



Jump in



USA
FIELD HOCKEY

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO FIELD HOCKEY UMPIRING

Jump In



The goal of **Jump In** is to expose potential umpires of all ages to the USA Field Hockey way of umpiring with a consistent, clear and concise education process that will give them the confidence to **Jump In** to umpiring. This program is best presented by a USA Field Hockey certified instructor, but can also be learned on an individual basis.

Umpires are as important to the game as highly skilled players. Part of USA Field Hockey's long-term plan to enhance the sport is to increase the number of umpires and the standard of umpiring.

Becoming a quality umpire takes athleticism, rules knowledge, and hard work. Completing and understanding the **Jump In** curriculum is the first step for many who will look to advance their skills to a higher level which includes umpiring USA Field Hockey sanctioned events, college-level matches and even the possibility of someday an Olympic Games or World Cup. USA Field Hockey provides many opportunities throughout the year in which an umpire can improve their skills with the proper oversight from trained Umpire Managers and Umpire Coaches.

This **Jump In** curriculum is developed by Cris Maloney in conjunction with USA Field Hockey as an initiative to allow for the most novice of hockey enthusiasts to begin the process of learning to become a USA Field Hockey umpire.

USA Field Hockey hopes you will **Jump In** and become the best umpire you can possibly be!

WHY UMPIRE

- Become a better player
- Challenge yourself
- Learn a new skill
- Improve your self confidence
- Earn money
- Give back to the game
- Enhance players' experience
- Develop friendships
- Stay involved with the game
- Represent the USA in the Olympics



There are many different reasons to umpire. As long as you are dedicated to being the best umpire you can possibly be and understand that you are at the game with the best interest of the athletes and the sport in mind, your personal motivation for umpiring is to be commended.

Keeping abreast of new rules, accepting new practices, staying fit, and constantly changing is part of being an umpire.

An important personality trait common in all active umpires is the willingness to embrace change as the sport evolves.

THE BASICS

- Read the rules
- Watch the game
- Run around
- Predict the future
- Make decisions
- Blow a whistle
- Point

Umpiring field hockey is not rocket science. In fact, it's relatively easy. What better way to spend your time than getting paid to run around while you watch a game?

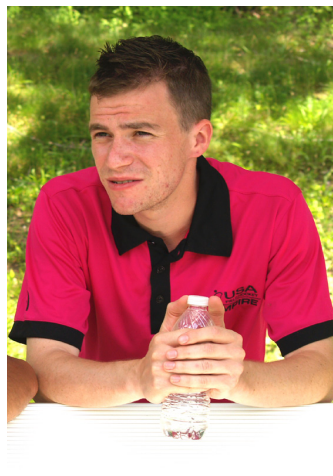
You must read and understand the rules. You can't rely on what you think is a rule.

Concentration is important. You have to watch play on and off the ball—and you have to run around while you're watching.

Predicting the future isn't a magic trick. Call it guessing or anticipating what will happen next. It is an important part of umpiring—so you know where to run!

When you see a rule violated, you have to make a decision about whether that breach is disadvantaging the opponent and, if so, what penalty to apply. Should it be penalized with a simple change of possession?...a penalty stroke?...a red card?

When you blow your whistle, you point to show everyone what happens next.



UMPIRE NECESSITIES

Equipment

- Whistle
- Cards
- Stopwatch/Timer
- Recording materials

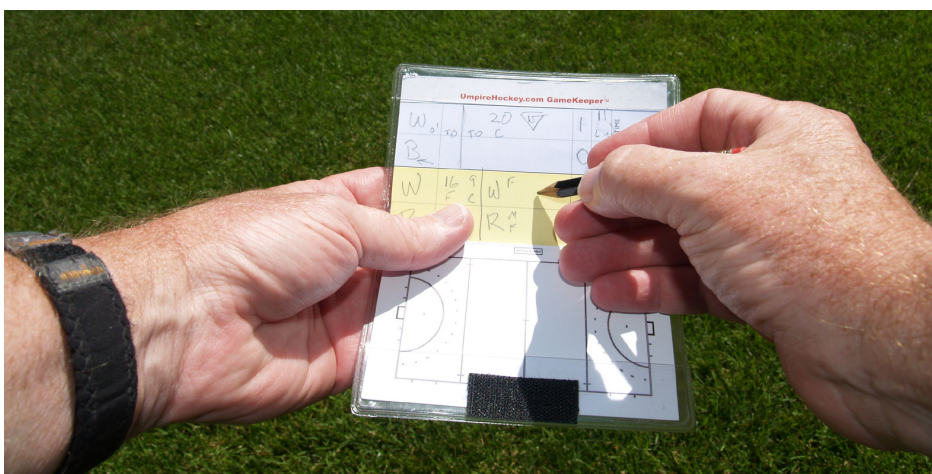
Uniform

- Umpire shirt
- Black below the waist
- Appropriate shoes

Water & Sunscreen

- Quench thirst
- Protect skin





During a match, each umpire carries a whistle, stopwatch, warning cards, and recording materials. When available, wireless communication devices significantly enhance umpire-to-umpire communications.

- Umpires must match each other in the color and, when possible, the style of their apparel. Umpires are a team and their clothing must convey that to players, coaches and spectators
- Shoes should be a muted color or black and appropriate for the playing conditions. Umpires must wear shoes that won't slip when the competition surface is wet
- The most popular whistle used by field hockey umpires is the Fox 40 Classic. When calling a game, the umpires should be using the same type of whistle
- Warning cards come in three shapes and colors—green triangle, yellow square, red circle. Outdoors a green card suspends a player for two minutes, a yellow card suspends a player for five or ten minutes (sometimes longer), a red card suspends a player for the remainder of the game
- Both umpires time games on their watch in case the scoreboard clock fails
- Both umpires write down all goals and suspensions on their recording material

WHISTLING

Holding the whistle

- Don't cover the holes
- Air holes point away from body

Types of whistling

Pop (hard, sharp, chirp—simple foul and goals)

Roar (longer, louder—start/end game, cardings)

Quick tweets (to get the players' attention)



Practice whistling. Most beginners will blow the whistle with a slow “entry” to the sound—building up the sound slowly rather than jumping from silence to a full blown whistle. It’s as if they’re trying to blow a feather from one end of their palm to the other without blowing hard enough to cause the feather to fly off into the air. This is what is often called being timid with the whistle. Timid whistling is easy to fix.

Imaginary Exercise

Pretend you’re holding an elephant up on your palm, like a waiter carries a tray of food. Now, blow hard and fast so you surprise the elephant and blow it off your hand.

Real Exercise

Hold the whistle up to your mouth and block the opening with your tongue. Close your lips around the whistle and blow without removing your tongue. You shouldn’t be able to make any noise because air can’t enter the whistle. Do it again but, this time, after there is pressure against the whistle, quickly pull your tongue out of the way so the air rushes into the whistle.

SIGNALING



- **Face the field**
- **Primary signals first**
- **Chin up**
(do NOT look down after making a call)
- **Eye contact**
(look at players who foul)
- **Confident arm movements**
(like karate not wet spaghetti)

Hands are held with palms open, flat towards the players or your body, to make signals easy to see. Pointing with just a finger, instead of your whole hand, makes your hand difficult to see from far away.

The signal for direction is the most frequently used signal. When showing direction, have your hand even with shoulders (not pointing down, not pointing up).

Never reach across your body when giving direction. Therefore, if play should go to the right, always hold out your right arm and if play should go to your left, always hold out your left arm.

Never put your back to the field of play.

SIGNALS

Primary Signals *(what's next)*



Direction



"16"



Penalty Corner



Penalty Stroke



Goal

Secondary Signals *(what's already happened)*



Back of Stick



Obstruction
with Body



Obstruction
with Stick



Danger



"5" Violation

Umpires show primary signals first because players have an urgent need to know which way they should go. Umpires show secondary signals when there is legitimate confusion about the call.

Primary Signals *(what's next)*

- Direction
- 16
- Corner
- Penalty corner
- Penalty stroke
- Bully
- Goal (“what’s next” after a goal is a restart at center)
- Play on

Secondary Signals *(what’s already happened)*

- Back of stick
- Body/kick
- Obstructions
- Danger
- Encroachment

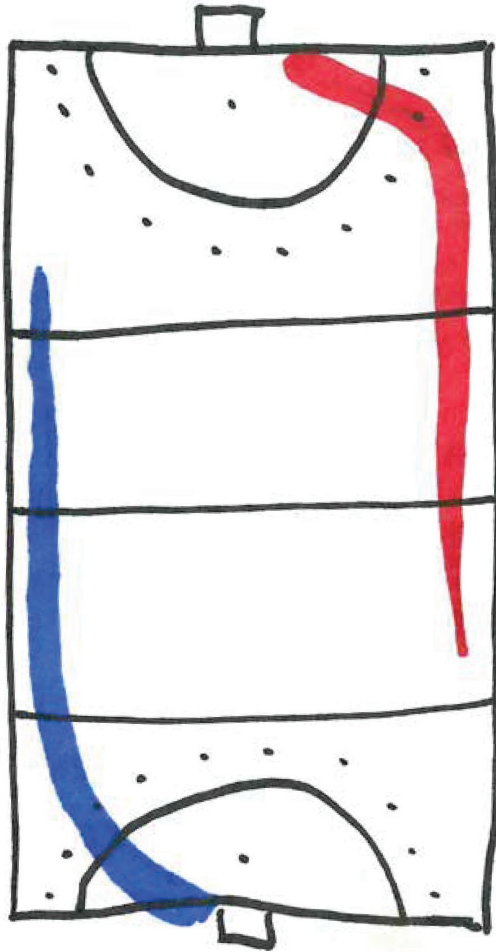
Administrative

- Time out
- Two minutes remaining
- One minute remaining

All of the signals are described in the *Rules of Hockey*.



POSITIONING



If every few seconds a dot representing each umpire's position were placed on a diagram of a field, the patterns illustrated by the blue and red markings would likely emerge. The movement of play and the location of players will dictate the actual positions that each umpire must take up during any given moment of the game.

Instructive Metaphor

The players are in a fish bowl. The umpires are outside the fish bowl. There are times when the umpires should be right up against the glass (perhaps if game action needs a firmer degree of attention) and other times when the umpires might be able to make calls further away from the bowl (but not so far away that they can't reach out and touch the glass).

Note

When play is close to the side-line and back-line, the umpire must go into the officiating space surrounding the field of play. That is the reason coaches (and players not in the game) must stay in the team area, which is located far away from the side-line.

LINE OF SIGHT

- Move to keep the ball on your left
- Move to keep a clear line of sight to the ball
- Predict where the ball will go
- Stay on your side of the cage

Pop Quiz:

What is the most important line in a hockey game?

The most important line in a hockey game is the goal-line. It is more important to take up a position near the goal-line than any other location.

Warning

When positioned near the goal-line umpires must be ready to dodge a wide shot or a deflection off the goalkeeper or a field player.

Exercise

Set up a small rectangular area – it's a tiny field. Have a friend play the role of the ball. Keep the ball on your left as the 'ball' moves up and down the field.

Don't Be Fooled

After emphasizing that umpires should never cross to the other side of the cage, your instructor may try to trick you into doing just that. He/she might describe a penalty corner with the insertion taking place from far side, then switch the insertion to the near side and tell you to go to the other side of the cage. It makes sense. The insertion side switches so the umpire should switch sides too, right?

WRONG! *Don't be fooled.*



FIVE BASIC RULES

There are five rules that apply throughout the entirety of the game, no matter where the ball is located.

- 1** Everyone must always play safely
- 2** Field players can only play the ball with the flat side and edges of the stick (no one can use the back/rounded side of the stick and only goalkeepers – when they're inside their circle – can play the ball with their body)
- 3** Players are not allowed to impede an opponent with their stick or body – that's called obstruction (a common type of obstruction is stick hacking)
- 4** A player who is restarting play or receiving an aerial must be given a 5-meter buffer zone (safe from an opponent's pressure/presence)
- 5** No one is allowed to waste time (umpires penalize delay, they don't rush players)





Every umpire must read and understand the *Rules of Hockey*. Don't rely on what you think the rules are or what the rules used to be. Before umpiring a game without a mentor by your side, make sure you have read the rules and have a thorough understanding of the current rules. Some situations (for example penalty corners, penalty strokes, and restarting play inside the attacking quarter of the field) are comparatively complex and require extra practice and study.

SEEING FOULS

- **Illegal ball play**
(back of stick, hard forehand edge hit, kicks)
- **Obstructions**
(player obstructions, stick obstructions)
- **Restart breaches**
(encroachments, direct play into the circle from a restart within the attacking quarter of the field)
- **Stick whip**
(lifting the stick up and over an opponent's head)
- **Danger**
- **Delay**





When umpiring, you have to have a broad view of the game so you can see certain fouls (5 yard/meter breaches, obstructions, pushing, etc.). At other times, you have to use your eyes to zoom in on the ball to see, for example, if the whole ball crosses a line or a player uses the back of his/her stick to play the ball.

There aren't very many rules governing general play. Players shall not:

- Play dangerously
- Use the back of the stick to play the ball
- Lift their stick over an opponent's head
- Obstruct (with their body or stick) an opponent from reaching a reachable ball
- Hit the ball hard with the edge of their stick on the forehand side
- Intentionally play the ball over the back-line they are defending
- Waste time/delay the game

There are many rules governing set plays inside the attacking quarter of the field, including penalty corners and penalty strokes. There is no short cut to learning those rules. You have to read and understand the rules governing those situations.

SELLING DECISIONS



- Wonderful whistling
- Sharp arm signals
- Chin up
- Eye contact
- Upright torso
- Confident smile

Umpires do not “sell” calls. What umpires “sell” is that they are 100% positive about the decision that they’ve made. There is a big difference.

Exercise

Blow your whistle, give direction to the left, right, and then back to the left. At the same time, slouch and look down at the ground. How do you think you look? Now, blow your whistle, give direction to the right and—while you hold your signal—stand up straight, chin up, imagine looking into the eyes of the player who fouled, and smile. How do you think you look now?

SPECIAL ISSUES

- **Stick hacks**
- **Risky tackle fails**
- **Physical fouls**
- **Injuries**
- **Getting the ball**
- **Goals**

There isn't anything pretty about one player hacking at another player's stick in an attempt to play the ball. This action must be immediately penalized and carded.

There isn't anything prettier than a smooth tackle from behind when a player steals the ball away from an opponent. However, such tackles can be risky and if the tackler contacts the opponent or endangers him or herself, the tackler must be carded.

Physical fouls—pushing, shoving, elbowing, tripping—must be penalized with a long yellow card or a red card.

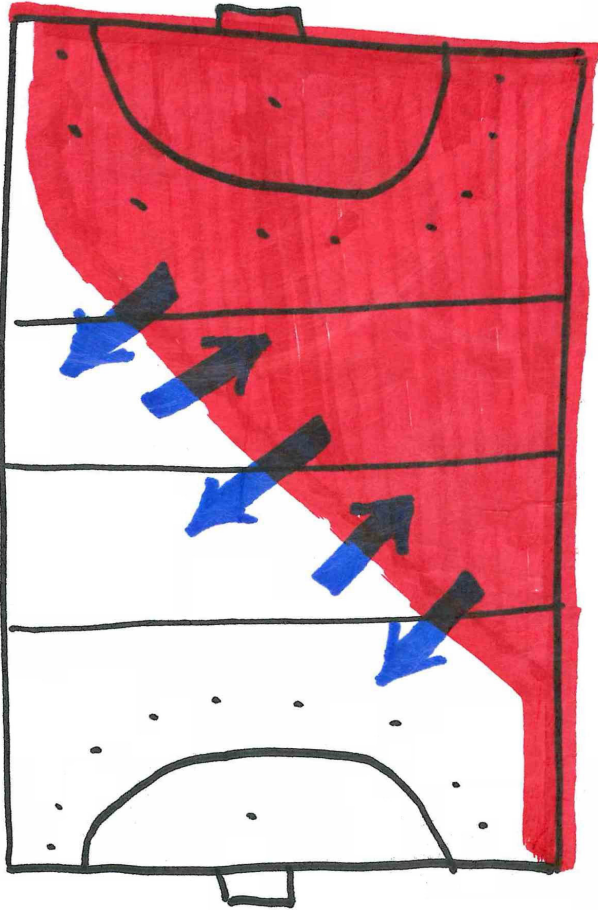
When there is an injury, the umpire furthest from the play should go to the injured player and determine if and when play should be stopped.

Unlike other sports, hockey umpires don't handle the ball once the game begins. Our umpires don't chase after a ball that is going out of bounds, collect the ball at half time, or get the ball from the cage after a goal. In all these circumstances, the team that plays the ball next gets the ball.

To score a goal, the ball must be played/touched inside the circle and then completely cross the goal-line.



TEAMWORK



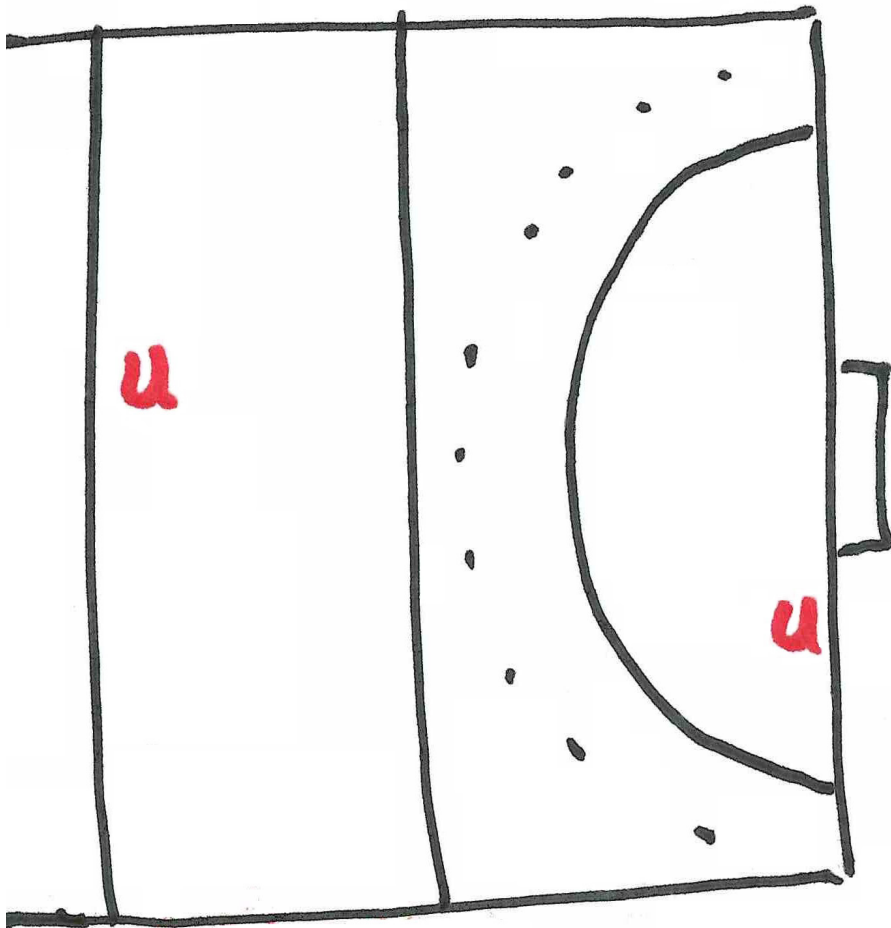
The umpires are a team.

The umpires divide the playing area on a diagonal as shown in the diagram and share the area in close proximity to where the divided sides of the field reach each other.

If play is moving towards the red side of the field, the umpire in the red side should make the decisions in the shared area. Of course, the umpire in the red area won't be able to see a hand on the back on a player heading his/her way so the other umpire would make that call. On only the rarest occasions should an umpire even consider "reaching" beyond the shared area and call a foul within the other umpire's area of responsibility.

Each umpire has sole responsibility for the entirety of the side-line closest to them and the back-line, circle, and goal-line to their right. Those areas are NOT shared. If the umpire in the circle on your left has a question about play in his/her area, it is that umpire's responsibility to look to you for help. Then and ONLY THEN do you show the other umpire a signal for the play that he/she missed. Never blow your whistle when play is in the circle to your left.

PENALTY CORNER



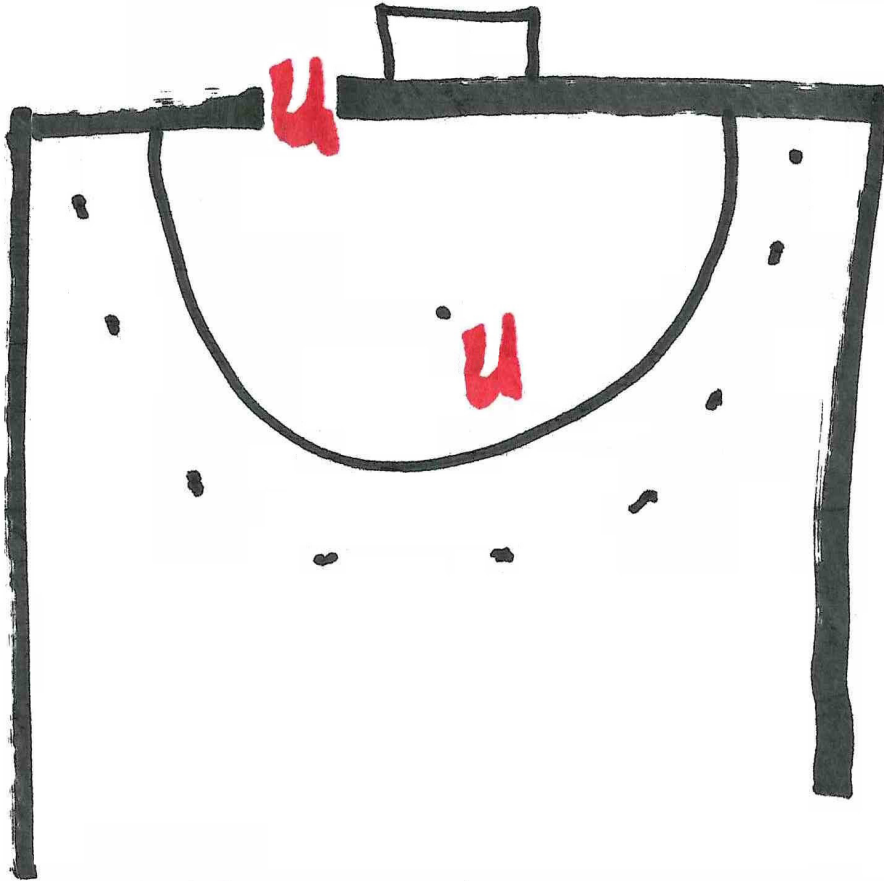
When taking up positions for a penalty corner, the umpires never cross to the other side of the cage. The support umpire positions himself/herself (roughly) in front of his/her near post so he/she can be behind the first shot. The primary reason that the support umpire is there is to watch the first shot from behind to see (if a hitting action is used) whether there is a deflection in case the managing umpire asks whether there was a deflection. He/she must IMMEDIATELY get to his/her sideline after the first shot is taken. Umpires should NOT continue to stand in the middle of the field watching more of the penalty corner.

Exercise

Imagine a penalty corner with the insertion taking place on the far side of the circle—the managing umpire's position is in the circle as shown in the diagram. Now, imagine the insertion taking place on the near side of the circle. Should the managing umpire switch to the other side of the circle?

Answer: *No. Never cross to the other side of the goal.*

PENALTY STROKE



Even when taking up positions for a penalty stroke, regardless of how the players set up, the umpires never cross to the other side of the cage.

The managing umpire positions himself or herself behind the attacker, who must be within playing position of the ball, so that the umpire can see the attacker and the goalkeeper at the same time. The managing umpire should position himself/herself, roughly, twice as far from the ball as the attacker. The managing umpire must make sure both players are in a proper starting position before blowing the whistle.

The support umpire positions himself/herself on the back-line, two or three meters from the goal post with a clear line of sight to the goal line. The support umpire's only job is to help see if the ball goes across the goal-line (that's why the support umpire is so close to the goal-line).

Safety First

The support umpire **MUST** watch the shot in case the attacker misses wide left—directly at the support umpire!

WHAT TO EXPECT

At first you may feel...

- 👉 Nervous
- 👉 Terror!!!
- 👉 FUD (Fear, Uncertainty, Doubt)

Then you will feel...

- 👉 Enjoyment
- 👉 Satisfaction
- 👉 Pride in a job well done

New umpires will likely feel very uncomfortable and make a lot of mistakes in their first three games.

Like every other dedicated umpire on the planet, new umpires will get better and better with each game they officiate.

The very best umpires become so good that they're selected to umpire at the Olympics.

WHAT'S NEXT

After completing **Jump In** and practicing, you'll be able to umpire U12 and U14 games with confidence. With additional study and practice, you can move up the ranks.

The first thing you have to do is read and understand the *Rules of Hockey*. The rules are available online for free. Then, join USA Field Hockey as an umpire member to stay connected and attend our regional and national events. Each year USA Field Hockey needs thousands of games umpired at its events and only USA Field Hockey umpires can umpire at these events.

Learn more about the rules of field hockey, umpiring opportunities and more at:
www.usafieldhockey.com

Questions?

umpire@usafieldhockey.com





Written by Cris Maloney
in conjunction with

Steve Horgan, National Umpire Director