

LONDON 2012 MERCURY | nie  
Newspapers in Education

# HOCKEY



**FACT FILE**

Since their Olympic debuts in 1956 (men) and 1984 (women), the Australian teams have finished no lower than sixth. The women won gold in 1988, 1996 and 2000; and the men in 2004.

Hockey makes a historic return to London – the city where it was introduced as an Olympic sport

**F**irst introduced as an Olympic men's event at the 1908 London Games, hockey makes a return to the host city in 2012.

It was many more decades before the women's tournament debuted in Moscow, in 1980.

Historically, archaeological evidence suggests a form of hockey was being played in Egypt more than 4000 years ago, while many other ancient civilisations played variations of the game.

Aztec Indians played a game called "cheuca", which they believed would make them better warriors. The game modern hockey "warriors" play originated in Britain in the 19th century with the London Hockey Association formed in 1886.

**AT THE GAMES**

Hockey involves two teams of 11 players whose objective is to hit the ball into the opposition goal. The teams with the most goals at the end of two 35-minute halves wins.

In London, 12 men's and 12 women's teams will compete, with 16 players (11 players and 5 substitutes) on each side. Matches will be held at Olympic Park's Riverbank Arena, and it will be the first Games to use a blue pitch.

Both the men's and women's competitions begin with a preliminary phase, with the 12 teams divided into two pools. The top two in each pool qualify for the semi-finals — the winners going head-to-head for the gold medal.

**THE RULES**

■ If a ball is hit over the side line, an opposing player restarts play from where the ball crosses the line.

■ If an attacking player hits the ball over the back line, a defender restarts play.

■ The game restarts play when there is a simultaneous breach of the rules by both teams, when the ball becomes lodged in a player's clothing, or when the game is stopped for an injury or other reason.

■ A penalty stroke is awarded when a defensive player commits an international offence.

■ Within the goal circle that prevents a goal from being scored. An attacking player places the ball on a spot 6.4m from the goal, and takes a shot at goal with only the goalkeeper defending.



**GOALIE**

Top international hockey players hit the ball at speeds greater than 160km/h so goalkeepers need to be well protected by padding and guards. The goalie can use any part of the body to prevent a goal being scored, as long as he/she stays in the goal circle. Lying on the ball is considered an obstruction.

**SHIN PADS**

Provide protection from injuries caused by opponents' sticks or the ball. Must be worn inside the socks.

**STICK**

Length: 96cm  
Weight: 737g  
Sticks are flat on one side and curved on the other. Only the flat side can be used to strike the ball.

**BALL**

Weight: 163g  
Colour: Yellow  
Players (excluding goalies) must not touch the ball with their hands or bodies.

**PENALTY CORNERS**

Also known as short corners, these are awarded for infringements within the 23m line. Four defenders and the goalkeeper stay behind the goal line until the ball is played. Other defenders remain behind the centre line.

The penalty corner is taken from a mark 10m either side of goal. The ball is played towards attacking players around edge of the scoring circle. The ball must pass outside the circle, then come back in before shot is taken. Unless flicked, shot must enter goal at height of not more than 46cm to be valid.

A penalty corner may also be awarded for:

- Accidental breaches inside the circle which do not prevent a probable goal.
- Deliberate defensive breaches in the circle not involving the ball.
- Deliberate defensive breaches outside the circle but within the 23m line.

**LONG CORNERS**

If a defending player unintentionally hits the ball over his/her back line, the attacking team is awarded a long corner, hitting the ball into play from a spot on the side line about 5m from the corner flag.

**UMPIRES**

A game is controlled by two umpires, each generally covering half the pitch. For intentional offences, misconduct or dangerous play, umpires show a player a coloured card.



**GREEN:**  
Suspended for two minutes



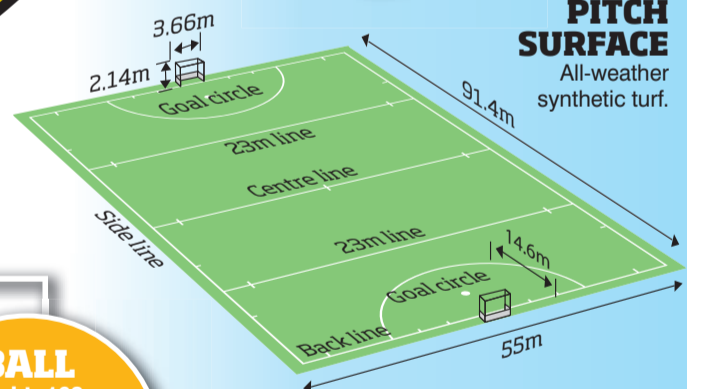
**YELLOW:**  
Suspended for minimum of five minutes



**RED:**  
Ejected from the game

**PITCH SURFACE**

All-weather synthetic turf.



**DEFENCE**

The defence is limited to four players and the goalkeeper. They must stand with both feet and sticks behind the back line or goal line. All other players on the defending side must be behind the centre line.

**ATTACK**

Only the "attacker" is allowed inside the shooting circle and must have one foot behind the back line. The ball must be stopped outside the circle before a shot at goal can be made. Goal shooter must be inside the circle for the goal to count.

