

NFHS Field Hockey Rules Changes 2026

February 06, 2026

1-6-1: The rule was modified to clarify that tooth and mouth protectors may not include non-functional or unsafe attachments.

Rationale: The tooth and mouth protector is intended solely to protect the teeth, mouth, and lips. Attachments or components that do not serve this purpose, or that pose a safety risk, are not permitted.

4-4-3: The rule was revised to limit substitutions prior to a penalty corner to goalkeeper safety situations. Substitution is permitted only for an ill, injured, suspended, or disqualified defending goalkeeper. That goalkeeper must be replaced by a properly equipped substitute goalkeeper.

Rationale: Limiting substitutions prior to a penalty corner addresses safety concerns while preserving the integrity and continuity of the penalty corner procedure.

10-3-3 PENALTIES: The rule was clarified to assign responsibility when an attacking player enters the circle early. For an offense of this rule by an attacker who enters the circle before the ball is played, the inserter shall be required to go beyond the center line.

Rationale: Requiring the inserter to go beyond the center line provides a clear, consistent, and easily administered penalty, simplifies enforcement, and promotes proper positioning and discipline during penalty corner setup.