

RULES OF HOCKEY 2009-10

FREE HIT

GUIDANCE ISSUED TO UMPIRES (May 2009)

For free hits (including centre passes, corners and all sideline restarts after the ball has been outside the field), all **opponents** must be at least 5 metres from the ball

For free hits awarded to the **attack** within their attacking 23 metre area, all **players** must be at least 5 metres from the ball

In all situations, if a free hit is taken quickly and a player is within 5 metres of the ball but is not playing, attempting to play the ball or influencing play, the taking of the free hit does not need to be delayed. Umpires are asked to be consistent in their judgment of this.

Attacking free hits awarded **within 5 metres** of the circle must be taken **back to the nearest point 5 metres from the circle**.

A player taking a free hit, centre pass, corner or sideline restart can be the next player to play the ball – a **'self-pass'**.

Taking the free hit and the next playing of the ball must be **two distinct and separate** actions. The ball does **not** have to move 1 metre before the player may play the ball again.

At a free hit which is not a 'self-pass', the ball must move at least **1 metre** before it can be played by a teammate of the player taking the free hit (for clarity, a 'self-pass' must show a clear movement of the ball before a secondary action, whilst a free hit must see the ball move at least 1 metre before that ball is played by a colleague).

For free hits (including corners and sideline restarts) taken by the **attacking team inside the 23 metre area** the ball **cannot** be played **directly into the circle**.

At a 'self-pass' the ball **must travel** at least 5 metres from the point of the free hit (not necessarily in a single direction) before the taker himself can play the ball into the circle.

Alternatively the ball must be touched, deflected, hit or pushed by **any** other player **before either it enters or can be played** into the circle.

For free hits (including corners and sideline restarts) taken by the **attacking team** inside the 23 metre area, Umpires are asked to be **pro-active** and use common sense regarding the **placement** of free hits either close to the circle or the 23 metre line and

To be flexible, only penalising if the 'wrong spot' for the free hit is chosen in order to either **gain an unfair advantage** or for reasons which are **against the spirit and aim of the Rules**

Intentionally moving the location of an attacking free hit outside the 23 metre area to create an opportunity to play the ball directly into the circle **must** be seen as an unfair advantage and **penalised accordingly**

For a free hit taken by the **attacking** team within their attacking 23 metre area which is played directly into the circle, Umpires should **not** penalise **unless and until** the ball actually enters the circle. A free hit is awarded to the opposing team from the spot where the free hit was incorrectly executed.

Umpires should award the appropriate penalty for infringements and be aware of breaking down play situations, intentional interference with free hits (including the self-pass) etc.. Umpires are being asked to use technical and personal penalties as required and as appropriate.