I hope everyone had a great Labor Day Weekend. I headed out of town for a long weekend and just returned last night. Now, as we enter week three of the current field hockey season, there are a couple of things that should be addressed. Please bear with me as we address “double jeopardy” on defensive encroachment, feinting on a penalty corner, and tournament voting. Before we get there, here is a rules question for your consideration.

**Question of the Day:** I was recently asked: What constitutes a ball going out of bounds? The question is based on the fact that in some sports, the ball is not considered out of bounds until it touches the ground or an obstacle outside of the playing field.

**Answer:** Rule 7.1.1 (page 40) tells us that “The ball is out of play when it has completely crossed an end line or sideline, whether on the ground or in flight.” In our sport, the ball is out of play once it crosses the plane of the end line or sideline.

**ITEM 1 ~ CLARIFICATION (RULE 8, Fouls and Misconduct):**
At least one issue has arisen regarding the newly revised Rule 8. Per the NFHS rules committee, the intention of the revision of that section was to clarify which infractions are fouls (and treated as such with a change of possession and a free hit, penalty corner, etc.) and which infractions are to be considered as misconduct (and penalized with a card for misconduct). This has resulted in mislabeling and confusion. Specifically, for our purposes here, 5-yard defensive encroachment is to be considered as unnecessary delay of game and could be treated as a foul or a misconduct based on the umpire’s judgement. Once identified as such, “*the free hit may be retaken, upgraded, or dealt with as a misconduct*” (Rule 9.2.2 PEN.3 on page 49).

**Explanation (No Double Jeopardy):** We know the “Add-10” provision has been removed from the official’s toolbox. In some areas of the country, officials began calling the 5-yard defensive encroachment violation as both a foul and as a misconduct... This has caused quite a bit of confusion and is inappropriate. What we want and need to do is to remember that this is a
judgement call on the part of the official, but it can be either a foul or a misconduct, but it cannot be both simultaneously. There is no double jeopardy for the same violation.

The NFHS has advised that, given the Rule Book as written we should use Rule 9.2.3 PENALTIES to adjudicate the "unnecessary delay" for an opposing player within 5 yards of the ball at the time of the free hit. The free hit may be retaken, upgraded {Penalty Corner for deliberate foul within 25 yard line (8.1.5 PENALTIES)} or dealt with as misconduct.

I hope I have provided a clear explanation. I’m certain that you will let me know if there are further questions regarding the appropriate penalties for a 5-yard defensive encroachment delay of game.

ITEM 2 ~ VIOLATION OF PENALTY CORNER PROVISIONS:
The rule book (Rule 10.2, page 50-51) clearly outlines how a penalty corner should be taken, the restrictions on player actions, and the appropriate penalties. Of specific issue at this time is Rule 10.2.3 combined with the appropriate penalty (Rule 10.3.2. PEN.4, page 52). The first of these rules states that “No player shall cross the end line or center line or enter the circle until the ball is struck...” The second one states that “The player who pushes the ball form the back line must not feint at playing the ball. For an offense of this rule, the offending player shall be replaced by another attacker and must go to the center line.”

There is no place in the rule book that states specifically that a feint involves movement of the stick, the movement of the inserters shoulders, an intentional hesitation, or a step forward before inserting the ball. With good reason, as there is no single definition of a feint (this would require a multipage listing). Instead, the umpire needs to watch the movement(s) and if in the umpire’s judgement, the action of the inserter caused a defender to cross the end line, she feinted the insertion. The inserter should be the one penalized should this be the case.

Clearly if a flyer just jumps before the ball is inserted, the defender should be penalized, but officials need to be aware of what is going on and what, if anything, caused the defender to cross the end line early. Let’s work to change our focus on Penalty Corners. Instead of merely watching the line for players to enter the circle, let’s try to focus on what action(s), if any, caused the player to step in early!

ITEM 3 ~ TOURNAMENT VOTING:
As some of you know, officials receive currently receive votes and ratings in order to be selected for OHSAA State Qualifying and State Finals Tournaments. However, the system that has been in use may have seemed a bit muddy at best. Rather than explaining the details of past procedures, I’m happy to share the news that beginning with this year’s voting, we will be using the same system
that is used for OHSAA Tournaments in Football, Basketball, Soccer, Baseball, Softball, etc. Note: This year’s voting will be implemented for the selection of next year’s tournament officials.

Under this new system, 50% of the votes come from officials and officials associations. There is a PDF attached to this Document and a PowerPoint Presentation is on the Field Hockey Page of the OHSAA Website. Here’s how this will work:

A.) There are 60 Possible Total Points from four categories (maximum of 15 points from each category).
   1. Coaches will need to rate officials on each varsity game on a 1-5 scale. (This is something that roughly 40% of our coaches have been doing for many years. Coaches who may need help with this part can get instructions from their Athletic Directors.)
   2. Schools (Athletic Directors) will need to submit their vote at the end of the season. They may vote for up to 15 officials (In Field Hockey that number may be too large if we are to identify the best officials. There is no minimum number.)
   3. The third category is the Association Vote. Each Association may vote for up to 25% of their membership. Officials receiving the top 5% of their association’s vote will receive 15 points. The next highest 5% will receive 12 points. The third highest will receive 9 points, followed by 6 points and 3 points for the remaining groups. Association Secretaries are responsible to submit their association vote to OHSAA at the conclusion of the season. Voting by email (timing to be determined by the secretary) is acceptable and encouraged.
   4. The final category is called Leaders of Officiating. A vote is available to Local Association Secretaries, Local Association Rules Interpreters, Local Association Assigners, Local Association Presidents, Current Instructors, Directors of Development, OHSAA Administrators, OHSAA Assigned Tournament Observers, and Others as determined by the Commissioner. Please note that those individuals who hold multiple positions in this list are limited to a single ballot.

B.) Ranking and Pools:
   1. Officials will be ranked by district of residence and divided into pools. Pools are grouped by eligibility for various levels of the tournaments.
   2. Where feasible, the State Qualifying Tournament Pool will be approximately twice as large as the number of officials to be assigned.
   3. The State Finals Tournament Pool will be approximately three times as large as the number of officials to be assigned.

C.) Tournament Eligible Officials & Assignments:
Eligible officials will need to complete a tournament questionnaire through their MyOHSAA Dashboard. Rankings and Pools are then reviewed to ensure that a sufficient number of officials are available in each pool. State Qualifying and State Final Tournament assignments are finalized by one or more individuals, including OHSAA Staff and the sport’s Director of Development.

End Result:
- This improved process puts Field Hockey Tournament Officials selection in sync with other sports in Ohio.
- It provides Field Hockey Officials and Officials’ Associations with input into the selection of Tournament Officials in addition to the traditional system of selecting tournament officials.
- It opens the door and recognizes newer officials who have stepped up to develop their officiating skills.

Have a great week!