

To: International Handball Federation (IHF)  
Attention: Manfred Prause / IHF PRC

Vienna, 11 March 2010

### **2010 IHF Rules of the Game**

Dear Manfred,  
Dear PRC Members,

Reference is made to the publication of the 2010 IHF Rules of the Game on the IHF website on 2 March 2010 that will become effective as of 1 July 2010.

As you know, the European Handball Federation (EHF) has contributed to the work of the IHF Working Group on the Rules of the Game since 2008 (based on the results of two EHF Working Groups and an opinion poll among the EHF Member Federations).

We would like to point out that the EHF in principle appreciates the concept behind the new rules/ wordings of clearly defining and setting-up standards for the “behaviour of players and officials”, the “behaviour towards the opponent” and the “behaviour in the substitution area and coaching zone”. However, we will not focus on details regarding Rule 8 in this letter, although we still receive some comments by coaches from the EHF Member Federations and renowned EHF coaching lecturers that doubt whether a correct interpretation of rule 8:1 c + Comment (“blocking”) is possible at all and are afraid of the consequences in practice on court.

In the following we would like to refer to some aspects related to the rules of the game that – in our opinion – have to be carefully handled for the benefit of top level international handball in the future, because the requirements of a top handball competition event have to be seen differently from national and regional competitions. Based on the input by the EHF Commissions as well as event organization experts the EHF Technical Delegation (EHF Technical Commission chairmen) discussed the consequences of some of the new rules and wordings with regard to modern “on and off-court officiating” as well as “event management” in top level international handball and would like to provide some comments to you, especially concerning

#### **1) Court set-up, off-court officiating and event management issues**

- the substitution area set-up with 14 chairs (14 players and 4 team officials) requires a 11m “red marked” coaching zone, with 16 chairs (16 players – currently in test phase - and 4 officials) 12m of coaching zone. If the 1<sup>st</sup> chair has to be positioned 3,5m from the middle line the whole coaching zone would reach 14, 5m, respectively 15,5m into each half – is that really, what we want? Furthermore a coach that wants to control multiple substitutions of his players (e.g.: substituting two attackers for two defenders at the same time) in truth has 1m of “permitted acting space”, right?
- the use of 16 players in 2010 EHF Euro in AUT as well as the 2009/2010 EHF Champions League season as a test has been highly appreciated by the top teams. That would be still in contradiction to rule 4:1 that has remained unchanged. In this respect a competent discussion should take place with regard to top level handball.
- an extension of the number of officials from 4 to 5 that has been requested by many top teams seems to be difficult with regard to the previously mentioned points.
- a minimum distance of 50 cm between the side line and the judges table seems to be obsolete in big arenas and in contradiction to TV requirements (main TV camera angle to catch the side line in the substitution area). It should be 1-2m !

- a clearer definition of the surrounding area of the playing court would be beneficial for marketing and set-up requirements in big arenas where top competitions are played. The same holds good for a clear definition that the "in goal area" belongs to the surrounding area because of marketing reasons (floor advertising).
- an obligation for teams to have 2 sets of dresses of the same colour available (one bright and one dark version of the respective colour) would be beneficial at top level competitions, too.

**2) Obligation for the referees to report (rules 8:6 and 8:10) and the authorities to decide on further measures**

- The obligation for the referees to report in connection with the rules 8:6 and 8:10 have been extremely enhanced after cancelling the "exclusion" (many experts are still against) from the rules of the game. This will lead to a huge and stressy workload in administering disciplinary measures for the appointed authorities during World Championships and Euro Events with regard to the timeframe available. In our opinion this is in contradiction to the planned separation of officiating requirements and disciplinary cases/measures after the matches in a top level handball championship/competition, not talking about the danger of many more interventions. Today legal matters are more and more exploited by the protagonists in handball.

**3) Clarity of terminology/drawings used in the 2010 IHF Rules of the Game**

- the term "team/substitution bench" is not a proper one for top level handball any more, since chairs are used instead. Therefore it should be replaced by "substitution chairs".
- In the 2010 IHF Rules of the Game the terms "delegate", "technical delegate" and "official delegate" can be found. There should be one commonly accepted term for this function.
- The graphical drawings should be adapted likewise (e.g.: chairs, distances as mentioned under item 1).

The EHF Technical Delegation thinks that some necessary amendments and adaptations have to be made for international top competition regulations that are in accordance with the 2010 IHF Rules of the Game and accepted when implementing them in order to facilitate an efficient and modern event management, serving the needs of TV, media and professional event partners (e.g.: stats provider and marketing partners)

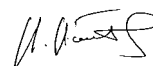
Therefore we kindly ask the IHF PRC to regard the EHF input as a constructive contribution and to consider/discuss the above-mentioned catalogue of issues with particular reference to International top level handball in terms of a proper event management/marketing and off-court officiating.

We are looking forward to your answer with great interest as well as a constructive dialogue, thus facilitating a further improvement of top level handball in the future for all parties involved. Thank you for taking-note and your cooperation in advance!

Best regards

**EUROPEAN HANDBALL FEDERATION**

Helmut Hörtsch  
EHF CAN Coordinator



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**EHF Competence  
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