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NFHS Field Hockey Weekly Rule Interpretations

Substitution During a Penalty Corner

RULE REFERENCES: Rule 4-4, 4-4-3, 4-4-7, Rule 5-2-1 a-b, Rule 10-3-2

Purpose: The purpose of this interpretation is to clarify the procedure officials should use when an illegal substitute enters the field during a penalty corner. The key consideration is that the offending team should not benefit from its own substitution violation.

Officials should recognize the violation but should not automatically stop play when doing so could provide an advantage to the offending team. The official must determine whether the illegal substitute has participated in or affected the penalty corner.

Rule Language: There shall be no substitutions prior to a penalty corner. Substitutions may occur following the completion of the penalty corner. Substitution shall be permitted prior to a penalty stroke. The exception is the replacement of an ill, injured, suspended or disqualified goalkeeper, as provided by Rule 4-4-3 EXCEPTION. A suspended player whose suspension expires during a penalty corner must wait until the penalty corner has been completed before re-entering the game. Rule 4-4-7. When an illegal substitute enters the field during a penalty corner but has not participated in or affected play, the official should allow play to continue and address the violation at the first stoppage of play. Misconduct penalties will be assessed to the head coach of the offending team, using the card progression. Rule 4-4 PENALTY 1. Play will be restarted by following Rule 5.2.1 a-b.

Following any stoppage of play of the game clock by the officials, play shall be restarted as follows:

- a. If a foul was called prior to the stopping of the clock, the game shall be restarted by assessing the penalty for that foul.
- b. If the ball went out of bounds the game shall be restarted by awarding the side-in, 16-yard hit or 25-yard hit.

If the illegal substitute participates in or affects the penalty corner, the official shall stop play immediately, assess a misconduct penalty to the head coach of the offending team, using the card progression and remove the illegal substitute from the field for the retaken penalty corner. Play is restarted with a Penalty Corner. Rule 10-3-2-If play is stopped because of injury, inadvertent whistle, or

any other reason during the taking of a penalty corner and a bully would otherwise be awarded, the penalty corner must be retaken.

Interpretation: The advantage principle is important when enforcing an illegal substitution during a penalty corner. Officials should not stop play simply because the violation has been identified if the illegal substitute has not participated in or affected play.

Stopping play immediately could interrupt an advantageous attacking or defensive situation and potentially reward the team that committed the violation.

The same procedure applies whether the illegal substitute is from the attacking team or the defending team. The official should allow play to continue when the player has not affected play and penalize the violation at the first stoppage of play.

However, once the illegal substitute participates in or affects the penalty corner, the official shall stop play immediately. An offending team should not be permitted to gain an advantage by having an illegal substitute participate in the penalty corner.

Game Scenario: SITUATION #1: During a penalty corner, the official observes an attacking substitute enter the field. The player remains away from the play and does not participate in or affect the penalty corner. **RULING:** Play continues. **COMMENT:** The official should withhold the whistle because the illegal substitute has not participated in or affected play. The violation should be penalized at the next stoppage of play by assessing misconduct penalty to the head coach, using the card progression. This prevents the offending team from gaining an advantage by having the official immediately interrupt play. The illegal substitute is permitted to remain in the game unless a retaken or subsequent penalty corner is awarded.

SITUATION #2: During a penalty corner, the official observes a defending substitute enter the field. The player does not participate in or affect the play. The attacking team continues its attack. **RULING:** Play continues. **COMMENT:** The same procedure applies to a defending player. The official should not immediately stop play simply because the violation has been observed. If the illegal substitute does not participate in or affect the penalty corner, the violation is addressed at the first stoppage of play. The illegal substitute is permitted to remain in the game unless a retaken or subsequent penalty is awarded.

SITUATION #3: During a penalty corner, an attacking substitute enters the field. The player participates in the penalty corner. **RULING:** The official shall stop play immediately. The head coach is assessed a misconduct penalty using the card progression. The illegal substitute is removed to the substitution area and play is restarted with a penalty corner. Rule 10-3-2. **COMMENT:** Once the illegal substitute participates in or affects the penalty corner, the official must stop play. The offending team may not gain an advantage by having an illegal substitute participate in the penalty corner.

SITUATION #4: During a penalty corner, a defending substitute enters the field and immediately moves toward the ball that is in the circle and attempts to defend against the attacking player. **RULING:** The official shall stop play immediately. The head coach is assessed a misconduct penalty using the card progression. The illegal substitute is removed to the substitution area and play is restarted with a penalty corner. Rule 10-3-2. **COMMENT:** The illegal substitute has affected the play by participating in the penalty corner. The official should not allow play to continue.

SITUATION #5: During a penalty corner, a field player from the defending team becomes injured. The coach attempts to send a substitute from the bench onto the field before the penalty corner has been completed. **RULING:** Illegal substitution. **COMMENT:** Rule 4-4-3 permits a substitution during a penalty corner only for the replacement of an ill, injured, suspended or disqualified goalkeeper. An injured field player may be replaced by another player who is already legally on the field, but a substitute may not enter from the bench until the penalty corner has been completed. The head coach is assessed a misconduct penalty using the card progression. The illegal substitute is removed to the substitution area, and play is restarted with a penalty corner. Rule 10-3-2.

SITUATION #6: A penalty corner has been awarded. The suspension time for a player expires while the penalty corner is in progress. The player attempts to return to the field before the penalty corner is completed. **RULING:** Illegal procedure. The player must wait until the penalty corner has been completed before re-entering the game. **COMMENT:** Rule 4-4-7 requires a suspended player returning to the game to follow the substitution provisions of Rule 4-4. Because field player substitutions are not permitted during a penalty corner, the player must wait until the penalty corner has been completed. If the player participates or affects the play, immediate whistle. The head coach is assessed a misconduct penalty using the card progression. The illegal substitute is removed to the substitution area, and play is restarted with a penalty corner. Rule 10-3-2. If the player does not participate or affect the play the official will assess a misconduct to the head coach, using the card progression. The player is removed to the substitution area if the restart is a subsequent or retaken penalty corner, otherwise the player may remain on the field.

Points of Emphasis for Officials and Coaches: Officials should remember that recognizing a violation does not always mean immediately stopping play.

When an illegal substitute enters during a penalty corner:

- If the player has not participated in or affected play, allow play to continue and address the violation at the first stoppage.
- If the player participates in or affects play, stop play immediately and administer the appropriate penalty and restart.
- The procedure applies equally to attacking and defending players.
- Do not allow the offending team to benefit from its own substitution violation.
- Field player substitutions are not permitted during a penalty corner.
- The exception is the replacement of an ill, injured, suspended or disqualified goalkeeper as provided by Rule 4-4-3.
- A suspended player whose suspension expires during a penalty corner must wait until the penalty corner is completed before returning.
- Trail official should be proactive on Penalty Corners and monitor the substitution area for substitutes. Making eye contact and or verbal contact with the substitute prior to the insertion of the ball and reminding them to not enter until the penalty corner is complete can prevent illegal substitutions on penalty corners.

The key question for the official is: Did the illegal substitute participate in or affect the penalty corner?
That determination guides whether play continues to the first stoppage or is stopped immediately.