



Advice for Match Officials (Covid-19)

Introduction

Following the announcement by England Hockey on 2 September confirming the move to Step 5 (competitive league hockey) in its Return to Play strategy, TAP and England Hockey have produced the following guidance for Match Officials ahead of the commencement of the 2020/21 season. We hope that this will help you to participate safely and understand any additional responsibilities necessary when acting as a Match or Technical Official at an EH event or EH League match.

Please note that the arrangements teams have put in place will differ from venue to venue and may be constrained by whether the venue is a club, local authority or school property. It is therefore impossible to be prescriptive in this document or cover every eventuality, but we hope that this will help you conduct your Match Officiating safely, effectively and with confidence.

Everyone is being encouraged to help facilitate the EH Return to Play at Stage 5 as much as possible. Your responsibilities (as with all other things applicable to match day officiating) are pitch-side and match related. For issues involving spectators please refer to your home club spectator liaison who should deal accordingly.

For up to date information on England Hockey's Return to Play and how Government announcements affect this see the Return to Play Guidelines on the EH website available [here](#)

Generally

The conditions of the Return to Play agreement with DCMS allow the relaxing of social distancing on the pitch when the ball is in play. This means that when the clock is stopped, or situations such as the set up to a penalty corner, social distancing should be applied by the players and umpires.

The total number of 30 people in the guidance documents apply to individuals within the white lines of the pitch. The pitch surrounding area (i.e. within the fence but not on the field of play) must apply social distancing guidelines at all times. This applies to all individuals on team benches, any technical officials on duty, umpire coaches/assessors and spectators.

Match Officials are responsible purely for management of the game around the benches and technical area. The home club's Covid Officer is responsible for ensuring that any guidance documents concerning the steps the club have taken to make the facility Covid safe are available.

At Home

- Carry out a Covid-19 symptoms self-assessment prior to leaving home. If you exhibit any symptoms do not travel to the venue but advise the host club and the EH Technical Appointments Administrator. You should then contact the NHS for a test.



- If it is your first appointment, and if you have not already done so, ensure that you have completed and submitted your England Hockey Participant Agreement which, can be found on your OMS homepage when you first login.
- Check with the home club/venue what facilities are accessible at the venue, and who their responsible Covid Officer is. Make contact with the host club/venue for guidance on the Covid measures at the venue to make your visit safe for yourself and others. Specifically, ask your team liaison to arrange for hand sanitiser to be available at the technical area.
- Be aware that clubhouse/school/leisure centre facilities vary from location to location, therefore you may not be able to check team sheets and other information indoors. The EHL Regulations have been amended this year to help with pre-match preparation - make sure that you have read these and work with the team manager to prepare as much as possible before you reach the venue.
- Ensure that you take your own face covering and hand sanitiser and have these with you throughout the event/match.
- **MO Tip** - *This season, more than ever, it will be important to make early contact with your teams and umpiring colleagues. Take this opportunity to get up to date information from the home team on their Covid guidelines and always make sure you have a match day contact for the teams and umpires in case you need to contact them.*

At the Venue - General Principles

- Wherever possible remain 2+ metres away from individuals outside of your social bubble at all times, or 1 metre + if wearing a face covering (in line with government policy at the time of writing).
- Work with team managers and other officials and umpires at a distance of 2+ metres away at all times, or 1 metre + where not possible.
- Establish from the COVID Officer (or in their absence, the team manager) any venue rules to adhere to during their visit concerning COVID 19.
- If possible, regularly wash your hands or apply hand sanitiser during your time at the venue.

Pre-match

- Conduct all pitch and goal/net checks in line with social distancing. Visually inspect the goals, but any repairs to goals or netting, placing of goals on goal-line should be done by the home team or, if by you, either wearing gloves or sanitising/washing your hands immediately after.
- The teams have been advised to dispense with corner flags for this season.
- Player equipment checks are discretionary and should only be undertaken visually. If you do need to touch any equipment, wear gloves if possible or wash or sanitise your hands immediately after each contact to protect yourself and to avoid cross contamination.
- **MO Tip** - *Get to the venue early and get your goal and net checks done as soon as possible so that the home team has good notice of any repairs that need to be undertaken. Likewise, any stick and equipment checks must be done early to allow the teams to warm up in good time.*
- Exercise appropriate social distancing in any pre-match discussions with umpires and team managers.
- Inform team managers to remind their players and coaching staff about the EH Covid regulations and also the EH Code of Ethics and Behaviour.
- **MO Tip** - *Working effectively with your team manager is going to be an important part of keeping hockey safe for everyone. It is always good to talk to your team managers before the match but make sure that you do this early soon as possible, taking the opportunity to outline the Covid safety guidelines applicable at your venue.*



- The EH Covid regulations and the EHL Regulations are clear on unacceptable behaviour so take some time to speak to the managers so they can remind their players about this and work with you to avoid disciplinary issues during the match.
- Ensure chairs are placed in appropriate locations for any temporary suspended players and follow social distancing guidelines where possible. Chairs should be placed at least 2 metres apart, more if the facility allows this. If this is not possible, note that umpires are instructed to allow players to stand near the 23m line away from the other players (but are still under the MOs control).
- **MO Tip** - Every venue will be different so make this part of your pre match talk to make sure everyone is clear on what will happen with any suspended players.

Match Paperwork

- Check the EHL Regulations and guidance on this. Teams should, if possible, e-mail their team sheet (generated from SportLomo) together with their registered players list to the MO in advance of the match. This can be done any time before the game, including the night before (but not on match day unless the team has contacted you). Take a copy of the information you receive to the match as you still need to check this on match day. The e-signature or covering email is a sufficient signature.
- Teams will be asked to provide laminated photo sheets, if needed, so that they can be sanitised.
- A copy of the Match Report Form (MRF) will be emailed to all teams and MOs before the start of the season. On the day, the MO will only receive a hard copy of the team sheet **if** there are late changes and if a revised form cannot be e-mailed (i.e. one where hand-written changes are made). The MO completes a hard copy MRF which is a single sheet document (there will be no triplicate forms in 2020-21).
- Any tablets provided to use AltiusRT in EHL Premier Division are required to be wiped with sanitiser pre and post-match for the MO to use. Ideally MOs should provide their own tablet/laptop for this purpose but if you are unable to do so, make early contact with the teams to ask for one to be provided (note - clubs have been asked by EHCD to be ready to assist you on this).
- Match programmes may be made available by home clubs online who will advise how/where to download them from. Programmes must include team lists and EH advertisements as a minimum.

Technical Area and Managing the Match

- Note that social distancing during breaks in play including for PCs, injury, quarter and half-time breaks, and at the end of the match, apply to all participants (players, team management, coaches, umpires and officials).
- **MO Tip** - A friendly reminder is a good idea, but ultimately social distancing is the responsibility of each team manager.
- Umpiring guidance has been issued through NPUA and regional/county HUAs. Umpires are advised to be especially strong on the areas of spitting or nose blowing without a tissue. Umpires will penalise with penalty cards and offending players are required to clean off the pitch where this took place.
- MOs are required to report to the umpires any occasions of the above behaviour on the bench or off the pitch (including subs and suspended players).
- Deliberate or repeated breaches can be reported as a disrepute offence under the EH Code of Ethics and Behaviour.
- **MO Tip** - Work with your team managers regarding player behaviour and remind them to be vigilant to this - make them aware of the sanctions that may be applied. If there are obvious instances of spitting or nose blowing without a tissue at the team benches or around the technical area ask the team manager to deal with this. If you don't get the necessary co-operation then you can ask the umpire to stop time for this be dealt with, and penalties awarded accordingly. Again, this is all about getting the teams on board to keep hockey safe.



- Advice about crowding of umpires or officials has also been given in the guidance to umpires, again being dealt with promptly and firmly with the award of a green card. Deliberate or repeated breaches can be considered as cases of disrepute, and should be managed appropriately by the umpires on the day.
- Technical areas are to be kept free as much as possible, therefore the MO should be the only person there. If any umpire support or home club/venue volunteers are present they should comply fully with social distancing at all times or be asked politely to leave the area. Trainee MOs or MO Assessors present at a match may stay in the technical area but must maintain social distancing as appropriate.
- **MO Tip** - Check OMS to see who is joining you for your match and cover this in any pre match discussions.
- To maintain 2 metre social distancing between teams whilst waiting to substitute, substitutions should take place no less than 1 metre from the centre line on the side of their team's own bench. Multiple player substitutions should, where possible, maintain appropriate social distancing.
- Where team benches/dugouts are provided, players and team staff must maintain social distancing, even if this results in players standing further down the side of the pitch than would normally be allowed. This of course will vary from venue to venue but should be managed by the team managers under the direction of the MO.
- **MO Tip** - This is the responsibility of the team manager; work with your team manager to encourage proper social distancing off the pitch but do not let this become a distraction from your other core duties.

Medical

- Team physios or doctors may attend to players but must wear suitable protection - minimum of medical gloves and a face mask advisable.
- Ice should be supplied to both teams separately by the home team for use by the appropriate physio or team doctor. A small supply should be at the technical table for the umpires, if needed. Gloves/hand sanitiser must be used prior to the use of ice.
- Blood cleaning on the pitch is now the home team's responsibility and they should appoint an individual to be responsible for this who must use gloves, face mask and sanitiser as appropriate.
- **MO Tip** - Make it part of your pre-match checks to ensure this is done; do it early so that issues can be rectified in good time before the match starts.

Post-match

- Where possible, team managers should sign the match report using their own pen/stylus.
- Teams can be sent a scan or photo or take their own photo, of the completed MRF at the end of the match for their own records.
- On returning home the MO must check that information on SportLomo replicates the team and MRF information - teams and player names with correct shirt numbers, goals, cards, times, suspensions etc. The EHL Regulations now cover this.
- The MRF and both team-sheets should be scanned and sent to Dan Wilson at EHCD daniel.wilson@englandhockey.co.uk together with details of any discrepancies between the match report and SportLomo. The match report should be posted to England Hockey **only** if a scan facility is not available. The MO is asked to retain and store hard copies of the paperwork for the duration of the season in case of any issues.
- There is no requirement to send hard copy programmes to EH unless there is something of note in them.
- If you show any symptoms of Covid-19 within 72 hours of fulfilling your appointment you **must** inform the club/venue Covid Officer **and** Jo Pennycook (EH Technical Appointments Administrator) joanne.pennycook@btinternet.com and submit yourself for a test through the NHS as soon as possible.



- Similarly, if you are contacted by a club to say that someone involved in a game shows either Covid symptoms **or** is tested positive for Covid you must advise Jo Pennycook immediately.

If you have any questions or concerns on the above, please e-mail:

David Elworthy (EH Officiating Relationship Manager) david.elworthy@englandhockey.co.uk or
Jo Pennycook (EH Technical Appointments Administrator) joanne.pennycook@btinternet.com

Good luck with your Match Officiating, enjoy the return to play and please stay safe.

England Hockey
Technical Appointments Panel

15 September 2020

