



GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2009 “NEW” FREE-HIT RULE

New Rule Interpretations

The following information is provided for teams and officials participating in 2009 Hockey competitions played under the new 2009 Rules of Hockey. It is a simplified version of the directions given to AHL umpires for the AHL season.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THE OBJECTIVES OF THE NEW RULES FOR 2009:

- a) To speed-up the game.
- b) To reduce the possibility of danger at “dead-ball” situations in the attacking 23m area of the field.

Note: The free-hit, centre-pass, sideline hit-ins and “long corners” are now grouped together and should be interpreted in the same manner.

Note: The ball must still travel 1m. If passed directly to a team mate from a free hit.

13.2 The self-play free hit:

The team taking the free hit:

- A player must make 2 clear motions – a stop with a push/ hit to follow immediately.
- A free hit is not taken if a player just dribbles off with the ball.
- The player must stop the ball before taking the free hit, this indicates that the free hit is to be taken (the same degree of leniency in applying this will be as per the “old” rule in open play).
- The ball does not have to travel a metre before the second motion.
- It is possible for a player to “self-pass” and throw an “overhead” as the second motion but safety of players is paramount and DANGER must be penalised if this is used inappropriately.

Note: Players from the same team do not have to be 5m from the free hit except in the attacking 23m area.

Note: The team with the free hit does not have to wait for opposition players to move 5m from where the free hit is to be taken.

Opposition Players

- Opposition players **MUST** move 5m from where the free hit is to be taken.
- Umpires **MUST** take action against players deliberately preventing a quick free hit – this is gamesmanship. A warning (verbal or “green”) may be appropriate, but those actions which are clearly designed to slow the game are intentional and repeated offences merit temporary suspensions.
- **UMPIRES MUST BE PRO-ACTIVE IN MOVING PLAYERS 5M FROM FREE HITS (VERBAL and WHISTLING).**

OPPOSITION PLAYERS IN “THE 5” CANNOT INTERFERE WITH THE PLAY UNTIL THEY HAVE RETREATED AT LEAST 5M FROM THE SITE OF THE FREE HIT.



PLAYING AT THE BALL IN ANY WAY, "GETTING IN THE WAY" OR RUNNING NEXT TO THE BALL CARRIER WHO HAS TAKEN THE FREE HIT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE and SHOULD BE UMPIRED CONSISTENTLY IN LINE WITH OTHER EXAMPLES OF "GAMESMANSHIP".

13.1 Location of a free hit:

- In open-play allow the free hit to be taken in the general proximity of the offence, as per the "old" rule.
- Inside the attacking 23 - the free hit must be taken close to the site of the offence.
- Inside the dotted circle - THE BALL MUST BE TAKEN BACK TO THE NEAREST POINT 5m FROM THE CIRCLE.
- Defensive free hits and 15s are as per "old" rule.

Free hit's taken inside the attacking 23 area:

This has complex wording in the Rules of Hockey but it is very simple and MUST be applied as directed:

- All players other than the player taking the free hit must be 5m from the ball when the free hit, LONG CORNER or sideline hit is taken.
- BEFORE the ball can enter the circle it MUST be touched by another player OR
- For a player taking a "self-play free hit": the ball must be dribbled at least 5m before it is played into the circle. A player can "self-pass" and then dribble directly into the circle, or pass the ball once the ball has moved 5m from the site of the free hit.

Note: Hard hits or pushes to a team mate, who is 5m away from the free hit when it is taken AND outside the circle, with the intent of deflecting into the circle are permissible – WITH THE PROVISIO THAT "DANGER" BE PENALISED IF APPLICABLE.

- Umpires must be pro-active with regard to free hit location. If the ball is in the wrong spot communicate this to the players before they have the chance to take the hit to avoid "replays".

AT ALL TIMES UMPIRES, COACHES and PLAYERS SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RULES:

TO SPEED-UP THE GAME and REDUCE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR DANGER