



September 17, 2025

NFHS Field Hockey Weekly Rule Interpretations
Rule 4-4-3 – Substitutions During a Penalty Corner

Purpose

This interpretation provides clarification on the adjustment to substitution rules during the administration of a penalty corner.

Rule Change

- New Requirement (Rule 4-4-3):
 - Substitutions are permitted for an injured or ill player or the disqualification of the goalkeeper during the administration of a penalty corner.
 - Field players may not be substituted until the penalty corner is complete.

Clarification (Official Guidance)

1. When Allowed:
 - A substitution is permitted only if a goalkeeper is injured, suspended, or otherwise unable to continue during a penalty corner sequence.
 - The incoming goalkeeper must be fully equipped before entering the game.
2. Field Player Substitutions:
 - Substitutions for field players are not permitted until the penalty corner has been completed.
3. Game Management:
 - Officials should stop play immediately if a goalkeeper is injured or suspended during a penalty corner to allow adequate time for the substitution.
 - Resume play with the continuation of the penalty corner.

Game Scenario, Ruling & Explanation

SCENARIO: During the execution of a penalty corner, the defending goalkeeper is struck on the hand and cannot continue. The coach requests a substitution for a backup goalkeeper. The umpire stops play, allows the substitution, and ensures the incoming goalkeeper is fully equipped. Once ready, play resumes with the continuation of the penalty corner. **RULING:** Correct Procedure

COMMENT: Under Rule 4-4-3, a goalkeeper substitution is permitted during a penalty corner in the event of injury or suspension. Field players, however, may not substitute until the penalty corner has been completed. This ensures proper game flow while prioritizing player safety.