

Midland Region Hockey Umpiring Association

Umpiring Guidance

Using your Radio in 2016.

MRHUA issued all Level 2 umpires with personal radios in season 2014/15. It took a little time for umpires to be comfortable with using them and now we are inconvenienced without them. They have improved the quality of umpiring performance and increased the percentage of good decisions made significantly – by as much as 10%.

We now need to ask ourselves how we can use radios to improve our umpiring still further. For instance:-

- *Am I using my radio to help me to be the best umpire I can be?*
- *What can I do and what should I avoid to help my colleagues to umpire to the best of their ability?*
- *Are we using the radios to build the best team spirit within MRHUA umpires?*

It is worthwhile to remind ourselves of the basic “Dos” and “Don’ts” when using radios.

“Dos”

- Ensure that you continue to use big and well-presented signals. Make eye contact with your colleague and sell your decisions with big body language to colleagues, the benches, and the crowd.
- When speaking, provide succinct and relevant information only. Do not be tempted to say too much or speak too quickly. Work on using as few words as possible to accurately send your message.
- Anticipate your colleague’s potential difficulties and clarify what happened before your colleague needs to make a decision.
- If you ask for help, take it if it is positive and immediate.
- When and if you use a card, use the radio to advise your colleague of the reason for the card and the offending player’s number so that they are fully informed.
- If you are faced by a serious confrontation or a protest over a game changing decision you have made, stop time, and use the radio to speak to your colleague and, if necessary, meet with your colleague to discuss the situation.
- Nod your head, smile and gesture to your colleague so that everyone can see you are working as a team – even if you have just said well done over the radio.
- Use the radio to ensure you are working together over changes to the tempo, intensity and temperature of the game.

“Don’ts”

- Allow a faulty radio to interfere with your basic umpiring skills or distract your concentration before and during the game. If the radios are not working, make a point of informing the teams and remove your radio from your ear.
- Over use your radio by talking too much or relaying a commentary of your thought process. Avoid talking about every decision.

- Use your radio to tell your colleague what to blow and how to umpire throughout the game.
- Use derogatory or bad language about the standard of play or to make comments about individual players. Other players, the benches or the crowd might hear.
- Ignore your colleague when they ask for assistance. If you can't help – say so.
- Avoid saying just “foot” or “free hit” when communicating. Be more positive by adding at least the direction. For example - “foot defence” or “free hit defence”.
- Ignore a colleague's use of the radio to point out a clear offence in your circle where your colleague had a much better view.

Umpire Teamwork.

Can you think of ways that you can use your radios to strengthen your umpire teamwork - improving the percentage of good decisions still further?

When are the times when both umpires need to look at the same incident?

Taking the opportunity to see an incident from two different viewpoints. The need for a second opinion. To support your colleague. Confirming to the players that you both agree a decision – usually to diffuse a conflict.

Use of the radios to improve consistency among umpires. When players are asked “What is the most important quality you look for from an umpire?” “Consistency” is the most common response; both week by week and particularly within each game.

Using your radio, is it possible to consult between the perceived offence and the award of the sanction? For example, after a bad challenge use the radio to ask “is the Free enough?” This will need high speed decisiveness and a common determination by the umpires to improve consistency between them. Consider being able to agree a card colour and the player number before you produce it? For example – “Green to White 6”? Response “Yes agreed”. You can only do this with trust so that your colleague does not think you are interfering.

However, there are frequent times when using 2 umpires to make the same decision is inefficient. How can you be more efficient as a team?

If one umpire is concentrating on the ball and what is happening around the ball. The other umpire can be looking at what is happening off the ball. The so called front door back door concept. How do you know which of you is doing which? How do you know when to change rolls?

The “Who has the ball” concept.

Think about areas of responsibility. Can you use the radio to be clear which of you has the first opportunity to make a decision in particular areas of the pitch? For example: Play is going away from you down your side line. At what point do you think that your colleague has a better view than you? Can you use your radio to “Pass the ball to him or her?” Say “You have the ball” so that you both know who will have the main whistle responsibility and who will delay coming in for a second longer.

This is another way of using the Front Door/Back Door technique on the far side of the circle edge. Who has a clear view and who is looking through players?

This is particularly important after turnovers.

Who has the ball for aerials - going up and for coming down? You can pass the ball to your colleague while it is still in the air.

Breaking down of play situations - Consider when these are most likely to occur and in which areas of the pitch. A beaten player is more likely to break down the player in possession who has a clear route to goal. Your colleague will be watching the ball carrier (so he or she “has the ball”) and you will watch the beaten player for Breaking Down offences.

It is important for you both to be mentally ahead of the game; anticipating what the players might do next. Keep making every decision even when you don’t blow your whistle.

When you umpire with a colleague regularly and you have confidence in each other, discuss how you can build the teamwork between you.

Who is nearer to a decision or in the best position to sell it? The umpire with the clearest view of the decision may not be able to see the offending player’s number.

Finally,

Congratulate your colleague. When your colleague makes a good decision, offer encouragement by voicing your approval. This helps build rapport between the two umpires and re-establishes the communication channels. This is especially important when your colleague is faced by upset players; has played a great advantage or has tried and been let down by the players.

Co-operation is two or more people working together and not one person having to adapt to the other’s idea of the norm. Everyone’s wish list of what they want from the radios is different. It is up to each pair of umpires to adapt for the future so that both get what they want without interference or annoyance.

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