



**ENGLAND
HOCKEY**

Top Tips for Chairing a Meeting

We all attend a variety of hockey meetings, which when chaired and conducted well, help us to achieve our goals in a more efficient way. By introducing some relatively simple changes to the way we plan, structure and manage meetings, we can increase effectiveness and realise our potential, regardless of size.

1. Set a specific meeting outcome

Work together with the Secretary and other Committee members. Find out what people want to discuss and achieve. Think about how you can raise issues in a clear and informed way. Ensuring you as the chair and the meeting participants have a clear outcome for the meeting will bring clarity, purpose and avoid potentially wasted time.

- Why are you having the meeting?
- Do you want speakers?
- Do you need to get more information to inform the discussions, which may need to be circulated in advance of the meeting?
- Do you want to ask someone to prepare an introduction?

2. Circulate an agenda in advance of the meeting

An agenda is simply a list of the things you want/need to discuss in your meeting. By circulating a timed agenda this will enable each participant to prepare and fully contribute to each agenda item, achieving a more focused discussion and decision-making process.

- Make sure everyone has the agenda and papers at least 7 days before a meeting.
- Allocate a time to each topic – and stick to it!
- Aim to keep the length of meetings to no more than 90 minutes. Any outstanding issues can be rolled forward to the next meeting.
- Assume that previous minutes and circulated reports have been read – do not go through them line by line!
- Best practice suggests that there should be no 'Any Other Business' to retain focus on key outcomes.

3. Check the meeting room in advance

Arrive 15 minutes ahead of the meeting start time to check the meeting room, layout, catering, lighting and temperature are all conducive to an effective meeting. Arrange for refreshments to arrive 10 - 15 minutes before the scheduled start time of the meeting, to help ensure the meeting starts on time. For virtual meetings, always log in ahead of the meeting to allow members access.

4. Start of the meeting

Be disciplined and start the meeting on time, regardless of attendance. This will help you run to time and encourage participants to arrive promptly at future meetings.

- Never let a new person sit ignored while everyone else chats.

- Introduce yourself and other speakers at the start.
- If it is a small or new meeting, ask everyone to introduce themselves. Sometimes it works well to get people to say a bit more about themselves as part of the introduction.
- Tell people what the meeting is about.
- Do not assume everyone knows as much as you.

5. Manage time and maintain the schedule

Keep track of the time during the meeting (or delegate the task) to ensure you finish on time. You will find this will improve meeting efficiency and encourage future attendance.

6. Assign tasks and responsibilities

Make sure participants know their role in the meeting, for example who is taking notes, recording discussions and actions. At times you may need others to present or facilitate an agenda item.

7. Use the timed agenda to guide the meeting

A timed agenda will enable you to keep the meeting discussion focused and structured. If you need more time, you can jointly decide to allocate more time to the topic or time can be scheduled outside the meeting. Try having a "car park", to enable you to quickly "park" any comments that are important, but not relevant to the specific agenda item, enabling the group to remain focused.

8. Encourage and manage participant contributions

It is vital to encourage and stimulate meeting discussion, which is critical to successful decision making. Ensure that everyone has had the opportunity to be heard. 'Draw out' the quieter, more reflective participants; whilst managing and controlling the louder, more vocal participants. You will need to constructively resolve any conflict that arises within the meeting.

9. Summarise key decisions and agreed actions

After each agenda item, to help clarify and focus the participants summarise what has been discussed and agreed. Capture the action points and decisions during the meeting, then summarise them, at the end of the meeting. As a result, the process of then identifying who will take responsibility for achieving each of the action items within an agreed timeframe, will then become easier and may encourage more of a team spirit.

10. Review the effectiveness of the meeting

Ask meeting participants to review the meeting effectiveness and how successful you have been at chairing the meeting. This can enhance future meetings, as well as give you some great personal feedback and insights.

- What did we do that worked well?
- What could we do differently next time?

11. Follow up and review the agreed actions

The follow up to the meeting is just as important as the meeting itself. It is vital to ensure that the minutes with agreed action points are circulated soon after the meeting. The first point of any regular meeting that you chair should be to ask those responsible to report back on their progress from the previous meeting. This will stimulate action, responsibility and commitment, and encourage resolution of challenges in achievement of the action points, prior to the next scheduled meeting.



Key Tasks of the Chair during the Meeting

- Getting through the business on time.
- Involving everyone.
- Reaching decisions.
- Dealing with difficult/disruptive people.

Chairing an Effective Meeting

- You are there to facilitate the meeting, not dominate it.
- Do not use your position as an opportunity to impose your views.
- Listen to other people.
- Make sure all viewpoints get heard – including those you disagree with.
- Do not be afraid to speak out if necessary, to keep discussions on point.

