



**Rules of Para-hockey for Athletes with an Intellectual  
Disability (ID)**

**Short version, including explanations**

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## **Responsibility and Liability**

Participants in Para-hockey must be aware of the Para-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 Para-hockey Rules apply to all Para-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 July 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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## Playing the Game

***For explanations of terminology and any other matters not explicitly dealt with in this short form of the Rules of Para-hockey, see the long version and/or the Rules of Hockey.***

### 1 Field of Play

- 1.1 The field of play is rectangular, ideally 55 metres long and 43 metres wide.
- The indicated size is the maximum, however the pitch size may be varied according to available location, surface and 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 A spot of 150 mm diameter is marked in the middle of the field: the centre spot.
- 1.5 Circles: as per the Rules of Hockey
- 1.6 Penalty spots 150 mm in diameter are marked in front of the centre of each goal with the centre of each spot 6.00 metres from the inner edge of the goal-line.
- 1.7 All lines are 75 mm wide and are part of the field of play.
- 1.8 Goals 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 seven players from each team take part in play at any particular time during the match.
- 2.2 Each team has a goalkeeper on the field throughout a match.
- 2.3 Each team is permitted up to three 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.
- A goalkeeper may only be substituted if another goalkeeper is available as a substitute and is already wearing full protective equipment. Otherwise the goalkeeper required in these Rules must stay on the field throughout the match. If a goalkeeper is incapacitated, temporarily suspended with a yellow card or permanently suspended and a substitute already wearing full protective equipment is not available, for safety reasons, reasonable time should be allowed for a field player to put on full protective equipment.*
- 2.5 Players must leave or enter the field for substitution or any other purpose at 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.*

- 2.8 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.
- 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.

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

- 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 permitted to wear hand protection which does not increase the natural size of the hands significantly;*
- *are strongly recommended to wear shin, ankle and mouth protection;*
- *are permitted to wear throughout a match for medical reasons only a smooth preferably transparent or white but otherwise single coloured face mask which closely fits the face, soft protective head-covering or eye protection in the form of plastic goggles (ie goggles with a soft-covered frame and plastic lenses);*
- *other than goalkeepers, are not permitted to wear protective headgear.*

- 4.3 Goalkeepers must wear a single coloured shirt or garment which is different in colour from that of both teams.
- 4.4 Goalkeepers must wear protective equipment comprising at least headgear (comprising full helmet, with throat guard recommended), body protection (chest, arms and abdomen/pelvic protection), hand protectors, leg guards and kickers.

*The following are permitted for use only by goalkeepers: body, upper arm, elbow, forearm, hand, thigh and knee protectors, leg guards and kickers.*

- 4.5 Clothing or protective equipment which significantly increases the natural size of a goalkeeper's body or area of protection is not permitted.
- 4.6 The stick: must conform with the specification agreed by the FIH Rules Committee.
- 4.7 The ball is spherical, hard and a colour which contrasts with the playing surface.

### **5 Match and Result**

- 5.1 A match consists of two periods of 12-15 minutes and a half-time interval of 5 minutes.

*Time is not stopped except for the award of a penalty stroke, or 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.

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

6.1 A coin is tossed:

- a the team which wins the toss has the choice of which goal to attack in the first half of the match or to start the match with a centre pass
- b if the team winning the toss chooses which goal to attack in the first half of the match, the opposing team starts the match
- c 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 half of the match.

6.2 Direction of play is reversed in the second half of the match.

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 the match after an interval by a player of the team which did not take the centre pass in the previous period
- c 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 close to the location of the ball when play was stopped, but not within 15 metres of the back-line and not within 4 metres of the circle
- 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 side-line or back-line.

7.2 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.

7.3 When the ball travels over the side-line, play is re-started where the ball crossed the line and the procedures for taking a free hit apply.

7.4 When the ball is played over the back-line and no goal is scored:

- a if played by an attacker, play is re-started with the ball up to 15 metres from and in line with where it crossed the back-line and the procedures for taking a free hit apply
- b if played unintentionally by a defender or deflected by a goalkeeper, play is re-started with the ball 4 metres outside the circle, and in line with where it crossed the back-line, and the procedures for taking a free hit apply
- c if played intentionally by a defender, unless deflected by a goalkeeper, play is re-started with the ball on the centre spot, and the procedures for taking a shoot-out apply

## **8 Method of Scoring**

- 8.1 A goal is scored when the ball is played within the circle by an attacker and does not travel outside the circle before passing completely over the goal-line and under the cross-bar.

*The ball may be played by a defender or touch their body before or after being played in the circle by an attacker.*

## **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 seven 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 not play the ball with any part of the stick when the ball is above shoulder height, except that defenders are permitted to use the stick to stop or deflect a shot at goal at any height.

*Only if the ball is genuinely hit while above shoulder height and a goal is prevented should a penalty stroke be awarded.*

*If a defender attempts to stop or deflect a ball travelling towards the goal which will actually miss the goal, any use of the stick above the shoulder must be penalised by a shoot-out and not a penalty stroke.*

- 9.7 Players must not play the ball dangerously or in a way which leads to dangerous play.
- 9.8 Players must not intentionally raise the ball from a hit except for a shot at goal.

*Players are permitted to raise the ball with a flick or scoop provided it is not dangerous. A flick or scoop towards an opponent within 4 metres is considered dangerous. If an opponent is clearly running into the shot or into the attacker without attempting to play the ball with their stick, they should be penalised for dangerous play.*

- 9.9 Players must not approach within 4 metres of an opponent receiving a falling raised ball until it has been received, controlled and is on the ground.
- 9.10 Field players must not stop, kick, propel, pick up, throw or carry the ball with any part of their body.
- 9.11 Players must not obstruct an opponent who is attempting to play the ball.
- 9.12 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.*

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

- 10.1 A goalkeeper who wears protective equipment comprising at least headgear, body protection, hand protectors, leg guards and kickers must not take part in the match outside the half they are defending, except when taking a penalty stroke.

*Protective headgear must be worn by a goalkeeper at all times, except when taking a penalty stroke.*

10.2 When the ball is inside the circle they are defending and they have their stick in their hand :

- a goalkeepers wearing full protective equipment are permitted to use their stick, feet, kickers, legs or leg guards to propel the ball and to use their stick, feet, kickers, legs, leg guards or any other part of their body to stop the ball or deflect it in any direction including over the back-line.

*Goalkeepers are not permitted to conduct themselves in a manner which is dangerous to other players by taking advantage of the protective equipment they wear.*

- b goalkeepers wearing full protective equipment are permitted to use their arms, hands and any other part of their body to push the ball away.

*The action in 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 privileges to propel the ball forcefully with arms, hands or body so that it travels a long distance.*

10.3 Goalkeepers must not lie on the ball.

10.4 When the ball is outside the circle that they are defending, goalkeepers are only permitted to play the ball with their stick.

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

11.1 Two umpires control the match, apply the Rules and are the judges of fair play.

*It is a key aspect of Para-hockey that the umpires should enable the game to flow.*

11.2 Each umpire has primary responsibility for decisions in one half of the field for the duration of the match

11.3 Each umpire is responsible for decisions on free hits in the circle, shoot-outs, penalty strokes and goals in one half of the field.

11.6 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 shoot-out
- e start and end a penalty stroke
- f indicate a goal
- g re-start the match after a goal has been scored
- h re-start the match after a penalty stroke when a goal is not scored
- i stop the play for the substitution onto or off the field of an incapacitated or suspended goalkeeper and to re-start the match on completion of the substitution
- j stop the match for any other reason and to re-start it
- k indicate, when necessary, that the ball has passed wholly outside the field

## **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:
- for an offence by an attacker in the half of the pitch they are attacking
  - for an unintentional offence by a defender outside the circle but within the half of the pitch they are defending.
- 12.3 A shoot-out is awarded:
- for an offence by a defender in the circle which does not prevent the probable scoring of a goal
  - for an intentional offence by a defender in the circle against an opponent who does not have possession of the ball or an opportunity to play the ball.
  - for an intentional offence by a defender outside the circle but within the half of the pitch they are defending.
  - for intentionally playing the ball over the back-line by a defender  
*Goalkeepers are permitted to deflect the ball with their stick, protective equipment or any part of their body in any direction including over the back-line.*
  - when the ball becomes lodged in a player's clothing or equipment while in the circle they are defending  
*The umpiring signal for a shoot-out in Para-hockey is the same as for a penalty corner in the Rules of Hockey.*
- 12.4 A penalty stroke is awarded:
- for an offence by a defender in the circle which prevents the probable scoring of a goal
  - for an intentional offence in the circle by a defender against an opponent who has possession of the ball or an opportunity to play the ball
  - for any intentional offence by the defending goalkeeper against an opponent taking a shoot-out

### 13 Procedures for Taking Penalties

- 13.1 Location of a free hit:
- a free hit is taken close to where the offence occurred
  - a free hit awarded to the defence within 15 metres of the back-line is taken up to 15 metres from the back-line in line with the location of the offence, parallel to the side-line
- 13.2 Procedures for taking a free hit, centre pass and putting the ball back into play after it has been outside the field:
- the ball must be stationary
  - 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.*
  - when a free hit is awarded to the attack within the half of the pitch that they are attacking, all players other than the player taking the free hit must be at least 4 metres from the ball
  - the ball is moved using a hit, push, flick or scoop

- e the ball may be raised immediately using a push, flick or scoop but must not be raised intentionally using a hit
- f from a free hit awarded to the attack within the half of the pitch that they are attacking, the ball must not be played into the circle until it has travelled at least 4 metres, not necessarily in a single direction, or has been touched by a player of the defending team.

*If the player taking the free hit continues to play the ball (ie no defending player has yet played it):*

- *that player may play the ball any number of times, but*
- *the ball must travel at least 4 metres, not necessarily in a single direction, before*
- *that player shoots the ball at goal by playing the ball again.*

*Alternatively:*

- *after a defending player has touched the ball, it can be played into the circle by any other player including the player who took the free hit.*

13.3 Taking a shoot-out:

- a all players on the field other than the attacker taking the shoot-out and the goalkeeper defending it must stand inside the circle not used to defend the shoot-out
- b the ball is placed on the centre spot
- c the attacker taking the shoot-out must stand behind the ball before beginning the shoot-out
- d the goalkeeper defending the shoot-out must stand on or behind the goal-line between the goal posts
- e the whistle is blown when the attacker taking the shoot-out and the goalkeeper defending it are in position
- f the attacker taking the shoot-out must not take it until the whistle has been blown
- g the attacker and goalkeeper may then move in any direction

13.4 The match is prolonged at half-time and full-time to allow completion of a shoot-out or any subsequent re-take or penalty stroke

13.5 The shoot-out is completed when:

- a. 12 seconds has elapsed since the starting signal
- b. a goal is scored
- c. the attacker commits an offence
- d. the goalkeeper commits an unintentional offence inside or outside the circle
- e. the goalkeeper commits an intentional offence inside or outside the circle
- f. the ball goes out of play over the back-line or side-line; this includes the goalkeeper intentionally playing the ball over the back-line

13.6 For an offence during the taking of a shoot-out:

- a the shoot-out is taken before the whistle is blown: the shoot-out is taken again
- b for any other offence by the player taking the shoot-out: a free hit is awarded to the defence
- c for any unintentional offence by the defending goalkeeper against the player taking the shoot-out: the shoot-out is re-taken by the same player against the same goalkeeper

- d for any intentional offence by the defending goalkeeper against the player taking the shoot-out: a penalty stroke is awarded and taken
- 13.7 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 inside the circle not used to defend the penalty stroke and must not influence the taking of the stroke
  - c the ball is placed on the penalty spot
  - d the player taking the stroke must stand behind and within playing distance of the ball before beginning the stroke
  - e the goalkeeper defending the stroke 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 or move either foot until the ball has been played
  - f the goalkeeper defending the stroke must wear protective headgear
  - g the whistle is blown when the player taking the stroke and the goalkeeper defending it are in position
  - h 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.*
  - i the player taking the stroke must not feint at playing the ball
  - j the player taking the stroke must push, flick or scoop the ball and is permitted to raise it to any height  
*Using a 'dragging' action to play the ball at a penalty stroke is not permitted.*
  - k the player taking the stroke must play the ball only once and must not subsequently approach either the ball or the goalkeeper defending the stroke.
- 13.8 The penalty stroke is completed when :
- a a goal is scored
  - b the ball comes to rest inside the circle, lodges in the goalkeeper's equipment, is caught by the goalkeeper, or goes outside the circle
- 13.9 For an offence during the taking of a penalty stroke :
- a the stroke is taken before the whistle is blown and a goal is scored : the penalty 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 defending the stroke including moving either foot before the ball has been played : the penalty stroke is taken again  
*If the goalkeeper defending the stroke prevents a goal being scored but moves either foot before the ball has been played, this player may be suspended (green card) and for any subsequent offence must be suspended (yellow card).*  
*If a goal is scored even though there has been an offence by the goalkeeper defending the stroke, the goal is awarded.*
  - e for an offence by a player of the defending team 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)
    - If a goalkeeper is awarded a green card, the team may nominate a player to serve the suspension on their behalf.*
  - 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 less player.*
    - If the goalkeeper is temporarily suspended the offending team plays with one less field player. If a substitute goalkeeper already wearing full protective equipment is not available, reasonable time should be allowed for a field player to put on protective equipment for safety reasons.*
    - The suspended player must serve the full period of the suspension*
  - 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 less player.*
    - Each team must have a goalkeeper on the field throughout a match. If a substitute goalkeeper already wearing full protective equipment is not available, reasonable time should be allowed for a field player to put on protective equipment. The offending team plays with one less field player for the remainder of the match.*
    - A personal penalty may be awarded in addition to the appropriate penalty.*
- 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.

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