

WEST HOCKEY UMPIRES ASSOCIATION
PLAYER BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Over recent past seasons the West Hockey Umpires Association and West Hockey Umpiring Committee have together become more concerned with the deteriorating standard of behaviour exhibited by players in games in the West hockey region at all levels. This is having a detrimental effect for all who enjoy the game. The number of current umpires is reducing coupled with a reduction in new uptake of the whistle at all levels. Many cite player behaviour specifically persistent comments, dissent, questioning and downright abuse as the key factor influencing their decision whether to umpire or not. The majority of players also reflect that there has been a sea change in the way players inter-react with umpires.

The policy below therefore is for implementation at West Regional Level – and is therefore to be applied by Level 2 Umpires across the region on West Hockey Umpires Association appointed games, across both Womens' and Mens' hockey. It has been developed following the pioneering steps along these lines taken by the Devon Hockey Umpires Association in the past season and the positive feedback and effect on all who play the game their policy has produced. In time it is envisaged that all WHA playing and umpiring associations will adopt if not this policy (as this has been written with Level 2 Umpires and regional games in mind) then one like it.

It is hoped therefore to engender responsibility to all for improving player behaviour, be they players, umpires, selectors, managers, coaches, supporters, and that this policy and others like it act as the framework around which we can influence change so that all involved in hockey can again enjoy the game.

Richard Shaw

Chair, West Hockey Umpires Association.

PLAYER BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Importantly this policy is **not** intended:

- to be prescriptive of the sanctions which will be applied in **every** instance;
- to take away the umpires' ability to manage the game and apply their common sense; or
- to discourage a dialogue between players and umpires in appropriate circumstances.

However, this policy does represent a standard which will be enforced by umpires in the majority of cases and against which their handling of player behaviour will be assessed.

1 ROLE OF THE CAPTAIN

Captains are responsible for the behaviour of all players on their team, including those on the bench (Rule 3.4). The importance of this rule cannot be underestimated. Umpires will expect and must receive the assistance of both captains at all times to assist their management of the game. A personal penalty will be awarded to a captain who does not exercise his/her responsibilities.

2 SWEARING

Swearing is unacceptable on a hockey field. All instances of audible swearing will be dealt with by the umpires with a personal and/or team penalty being applied where appropriate. The personal penalties may include:

- (a) A verbal warning;
- (b) A green card; or
- (c) A yellow card.

A team penalty will result in the upgrading or reversal of a decision as appropriate.

Swearing directed at an umpire, about the decision of an umpire, at an opponent, any other official or a spectator will be punished with a yellow card. The duration of the yellow card will reflect the seriousness of the offence.

Swearing which is audible only within a short distance or which is genuinely borne out of frustration (but not in reaction to a decision of the umpires) will generally be dealt with by a verbal caution in the first instance, perhaps even without the game stopping. Subsequent or repeated occurrences will see more severe penalties applied.

3 DISSENT / VERBAL ABUSE

Dissent or verbal abuse directed towards an umpire, about the decision of an umpire, at an opponent, any other official or a spectator will be punished with a yellow card. The duration of the yellow card will reflect the seriousness of the offence. Team penalties may also be applied.

Ordinarily a captain will be invited to deal with the first instance of verbal abuse between members of his/her own team unless it is particularly serious. Thereafter, the umpires will apply such penalties as they see fit.

4 PERSISTENT QUESTIONING / INDIRECT DISSENT

Persistent questioning of or complaining about umpires' decisions undermines their authority and is unacceptable. Whilst there will always be individual instances of questioning the umpires' decisions during a match, this should ordinarily be undertaken by the captain and always in an appropriate manner. Any explanation offered by an umpire will be the end of the matter and not be subject to further discussion during the match.

Persistent questioning, indirect comments about umpires, their decisions, non-verbal dissent (e.g. throwing away the stick) and generally petulant behaviour will be dealt with in the same manner as swearing in section 2 above.

5 SURROUNDING UMPIRES

Surrounding an umpire means more than 2 players approaching an umpire to contest a decision. Surrounding umpires is unacceptable and will be punished by the umpires in every instance. On the first occasion the team captain will be awarded a green card and warned to control his players. On subsequent occasions, the captain and/or offending players may be awarded a yellow card.

6 APPEALING

Encouraging umpires to award cards to members of the opposing team is unacceptable. Players doing this (either verbally or by waving imaginary cards) will receive a minimum penalty of a green card.