way (27.5m) line and in line with where it crossed the back line. This means the ball is in the attacking half of the pitch and therefore rule 15e applies.
- f. The Rules relating to the taking of a free hit (15.a - 15.e) shall apply to all such re-starts.
- g. If the ball is deliberately played over the back-line by a defending player, the game is re-started with a penalty corner to the attacking team. The ball can be hit or pushed. A self-pass is not permitted at a penalty corner.
- h. The penalty corner is taken on the back-line, 10 metres from the goal-post.

- i. No player, other than the taker, shall be within 5 metres of the ball until it is played.

RULE 15 – FREE HIT

- a. Free hits are to be taken close to where the offence occurred. The ball can be hit, pushed, flicked, scooped or a self-pass can be played. The ball may be raised immediately using a push, flick or scoop but must not be raised intentionally using a hit.
- b. The ball must be stationary at a free hit.
- c. Until the free hit is taken, all opposition players must be a minimum of 5 metres from the ball.
- d. Opponents who remain within 5 metres when the free hit is taken (this is very common when the self-pass is used) must not interfere with the play until they have moved 5 metres away from where the free hit was taken, or the ball has moved 5 metres. Running alongside the taker (channelling) will be penalised as interference.
- e. If the free hit is awarded in the half that the team is attacking, all players except the taker must be a minimum of 5 metres from the ball. The ball can only enter the circle once it has either travelled 5m “under control” (i.e. dribbled or passed to team mate outside of the circle), or it is touched by a player of the defending team.

RULE 16 – PENALTY CORNER

- a. Penalty corners are taken on the back-line on a marker that is 10 metres from each goal-post.
- b. The players may choose which side of the goal to take the penalty corner.
- c. The ball can be hit or pushed however a self-pass is not permitted.
- d. The taker must have at least one foot off the pitch (behind the back-line).
- e. All other attacking players must be outside the circle. If an attacker enters the circle before permitted, the player taking the push or hit from the backline is required to go into the other shooting circle – at the opposite end of the pitch. This player may not return for any retaken penalty corners, but may do so for any subsequently awarded penalty corner.
- f. The five defending players (four outfield plus Goalkeeper) must stand behind the back-line at least 5 metres from the ball. The remaining two defending players must be in the other shooting circle - at the opposite end of the pitch.
- g. If a defender, other than the goalkeeper, crosses the line before the attacker plays the ball, then that defender shall be sent to join their teammates in the circle at the other end of the pitch and they cannot be replaced by another defender. The penalty corner shall be taken again. This player may not return for any retaken penalty corners, but may do so for any subsequently awarded penalty corner.

- h. If the goalkeeper crosses the line before the attacker plays the ball, the defending team shall send one of the other defenders to join their teammates in the circle at the other end of the pitch and they cannot be replaced by another defender. The penalty corner shall be taken again. This player may not return for any retaken penalty corners, but may do so for any subsequently awarded penalty corner.
 - i. Before any shot at the goal, the ball must first pass outside (beyond) the circle edge.
 - j. If the first shot at goal is a hit, it must not cross the goal-line at above 460mm, (the height of the back-board) unless it takes a deflection off an attacking or a defending player on the way.
 - k. No shot will be allowed if it is judged as dangerous to other outfield players.
 - l. If the ball passes beyond 5 metres of the circle edge, the penalty corner restrictions (rules) shall cease to apply.
 - m. Any penalty corner awarded immediately before half or full time shall be completed.
 - n. If the penalty corner breaks down normal play should resume.
- A penalty corner shall be awarded for any one of the following reasons:
- o. A defending player accidentally committing an offence inside the circle.
 - p. A defending player deliberately committing an offence outside the shooting circle, but within their own half of the pitch.
 - q. A defending player deliberately playing the ball over their own back-line from anywhere on the pitch.
 - r. A defending player committing a deliberate offence in the shooting circle that does not prevent a probable or actual goal.
 - s. When the ball becomes lodged in a goalkeeper/player's clothing or equipment while in the circle they are defending.

RULE 17 – PENALTY STROKE

- a. Penalty strokes are taken on the penalty stroke spot which is 5 metres from the goal-line into the pitch.
- b. Apart from the defending goalkeeper and the penalty stroke taker, all other players must be beyond the centre-line.
- c. The goalkeeper must remain on the goal-line until the ball is played.
- d. The taker must be positioned behind the ball and must not touch the ball a second time.
- e. The player taking the stroke must push, flick or scoop the ball and is permitted to raise it to any height.
- f. The clock stops (time is stopped by the umpires) immediately when a penalty stroke is awarded.

A penalty stroke shall be awarded for any one of the following reasons:

- g. An offence by a defending player inside the circle that prevents the probable scoring of a goal. If the ball hits a piece of equipment lying in the circle and a probable goal is prevented, a penalty stroke may be awarded.
- h. An intentional offence in the circle by a defending player against an opponent who has possession of the ball or an opportunity to play the ball.
- i. Following a penalty stroke, play is re-started with a centre pass if a goal has been scored. If no goal is scored, play is re-started with a hit out to the defence taken at the top of the shooting circle.

RULE 18 – INCIDENT

- a. If the game is temporarily suspended because of an accident or injury where no offence occurred it shall be re-started with a bully close to the spot where the incident occurred.
- b. Players must stand square of each other and prior to playing the ball and following the umpires whistle, they shall tap the ground with their stick once and tap each other's stick above the ball once.
- c. All non-involved players must be a minimum of 5 metres from the ball.

NOTE: a bully is taken close to the location of the ball when play was stopped but not within 15 metres of the backline and not within 5 metres of the circle.

- d. Players who are cut or bleeding will be required to leave the pitch immediately and shall not be allowed to return until the bleeding has been suppressed or stopped.

RULE 19 – PERSONAL PENALTIES

- a. There are three types of personal penalties in a game of In2Hockey supported by warning cards.
- b. The first is a green card accompanied with a verbal warning. This is given for repetitive, minor offences.
Examples of why this may be given are repeated: stick tackles or not retreating 5m when required.
- c. The second is a yellow card and this represents a suspension of a minimum of two minutes. Examples of why this may be given are: an intentional offence; or conducting an action again that the player had already received a green card for.
- d. The third is a red card and this represents a permanent suspension from the match.
Examples of why this may be given are: for intentionally hitting or striking out at another player or umpire; or a second yellow card offence.

RULE 20 – UMPIRES

- a. In2Hockey shall be controlled by one or two umpires (preferably two).
- b. The umpires are responsible for all decisions and penalties.

APPENDIX 1 - Specific guidance on suggested match durations for different ages

At U18, U16 and U14 level if playing full length games, teams should only play one full length match in one day, however teams in this and other age groups may play for a longer duration in a tournament or festival with shorter matches. Recommended times are as below.

Age Group	11 or 7 a-side	Max Time in a day*	Max No of games	Min Duration of games^	Duration of games for triangulars~	Max Duration of games
						(& Times for U14 U16 U18 T1 T2 one-off matches)
U18	11	2 hours	4 matches	15 mins e/w	25 mins e/w	35 mins e/w, ie full length game
U16	11	2 hours	4 matches	15 mins e/w	25 mins e/w	35 mins e/w, ie full length game
U14	11	2 hours	4 matches	15 mins e/w	20 mins e/w	35 mins e/w, ie full length game
U14	7	2 hours	6 matches	10 mins e/w	15 mins e/w	15 mins e/w
U13 & U12	7 or 6	1 hour 45 mins	7 matches	9 mins e/w, 15 mins 1/way	15 mins e/w	15 mins e/w
U11	7 or 6	1 hours 30 mins	9 matches	9 mins e/w, 10 mins 1/way	15 mins e/w	15 mins e/w
U10	7 or 6	1 hours 30 mins	9 matches	9 mins e/w, 10 mins 1/way	15 mins e/w	15 mins e/w
U8	7, 6 or 4	1 hours 15 mins	7 matches	7 mins e/w, 10 mins 1/way	10 mins e/w	10 mins e/w

*Max Time in a day - this is based on a tournament or festival style activity where teams have multiple games and breaks. Teams must have a break between games. If the Max Time in a day is used it is strongly recommended that the overall length of the activity is at least one and a half times as long, e.g. 2 hours play in 5 hours activity.

^Min Duration of games - these are recommended times for T1 and T2 activity, however organisers may vary these and shorten particularly for lower Tier activity and festivals.

~Triangulars – U16 and U18 T1 and T2

Recommend schedule. Matches 25 mins

e/w. 1200 hrs Match 1 – A v B
 1230 hrs Match 2 – B v C
 1300 hrs Match 3 – C v A

~Triangulars – U14 T1 and T2

Recommended schedule. Matches 20 mins

e/w. 1200 hrs Match 1 – A v B
 1225 hrs Match 2 – B v C
 1250 hrs Match 3 – C v A