



October 1, 2025

NFHS Field Hockey Weekly Rule Interpretations
Rule 11-2-7 – Penalty Stroke at the End of the Game

Purpose

This interpretation provides clarification on the updated procedures for administering a penalty stroke when time has expired, aligning the end-of-game penalty stroke rule with existing penalty corner procedures.

Rule Change

- New Requirement (Rule 11-2-7):
 - If a penalty stroke is awarded before time expires, the stroke shall be taken even if time runs out before its administration.
 - **Exception:** If the result of the penalty stroke would not affect the outcome of the game, the stroke does not need to be taken.
 - This aligns with penalty corner procedures, where play continues until the penalty corner is completed when relevant to the game result.

Clarification (Official Guidance)

1. When Awarded:
 - A penalty stroke awarded before the game clock expires must still be administered, unless the goal would not alter the game's outcome (e.g., the leading team is ahead by more than one goal with no time remaining).
2. When Completed:
 - A penalty stroke is considered complete once:
 - A goal is scored, or
 - The ball goes out of play, or
 - The goalkeeper makes a save and play is finished.
3. When Omitted:
 - If the stroke would not affect the game's result, officials shall declare the game complete without administering the penalty stroke.

Officiating Mechanics

1. End of Game Awareness:
 - Umpires must be alert in the final moments of regulation or overtime.
 - If a foul occurs and a penalty stroke is awarded before the clock hits zero, signal the stroke clearly.
2. Game Outcome Consideration:
 - Before administering the stroke, the umpires must determine whether the goal could influence the outcome (win, tie, or progression to overtime).
 - If not, the stroke is omitted and the game ends immediately.

Game Scenarios, Ruling & Explanation

SCENARIO 1 (STROKE TAKEN):

With three seconds left in a tie game, the attacking team shoots, and a defender illegally blocks the ball on the goal line with their body. Time expires before the penalty stroke is set up. The penalty stroke must be taken. **RULING:** Correct Procedure **COMMENT:** Since the outcome of the game could be altered, the stroke is required under Rule 11-2-7.

Scenario 2 (Stroke Not Taken):

With no time remaining, Team A leads 3–1. A penalty stroke is awarded to Team B before time expires. The penalty stroke is not taken **RULING:** Correct Procedure **COMMENT:** Even if Team B were to score, the outcome of the game would not change. Therefore, the game ends immediately.

This interpretation reinforces that a penalty stroke awarded before the expiration of time must be taken if the outcome of the game could be affected. If the outcome is already determined, the stroke is omitted for efficiency and consistency.