

**Hampshire Hockey Umpires' Association**  
**www.hampshirehockeyassociation.co.uk**

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**A study guide to the Rule Book for Level 1 Umpire candidates**

**Preface**

- A sorry tale** Pat was the players' nightmare: an inconsistent and indecisive umpire whose partners always struggled to control a tetchy game. Despite accepting a place on the Level 1 Umpire course, Pat is careful to avoid assessment (which is sure to be critical) and carries on the same as ever.
- A sorrier tale** Alex agreed to go on the course after blowing the whistle for a few games. The classroom sessions sort-of made sense, but then in the practice game it all became a blur. The next game was even more horrible and Alex definitely hates umpiring. Never again.
- The sorriest tale of all** Sam had never blown a whistle until being forced to in front of the whole course. In the classroom everyone else seemed interested in the size of the pitch and substitution of goalkeepers, but to Sam it all seemed so much nonsense. Sam never did umpire a game of hockey.

OK, Pat's tale is imagined, but on past Level 1 courses Alex represented about 1 in 3, and Sam 1 in 5, of the candidates. Behind each tale is the idea that it would be the course that taught a candidate to umpire. It is not.

Umpires learn to umpire by umpiring. And the core of the core skills is making decisions.

Let's face it... The Level 1 Umpire Award requires around 5 hours in the classroom, one of which is the exam. Then candidates spend another 5 hours umpiring 3 practice matches and the assessment. Most umpire at least as many extra games, either before or after the course, so make that 10-15 hours of hockey altogether. Add in the preparation on the pitch and review at home, and that's at least as many hours again.

So, for every hour of listening to the course tutor, Level 1 Umpire candidates spend several hours teaching themselves to umpire.

These study notes aim to make the best use of that time, and put the classroom sessions into a proper perspective. Instead of some scary monster ordeal, the course becomes a pleasant day with fellow umpires, which fills the gaps in your knowledge, and adds useful tips and tricks to your umpiring toolbox.

From now on... The homework and the course sessions light up Pat's mind with sparks of recognition. Just get those decisions working and all that experience starts to count for something. Pat turns out as good as the next umpire.

Alex came away from the course with just one key idea - make decisions - but that was enough. Suddenly everything fits together and the umpiring just gets better and more fun.

The course was hard work but Sam has learnt enough to have a go at that first game, which turns out to be not bad at all. A few mistakes and messy situations for sure, but did you see that advantage at the top of the D? What a goal!!

The big challenge becomes the assessment game that wins you the Level 1 Umpire Award, and even that will be remembered as just a milestone you passed on your umpiring journey.

Give your tale a happy ending.

## A DIY Guide to the Level 1 Umpire course

### All you need to know is in the Rule Book

Either borrow a Rule Book, or google 'FIH Rules of Hockey' to download the 2009 Rules<sup>1</sup>.

### The Umpire's job

Given that the Level 1 Umpire assessment is to confirm that the candidate is reasonably competent as an umpire, we should be clear what the umpire's job actually involves.

Rule 11.1 defines the umpire's job as "Two umpires control the match, apply the Rules and are the judges of fair play". Umpiring consists of judging each of up to a hundred incidents in a match, and giving the decision with a signal, often a whistle, and usually voice also.

### Decision-Centred Umpiring

The Level 1 Umpire award says an umpire has enough knowledge of the rules, and the basic umpiring skills, to make the same decisions as any good umpire. The quickest and easiest way to get there appears to involve building the knowledge and developing the skills that contribute most directly to 'The Decision'.

Oddly, neither the FIH Rule Book nor the standard England Hockey course materials say much about the crucial skill of 'making decisions'. Maybe the umpires on the Hockey Rules Board or the authors of the course are so experienced that 'umpires make decisions' seems too obvious to be worth mentioning. But when beginners try to build their umpiring skills, and knowledge of the rules, without that keystone of 'The Decision', the whole lot tends to crash into an untidy heap, and nothing makes sense.

### Level 1 Umpire Assessment

It is the assessment game that passes any candidate as a Level 1 Umpire, so the pass/fail criteria provide a good indication of the skills and knowledge an umpire needs.

The result of the assessment will be one of: Not to grade / To grade / Above grade.

The 'current grade' in this context is the basic Level 1 Umpire standard, and therefore an ordinary pass is 'To grade', and a fail is 'Not to grade'.

To grade - The assessment is 'To grade' provided the candidate has given a decision on nearly every out-of-play and significant conduct-of-play incident, even if there were a few mistakes and they lack some of the basic 'Umpiring skills' on pages 42-45 of the Rule Book: preparation, co-operation, positioning, whistling, and signalling. These candidates can play the more obvious advantages, and would wave play on for, say, a trivial foot contact.

Above grade - An 'Above grade' umpire has developed beyond the basic Level 1, and could soon take county appointments if they wanted. The candidate has strong basic skills and can show all three of the higher skills of 'Applying the rules' on pages 40-42:

- firm decisions on the harder calls: 5m at free hits, obstruction, aerials, AND
- advantage: letting play 'flow' while keeping control of the game, AND
- control: not necessarily cards, more often strong whistle and verbal warning for interfering with free-hits, intentional fouls, reckless play.

Not to grade - The assessment must be 'Not to grade' when the candidate barely umpired at all - missed decisions, whistle inaudible, signals vague - leaving the game largely to the players' honesty.

The assessor usually sends a report, laid out as on the next page, with comments on where the candidate performed well, and some action points to keep the progress moving.

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<sup>1</sup> Be sure to download the rules for outdoor hockey not indoor. For a paper copy of pages 1-47 that you need, Adobe Reader lets you 'Print' with a 'Page scaling' setting of 'Multiple pages per sheet' for 2 or 4 pages of rules per sheet of A4, with 'Page' order set to 'Vertical'. The green text is too pale on many colour printers so try to use a black-and-white printer, or select greyscale with 100% contrast. The map on page 51 can be printed on a full sheet of A4 to help think through positions on page 44.

**LEVEL 1 UMPIRE - CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT FORM**  
(Based on Umpire Performance Report recommended by England Hockey)

Name	AA	Colleague	BB (L1 Candidate)
Date		Teams	K v J
Type of pitch		Weather	
Competition	Hants Women Div X	Final score	

<b>Decision making</b>	The essential 'decision-whistle-signal' thought process must be evident, including basic 'advantage' and occasional 'no offence' decisions. Comment here on general whistling and signals. Ability on tough decisions: obstruction, aerals, 5m at free hits
<b>Management</b>	Prepared: sensible attire, some sort of pre-match routine Co-operation: areas of control, assistance when needed Routine and signals for restarts and set pieces like PC Ability with more advanced control actions: not necessarily cards, more often strong whistle and verbal warning for interfering with free-hits, intentional fouls, reckless play.
<b>Advantage</b>	Higher skills - letting the game 'flow' while retaining control
<b>Positioning &amp; Mobility</b>	Positions for play in circle, and supporting up-field Position at set pieces: 15m, corner, penalty corner, penalty stroke Mobility and anticipation
<b>Summary</b>	Umpiring impression: comfortable, competent, confident? Challenge of game: easy, uneventful, appropriate, difficult, etc.
<b>Action Plan</b>	No more than 3 points to work on to maintain progress, phrased as: doing X will make Y better/easier/more confident etc.

Fitness	Physical stamina and concentration
Current grade	Level 1 Candidate
Assessment	Not to grade / To grade / Above grade
Recommendation	Club umpire / potential for future / assess for HHUA grade

Once candidates realise that 'making decisions' is all they need to do, the coming months of practice games and assessment become a much less daunting prospect.

DIY Umpire Development

The best way to develop is to start preparing for a match as soon as the previous one ends. Talk through the game's best decisions with partner and players, and understand any mistakes. Then check the rules and pick which skills need improving in your next game.

Make sure you umpire a variety of hockey and avoid taking the same team every week. That way you experience working with good umpires, and taking the lead for even less experienced partners. Extend your comfort zone to ever more challenging hockey, but if you go 'a game too far' then step back to easier matches to rebuild your confidence.

Take every opportunity to watch good umpires in action. Maybe county umpires are appointed to the game before or after yours, or else find out which Sundays will have a cup match or nearby national league fixtures. When good umpires happen to see you umpiring, talk to them and listen carefully to any tips and tricks they might suggest.

Imagining tricky situations, and what a good umpire would do, gives you a better chance of handling it well when it happens to you. So involve yourself in umpiring chatter after the game, and browse the discussions on a forum such as [www.fieldhockeyforum.com](http://www.fieldhockeyforum.com).

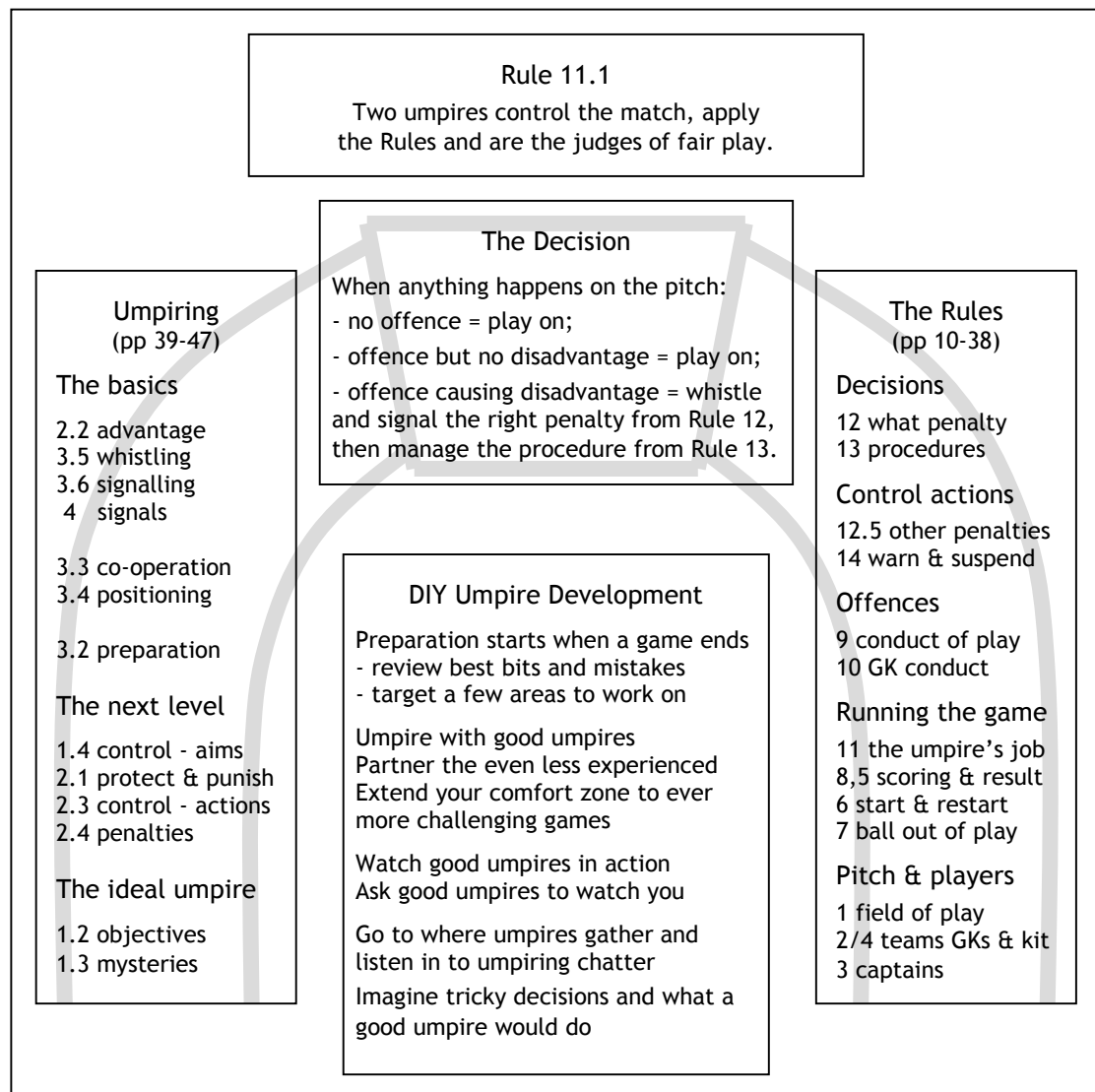
## A Study Guide to the 2009 Rule Book

As the preface explained, an umpire mainly learns to umpire by umpiring games of hockey, returning to the rule book and watching other umpires between games. Somewhere along the way there will be the Level 1 Umpire course to fill in the gaps and bring the candidate's umpiring to the common standard.

The diagram below shows how the key idea of 'The Decision' ties together, on the one side knowledge of the rules, and on the other the skills of umpiring them. Highest on each list are the skills and rules that any umpire uses throughout every game. Further down are the more advanced skills that will be covered in the Core Skills DVD session of the course, and the rules every umpire must know for when the game needs them, and (for the Level 1 course) to pass the exam at the end of the classroom sessions.

The exam has a pass mark of 60 out of 90: 30 marks are possible from the decision rules 12 & 13; and around 12 each from: control actions, offences, running the game, pitch & players, and the Umpiring section.

Some candidates feel that the DVD, rules sessions, and exam put undue emphasis on control actions and cards, which are seldom needed at their level of hockey. But the moment of truth will come soon enough. Never mind the course and the exam and the assessment: a player has misbehaved. You are the Level 1 Umpire, and must know what to do.

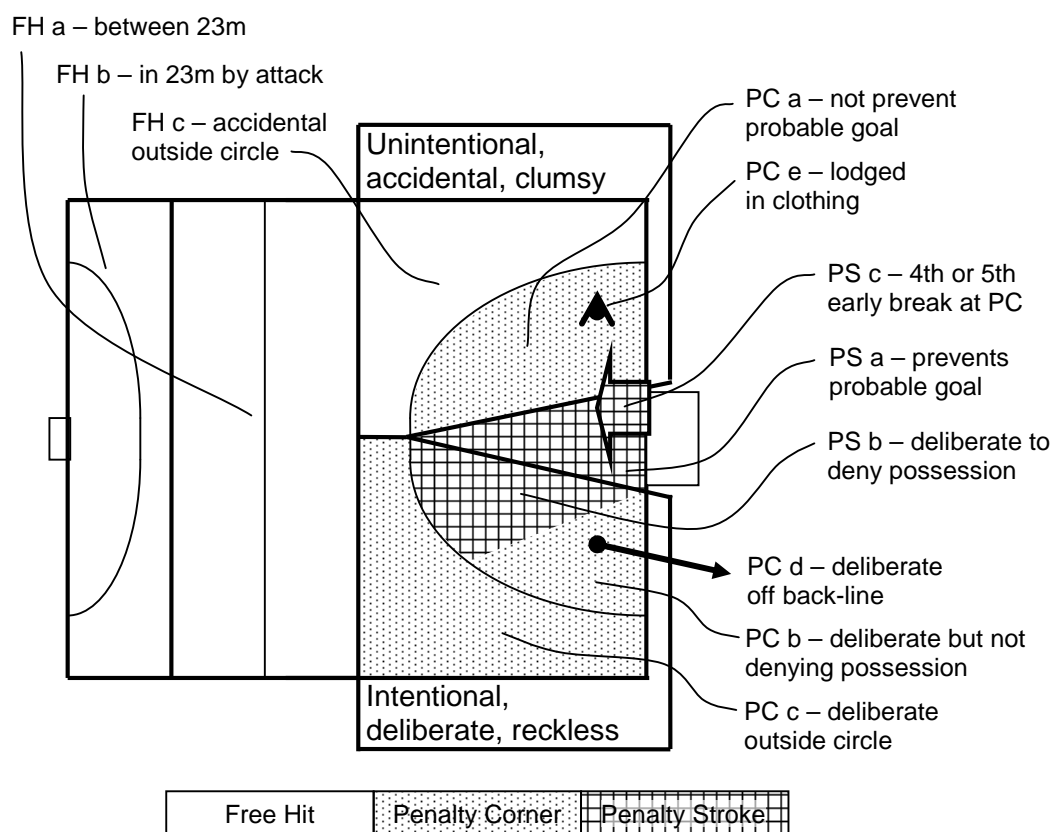


Study the Rules and Umpiring section from the top of each side of the 'arch' above.

## Rules 12 what penalty & 13 procedures

Umpires always consider Rule 12.1 Advantage before blowing the whistle for a free hit or penalty corner, but generally a penalty stroke decision is blown at once.

Some candidates might find that the diagram below helps to map out the decisions on: 12.2 Free Hit, 12.3 Penalty Corner, and 12.4 Penalty Stroke. Others will be comfortable enough with the rules text, and are welcome to forget the picture.



Advantage on page 40 describes the skills involved in applying rule 12.1. Umpiring skills from page 42 cover the preparation, cooperation, positioning, whistling, and signalling skills that support good decisions, with the official umpiring signals on pages 45-47.

The free hit rules 13.1 & 13.2 have major changes for 2009. Players will be looking for you to know the rules and to apply them consistently with other umpires in their league.

There are two pages of penalty corner rule 13.3 and it is important for both attack and defence that you know it inside out. 13.4 13.5 and 13.6 are relatively straightforward rules on when the penalty corner ends for overtime and substitution.

The penalty stroke rules 13.7 13.8 are not needed as often as a penalty corner but are simple to run. Know the potential offences 13.9 even though they are hardly ever seen.

## Rule 12.5 and 14 control actions

Rules 12.5 & 14 provide additional penalties for serious offences and to control misconduct.

Umpiring 1.4, 2.1 and 2.3 on pages 40-42 describe the higher skills of managing the game that will come with experience. But read this now so you know what to aim for, and keep coming back here in your preparation for each game.

When you are watching better umpires, these are their skills that you should be looking to bring into your own umpiring.

### Rules 9 & 10 offences

Most of these rules describe what players must not do. In practice the tricky ones to umpire are for tackling and obstruction 9.3, 9.12, and 9.13, and for aerial passes 9.7 and 9.10, but accuracy will come with practice.

The notes to the foot body rule 9.11 say it is an offence 'only' when contact with the ball is 'voluntary', but in practice an accidental contact that alters the balance of play is just as much an offence as deliberately playing with foot or body.

This is just one example of interpreting rules consistently with your partner and with other umpires the teams will have. Sometimes their interpretation will differ from how the rule seems, to you, to read. But you must umpire play their way, and never apply your own version. If that leaves you uncomfortable then a bit of lateral thinking should soon enough make the same sense of it for you as it does for everyone else.

### Rules 11, 5, 8, 6, 7 umpiring the match

Rule 11 is the umpire's job description, and requires the equipment listed in preparation 3.2f on page 43. Note that the whistle is not usually blown when the ball goes out of play.

Rule 5 and 8 define the result and scoring. The ball has to cross completely over the line, which is why positioning 3.4g on page 44 suggests moving into the circle to judge shots at goal, and exactly how far the ball goes.

Rules 6 and 7 describe your routines for starting and restarting after goals, stoppages, and the ball going off the pitch. This is easy to get right, and consistently getting it right builds the players' trust in your umpiring. That trust comes in very useful when there is a tight decision on a borderline offence.

Getting it right includes using the correct umpiring signals from pages 45-47.

### Rules 1, 2/4, 3 pitch & players

These rules provide the framework for a hockey match and are seldom needed during play, but when a question arises on what is, and is not, allowed by way of, say, goalkeeper substitutions, then an umpire must know the rule.

If something comes up during a game (or an exam) that you don't know, then you will have to come back and re-read it. Otherwise you will seldom look in this part of the rule book.

### Umpiring 1 - objectives & mysteries

The umpiring objectives on page 39 might be called the 'mysteries of the umpire's art'.

Top level umpires doing national and international games know all the rules and have completely mastered the skills on pages 40 to 47. But be assured that every game they umpire uncovers new depths to these objectives and how they might be achieved.

However many years you keep umpiring, the apprenticeship never ends.

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