

A BRIEF GUIDE to the England Hockey Code of Ethics and Behaviour 2008

I. Introduction

On 17th March 2008 the Board of England Hockey approved a composite Code of Ethics and Behaviour (“the Code”), effective from 1st September. The purpose of the Code is twofold i.e.:-

- a) To clarify the standards of behaviour and values expected from anyone involved with the sport of hockey; and
- b) To set out the consequences of failing to meet those standards and values.

Almost by definition, no brief guide or summary can hope to address all the points in the Code. Anyone who wishes to find out how the Code might affect them should therefore look at the relevant part. In the case of any conflicts or inconsistencies between this note and the Code, the latter obviously takes priority.

The Code is available to view and can also be downloaded from the EH website www.englishockey.co.uk under the “Equity and Ethics” section. This starts with a generic overview of standards of behaviour and values, and is then broken down into more detailed sub-sections for players, umpires, coaches, team officials, medical staff etc.

Details of the consequences of failing to meet those standards and values are set out in the four appendices to the Code. These appendices are intended to concentrate on specific breaches and can be summarised as follows:-

- a) Appendix A – Safeguarding and protecting young people;
- b) Appendix B – Red card and match-day misconduct offences;
- c) Appendix C – Anti doping offences; and
- d) Appendix D – Disrepute offences

The provisions of the new Code are of universal application, and every individual/ organisation participating in the sport of hockey is deemed to have accepted its jurisdiction. This effectively means that, as before, ignorance of the Code is no defence and the fact that an individual/ organisation may disagree with any part of the Code (eg the concept of mandatory minimum suspension) is completely irrelevant.

2. Changes of style

The **style** of the Code is very different from anything which has been in place previously, given that this is the first time any attempt has been made to bring a range of issues together under one comprehensive policy. The initial statement of an ethical policy is therefore completely new, as is the focus on safeguarding young people under Appendix A.

The other significant change in style is the separation of the old disciplinary code into two distinct sections ie red card and match-day misconduct offences are dealt with by reference to Appendix B, but disrepute offences have been separated out and are now dealt with under Appendix D.

3. Changes of content

- 3.1 The most significant change in the **content** of the new Code is probably the reduction in the number of categories of red card/ match-day misconduct offences from 7 down to 3. The common theme is still the extent to which physical violence is involved, but the categories are now simplified and encompass the following cases i.e.:-

- a) where physical violence is not used, attempted or threatened;
- b) where physical violence is used, attempted or threatened to a player or any other person;
and
- c) where physical violence is used, attempted or threatened to an umpire or properly appointed tournament/ match official.

3.2 Nobody reading the Code or this guide should, however, conclude that this reduction in the number of categories of offence means that incidents of ill-discipline resulting in the award of a red card or which constitute a match-day misconduct offence are necessarily going to be treated any less severely. On the contrary, England Hockey remains determined to ensure that incidents of ill-discipline are punished.

3.3 In considering the impact of new Code, it also needs to be stressed that much of the old administrative arrangements have deliberately been retained. From a practical point of view, the starting point for dealing with red card and match-day misconduct offences will therefore still be the completion of a form by the umpire(s) concerned.

3.4 In the vast majority of cases of ill-discipline, those forms should then still be sent to the Discipline Administrator of the County to which the Club concerned is affiliated. The principle of mandatory minimum suspensions for red card/ match-day misconduct offences has also been retained. Penalties for disrepute offences have again deliberately not been set out in stone on the basis that flexibility needs to be retained to deal with a wide range of incidents.

4. Changes to procedures in dealing with red card/ match-day misconduct offences

4.1 Having indicated that the majority of procedural/ administrative arrangements remain the same, there are a number of changes implemented by the new Code, particularly with regard to cases where the CDA might wish to impose penalties for red card/ match-day misconduct offences in excess of the mandatory minimum suspensions.

4.2 The mandatory minimum suspension for a category (a) offence where physical violence is not used, attempted or threatened is still 16 days. A CDA is now entitled to impose an additional penalty up to – but not exceeding - 30 days suspension for a category (a) offence of his/ her own volition, but requires the prior approval of the Regional Discipline Administrator for anything above and beyond 30 days (see Regulation 6.7)

4.3 Regulation 6.7 also provides that where a CDA feels a penalty greater than 30 days is appropriate for a category (b) offence or a penalty greater than 60 days for a category (c) offence, he/ she should again secure the prior approval of the Regional Discipline Administrator to the proposal. This has been done with a view to improving consistency across the country.

5. Changes to disrepute offences

5.1 The majority of the old provisions for dealing with disrepute offences again remain the same. In particular, the basis of a disrepute offence is now defined as “conduct by an individual or an affiliated body that is prejudicial to the EH Code of Ethics and Behaviour, or is otherwise liable to cause the sport of hockey to be brought into disrepute.” Issues which are potentially dealt with under one of the other Appendices (e.g. offences penalised by the umpires during a match or the commission of a match-day misconduct offence) are specifically precluded from being dealt with as disrepute offences.

5.2 There are, however, a number of important changes. In particular:-

- a) a disrepute complaint must now be instigated by the completion and submission of a Disrepute Incident Form;
- b) any individual wishing to lodge a disrepute complaint must have the endorsement of an affiliated body; and
- c) where a disrepute offence is dealt with by a CDA, any decision must be approved by the relevant RDA.

5.3 These changes are all implemented with a view to securing greater consistency in dealing with disrepute offences throughout the country

6. Changes to the appeal arrangements

6.1 As previously, there is no appeal in respect of the first 16 days of a mandatory suspension following the award of a red card or the commission of a matchday misconduct offence, but an Appeal Body can now set aside the red card or the MMO if satisfied that the case is exceptional.

6.2 The new Code also introduces for the first time the concept of a "Further Appeal" to the EH Appeal Panel if, but only if, the Chairman of the EH Appeal Panel is of the view that:-

- a) the circumstances of and the procedure adopted following the issues of the red card in question, or the commission of the MMO and/ or the sanction imposed were exceptional, and/ or disclose a material irregularity; and
- b) it is in the general interest of the individuals and the affiliated bodies concerned that the red card or the MMO in question should be adjudicated upon by the EH Appeal Panel; and
- c) that the proposed Further Appeal has a reasonable chance of success.

6.3 Similar provisions have also been introduced into Appendix D recognising the possibility of a Further Appeal following a disrepute complaint.