

INTERNATIONAL HOCKEY FEDERATION (FIH)
Rue du Valentin 61
1004 Lausanne
Switzerland

Continental Federation and National Association
Presidents and CEOs

Lausanne, 24th January 2025

<https://www.fih.hockey/news/penalty-corners-face-masks-mandatory-for-all-fih-events>

Dear Friends

Firstly, we wish all of you a healthy, successful and enjoyable 2025.

The purpose of this letter is to inform all Continental Federations and National Associations of an addition to the FIH Regulations, with immediate effect, making it mandatory to wear face masks when defending penalty corners in all FIH competitions (indoor and outdoor).

Athlete safety and welfare is, and always has been, primary when making decisions about the Rules of Hockey and the Regulations of our competitions, and given the evolution in speed and power of our game, in particular during penalty corners, this is an important step that we have made to best protect our athletes.

In addition, and to allow all defending players to be properly protected, the outdoor Regulations have been adjusted to provide some flexibility to umpires in applying the 40 seconds between the award of a penalty corner and the taking of it. However, please note that should any players deliberately delay the taking of the PC, umpires will still be able to award personal penalties.

To provide a little more detail:

Following a recommendation from the **FIH Health & Safety Committee**, based on protecting athlete welfare and safety, the below additions to Paragraph 5 of Appendix 1 of the outdoor FIH Regulations “Penalty Corner Countdown Clock” are being made with immediate effect.

[fih-top-tier-tournament-regulations-january-2025.pdf](#)

The key changes are highlighted below in yellow and we now require all teams to arrive at FIH events with appropriate numbers of PC defensive face masks for their teams to use when defending Penalty Corners during the competitions.

FIH Tournament Regulations -

Appendix 1 - Regulation 5: Penalty Corner Countdown Clock

*“When an initial penalty corner is awarded, the timing of the match shall be stopped for 40 seconds, as specified in Article 2 above, (inter alia to permit defenders to put on protective gear etc) before allowing the penalty corner to commence. **It is mandatory for all players defending a penalty corner to use head or face protection.** The engaged Umpire shall advise both the defence and the attackers as the countdown clock approaches zero. After 40 seconds if both teams are ready the Umpire shall re-start play by blowing the whistle and the ball shall be injected immediately or very shortly thereafter.*

*In the event that a team is not ready the engaged Umpire is to **determine whether the delay is intentional, or in the case of the defending team, if the delay is due to players finding and putting on their full protective equipment.** The priority for the umpires is athlete safety and welfare, and therefore if a little more time is required for all defenders to be ready and fully protected, this should be given, without penalty. If however the Umpire is of the view that **there is an intentional delay resulting in a team not being ready within the aforesaid 40 seconds, the Umpire is to identify and issue a personal penalty (i.e. a green card) to the player who is responsible for the delay, with an increased personal penalty (i.e. a yellow card) for repeated offences.** If this player is a defender, the defending team defends the particular Penalty Corner with one player fewer. For any offence of this rule by a defending goalkeeper, the defending team defends the penalty corner with one fewer player: ie the corner is defended by one fewer player than before this incident. The defending team nominates which defender will be subject to a personal penalty.”*

The mandatory wearing of a face mask will also be applied to Indoor Hockey FIH competitions - [fih-tournament-regulations-indoor-january-2025.pdf](#)

In addition, we strongly recommend these regulations are adopted in your Continental and National competitions. However, we recognise that not all teams across all levels of competition in all countries will be able to provide appropriate face/head protection for all players. Therefore, should a CF or NA decide not to apply this mandatory use of face/head protection in a particular competition, FIH are supportive of other regulations being adjusted to protect athletes and maintain safe hockey. For example, restricting the first shot at goal (including drag flicks) to be at backboard height or below.

We thank you in advance for taking note of these Regulations to protect our athletes.

Should there be any questions, please address them to me at the below address.

Kind regards



Jon Wyatt

FIH Sport Director and Interim Senior Director - jon.wyatt@fih.hockey