

NDHA MODIFIED RULES FOR JUNIOR COMPETITION ADDENDUM TO BY-LAWS

UNDER 9 COMPETITION

- In 2025 Under 9 matches are scheduled to start approx 40 minutes prior to the first scheduled game of the day on a Saturday. Guardians will need to check the draw as this start time may vary from week to week. Players are encouraged to arrive 15 minutes prior to their scheduled start time to enable coaches/managers to organize their teams.
- Participants must be under 9 years of age on the 1st of January. Participants in the Under 9 competition are not excluded from also participating in the Under 13 competition.
- Teams will consist of between 5 and 7 players on the field at a time.
If teams have more than 7 players they may share their extra players with the opposition but may not put more than 7 players on the field at a time. If both teams have up to 8 or 9 players they may choose to allow this amount of players, but the field must not become crowded.
- Teams will play with a maximum of one more player than the other team. Teams are expected to share players whenever necessary to ensure the maximum number of children get to play.
- Participants **MUST** wear shin guards and mouthguards.
- Parents and spectators are expected to support all players and always show good sportsmanship as an example to the participants.
- If more than 5 Under 13 matches are played an upgrade to a Junior Player registration will be required.
- Coaches will be responsible for umpiring the game. Coaches may choose to have an umpire under their supervision, but ultimate decision making rests with the coaches working together for the benefit of the players. Please make sure there are two people to umpire each game (coaches please carry a whistle).

The following modified rules will apply:

- Time – games will be of 2 x 15 minutes halves.
- Games will be played on a quarter sized field.
- The ball must be on the ground at all times
- Raised sticks (above waist height) and wild/dangerous swings will be penalised immediately.
- Players must be at least 3 metres away at free hits, take the time to move all players back to create space for the player taking the free.
- Players will be penalised if the ball hits their feet or the back (round) side of their stick.
- Only one player from each team can tackle at a time.
- Very little advantage will be given in order to help the players learn the basic rules.
- There should be no body contact between players.
- There will be no penalty corners in U9.
- There will be a marked line (cone markers) 10m from each ‘backline’ of the quarter field. This line will be where free hits, earned inside the section, will be taken from, and will indicate the goal scoring area.
- To score a goal the attacking team must touch the ball with the flat side of their stick inside the 10m area before the ball goes over the goal line.

These modified rules are subject to review and may be changed at any time by the NDHA Junior Committee or Executive Committee.

General Guidelines:

- Shin guards and mouthguards are compulsory for all field players.
- Coaches are permitted to occasionally be on the field to help their learning players – approximately 2-3m from the sideline and only between the two 23m lines (not between the baseline and the 23m line). Coaches must avoid getting in the way of umpires and players and must leave the field if requested by the umpire.
- The Under 13 competition will be 11-a-side, but if one team can not field a full team, a difference of only one player is permitted between the teams (e.g. 9 players on one team, therefore maximum of 10 players on field for the other team).
- If teams require extra players 'bye' players are to be approached in the first instance. If 'bye' players are not available to fill-in for a team needing extra players the option of borrowing players from the opposition is available. If players are still required to fill a side they may be borrowed from any of the other teams (these players are treated the same way as 'bye' players would be). Opposition players may be loaned for half a game or for the entire game, but must remain listed on the card as a player on the team they are registered with.
- Coaches are expected to be fair in their choice of loaned players and must avoid letting the need to win override the need to give all junior participants a fair go. Above all, junior participants must be treated with respect regardless of their capabilities.
- Umpires of the Under 13 grade need to be verbal and explanatory with their decisions so that players can always understand what is expected of them. Remember that the safety of the players is paramount, especially in junior grades.
- Cautions, Warnings and Temporary Suspensions – verbal cautions and green cards should be used appropriately to help players understand that certain behaviours are unacceptable in hockey. If a player is given a temporary suspension they are to be seated in the tech bench area. Coaches are strongly encouraged to take the time to speak to their player and support them to make sure they understand the reason for the suspension.
- Apart from the following rule modifications, the Under 13 competition will be played using the same rules as the NDHA senior competition for that season taking into account any additional modifications that may be in the NDHA By-laws.

The following modified rules will apply:

- Time – games will be of 4 x 12 minutes quarters with 2 minute quarter breaks and 5 minute half time break.
- Face masks are compulsory for all field players defending a penalty corner.
- Teams will be required to have a fully kitted goalkeeper on the field at all times.
- Dangerous play – dangerous swinging (e.g. complete miss or huge unsafe swing) is to be penalised by umpires, especially if another player is in close proximity.
- Raised balls – Raised balls are permitted in general field play but only to a maximum of approximately 1 metre and must otherwise comply with FIH rules regarding danger. All raised balls must be carefully and consistently umpired to ensure the maximum safety of players.
- Raised balls shots on goal – if a player has a clear shot at goal and no other player apart from the goalkeeper is in the goal area, the 1m height rule will not apply and the player may shoot at any height at goal, per FIH rules. As a general guide no other player should be within 5 metres of the goal area in this scenario.
- Penalty strokes – penalty strokes are to be awarded as necessary – ball can be pushed/flicked/scooped to any height.

These modified rules are subject to review and may be changed at any time by the NDHA Junior Committee or Executive Committee.

UNDER 16 COMPETITION

General Guidelines:

- Shin guards and mouthguards are compulsory for all field players.
- Eligibility for players in the Under 16 competition will be in compliance with NDHA By Law 12.7.1 – i.e. the minimum age for players to participate in the U16 competition will be 11 years.
A permit may be applied for if a player will turn 11 during that calendar year and each permit application will be decided on a case by case basis. As soon as the player turns 11 years of age a permit is no longer required.
- If teams require extra players 'bye' players are to be approached in the first instance. If 'bye' players are not available to fill-in for a team needing extra players the option of borrowing players from the opposition is available. If players are still required to fill a side they may be borrowed from any of the other teams (these players are treated the same way as 'bye' players would be). Opposition players may be loaned for half a game or for the entire game, but must remain listed on the card as a player on the team they are registered with.
- Coaches are expected to be fair in their choice of loaned players and must avoid letting the need to win override the need to give all junior participants a fair go. Above all, junior participants must be treated with respect regardless of their capabilities.
- Apart from the following rule modifications, the Under 16 competition will be played using the same rules as the NDHA senior competition for that season.

The following modified rules will apply:

- Time – games will be of 4 x 12 minutes quarters with 2 minute quarter breaks and 5 minute half time break.
- Teams will be required to have a fully kitted goalkeeper on the field at all times.
- Face masks are compulsory for all field players defending a penalty corner.
- Drag flicks on penalty corners are allowed BUT the same rules that apply to the first hit at goal also apply to drag flicks, i.e. if the first shot at goal is a hit (or drag flick) the ball must cross the goal-line at or below the height of the backboard.

PERMIT GUIDELINES

Special circumstances may exist for players outside of the age limit to apply for a permit to play in Under 9, Under 13 or Under 16 divisions. Permits will be decided by the Junior Coordinator and the Junior Committee when the application is made. The criteria for the approval of the permit will depend on the skill level, confidence, maturity and physical size of the player in question.

Individual circumstances will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Junior Coordinator and Junior Committee, and conditions may be applied to those permits.

Players given a permit to play in Under 13 or Under 16 will be monitored and reassessed mid season (i.e. round 7 of a 15 round season) by the Junior Coordinator and the Junior Committee to determine whether the permit is still appropriate.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The purpose behind allowing a difference of one player between the teams (10 on team A and 9 on team B) is to allow the teams to be as even as possible without overly penalising the team which has managed to field a full or nearly full side.

The purpose behind allowing limited raised balls and penalty strokes in the Under 13 grade is to help safely prepare our young players for other levels of competition, including SAPSASA, Zone Championships and other inter-association competitions. It is also intended to help the transition into Under 16 and senior grades.