

# The Use of Radio Headsets

## OHUA

### Guidance for Umpires

New technology is being introduced in all aspects of our lives and sport, including hockey, is no exception to this. Umpires at international matches now use radios to communicate to their colleague and often have access to video technology to review potentially game changing decisions. Umpires in the national programme in England regularly use radios. Whilst we are probably some way away from video referrals in the OHUA we are seeing an increasing use of radios or radio headsets at our level of umpiring. This guidance is designed to help those individuals who own headsets and use them on a regular basis as well as more occasional users.

The most important thing to remember when using radios is that they are an additional tool and if used correctly can help the umpiring team in a game. It is also important to note that they are not a replacement for existing communication skills you use with your colleague and how you manage players and coaches.

If you own a set of radios and wish to use them for an OHUA appointment we would suggest that you contact your colleague in advance and offer them the opportunity to use this new tool. Some people may not feel comfortable using them and it is better to establish this in advance rather than during your pre-match chat. It also gives those umpires who are not familiar with them the opportunity to ask questions or refer to this guide. If the use of radios is agreed it should be noted that additional time will be required for you and your colleague to get kitted up and also agree how to use the technology during the game.

#### **Things to do:**

- advise the captains before the start of the game that you will be using radios to communicate with each other. It is also worth making the point that they let their respective teams know - which hopefully avoids the left back and left half thinking you're talking to them the whole game!
- be aware that players may not have encountered umpires using radios before and may not understand how they are used
- you should still be communicating mainly with the players and not your colleague
- maintain eye contact with the players and make clear signals - just because you and your colleague know why you've given a decision you still need to communicate this to everybody else
- work towards achieving the right balance between talking too much and not utilising the tool
- concentrate on the game and not on the radios
- continue to take the time to come together to talk about game changing decisions

**Things to avoid:**

- don't let the radios get in the way of normal communication with the players, coaches and your colleague
- debate every decision or try and umpire for your colleague
- keep up a running commentary on the game

**When radios might be useful:**

- to support, consult on or clarify a decision - if required
- discuss tightening up the use of the whistle, or even cards, in response to an increase in the tempo of the game
- to understand what your colleague has given a card for and the offending players shirt number
- to be aware of low level control comments made to players by your colleague

In the pre-match chat it's important that you discuss how you're going to use the radios and also what to do in the event that the equipment fails during the game. In some cases you may be able to hear your colleague but they may not be able to hear you. Agree on a clear signal that you can use which avoids you having to stop the game to advise your colleague. Be aware that players, coaches and spectators close to you will hear what you are saying to your colleague. Equally, you will also hear what is being said to your colleague from those around them.

Talk to your colleague and agree how you're going to call offences. For example you might use "red foot" or "stick obstruction by attacker". You might also use the team names, but it helps to decide on one method and try and stick to it. You can also ask your colleague direct questions. This can be particularly useful if you haven't got the best possible view of play. If you think something might have happened on the far side of your D, but you're not sure, ask; "did you see an offence?" If they tell you that there was a defenders foot inside the D, and you decided to give a penalty corner, make sure that you also establish eye contact with them and acknowledge their signal with a thumbs up. This demonstrates to the players that you are working as a team and if necessary you can tell the defenders that your colleague has seen the offence. You might even want to offer them the occasional word of praise for a good call.