



To: All Associations
From: Craig Gribble
Date: 19 April 2006
Re: Rule Interpretation: low forehand hit

I would like to draw your attention to the following rule interpretation from the FIH Rules Board:

Use of the "low forehand"

Update: at its meeting on 3/5 March 2006, the Executive Board agreed a proposal from the Hockey Rules Board to reinforce the interpretation described below by introducing with immediate effect a rule change specifically forbidding this action. The wording of the rule will be published in due course and will be included in the full set of rules for 2007/8 when they are printed later in the year.

This is a relatively new technique where the ball is played with the edge of the stick (in a similar way to the 'low backhand') just above the hook on the forehand with the face of the stick upwards.

This action is considered to be dangerous. This is because the ball must be hit very precisely at the correct spot, otherwise it is likely that the ball will be raised at high speed and in an uncontrolled manner. Also, the direction of the ball from these hits is not predictable by opponents and in most cases not even by the player hitting the ball. This action can be executed accidentally or can be disguised as a different action so opponents have little or no chance to react if the ball is raised.

This applies only to a (hard) hit of this type. It is not considered dangerous to use the forehand edge of the stick in a controlled action such as the "jab" tackle, raising the ball in a controlled way over an opponent's stick or goalkeeper who is lying on the ground or when "sweeping" the ball along the ground on the forehand.

Recommendation: All Associations should notify their coaches, players and umpires that this type of hit is now illegal and should be penalised accordingly. Note that it is the actual hit that is dangerous and therefore not allowed – even if the ball does not travel dangerously the hit itself is not a legal shot in hockey.

This interpretation is similar to that of the deliberate undercut in open play which is also illegal – whether dangerous or not.

Note that this advice to forbid the use of this shot will be given to all umpires attending national tournaments. Associations should therefore notify the team managers involved with the U21 tournament and subsequent tournaments throughout 2006.

Thanks for your cooperation
Craig

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