



October 15, 2025

NFHS Field Hockey Weekly Rule Interpretations

Rule References: 8-1p – Obstruction

Rule Language

8-1p –Obstruction occurs when:

1. A player moves or interposes the body or stick, keeping an opponent from attempting to play the ball;
 2. A player shields the ball with the stick or any part of the body;
 3. A third player takes a position between an opponent and the ball to the payers teammate has an opportunity to play the ball;
 - a. NOTE: The following principles apply to obstruction: 1) A stationary, receiving player maybe facing any direction. 2) Once a player receives the ball, the player may move away in any direction (without body contact with the tackler) or pass/deflect the ball. 3) The responsibility is with the tackler to move around the receiver to attempt a legitimate tackle.
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Interpretation

Obstruction occurs when a player intentionally prevents an opponent from accessing or playing the ball, either through body positioning or stick placement. Officials must distinguish between:

- Legal shielding – protecting the ball while allowing the opponent an opportunity to play.
- Illegal obstruction – deliberately denying an opponent the chance to play the ball.

Obstruction can be committed by attackers or defenders. Both must be penalized consistently to maintain fair play.

GAME SCENARIO: Team A forward has possession near the circle. A Team B defender positions their body between the attacker and the goal, without attempting to play the ball, preventing the forward from shooting. The official awards a free hit to Team A from the spot of the obstruction. If the official deems the obstruction is deliberate or repeated, they can issue a misconduct penalty (green or yellow card depending on severity). **RULING:** Correct Procedure **COMMENT:** This interpretation reinforces fair play and safety:

- Obstruction restricts the opponent's ability to compete for the ball fairly.
 - Applying the free hit ensures the offended team has its rightful opportunity.
 - Misconduct penalties deter repeated or intentional obstruction.
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Points of Emphasis for Officials and Coaches

- Watch for players blocking access to the ball with body or stick.
- Distinguish legal shielding from illegal obstruction.
- Repeated obstruction may escalate to a green, yellow, or red card.