

Eastcote Hockey & Badminton Club Policy For Wearing Face Masks When Defending Penalty Corners.

Introduction

Earlier in the season the club published a Policy on the use of facemasks when defending Penalty Corners based on guidelines supplied by England Hockey who strongly recommend that they be worn.

Subsequent to this the Management Committee have had detailed discussions about the implementation of the Policy, with particular reference to the position of Junior members. As a result of these discussions, the Policy has been refined and updated, and the revised Policy is set out below.

Revised Policy

VERY IMPORTANT GUIDANCE ON USE OF FACEMASKS FOR JUNIOR AND ADULT PLAYERS
This guidance note relates to the use of facemasks during hockey play and their availability to players. It is important that all members (and, in the case of juniors, their parents or guardians) read this note and, where necessary, take steps to comply with the guidance.

You will be aware that it has become common place that, in a defensive penalty corner, the defenders will typically wear a facemask for protection. Eastcote Hockey Club (EHC) would like to make clear to all players and (in the case of juniors) their parents or guardians the following guidance on facemasks:

It is the personal responsibility of all players (and, in the case of juniors, i.e. players under 18 years of age, their parents or guardians) to provide their own protection equipment for playing the game of hockey, and EHC wishes to make members aware of its guidance in relation to the use of facemasks.

In line with the recommendation of England Hockey that facemasks are worn at penalty corners to help prevent serious injury EHC strongly advises junior and adult defenders to use facemasks in game and in training situations.

Adult players are permitted to make an informed personal decision whether to follow EH guidelines and wear a face mask or not. If they decide not to wear a face mask, EHC shall have no responsibility for their safety at penalty corners. EHC does not provide facemasks for adult players.

No junior player will be allowed to defend a penalty corner in any game for EHC or in any practice organised by EHC unless wearing a face mask. At EHC, the Club currently provides some masks to juniors, but we cannot guarantee they are available for all games and the responsibility for providing and using them remains with the player and/or their parents or guardians.

We therefore recommend that if any junior player is likely to be involved in defending penalty corners during a match or training they or their parent or guardian purchases a facemask, since the junior will not be permitted to defend a penalty corner if no face mask is available.

If there are cases of hardship and this purchase is not possible, for junior enquiries please contact:
Junior Section Captain, Jo Copley jo@thecopleys.co.uk

or for adult enquiries:

Chairman Rob Riddleston the.riddlestons@btinternet.com
Treasurer James Nicholls jatnicholls@outlook.com

Commentary

Historically the only person allowed to wear a face mask was the Goal Keeper; however as the game has developed, and player ability to hit and flick the ball more powerfully has increased, the FIH has now allowed the use of approved facemasks to be worn by the defenders positioned on the goal line at penalty corners. They are allowed to wear the mask until the penalty corner play has broken down, at which stage they must discard their masks, which are not allowed to be worn in subsequent open play. England Hockey has issued guidelines that strongly recommend that facemasks are worn for defending penalty corners. The Club also strongly advises junior and adult defenders to use facemasks in game and in training situations.

The Club must stress that the responsibility for providing face masks is entirely that of the individual in the case of adults and that of the parent or guardian in the case of juniors (i.e. players under 18 years of age).

The Management Committee is happy that adult players can make an informed decision whether they want to use a face mask (and if they choose not to wear a mask, the Club can have no responsibility for their safety at penalty corners). However for juniors, i.e. players under 18, the Committee considers that it is necessary to have strict guidelines in view of the age of the player and the fact that a parent may not be present at a training session or match. The Committee has therefore decided that no junior in either practice or matches will be allowed to defend a PC unless they are wearing a facemask.

Some facemasks may be available for Juniors to use in junior coaching and junior matches and but the Club cannot guarantee that availability. If a junior does not have a face mask and no spare face mask is available, the junior will not be permitted to defend a PC.

The club does not have any facemasks for juniors playing in adult games so unless the junior has their own mask they will not be allowed to defend a penalty corner in an adult game.

Please note that the possible availability of some facemasks provided by the Club does not in any way affect the responsibility of the parent or guardian of juniors for providing a face mask. In exceptional circumstances it is possible that no defenders will have facemasks, and the goal will be undefended, leading to a goal being conceded: the committee feel that safety of juniors is of paramount importance over any game result.

The Management Committee
31st December 2018