



Frustration Swearing

1st January 2018

This is an explanation of how umpires in Devon should approach the thorny subject of 'Frustration Swearing.' The 'Player Behaviour Policy' is on the DHUA Web Handbook under 'Umpiring Policy in Devon' and should be consulted for detailed procedures to deal with issues relating to:

1. The Role of the Captain
2. Swearing
3. Dissent / Verbal Abuse
4. Persistent Questioning / Indirect Dissent
5. Surrounding Umpires
6. Appealing

So, what is 'Frustration Swearing'? This is what Wikipedia says about frustration:

"Frustration is an emotion that occurs in situations where one is blocked from reaching a personal goal. The more important the goal, the greater the frustration. It is comparable to anger. Sources of frustration may be internal or external. Internal sources of frustration involve personal deficiencies such as a lack of confidence or fear of social situations that prevent one from reaching a goal. Conflict can also be an internal source of frustration when one has competing goals that interfere with one another. External causes of frustration involve conditions outside the person such as a blocked road or lack of money."

Obviously any connection between 'goal' in the definition above and 'goal' in hockey is both co-incidental and relevant at the same time! The 'Player Behaviour Policy' is NOT designed to allow officious, uncaring, unfeeling, unsympathetic umpires to card players just because they utter a word the umpire finds offensive. Leaving all this behind, let's look at some umpiring scenarios!

Example 1:

A ball is raised at a player and it hits them in the genitals. They fall to the ground screaming in pain, rolling around in agony and uttering the phrase 'f**king hell'. The correct umpire response is to stop time, particularly if the player is in immediate danger, and go to see that they are OK. Medical assistance may be needed but please don't do this yourself unless you are properly trained and insured. Once the player has been restored to full health or left the pitch then restart the game. No other action is required.

Example 2:

The forward has dribbled round 5 players, left the goalkeeper trailing, shoots at an open goal and his shot cannons off the post and over the backline. He follows this piece of skill by uttering an appropriate expletive. The correct umpire response (the first time it happens) is to approach the player, offer sympathy for his glaring mistake and a 'gentle' reminder that you would really prefer it if he kept the language down.

Example 3:

When receiving a ball a player swears angrily when he fails to stop it going off the pitch. A player is fairly tackled and in response they bang their stick on the ground in their own frustration and swear. In these instances a quiet word first then an increasing level of personal penalty if it persists. Don't go over the top too early but be firm and deal with it as it arises.

I hope this puts 'Frustration Swearing' into context in relation to verbal abuse / dissent.

This is an edited version of an original posting by our past President, Paddy Porter (Thanks Paddy!).