

International
Handball
Federation



Rules of the game

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FOREWORD

*These Rules of the Game will take effect on **July 1, 2010**.*

The Rules Text, the Comments, the IHF Hand Signals, the Clarifications to the Rules of the Game, and the Substitution Area Regulations are all components of the overall Rules. This does not apply to the Guidelines for Playing Courts and Goals, which are simply included in the rule book for the convenience of the users of that text.

Note:

For the sake of simplicity, this rule book generally uses the male form of words with respect to players, officials, referees and other persons.

However, the rules apply equally to male and female participants, except as regards the rules for the size of the balls to be used (see Rule 3)

Rule 1 **Playing Court**

1:1 The playing court (see *diagram 1*) is a 40 meter long and 20 meter wide rectangle, consisting of two goal areas (see 1:4 and 6) and a playing area. The longer boundary lines are called side lines, and the shorter ones are called goal lines (between the goalposts) or outer goal lines (on either side of the goal).

There should be a safety zone surrounding the playing court, with a width of at least 1 meter along the side lines and 2 meters behind the goal lines.

The characteristics of the playing court must not be altered during the game in such a way that one team gains an advantage.

1:2 A goal (see *diagrams 2a and 2b*) is placed in the center of each outer goal line. The goals must be firmly attached to the floor or to the walls behind them. They have an interior height of 2 meters and a width of 3 meters.

The goalposts are joined by a horizontal crossbar. The rear side of the goalposts shall be in line with the rear edge of the goal line. The goalposts and the crossbar must have an 8cm square cross section. On the three sides which are visible from the court they must be painted in bands of two contrasting colors, which also contrast clearly with the background.

The goals must have a net, that should be attached in such a way that a ball thrown into the goal normally remains in the goal.

1:3 All lines on the court are fully part of the area that they enclose. The goal lines shall be 8cm wide between the goalposts (see *diagram 2a*), whereas all other lines shall be 5cm wide.

Lines between two adjacent areas may be replaced with a difference in colors between the adjacent areas of the floor.

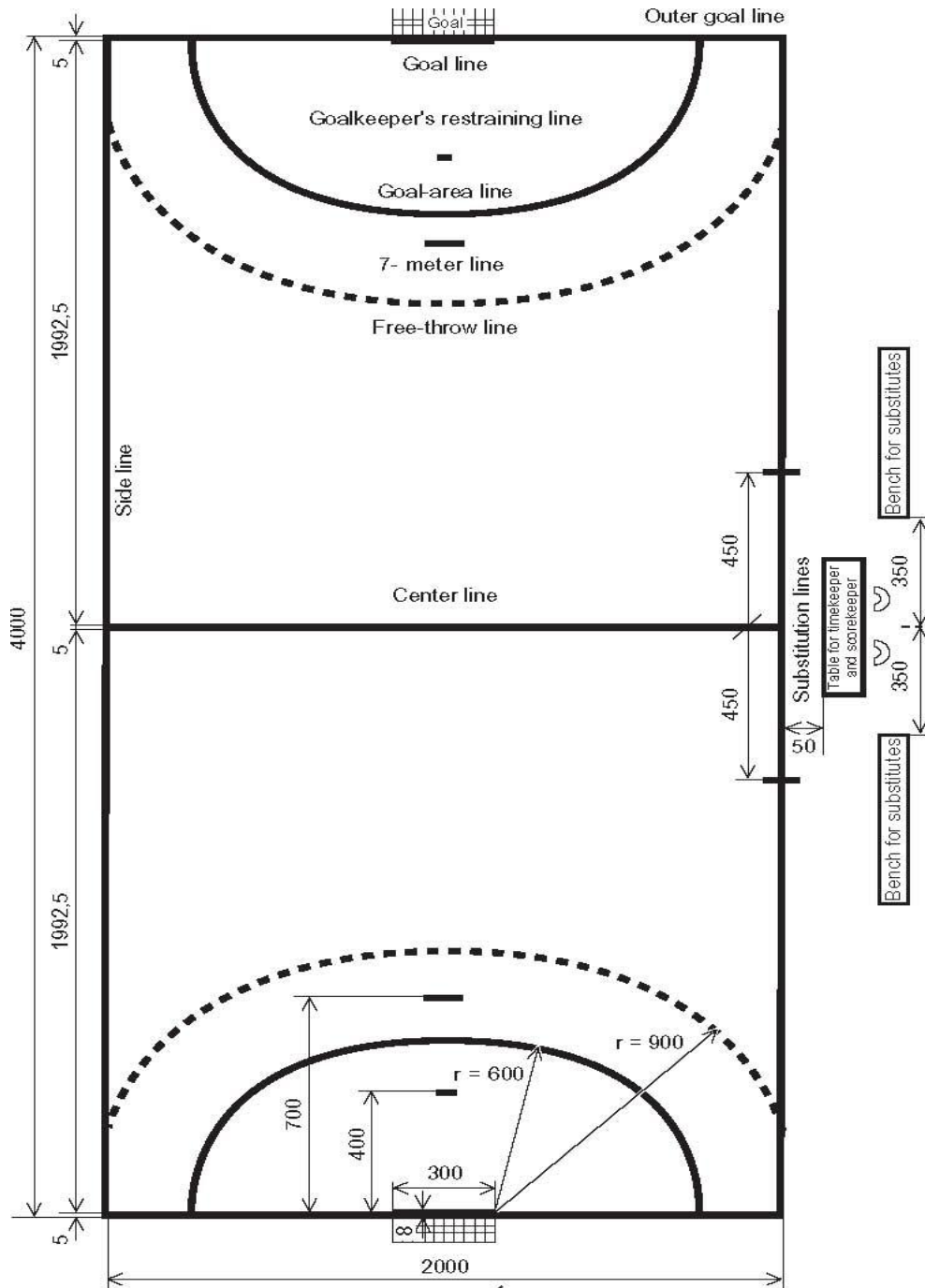
- 1:4** In front of each goal there is a goal area (see *diagram 5, page 90*). The goal area is defined by the goal-area line (6-meter line), which is drawn as follows :
- a) a 3 meter long line directly in front of the goal ; this line is parallel to the goal line and 6 meters away from it (measured from the rear edge of the goal line to the front edge of the goal-area line);
 - b) two quarter circles, each with a radius of 6 meters (measured from the rear inner corner of the goalposts), connecting the 3 meter long line with the outer goal line (see *diagrams 1 and 2a*).
- 1:5** The free-throw line (9-meter line) is a broken line, drawn 3 meters outside the goal-area line. Both the segments of the line and the spaces between them measure 15cm (see *diagram 1*).
- 1:6** The 7-meter line is a 1 meter long line, directly in front of the goal. It is parallel to the goal line and 7 meters away from it (measured from the rear edge of the goal line to the front edge of the 7-meter line); (see *diagram 1*).
- 1:7** The goalkeeper's restraining line (the 4-meter line) is a 15cm long line, directly in front of the goal. It is parallel to the goal line and 4 meters away from it (measured from the rear edge of the goal line to the front edge of the 4-meter line) ; (see *diagram 1*).
- 1:8** The center line connects the midpoints of the two side lines (see *diagrams 1 and 3*).
- 1:9** The substitution line (a segment of the side line) for each team extends from the center line to a point at a distance of 4.5 meters from the center line. This end point of the substitution line is enhanced by a line which is parallel to the center line, extending 15cm inside the sideline and 15cm outside the sideline (see *diagrams 1 and 3*).

Note :

More detailed technical requirements for the playing court and the goals can be found in the Guidelines for Playing Courts and Goals, starting on page 87.

Diagram 1: The Playing Court

Dimensions indicated in cm



Goal area : see also diagram 5 (page 90)

Diagram 2b: The Goal - lateral view

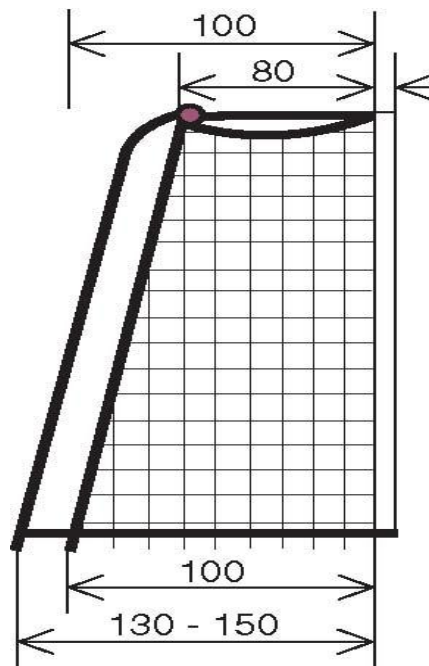
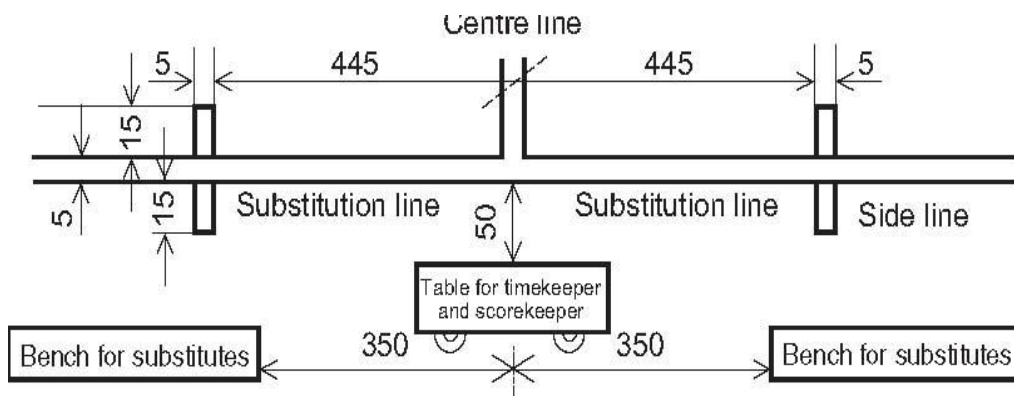


Diagram 3: Substitution lines and substitution area



The table for timekeeper and scorekeeper and the benches for substitutes has to be placed in such a way that the scorekeeper/timekeeper can see the substitution lines. The table should be placed closer to the side line than the benches, but at least 50cm outside the side line.

Rule 2 Playing Time, Final Signal and Time-Out

Playing Time

2:1 The normal playing time for all teams with players of age 16 and above is 2 halves of 30 minutes. The half-time break is normally 10 minutes.

The normal playing time for youth teams is 2 x 25 minutes in age group 12-16 and 2 x 20 minutes in age group 8-12. In both cases the half-time break is normally 10 minutes.

2:2 Overtime is played, following a 5-minute break, if a game is tied at the end of the regular playing time and a winner has to be determined. The overtime period consists of 2 halves of 5 minutes, with a 1-minute half-time break.

If the game is again tied after a first overtime period, a second period is played after a 5-minute break. This overtime period also has 2 halves of 5 minutes, with a 1-minute half-time break.

If the game is still tied, the winner will be determined in accordance with the rules for the particular competition. In the case that the decision is to use 7-meter-throwing as tie-breaker to decide a winner, the procedures indicated below shall be followed.

Comment:

If 7-meter-throwing is used as a tie-breaker, players who are not suspended or disqualified at the end of the playing time are entitled to participate (see also Rule 4:1, 4th paragraph). Each team nominates 5 players. These players make one throw each, alternating with the players of the other team. The teams are not required to predetermine the sequence of their throwers. Goalkeepers may be freely chosen and substituted among the players eligible to participate. Players may participate in the 7-meter throwing as both throwers and goalkeepers.

The referees decide which goal is used. The referees make a coin toss, and the winning team chooses whether they wish to throw first or last. The opposite sequence is used for all subsequent throws, if the throwing has to continue because the score is still tied after the first five throws each.

For such a continuation, each team shall again nominate five players. All or some of them may be the same as in the first round. This method of nominating five players at a time continues as long as it is necessary. However, the winner is now decided as soon as there is a goal difference after both teams have had the same number of throws.

Players may be disqualified from further participation in the 7-meter throwing in cases of significant or repeated unsportsmanlike conduct (16:6e). If this concerns a player who has just been nominated in a group of five throwers, the team must nominate another thrower.

Final Signal

2:3 The playing time begins with the referee's whistle for the initial throw-off. It ends with the automatic final signal from the public clock or from the timekeeper. If no such signal comes, the referee whistles to indicate that the playing time is over (17:9).

Comment :

If a public clock with an automatic final signal is not available, the timekeeper shall use a table clock or a stopwatch and end the game with a final signal (18:2, 2nd paragraph).

2:4 Infractions and unsportsmanlike conduct that take place before or simultaneously with the final signal (for half-time or end of game, and also for the end of the halves in overtime) are to be punished, also if the resulting free-throw (*under Rule 13:1*) or 7-meter-throw cannot be taken until after the signal.

Similarly, the throw must be retaken, if the final signal (for half-time or end of game, also in overtime) sounds precisely when a free-throw or a 7-meter throw is being executed or when the ball is already in the air.

In both cases, the referees end the game only after the free-throw or 7-meter throw has been taken (or retaken) and its immediate result has been established.

- 2:5** For free-throws taken (or retaken) under Rule 2:4, special restrictions apply regarding player positions and substitutions. As an exception to the normal substitution flexibility in Rule 4:4, the only player substitution allowed is for one player on the throwing team. Violations are penalized under Rule 4:5,1st paragraph. Moreover, all the team mates of the thrower must be positioned at least 3 meters away from the thrower, in addition to being outside the free-throw line of the opponents (13:7, 15:6; see also *Clarification No. 1*). The positions of the defending players are indicated in Rule 13:8.
- 2:6** Players and team officials remain subject to personal punishment for infractions or unsportsmanlike conduct which take place during the execution of a free-throw or 7-meter throw in the circumstances described in Rules 2:4-5. An infraction during the execution of such a throw cannot, however, lead to a free-throw in the opposite direction.
- 2:7** If the referees determine that the timekeeper has given the final signal (for half-time or end of game, also in overtime) too early, they must keep the players on the court and play the remaining time.

The team that was in possession of the ball at the time of the premature signal will remain in possession when the game resumes. If the ball was out of play, then the game is restarted with the throw that corresponds to the situation. If the ball was in play, then the game is restarted with a free-throw in accordance with Rule 13:4a-b.

If the first half of a game (or an overtime period) has been terminated too late, the second half must be shortened correspondingly. If the second half of a game (or an overtime period) has been terminated too late, then the referees are no longer in a position to change anything.

Time out

2:8 A time-out is obligatory when:

- a) a 2-minute suspension or disqualification is given;
- b) a team time-out is granted;
- c) there is a whistle signal from the timekeeper or the technical delegate;
- d) consultations between the referees are necessary in accordance with Rule 17:7.

A time-out is normally also given in certain other situations, depending on the circumstances (*see Clarification No. 2*).

Infractions during a time-out have the same consequences as infractions during the playing time (*16:10*).

2:9 In principle, the referees decide when the clock is to be stopped and started in connection with a time-out. The interruption of the playing time is to be indicated to the timekeeper through three short blasts on the whistle and hand signal no. 15.

However, in the case of obligatory time-outs where the game has been interrupted by a whistle signal from the timekeeper or Delegate (*2:8b-c*), the timekeeper is required to stop the official clock immediately, without awaiting a confirmation from the referees.

The whistle must always be blown to indicate the restart of the game after a time-out (*15:5b*).

Comments:

A whistle signal from the timekeeper/Delegate effectively stops the game. Even if the referees (and the players) do not immediately realize that the game has been stopped, any action on the court after whistle signal is invalid. This means that if a goal was scored after the whistle signal from the table, the 'goal' must be disallowed. Similarly, a decision to award a throw to a team (7-meter throw, free-throw, throw-in, throw-off or goalkeeper-throw) is also invalid. The game shall instead be restarted in the manner that corresponds to the situation that existed when the timekeeper/Delegate whistled. (It should be kept in mind that the typical reason for the intervention is a team time-out or a faulty substitution).

However, any personal punishment given by the referees between the time of the whistle from the timekeeper/delegate and the time the referees stop the action remains valid. This applies regardless of the type of the violation and regardless of the severity of the punishment.

2:10 Each team has the right to receive one 1-minute team time-out in each half of the regular playing time, but not in overtime (*Clarification No. 3*).

Rule 3 The Ball

3:1 The ball is made of leather or a synthetic material. It must be spherical. The surface must not be shiny or slippery (17:3).

3:2 The ball sizes, i.e. the circumference and weight, to be used by different categories of teams are as follows:

- 58-60cm and 425-475g (IHF Size 3) for Men and for Male Youth (over age 16) ;
- 54-56cm and 325-375g (IHF Size 2) for Women, Female Youth (over age 14), and Male Youth (age 12 to 16) ;
- 50-52cm and 290-330g (IHF Size 1) for Female Youth (age 8 to 14) and Male Youth (age 8 to 12).

Comments :

The technical requirements for the balls to be used in all official international games are described in the IHF Ball Regulations.

The size and weight of balls to be used for Mini-Handball are not regulated in the normal playing rules.

3:3 For every game there must be at least two balls available. The reserve balls must be immediately available at the timekeeper's table during the game. The balls must meet the requirements of Rules 3:1-2.

3:4 The referees decide when to use a reserve ball. In such cases, the referees should get the reserve ball into play quickly in order to minimize interruptions and avoid time-outs.

Rule 4 The Team, Substitutions, Equipment, Player Injuries

The Team

4:1 A team consists of up to 14 players.

No more than 7 players may be present on the court at the same time. The remaining players are substitutes.

At all times during the game, the team must have one of the players on the court identified as a goalkeeper. A player who is identified as a goalkeeper may become a court player at any time (*note, however, Rule 8:5 Comment, 2nd paragraph*). Similarly, a court player may become a goalkeeper at any time (*see, however, 4:4 and 4:7*).

A team must have at least 5 players on the court at the start of the game.

The number of players on a team can be increased up to 14, at any time during the game, including overtime.

The game may continue even if a team is reduced to less than 5 players on the court. It is for the referees to judge whether and when the game should be permanently suspended (*17:12*).

4:2 A team is allowed to use a maximum of 4 team officials during the game. These team officials may not be replaced during the course of the game. One of them must be designated as the «responsible team official». Only this official is allowed to address the timekeeper/scorekeeper and, possibly, the referees (*see, however, Clarification No. 3 : team time-out*).

A team official is generally not allowed to enter the court during the game. A violation of this rule is to be penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct (*see 8:7, 16:1b, 16:3d and 16:6c*). The game is restarted with a free-throw for the opponents (*13:1a-b; see, however, Clarification No. 7*).

The 'responsible team official' shall ensure that, once the game has started, no other persons than the (maximum 4) registered team officials and the players who are entitled to participate (*see 4:3*) are present in the substitution area. A violation of this rule leads to progressive punishment for the 'responsible team official' (*16:1b, 16:3d, and 16:6c*).

4:3 A player or team official is entitled to participate if he is present at the start of the game and is included in the score sheet.

Players and team officials who arrive after the game has started must obtain their entitlement to participate from the timekeeper/ scorekeeper and must be entered into the score sheet.

A player who is entitled to participate may, in principle, enter the court through the team's own substitution line at any time (*see, however, 4:4 and 4:6*).

The 'responsible team official' shall ensure that only players who are entitled to participate enter the court. A violation is to be penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct by the 'responsible team official' (*13:1a-b, 16:1b, 16:3d, and 16:6c; see, however, Clarification No.7*)

Player Substitutions

4:4 Substitutes may enter the court, at any time and repeatedly (*see, however, Rule 2:5*), without notifying the timekeeper/scorekeeper, as long as the players they are replacing have already left the court (*4:5*).

The players involved in the substitution shall always leave and enter the court over their own team's substitution line (*4:5*). These requirements also apply to the substitution of goalkeepers (*see also 4:7 and 14:10*).

The substitution rules also apply during a time-out (except during a team time-out).

Comments:

The purpose of the concept of the 'substitution line' is to ensure fair and orderly substitutions. It is not intended to cause punishments in other situations, where a player steps over the sideline or outer goal line in a harmless manner and without any intention of gaining an advantage (e.g., getting water or a towel at the bench just beyond the substitution line, or leaving the court in a sportsmanlike manner when receiving a suspension and crossing the sideline at the bench but just outside the 15cm line). Tactical and illegal usage of the area outside the court is dealt with separately in Rule 7:10.

4:5 A faulty substitution shall be penalized with a 2-minute suspension for the guilty player. If more than one player from the same team is guilty of faulty substitution in the same situation, only the first player committing an infraction is to be penalized.

The game is restarted with a free-throw for the opponents (*13:1a-b; see, however, Clarification No. 7*).

4:6 If an additional player enters the court without a substitution, or if a player illegally interferes with the game from the substitution area, there shall be a 2-minute suspension for the player. Thus, the team must be reduced by one player on the court for the next 2 minutes (apart from the fact that the entering additional player must leave the court).

If a player enters the court while serving a 2-minute suspension, he shall be given an additional 2-minute suspension. This suspension shall begin immediately, so the team must be further reduced on the court during the overlap between the first and the second suspension.

The game is in both cases restarted with a free-throw for the opponents (*13:1a-b ; see, however, Clarification No. 7*).

Equipment

4:7 All the court players on a team must wear identical uniforms. The combinations of colors and design for the two teams must be clearly distinguishable from each other. All players used in the goalkeeper position on a team must wear the same color, a color that distinguishes them from the court players of both teams and the goalkeeper(s) of the opposing team (*17:3*).

4:8 The players must wear visible numbers that are at least 20 cm high in the back of the shirt and at least 10cm in the front. The numbers used shall be from 1 to 99. A player who is switching between the court player and goalkeeper positions must wear the same number in both positions.

The color of the numbers must contrast clearly with the colors and design of the shirt.

4:9 The players must wear sports shoes.

It is not permitted to wear objects that could be dangerous to the players. This includes, for instance, head protection, face masks, bracelets, watches, rings, visible piercing, necklaces or chains, earrings, glasses without restraining bands or with solid frames, or any other objects which could be dangerous (17:3).

Players who do not meet this requirement will not be allowed to take part until they have corrected the problem.

Flat rings, small earrings and visible piercing may be allowed, as long as they are taped over in such a way that they are no longer deemed dangerous to players. Headbands, head scarves and captains' armlets are allowed, as long as they are made of soft, elastic material.

Player Injury

4:10 A player who is bleeding or has blood on the body or uniform must leave the court immediately and voluntarily (through a normal substitution), in order to have the bleeding stopped, the wound covered, and the body and uniform cleaned off. The player must not return to the court until this has been done.

A player who does not follow the instructions of the referees in connection with this provision is deemed guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct (8:7, 16:1b and 16:3d).

4:11 In the case of an injury, the referees may give permission (*through hand signals no. 15 and 16*) for two of the persons who are entitled to participate (see 4:3) to enter the court during a time-out, for the specific purpose of assisting an injured player from their team.

If additional persons enter the court after two persons have already entered, including persons from the team not affected, it shall be punished as illegal entry, in the case of a player under Rule 4:6 and 16:3a, and in the case of a team official under Rules 4:2, 16:1b, 16:3d and 16:6c. A person who has been permitted to enter the court under Rule 4:11, 1st paragraph, but, instead of assisting the injured player, gives instructions to players, approaches opponents or referees etc., shall be considered guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct (16:1b, 16:3d and 16:6c).

Rule 5 The Goalkeeper

The goalkeeper is **allowed** to:

- 5:1** touch the ball with any part of his body while in the act of defense inside the goal area
- 5:2** move with the ball inside the goal area, without being subject to the restrictions applying to court players (7:2-4, 7:7); the goalkeeper is not allowed, however, to delay the execution of the goalkeeper-throw (6:4-5, 12:2 and 15:5b);
- 5:3** leave the goal area without the ball and participate in the game in the playing area; when doing so, the goalkeeper becomes subject to the rules applying to players in the playing area (*except in the situation described in Rule 8:5 Comment, 2nd paragraph*);

The goalkeeper is considered to have left the goal area as soon as any part of the body touches the floor outside the goal-area line;

- 5:4** to leave the goal area with the ball and play it again in the playing area if he has not managed to control it.

The goalkeeper is **not allowed** to:

- 5:5** endanger the opponent while in the act of defense (8:3, 8:5, 8:5 *Comment, 13:1b*);
- 5:6** leave the goal area with the ball under control; this leads to a free-throw (*according to 6:1, 13:1a and 15:7, 3rd paragraph*), if the referees had whistled for the execution of the goalkeeper-throw; otherwise the goalkeeper-throw is simply repeated (*15:7, 2nd paragraph*); see, however, the advantage interpretation in 15:7, if the goalkeeper were to lose the ball outside the goal area after having crossed the line with the ball in his hand;
- 5:7** touch the ball when it is stationary or rolling on the floor outside the goal area, while he is inside the goal area (6:1, 13:1a);
- 5:8** take the ball into the goal area when it is stationary or rolling on the floor outside the goal area (6:1, 13:1a);
- 5:9** re-enter the goal area from the playing area with the ball (6:1, 13:1a);

5:10 touch the ball with the foot or the leg below the knee, when it is moving out towards the playing area (13:1a);

5:11 cross the goalkeeper's restraining line (4-meter line) or its projection on either side, before the ball has left the hand of the opponent who is executing a 7-meter throw (14:9).

Comment :

As long as the goalkeeper keeps one foot on the floor on or behind the restraining line (4-meter line), he is permitted to move the other foot or any other part of his body out over the line in the air.

Rule 6 The Goal Area

- 6:1** Only the goalkeeper is allowed to enter the goal area (*see, however, 6:3*). The goal area, which includes the goal-area line, is considered entered when a court player touches it with any part of the body.
- 6:2** When a court player enters the goal area, the decisions shall be as follows :
- a) goalkeeper-throw when a player of the team in possession enters the goal area in possession of the ball or enters without the ball but gains an advantage by doing so (*12:1*);
 - b) free-throw when a court player of the defending team enters the goal area and gains an advantage, but without destroying a chance of scoring (*13:1b; see also 8:7f*);
 - c) 7-meter-throw when a court player of the defending team enters the goal area and because of this destroys a clear chance of scoring (*14:1a*). For purposes of this rule, the concept “entering the goal area” does not mean just touching the goal-area line, but clearly stepping into the goal area.
- 6:3** Entering the goal area is not penalized when:
- a) a player enters the goal area after playing the ball, as long as this does not create a disadvantage for the opponents;
 - b) a player from one of the teams enters the goal area without the ball and does not gain an advantage by doing so;
- 6:4** The ball is considered to be ‘out of play’ when the goalkeeper controls the ball in the goal area (*12:1*). The ball must be put back into play through a goalkeeper-throw (*12:2*).

6:5 The ball remains in play, while it is rolling on the floor inside the goal area. It is in the possession of the goalkeeper's team and only the goalkeeper may touch it. The goalkeeper may pick it up, which brings it out of play, and then put it back into play, in accordance with Rules 6:4 and 12:1-2 (see, however, 6:7b). It leads to a free-throw (13:1a) if the ball is touched by a teammate of the goalkeeper while it is rolling (see, however, 14:1a, in conjunction with Clarification 6c), and the game is continued with a goalkeeper-throw (12:1 (III)) if it is touched by an opponent.

The ball is out of play, as soon as it is lying on the floor in goal area (12:1 (II)). It is in the possession of the goalkeeper's team and only the goalkeeper may touch it. The goalkeeper must put it back into play in accordance with 6:4 and 12:2 (see, however, 6:7b). It remains a goalkeeper-throw if the ball is touched by any other player of either team (12:1 2nd paragraph, 13:3).

It is permitted to touch the ball when it is in the air over the goal area, as long as it is in conformity with Rules 7:1 and 7:8.

6:6 Play shall continue (through a goalkeeper-throw according to 6:4-5) if a player of the defending team touches the ball when in the act of defense, and the ball is caught by the goalkeeper or comes to rest in the goal area.

6:7 If a player plays the ball into his own goal area, the decisions shall be as follows:

- a) goal if the ball enters the goal;
- b) free-throw if the ball comes to a rest in the goal area, or if the goalkeeper touches the ball and it does not enter the goal (13:1a-b);
- c) throw-in if the ball goes out over the outer goal line (11:1);
- d) play continues if the ball passes through the goal area back into the playing area, without being touched by the goalkeeper.

6:8 A ball that returns from the goal area out into the playing area remains in play.

Rule 7 Playing the Ball, Passive Play

Playing the Ball

It is **permitted** to:

- 7:1** throw, catch, stop, push or hit the ball, by using hands (open or closed), arms, head, torso, thighs, and knees;
- 7:2** hold the ball for a maximum of 3 seconds, also when it is lying on the floor (13:1a);
- 7:3** take a maximum of 3 steps with the ball (13:1a); one step is considered taken when:
- a) a player who is standing with both feet on the floor lifts one foot and puts it down again, or moves one foot from one place to another;
 - b) a player is touching the floor with one foot only, catches the ball and then touches the floor with the other foot;
 - c) a player after a jump touches the floor with one foot only, and then hops on the same foot or touches the floor with the other foot;
 - d) a player after a jump touches the floor with both feet simultaneously, and then lifts one foot and puts it down again, or moves one foot from one place to another.

Comment :

It is in conformance with the rules, if a player with the ball falls to the floor, slides and then stands up and plays the ball. This is also the case, if a player dives for the ball, controls it and stands up to play it.

7:4 while standing or running:

- a) bounce the ball once and catch it again with one or both hands;
- b) bounce the ball repeatedly with one hand (dribble), and then catch it or pick it up again with one or both hands;
- c) roll the ball on the floor repeatedly with one hand, and then catch it or pick it up again with one or both hands.

As soon as the ball thereafter is held in one or both hands, it must be played within 3 seconds or after no more than 3 steps (13:1a).

The bouncing or dribbling is considered to have started when the player touches the ball with any part of his body and directs it towards the floor.

After the ball has touched another player or the goal, the player is allowed to tap the ball or bounce it and catch it again (see, however, 14:6).

7:5 move the ball from one hand into the other one;

7:6 play the ball while kneeling, sitting or lying on the floor; this means that it is permitted to execute a throw (for instance a free-throw), from such a position, if the requirements of Rule 15:1 are met, including the requirement of having a part of one foot in constant contact with the floor.

It is **not permitted** to:

7:7 after the ball has been controlled, to touch it more than once, unless it has touched the floor, another player, or the goal in the meantime (13:1a); however, touching it more than once is not penalized, if the player is 'fumbling' the ball, i.e., failing to control it when trying to catch or stop it;

7:8 touch the ball with a foot or leg below the knee, except when the ball has been thrown at the player by an opponent (13:1a-b; see also 8:7e);

7:9 Play continues if the ball touches a referee on the court.

7:10 If a player with the ball moves outside the playing court with one or both feet (while the ball is still inside the court), for instance to get around a defending player, this shall lead to a free-throw for the opponents (13:1a).

If a player from the team in possession takes up position outside the court without the ball, the referees shall indicate to the player that he must move into the court. If the player does not do so, or if the action is later repeated by the same team, there shall be a free-throw awarded to the opponents (13:1a) without any further forewarning. Such actions shall not lead to personal punishment under Rules 8 and 16.

Passive Play

7:11 It is not permitted to keep the ball in the team's possession without making any recognizable attempt to attack or to shoot on goal. Similarly, it is not allowed to delay repeatedly the execution of a throw-off, free-throw, throw-in, or goalkeeper-throw for one's own team (see *Clarification No. 4*). This is regarded as passive play, which is to be penalized with a free-throw against the team in possession of the ball unless the passive tendency ceases (13:1a).

The free-throw is taken from the spot where the ball was when play was interrupted.

7:12 When a tendency to passive play is recognized, the forewarning signal (*hand signal no. 17*) is shown. This gives the team in possession of the ball the opportunity to change its way of attacking in order to avoid losing possession. If the way of attacking does not change after the forewarning signal has been shown, or no shot on goal is taken, then a free-throw is called against the team in possession (see *Clarification No. 4*).

In certain situations the referees can call a free throw against the team in possession also without any prior forewarning signal, e.g. when a player intentionally refrains from trying to utilize a clear scoring chance.

Rule 8 Fouls and Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Permitted actions

8:1 It is permitted:

- a) to use an open hand to play the ball out of the hand of another player;
- b) to use bent arms to make body contact with an opponent, and to monitor and follow him in this way;
- c) to use one's trunk to block the opponent, in a struggle for positions;

Comment:

Blocking means, preventing an opponent from moving into open space. Setting the block, maintaining the block and moving out of the block must, in principle, be done in a passive manner in relation to the opponent (see, however, 8:2b).

Fouls that normally do not lead to personal punishment (consider, however, the decision-making criteria in 8:3 a-d)

8:2 It is not permitted:

- a) to pull or hit the ball out of the hands of the opponent;
- b) to block the opponent with arms, hand, legs, or to use any part of the body to displace him or push him away; this includes a dangerous use of the elbow, both as a starting position and in motion;
- c) to hold an opponent (body or uniform), even if he remains free to continue the play;
- d) run into or jump into an opponent;

Fouls that warrant a personal punishment under Rules 8:3-6

8:3 Fouls, where the action is mainly or exclusively aimed at the body of the opponent, must lead to a personal punishment. This means that, in addition to a free-throw or 7-meter-throw, at least the foul is to be punished progressively, beginning with a warning (16:1), then with 2-minute suspensions (16:3b) and disqualification (16:6d).

For more severe fouls, there are 3 further levels of punishment on the basis of the following decision-making criteria:

- Fouls that are to be punished with an immediate 2-minute suspension (8:4);
- Fouls that are to be punished with a disqualification (8:5);
- Fouls that are to be punished with a disqualification and where a written report is required (8:6);

Decision-making criteria:

For the judgment as to which personal punishments are appropriate for specific fouls, the following decision-making criteria apply; these criteria are to be used in combination as appropriate in each situation:

- a) **the position** of the player who commits the foul (frontal position, from the side, or from behind);
- b) **the part of the body** against which the illegal action is aimed (torso, shooting arm, legs, head/throat/neck);
- c) **the dynamics** of the illegal action (the intensity of the illegal body contact, and/or a foul where the opponent is in full motion);
- d) **the effect** of the illegal action:
 - the impact on the body and ball control
 - the reduction or prevention of the ability to move
 - the prevention of the continuation of the game

For the judgment of fouls the particular game situation is relevant, too (e.g., shooting action, running into open space, situations with high running speed).

Fouls that warrant an immediate 2-minute suspension

8:4 For certain fouls, the punishment is a direct 2-minute suspension, regardless of whether the player had received a warning earlier.

This applies especially for such fouls where the guilty player disregards the danger to the opponent (*see also 8:5 and 8:6*); Taking into account the decision-making criteria under 8:3, such fouls could for instance be:

- a) fouls that are committed with high intensity or against an opponent who is running fast;
- b) holding on to the opponent for a long time, or pulling him down;
- c) fouls against the head, throat or neck;
- d) hard hitting against the torso or throwing arm;
- e) attempting to make the opponent lose body control (e.g., grabbing the leg/foot of an opponent who is jumping; *see, however, 8:5a*);
- f) running or jumping with great speed into an opponent.

Fouls that warrant a disqualification

8:5 A player who is attacking an opponent in a way that is dangerous to his health is to be disqualified (16:6a). The special danger to the opponent's health follows from the high intensity of the foul or from the fact that the opponent is completely unprepared for the foul and therefore cannot protect himself (see *Rule 8:5 Comment*).

In addition to the criteria of 8:3 and 8:4, the following decision-making criteria also apply:

- a) the actual loss of body control while running or jumping, or during a throwing action;
- b) a particularly aggressive action against a part of the body of the opponent, especially face, throat or neck; (the intensity of the body contact);
- c) the reckless attitude demonstrated by the guilty player when committing the foul.

Comment:

Also a foul with a very small physical impact can be very dangerous and lead to a severe injury, if the foul is committed in a moment when the player is jumping in the air or running, and therefore is unable to protect himself. In this type of situation, it is the danger to the opponent and not the intensity of the body contact that is the basis for the judgment whether a disqualification is warranted.

This also applies in those situations where a goalkeeper leaves the goal area, for the purpose of catching a pass intended for an opponent. Here the goalkeeper has the responsibility for ensuring that a situation does not arise that is dangerous to the health of the opponent.

He is to be disqualified if he:

- a) gains possession of the ball, but in his movement causes a collision with the opponent;
- b) cannot reach or control the ball, but causes a collision with the opponent;

If the referees are convinced in one of these situations, that, without the illegal action from the goalkeeper, the opponent would have been able to reach the ball, then a 7-meter throw is to be awarded.

Disqualification due to a particularly reckless, particularly dangerous, premeditated or malicious action (also to be reported in writing)

8:6 If the referees find an action to be particularly reckless, particularly dangerous, premeditated or malicious, they must submit a written report after the game, so that the responsible authorities are in a position to take a decision about further measures.

Indications and characteristics that could serve as decision-making criteria in addition to those in Rule 8:5 are:

- a) a particularly reckless or particularly dangerous action;
- b) a premeditated or malicious action, which is not in any way related to the game situation;

Comment:

When a foul under Rule 8:5 or 8:6 is committed during the last minute of a game, with the purpose of preventing a goal, then the action is to be seen as 'extremely unsportsmanlike conduct' under Rule 8:10d and punished accordingly.

Unsportsmanlike conduct that warrants a personal punishment under Rules 8:7-10

As unsportsmanlike conduct is considered any verbal and non-verbal expressions that are not in conformity with the spirit of good sportsmanship. This applies to both players and team officials, on the court and outside the court. For the punishment of unsportsmanlike, seriously unsportsmanlike, and extremely unsportsmanlike conduct, a difference is made between 4 levels of actions:

- Actions that are to be punished progressively (8:7);
- Actions that are to be punished with a direct 2-minute suspension (8:8);
- Actions that are to be punished with a disqualification (8:9);
- Actions that are to be punished with a disqualification and a written report (8:10);

Unsportsmanlike conduct that warrants progressive punishment

8:7 The actions listed below under a-f are examples of unsportsmanlike conduct that is to be punished progressively, beginning with a warning (16:1b):

- a) protests against referee decisions, or verbal and non-verbal actions intended to cause a specific referee decision;
- b) harassing an opponent or teammate through words or gestures, or shouting at an opponent in order to cause distraction;
- c) delaying the execution of a formal throw for the opponents, by not respecting the 3-meter distance or in some other way;
- d) through 'theater', trying to mislead the referees regarding the actions of an opponent or exaggerating the impact of an action, in order to provoke a time-out or an undeserved punishment for an opponent;
- e) actively blocking a shot or pass by using a foot or lower leg; pure reflex motions, e.g., moving the legs together, are not to be punished (*see also Rule 7:8*);
- f) repeated entering of the goal area for tactical reasons;

Unsportsmanlike conduct warranting an immediate 2-minute suspension

8:8 Certain unsportsmanlike actions are by their nature seen as more severe and warrant an immediate 2-minute suspension, regardless of whether the player or the officials had received a warning earlier. This includes:

- a) protests involving loudness with forceful gestures, or provocative behavior;
- b) when there is a decision against a team in possession, and the player with the ball does not immediately make it available to the opponents by dropping it or putting it down on the floor;
- c) blocking the access to a ball that went into the substitution area;

Seriously unsportsmanlike conduct warranting a disqualification

8:9 Certain forms of unsportsmanlike conduct are considered so serious that they warrant a disqualification. The following are examples of such conduct:

- a) throwing or hitting the ball away in a demonstrative manner, after a decision by the referees;
- b) if a goalkeeper demonstratively refrains from trying to stop a 7-meter-throw;
- c) deliberately throwing the ball at an opponent during a stoppage in the game; if it is done with a lot of force and from very short distance, it is more appropriately regarded as a 'particularly reckless action' under 8:6 above;
- d) when a 7-m shooter hits the goalkeeper's head, if the goalkeeper is not moving his head in the direction of the ball;
- e) when a free-throw shooter hits a defender's head, if the defender is not moving his head in the direction of the ball;
- f) an act of revenge after having been fouled.

Comment:

In the case of a 7-meter throw or a free-throw, the shooter has the responsibility not to endanger the goalkeeper or the defender.

Disqualification due to extremely unsportsmanlike conduct (also to be reported in writing)

8:10 If the referees classify a conduct as extremely unsportsmanlike, they must submit a written report after the game, so that the responsible authorities are in a position to take a decision about further measures.

The following actions may serve as examples:

- a) insulting or threatening behavior directed at another person, e.g., referee, timekeeper/scorekeeper, delegate, team official, player, spectator; the behavior may be in verbal or non-verbal form (e.g., facial expression, gestures, body language or body contact);
- b) (I) the interference by a team official in the game, on the playing court or from the substitution area, or (II) a player destroying a clear chance of scoring, either through an illegal entry on the court (*Rule 4:6*) or from the substitution area;
- c) if during the last minute of a game the ball is out of play, and a player or team official prevents or delays the execution of a throw for the opponents, in order to prevent them from being able to take a shot on goal or to obtain a clear scoring chance; this is considered extremely unsportsmanlike, and it applies to any type of interference (e.g., with only limited physical action, intercepting a pass, interference with the reception of the ball, not releasing the ball);
- d) if during the last minute of a game the ball is in play, and the opponents, through an action falling under rule 8:5 or 8:6, prevent the team in possession from being able to take a shot on goal or to obtain a clear scoring chance; this is not just to be punished with a disqualification under 8:5 or 8:6; a written report must also be submitted;

Rule 9 Scoring

9:1 A goal is scored when the entire ball has completely crossed the goal line (see *diagram 4*), provided that no violation of the rules has been committed by the thrower, a teammate or a team official before or during the throw. The goal line referee confirms with two short whistle signals and hand signal no. 12 that a goal has been scored.

A goal shall be awarded if there is a violation of the rules by a defender but the ball still goes into the goal.

A goal cannot be awarded if a referee, timekeeper or delegate has interrupted the game before the ball has completely crossed the goal line.

A goal shall be awarded to the opponents if a player plays the ball into his own goal, except in the situation where a goalkeeper is executing a goalkeeper-throw (12:2, 2nd paragraph).

Comment:

A goal shall be awarded if the ball is prevented from going into the goal by someone or something not participating in the game (spectators, etc.), and the referees are convinced that the ball would otherwise have entered the goal.

9:2 A goal that has been awarded can no longer be disallowed, once the referee has blown the whistle for the subsequent throw-off to be taken. (See, however, *Rule 2:9 Comment*).

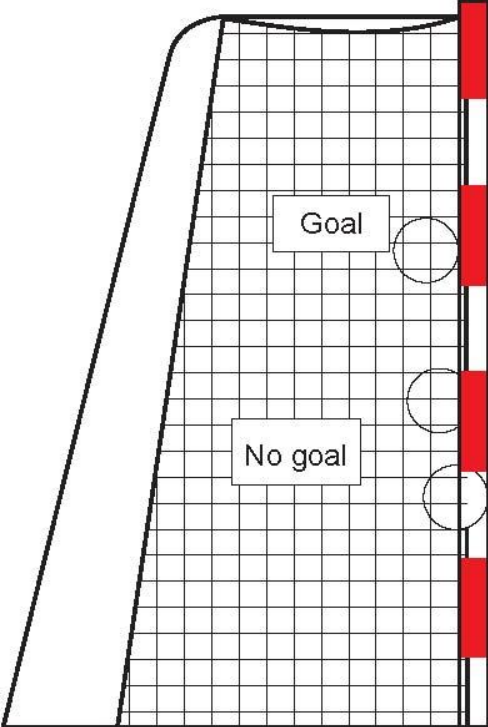
The referees must make clear (without a throw-off) that they have awarded a goal, if the signal for the end of a half sounds immediately after a goal is scored and before a throw-off can be taken.

Comment:

A goal should be entered on the scoreboard as soon as it has been awarded by the referees.

9:3 The team that has scored more goals than the opponents is the winner. The game is tied if both teams have scored the same number of goals or no goals at all (see 2:2).

Diagram 4: Scoring



Rule 10 The Throw-Off

10:1 At the start of the game, the throw-off is taken by the team that wins the coin toss and elects to start with the ball in its possession. The opponents then have the right to choose ends. Alternatively, if the team that wins the coin toss prefers to choose ends, then the opponents take the throw-off.

The teams change ends for the second half of the game. The throw-off at the start of the second half is taken by the team that did not have the throw-off at the start of the game.

A new coin toss is undertaken prior to each overtime period, and all the above-stated regulations under Rule 10:1 also apply to overtime.

10:2 After a goal has been scored play is resumed with a throw-off taken by the team that conceded the goal (*see, however, 9:2, 2nd paragraph*).

10:3 The throw-off is taken in any direction from the center of the court (with a tolerance sideways of about 1.5 meters). It is preceded by a whistle signal, following which it must be taken within 3 seconds (*13:1a, 15:7 3rd paragraph*). The player taking the throw-off must take up a position with at least one foot on the center line, and the other foot on or behind the line (*15:6*), and remain in this position until the ball has left his hand (*13:1a, 15:7 3rd paragraph*) (*see also Clarification No. 5*).

The teammates of the thrower are not allowed to cross the center line prior to the whistle signal (*15:6*).

10:4 For the throw-off at the start of each half (incl. any period of overtime), all players must be in their own half of the court.

However, for the throw-off after a goal has been scored, the opponents of the thrower are allowed to be in both halves of the court.

In both cases, however, the opponents must be at least 3 meters away from the player taking the throw-off (*15:4, 15:9, 8:7c*).

Rule 11 The Throw-In

11:1 A throw-in is awarded when the ball has completely crossed the side line, or when a court player on the defending team was the last one to touch the ball before it crossed his team's outer goal line.

It is also awarded when the ball has touched the ceiling or a fixture above the court.

11:2 The throw-in is taken without whistle signal from the referees (see, however, 15:5b) by the opponents of the team whose player last touched the ball before it crossed the line or touched the ceiling or fixture.

11:3 The throw-in is taken from the spot where the ball crossed the side line or, if it crossed the outer goal line, from the intersection of the side line and the outer goal line on that side. For a throw-in after the ball touched the ceiling or a fixture above the court, the throw-in is taken at the nearest point on the nearest side line in relation to the spot where the ball touched the ceiling or fixture.

11:4 The thrower must stand with a foot on the side line (15:6) and remain in a correct position until the ball has left his hand (15:7 2nd and 3rd paragraph, 13:1a). There is no limitation for the placement of the second foot.

11:5 While the throw-in is being taken, the opponents may not be closer than 3 meters to the thrower (15:4, 15:9, 8:7c).

This does not apply, however, if they stand immediately outside their own goal-area line.

Rule 12 The Goalkeeper-Throw

12:1 A goalkeeper-throw is awarded when: (I) a player of the opposing team has entered the goal area in violation of Rule 6:2a; (II) the goalkeeper has controlled the ball in the goal area or the ball is stationary on the floor in the goal area (6:4-5); (III) a player of the opposing team has touched the ball when it is rolling on the floor in the goal area (6:5, 1st paragraph) or (IV) when the ball has crossed the outer goal line, after having been touched last by the goalkeeper or a player of the opposing team.

This means that in all these situations the ball is considered out of play, and that the game is resumed with a goalkeeper-throw (13:3) if there is a violation after a goalkeeper-throw has been awarded and before it has been executed.

12:2 The goalkeeper-throw is taken by the goalkeeper without whistle signal from the referee (see, however, 15:5b), from the goal area out over the goal area line.

The goalkeeper-throw is considered to have been taken, when the ball thrown by the goalkeeper has completely crossed the goal-area line.

The players of the other team are allowed to be immediately outside the goal-area line, but they are not allowed to touch the ball until it has completely crossed the line (15:4, 15:9, 8:7c).

Rule 13 Free-Throw

Free-Throw Decision

13:1 In principle, the referees interrupt the game and have it restarted with a free-throw for the opponents when:

- a) the team in possession of the ball commits a violation of rules that must lead to a loss of possession (see 4:2-3, 4:5-6, 5:6-10, 6:5, 6:7b, 7:2-4, 7:7-8, 7:10, 7:11-12, 8:2, 10:3, 11:4, 13:7, 14:4-7, 15:7 1st paragraph, and 15 :8).
- b) the opponents commit a violation of rules that causes the team in possession of the ball to lose it (see 4:2-3, 4:5-6, 5:5, 6:2b, 6:7b, 7:8, 8:2).

13:2 The referees should allow continuity in the game by refraining from interrupting the game prematurely with a free-throw decision.

This means that, under Rule 13:1a, the referees should not call a free-throw if the defending team gains possession of the ball immediately after the violation committed by the attacking team.

Similarly, under Rule 13:1b, the referees should not intervene until and unless it is clear that the attacking team has lost possession of the ball or is unable to continue their attack, due to the violation committed by the defending team.

If a personal punishment is to be given because of rules violation, then the referees may decide to interrupt the game immediately, if this does not cause a disadvantage for the opponents of the team committing the violation. Otherwise the punishment should be delayed until the existing situation is over.

Rule 13:2 does not apply in the case of infringements against Rules 4:2-3 or 4:5-6, where the game shall be interrupted immediately, normally through the intervention of the timekeeper.

- 13:3** If a violation that would normally lead to a free-throw under Rule 13:1 a-b takes place when the ball is out of play, then the game is restarted with the throw that corresponds to the reason for the existing interruption.
- 13:4** In addition to the situations indicated in Rule 13:1 a-b, a free-throw is also used as the way of restarting the game in certain situations where the game is interrupted (i.e. when the ball is in play), even though no violation of rules has occurred :
- a) if one team is in possession of the ball at the time of the interruption, this team shall retain possession;
 - b) if neither team is in possession of the ball, then the team that last had possession shall be given possession again;
- 13:5** If there is a free-throw decision against the team that is in possession of the ball when the referee whistles, then the player who has the ball at that moment must immediately drop it or put it down on the floor, so that it can be played (*8:8b*).

Free-Throw Execution

13:6 The free-throw is normally taken without any whistle signal from the referee (see, however, 15:5b) and, in principle, from the place where the infraction occurred. The following are exceptions to this principle:

In the situations described under 13:4 a-b, the free-throw is taken, after whistle signal, in principle from the place where the ball was at the time of the interruption.

If a referee or technical delegate (of the IHF or a continental/national federation) interrupts the game because of an infringement on the part of a player or team official of the defending team, and this results in a verbal caution or a personal punishment, then the free-throw should be taken from the place where the ball was when the game was interrupted, if this is a more favorable location than the position where the infringement took place.

The same exception as in the previous paragraph applies if a timekeeper interrupts the game because of violations under Rules 4:2-3 or 4:5-6.

As indicated in Rule 7:11, free-throws called because of passive play shall be taken from the place where the ball was when the game was interrupted.

Notwithstanding the basic principles and procedures stated in the preceding paragraphs, a free-throw can never be taken inside the throwing team's own goal area or inside the free-throw line of the opponents.

In any situation where the location indicated by the one of the preceding paragraphs involves either one of these areas, the location for the execution must be moved to the nearest spot immediately outside the restricted area.

Comment:

If the correct position for the free-throw is at the free-throw line of the defending team, then the execution must take place essentially at the precise spot. However, the further away the location is from the defending team's free-throw line, the more of a margin there is for allowing the free-throw to be taken a short distance away from the precise spot. This margin gradually increases up to 3 meters, which applies in the case of a free-throw taken from just outside the throwing team's own goal area.

The margin just explained does not apply following a violation of Rule 13:5, if this violation is being punished in accordance with Rule 8:8b. In such cases, the execution should always be from the precise spot where the violation has been committed.

13:7 Players of the throwing team must not touch or cross the free-throw line of the opponents before the free-throw has been taken. See also the special restriction under Rule 2:5.

The referees must correct the positions of players of the throwing team who are between the free-throw line and the goal-area line prior to the execution of the free-throw, if the incorrect positions have an influence on the game (15:3, 15:6). The free-throw shall then be taken following a whistle signal (15:5b). The same procedure applies (Rule 15:7, 2nd paragraph) if players of the throwing team enter the restricted area during the execution of the free-throw (before the ball has left the thrower's hand), if the execution of the throw was not preceded by a whistle signal.

In the case where the execution of a free-throw has been authorized through a whistle signal, if players from the attacking team touch or cross the free-throw line before the ball has left the hand of the thrower, there shall be a free-throw awarded to the defending team (15:7, 3rd paragraph; 13:1a).

13:8 When a free throw is being taken, the opponents must remain at a distance of at least 3 meters from the thrower. They are, however, allowed to stand immediately outside their goal-area line if the free-throw is being taken at their free-throw line. Interference with the execution of the free-throw is penalized in accordance with Rules 15:9 and 8:7c.

Rule 14 The 7-Meter Throw

7-Meter Decision

14:1 A 7-meter throw is awarded when:

- a) a clear chance of scoring is illegally destroyed anywhere on the court by a player or a team official of the opposing team;
- b) there is an unwarranted whistle signal at the time of a clear chance of scoring;
- c) a clear chance of scoring is destroyed through the interference of someone not participating in the game, for instance a spectator entering the court or stopping the players through a whistle signal (except when 9:1 Comment applies). By analogy, this rule also applies in the case of a 'force majeure', such as a sudden electrical failure, that stops the game precisely during a clear chance of scoring.

See Clarification No. 6 for the definition of clear chance of scoring.

14:2 If an attacking player retains full control of ball and body despite a violation as in Rule 14:1a, there is no reason to give a 7-meter throw, even if thereafter the player fails to utilize the clear scoring chance.

Whenever there is a potential 7-meter decision, the referees should always hold off on intervening until they can clearly determine if a 7-meter decision is indeed justified and necessary. If the attacking player scores a goal despite the illegal interference from the defenders, then there is obviously no reason to give a 7-meter throw. Conversely, if it becomes apparent that the player really has lost ball or body control because of the violation, so that a clear chance no longer exists, then a 7-meter throw is to be given.

14:3 When awarding a 7-meter throw the referees may give a time-out, but only if there is a substantial delay, for instance due to a substitution of the goalkeeper or the thrower, and a time-out decision would be in line with the principles and criteria stated in Clarification No. 2.

7-Meter Execution

- 14:4** The 7-meter throw is to be taken as a shot on goal, within 3 seconds after a whistle signal from the referee (15:7, 3rd paragraph; 13:1a).
- 14:5** The player who is taking the 7-meter throw must take up a position behind the 7-meter line, not further away than 1 meter behind the line (15:1, 15:6). After the whistle signal from the referee, the thrower must not touch or cross the 7-meter line before the ball has left his hand (15:7, 3rd paragraph; 13:1a).
- 14:6** The ball must not be played again by the thrower or a teammate following the execution of a 7-meter throw, until it has touched an opponent or the goal (15:7, 3rd paragraph; 13:1a).
- 14:7** When a 7-meter throw is being executed, the teammates of the thrower must position themselves outside the free-throw line, and remain there until the ball has left the thrower's hand (15:3, 15:6). If they do not do so, a free-throw will be called against the team taking the 7-meter throw (15:7, 3rd paragraph; 13:1a).
- 14:8** When a 7-meter throw is being executed, the players of the opposing team must remain outside the free-throw line and at least 3 meters away from the 7-meter line, until the ball has left the thrower's hand. If they do not do so, the 7-meter throw will be retaken if it does not result in a goal, but there is no personal punishment.
- 14:9** The 7-meter throw is to be retaken, unless a goal is scored, if the goalkeeper crosses his restraining line, i.e. the 4-meter line (1:7, 5:11), before the ball has left the thrower's hand. However, it does not result in a personal punishment for the goalkeeper.
- 14:10** It is not permitted to change goalkeepers once the thrower is ready to take the 7-meter throw, standing in the correct position with the ball in hand. Any attempt to make a substitution in this situation is to be penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct (8:7c, 16:1b and 16:3d).

Rule 15 General Instructions for the Execution of the Throws (Throw-Off, Throw-In, Goalkeeper-Throw, Free-Throw and 7-Meter Throw)

The Thrower

15:1 Prior to the execution, the thrower must be in the correct position prescribed for the throw. The ball must be in the hand of the thrower. (15:6)

During the execution, except in the case of the goalkeeper-throw, the thrower must have one part of a foot in constant contact with the floor until the ball is released. The other foot may be lifted and put down repeatedly. (See also Rule 7:6). The thrower must remain in the correct position until the throw has been executed (15:7, 2nd and 3rd paragraph).

15:2 A throw is considered taken when the ball has left the hand of the thrower (see, however, 12:2). The thrower must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player or the goal. (15:7, 15:8). See also further restrictions for situations under 14:6.

A goal may be scored directly from any throw, except that a direct 'own goal' cannot be scored through a goalkeeper-throw (*i.e.*, by dropping the ball into one's own goal).

The Teammates of the Thrower

15:3 The teammates must take up the positions prescribed for the throw in question (15:6). The players must remain in correct positions until the ball has left the hand of the thrower, except as under 10:3, 2nd paragraph.

The ball must not be touched by, or handed over to, a teammate during the execution (15:7, 2nd and 3rd paragraph).

The Defending Players

15:4 The defending players must take up the positions prescribed for the throw and remain in correct position until the ball has left the hand of the thrower (15:9).

Incorrect positions on the part of the defending players in connection with the execution of a throw-off, throw-in, or free-throw must not be corrected by the referees if the attacking players are not at a disadvantage by taking the throw immediately. If there is a disadvantage, then the positions are to be corrected.

Whistle Signal for the Restart

15:5 The referee must blow the whistle for the restart:

- a) always in the case of a throw-off (10:3) or 7-meter throw (14:4);
- b) in the case of a throw-in, goalkeeper-throw or free-throw :
 - • for a restart after a time-out;
 - • for a restart with a free-throw under Rule 13:4;
 - • when there has been a delay in the execution;
 - • after a correction of the player positions;
 - • after a verbal caution or a warning.

The referee may judge it appropriate, for the sake of clarity, to blow the whistle for the restart on any other occasion.

In principle, the referee shall not give the whistle signal for the restart unless and until the requirements for player positions under 15:1, 15:3 and 15:4 are met. (See, however, 13:7 2nd paragraph and 15:4 2nd paragraph). If the referee blows his whistle for a throw to be taken, despite incorrect positions on the part of players, then those players are fully entitled to intervene.

After the whistle signal the thrower must play the ball within 3 seconds.

Sanctions

- 15:6** Violations by the thrower or his teammates prior to the execution of a throw, i.e., typically in the form of incorrect positions or the touching of the ball by a teammate, shall lead to a correction. (See, however, 13:7 2nd paragraph).
- 15:7** The consequences of violations by the thrower or his teammates (15:1-3) during the execution of a throw depend primarily on whether the execution was preceded by a whistle signal for the restart.

In principle, any violation during an execution that was not preceded by a restart signal is to be handled through a correction and a retaking of the throw after a whistle signal. However, an advantage concept, in analogy with Rule 13:2, applies here. If the thrower's team immediately loses possession after an incorrect execution, then the throw is simply considered to have been executed and play continues.

In principle, any violation during an execution after a restart signal is to be penalized. This applies, for instance, if the thrower jumps during the execution, holds on to the ball for more than 3 seconds, or moves out of the correct position before the ball has left his hand. It applies if the teammates move into illegal positions after the whistle signal but before the ball has left the thrower's hands (Note 10:3, 2nd paragraph). In such cases, the initial throw is forfeited, and the opponents are awarded a free-throw (13:1a) from the place of the infraction (see, however, Rule 2:6). The advantage provision under Rule 13:2 does apply, i.e., if the thrower's team loses possession of the ball before the referees have an opportunity to intervene, play continues.

- 15:8** In principle, any violation immediately following, but related to, the execution is to be penalized. This refers to a violation of 15:2, 2nd paragraph, i.e., the thrower touches the ball a second time before it has touched another player or the goal. It can take the form of a dribble, or grabbing the ball again after it is in the air or has been put down on the floor. This is sanctioned with a free-throw (13:1a) for the opponents. As in the case of 15:7 3rd paragraph, the advantage provision applies.

15:9 Except as indicated in Rules 14:8, 14:9, 15:4 2nd paragraph and 15:5 3rd paragraph, defending players who interfere with the execution of a throw for the opponents, for instance by not taking up a correct position initially or by moving into an incorrect position subsequently, shall be penalized. This applies regardless of whether it happens prior to the execution or during the execution (before the ball has left the thrower's hand).

It also applies whether the throw was preceded by a whistle signal for the restart or not. Rule 8:7c applies, in conjunction with Rules 16:1b and 16:3d.

A throw that was negatively affected by a defender's interference shall, in principle, be repeated.

Rule 16 The Punishments

Warning

16:1 A warning is the appropriate punishment for:

- a) fouls that are to be punished progressively (8:3; *compare however 16:3b and 16:6d*) ;
- b) unsportsmanlike conduct that is to be punished progressively (8:7);

Comment:

A player should not be given more than one warning, and the players of a team should not be given more than 3 warnings in total; thereafter, the punishment must be at least a 2-minute suspension.

A player who has already had a 2-minute suspension should not subsequently be given a warning.

No more than one warning in total should be given to the officials of a team.

16:2 The referee shall indicate the warning to the guilty player or official and to the timekeeper/scorekeeper by holding up a yellow card. (hand signal no. 13).

Suspension

16:3 A suspension (2 minutes) is the appropriate punishment:

- a) for a faulty substitution, if an additional player enters the court, or if a player interferes in the game from the substitution area (4:5-6); note, however, rule 8:10b (ii);
- b) for fouls such as those under 8:3, if the player and/or his team has already received the maximum number of warnings (see 16:1 *Comment*);
- c) for fouls such as those under 8:4 ;
- d) for unsportsmanlike conduct by a player as under 8:7, if the player and/or his team has already received the maximum number of warnings;
- e) for unsportsmanlike conduct by a team official as under 8:7, if one of the officials on the team has already received a warning);

- f) for unsportsmanlike conduct by a player or team official as under 8:8; see also 4:6;
- g) as a consequence of a disqualification of a player or team official (16:8, 2nd paragraph ; see, however, 16:11b);
- h) for unsportsmanlike conduct by a player before the game has been restarted, after he has just been given a 2-minute suspension (16:9a).

Comment:

It is not possible to give the officials of a team more than one 2-minute suspension in total.

When a 2-minute suspension is called against a team official in accordance with 16:3d-e, the official is allowed to remain in the substitution area and carry out his functions. However, the team's strength on the court is reduced for 2 minutes.

16:4 After calling time-out the referee shall clearly indicate the suspension to the guilty player or team official, and to the timekeeper/scorekeeper, through the prescribed hand signal, i.e., one arm raised with two fingers extended (*hand signal no. 14*).

16:5 A suspension is always for a playing time of 2 minutes; the third suspension for the same player also always leads to a disqualification (16:6d).

The suspended player is not allowed to participate in the game during his suspension time, and the team is not allowed to replace him on the court.

The suspension period begins when the game is restarted with a whistle signal.

A 2-minute suspension carries over to the second half of the game if it has not been completed by the end of the first half. The same applies from the normal playing time to overtime and during overtime. An unexpired 2-minute suspension at the end of overtime means that the player is not entitled to participate in a subsequent tie-breaker through 7-meter-throws in accordance with 2:2 Comment.

Disqualification

16:6 A disqualification is the appropriate punishment:

- a) for fouls under 8:5 and 8:6;
- b) for seriously unsportsmanlike conduct under 8:9 and extremely unsportsmanlike conduct under 8:10, by a player or team official, on or outside the court;
- c) for unsportsmanlike conduct by any one of the officials of a team under 8:7, after they have collectively already received both a warning and a 2-minute suspension in accordance with 16:1b and 16:3d-e;
- d) as a consequence of a third suspension to the same player (16:5);
- e) for significant or repeated unsportsmanlike conduct during a tie-breaker such as 7-meter throwing (2:2 *Comment and 16:10*);

16:7 After calling a time-out, the referees shall clearly indicate the disqualification to the guilty player or team official, and to the timekeeper/ scorekeeper, by holding up a red card (*hand signal no. 13*).

16:8 A disqualification of a player or team official is always for the entire remainder of the playing time. The player or official must leave the court and the substitution area immediately. After leaving, the player or official is not allowed to have any form of contact with the team.

The disqualification of a player or a team official, on or off the court, during the playing time, always carries with it a 2-minute suspension for the team. This means that the team's strength on the court is reduced by one (16:3f). The reduction on the court will, however, last for 4 minutes if a player has been disqualified in the circumstances indicated in Rule 16:9b-d.

A disqualification reduces the number of players, or officials, which is available to the team (*except as in 16:11b*). The team is, however, allowed to increase the number of players on the court again following the expiration of the suspension.

As noted in rules 8:6 and 8:10, disqualifications in accordance with these rules are to be reported in writing to the responsible authorities for further action. In such cases, the 'responsible team officials', and the delegate (*see Clarification No. 7*), shall be informed immediately after the decision.

More than one Violation in the Same Situation

16:9 If a player or team official is guilty of more than one violation simultaneously or in direct sequence before the game has been restarted and these violations warrant different punishments, then in principle, only the most severe one of these punishments shall be given.

There are however the following specific exceptions where in all cases the team must play at reduced strength on the court for 4 minutes:

- a) if a player who has just been given a 2-minute suspension is guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct before the game restarted, then the player is given an additional 2-minute suspension (16:3g); if the additional suspension is the player's third one, then the player is to be disqualified;
- b) if a player who has just been given a disqualification (directly or because of a third suspension) is guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct before the game is restarted, then the team is given a further punishment so that the reduction will be for 4 minutes (16:8, 2nd paragraph);
- c) if a player who has just been given a 2-minute suspension is guilty of seriously or extremely unsportsmanlike conduct before the game is restarted, then the player is furthermore disqualified (16:6c); these punishments combined lead to a 4-minute reduction (16:8, 2nd paragraph);
- d) if a player who has just been given a disqualification (directly or because of a third suspension) is guilty of seriously or extremely unsportsmanlike conduct before the game is restarted, then the team is given a further punishment so that the reduction will be for 4 minutes (16:8, 2nd paragraph).

Infractions during the playing time

16:10 The punishments for actions during the playing time are established in rules 16:1, 16:3 and 16:6. In the concept 'playing time' all intermissions, time-outs, team time-outs and overtime periods are included. In all other forms of tie-breakers (e.g., 7-meter throws), only rule 16:6 applies. In this way any form of significant or repeated unsportsmanlike conduct will prevent the further participation of the player concerned (see *Rule 2:2 Comment*).

Infractions outside the Playing Time

16:11 Unsportsmanlike conduct, seriously unsportsmanlike conduct, extremely unsportsmanlike conduct, or any form of particularly reckless actions (see *Rules 8:6-10*) on the part of a player or team official, taking place on the premises where a game is played but outside the playing time, shall be punished as follows :

Before the game:

- a) a warning shall be given in the case of unsportsmanlike conduct under rules 8:7-8;
- b) a disqualification of the guilty player or team official shall be given in the case of action deemed to fall under rules 8:6 and 8:10a, but the team is allowed to start with 14 players and 4 officials; Rule 16:8, 2nd paragraph applies only for violations during the playing time; accordingly, the disqualification does not carry with it a 2-minute suspension.

Such punishments for violations prior to the game can be implemented at any time during the game, whenever the guilty person is discovered to be a participant in the game, as this fact may not be possible to establish yet at the time of the incident.

After the game:

- c) a written report

Rule 17 The Referees

17:1 Two referees with equal authority shall be in charge of each game. They are assisted by a timekeeper and a scorekeeper.

17:2 The referees monitor the conduct of the players and team officials from the moment they enter the premises until they leave.

17:3 The referees are responsible for inspecting the playing court, the goals, and the balls before the game starts; they decide which balls will be used (1 and 3:1).

The referees also establish the presence of both teams in proper uniforms. They check the score sheet and the equipment of the players. They ensure that the number of players and officials in the substitution area is within the limits, and they establish the presence and identity of the «responsible team official», for each team. Any discrepancies must be corrected (4:1-2 and 4:7-9).

17:4 The coin toss (10:1) is undertaken by one of the referees in the presence of the other referee and the 'responsible team official' for each team, or a team official or player (for instance, a team captain) on behalf of the 'responsible team official'.

17:5 In principle, the entire game shall be conducted by the same referees.

It is their responsibility to ensure that the game is played in accordance with the rules, and they must penalize any infractions (*see, however, 13:2 and 14:2*).

If one of the referees becomes unable to finish the game, the other referee will continue the game alone.

Note: The IHF, continental and national federations have the right to apply deviating regulations in their areas of responsibility, regarding the application of paragraphs 1 and 3 in Rule 17:5.

17:6 If both referees whistle for an infraction and agree about which team should be penalized but have different opinions as to the severity of the punishment, then the most severe of the two punishments shall be given.

17:7 If both referees whistle for an infraction, or the ball has left the court, and the two referees show different opinions as to which team should have possession, then the joint decision that the referees reach after consulting with each other will apply. If they do not manage to reach a joint decision, then the opinion of the court referee will prevail.

A time-out is obligatory. Following the consultation between the referees, they give clear hand signals and the game is restarted after whistle signal (2:8d, 15:5).

17:8 Both referees are responsible for keeping the score. They also take notes about warnings, suspensions and disqualifications.

17:9 Both referees are responsible for controlling the playing time. If there is any doubt about the accuracy of the timekeeping, the referees reach a joint decision (see also 2:3).

Note: The IHF, continental and national federations have the right to apply deviating regulations in their areas of responsibility, regarding the application of Rules 17:8 and 17:9.

17:10 The referees are responsible for ensuring after the game that the score sheet is completed correctly.

Disqualifications of the type indicated in Rules 8:6 and 8:10 must be explained in the match report.

17:11 Decisions made by the referees on the basis of their observations of facts or their judgments are final.

Appeals can be lodged only against decisions that are not in compliance with the rules.

During the game, only the respective «responsible team officials» are entitled to address the referees.

17:12 The referees have the right to suspend a game temporarily or permanently.

Every effort must be made to continue the game, before a decision is taken to suspend it permanently.

17:13 The black uniform is primarily intended for the referees.

17:14 The referees and the delegates may use electronic equipment for their internal communication. The rules for their utilization are determined by the respective federation.

Rule 18 The Timekeeper and the Scorekeeper

18:1 In principle, the timekeeper has the main responsibility for the playing time, the time-outs, and the suspension time of suspended players.

The scorekeeper has the main responsibility for the team rosters, the score sheet, the entering of players who arrive after the game has started, and the entering of players who are not entitled to participate.

Other tasks, such as the control of the number of players and team officials in the substitution area, and the exit and entry of substituting players, are regarded as joint responsibilities.

Generally, only the timekeeper (and, when applicable, a Technical Delegate from the responsible Federation) should interrupt the game when this becomes necessary.

See also Clarification No. 7 regarding proper procedures for the interventions of the timekeeper/scorekeeper when fulfilling some of the responsibilities indicated above.

18:2 If there is no public scoreboard clock available, then the timekeeper must keep the «responsible team official» for each team informed about how much time has been played or how much time is left, especially following time-outs.

If there is no scoreboard clock with automatic signal available, the timekeeper assumes the responsibility for giving the final signal at half-time and at the end of the game (see 2:3).

If the public scoreboard is not capable of displaying also the suspension time (at least three per team during IHF games), the timekeeper shall display a card on the timekeeper's table, showing the expiration time of each suspension, together with the player's number.

Hand Signals

When a throw-in or free-throw is called, the referees must show *immediately* the direction for the throw that is to follow (signals 7 or 9).

Thereafter, as applicable, the appropriate obligatory hand signal(s) should be given, to indicate any personal punishment (signals 13-14).

If it seems that it would also be useful to explain the reason for a free-throw or 7-meter throw decision, then the applicable one of signals 1-6 and 11 could be given for the sake of information. (Signal 11 should, however, always be given in those situations where a free-throw decision for passive play was not preceded by signal 17.)

Signals 12, 15 and 16 are mandatory in those situations where they apply.

Signals 8, 10 and 17 are used as deemed necessary by the referees.

The List of the Hand Signals

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1

Entering the goal area

Empiètement sur la surface
de but

Betreten des Torraums



2

Illegal dribble

Dribble irrégulier

Prell- oder Tippfehler



3

Too many steps or holding the ball more than three seconds

Marcher ou 3 secondes

Schritt- oder Zeitfehler



4

Restraining, holding or pushing

Ceinturer, retenir ou pousser

Umklammern,
Festhalten oder Stoßen



5

Hitting

Frapper

Schlagen



6

Offensive foul

aute d'attaquant

türmerfoul

Throw-in – direction

Remise en jeu – direction

Einwurf – Richtung



7

Throw-in - direction

Remise en jeu – direction

Einwurf - Richtung



8

Goalkeeper-throw

Renvoi

Abwurf



9

Free-throw – direction

Jet franc – direction

Freiwurf – Richtung



10

Keep the distance of 3 meters

Non-respect de la distance
des 3 mètres

Nichtbeachten des
3-Meter-Abstandes



11

Passive play

Jeu passif

Passives Spiel



12

Goal

But

Torgewinn



13

Warning (yellow)
Disqualification (red)

Avertissement (jaune)
Disqualification (rouge)

Verwarnung (gelb)
Disqualifikation (rot)



14

Suspension
(2 minutes)

Exclusion
(2 minutes)

Hinausstellung
(2 Minuten)



15

Time-out

Arrêt du temps de jeu

Time-out



16

Permission for two persons
who are « entitled to participate »
to enter the court during time-out

Autorisation accordée à deux
personnes autorisées à
participer au jeu de pénétrer sur
l'aire de jeu pendant l'arrêt du temps de jeu

Erlaubnis für zwei
teilnahmeberechtigte Personen
zum Betreten der Spielfläche
bei Time-out



17

Forewarning signal for
passive play

Geste d'avertissement pour
jeu passif

Warnzeichen für passives
Spiel
International
Handball
Federation





Clarifications to the Rules of the Game

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1 Free-Throw Execution after the Final Signal (2:4-6)

In many cases, the team that has the opportunity to execute a free-throw after the playing time has expired is not really interested in trying to score a goal, either because the outcome of the game is already clear or because the position for the free-throw is too far away from the goal of the opponents. Although technically the rules require that the free-throw be executed, the referees should show good judgment and consider the free-throw taken if a player who is in the approximately correct position simply lets the ball drop or hands it to the referees.

In those cases where it is clear that the team wants to try to score a goal, the referees must try to find a balance between allowing this opportunity (even though it is a very small one) and ensuring that the situation does not deteriorate into a time-consuming and frustrating «theater». This means that the referees should get the players from both teams into correct positions firmly and quickly so that the free-throw can be executed without delay. The new restrictions in Rule 2:5 regarding player positions and substitutions must be enforced (*4:5 and 13:7*).

The referees must also be very alert to other punishable violations by the two teams. Persistent encroachment by the defenders must be punished (*15:4, 15:9, 16:1b, 16:3d*). Moreover, the attacking players often violate the rules during the execution, e.g. one or more players cross the free-throw line after the whistle but before the throw (*13:7, 3rd paragraph*), or the thrower actually moves or jumps when throwing (*15:1, 15:2, 15:3*).

It is very important not to allow any goals scored illegally.

2 Time-Out (2:8)

Apart from the situations indicated in Rule 2:8, where a time-out is obligatory, the referees are expected to use their judgment regarding the need for time-outs also in other situations. Some typical situations where time-outs are not obligatory but nevertheless tend to be given in normal circumstances are:

- a) there are external influences, e.g. the court must be wiped;
- b) a player seems to be injured;
- c) a team is clearly wasting time, e.g. when the team is delaying the execution of a formal throw, or when a player is throwing the ball away or not releasing it;
- d) if the ball touches the ceiling or a fixture above the court (11:1), and the ball is deflected so that it goes far away from the location of the resulting throw-in, causing an unusual delay.

When determining the need for a time-out in these and other situations, the referees should foremost take into consideration whether an interruption of the game without a time-out would create an unfair disadvantage for one of the teams. For instance, if a team is leading by a very clear margin late in the game, then it might not be necessary to make a time-out during a brief interruption to wipe the court. Similarly, if the team that would be disadvantaged by the lack of a time-out is the team that, for some reason, is itself causing a delay or wasting time, then there is obviously no reason for a time-out.

Another important factor is the expected duration of the interruption. The length of an interruption caused by an injury is often difficult to estimate, so it may then be safer to call a time-out. Conversely, the referees should not be too quick to call a time-out just because the ball has left the playing court. In such cases the ball is often back and ready to be played almost immediately. If not, the referees should concentrate on getting a reserve ball into play quickly (3:4), precisely in order to make a time-out unnecessary.

The obligatory time-out in connection with 7-meter throws has been removed. It may still be necessary to give a time-out based on subjective judgment on some occasions, in accordance with the principles just discussed. This may involve situations where one of the teams clearly delays the execution, including for instance through a substitution of the goalkeeper or the thrower.

3 Team Time-Out (2:10)

Each team has the right to receive one 1-minute team time-out in each half of the regular playing time (but not in overtime).

A team that wishes to request a team time-out must do so by having a team official place a green card on the table in front of the timekeeper. (It is recommended that the green card measures about 15 x 20 cm and has a large «T» on each side).

A team may request their team time-out only when it has possession of the ball (when the ball is in play or during an interruption). Provided that the team does not lose possession before the timekeeper has time to whistle (in which case the green card would be returned to the team), the team will be granted the team time-out immediately.

The timekeeper then interrupts the game by blowing the whistle, and stops the clock (2:9). He gives the hand signal for time-out (no. 15) and points with a stretched arm at the team that requested the team time-out.

The green card is placed on the table, on the side of the team that requested the team time-out, and remains there during the time-out.

The referees acknowledge the team time-out, and the timekeeper starts a separate clock controlling the duration of the team time-out. The scorekeeper enters the time of the team time-out in the score sheet for the team that requested it.

During the team time-out the players and team officials remain at the level of their substitution areas, either on the court or in the substitution area. The referees stay in the center of the court, but one of them may briefly go to the timekeeper's table for consultation.

For the purpose of punishments under rule 16, a team time-out is defined as being part of the playing time (16:10), so any unsportsmanlike conduct and other infractions are punished in the normal way. It is irrelevant in this context, if the player/official concerned is on or off the court. Accordingly, a warning, suspension or disqualification under Rules 16:1-3 and 16:6-9 can be given for unsportsmanlike conduct (8:7-10) or for action falling under Rule 8:6b.

After 50 seconds the timekeeper gives an acoustic signal indicating that the game is to be continued in 10 seconds.

The teams are obliged to be ready to resume play when the team time-out expires. The game is restarted either with the throw that corresponds to the situation that existed when the time-out was granted or, if the ball was in play, with a free-throw for the team requesting the team time-out from the place where the ball was at the time of the interruption.

When the referee blows the whistle the timekeeper starts the clock.

4 Passive Play (7:11-12)

A. General Guidelines

The application of the rules regarding passive play has the objective of preventing unattractive methods of play and intentional delays in game. This requires that the referees throughout the game recognize and judge passive methods in a consistent manner.

Passive methods of play may arise in all phases of a team's attack, i.e. when the ball is moved down the court, during the build-up phase, or during the finishing phase.

Passive ways of playing are typically used more frequently in the following situations:

- a team is narrowly in the lead towards the end of the game;
- a team has a player suspended ;
- when the ability of the opponent is superior, especially on defense;

The criteria mentioned in the following specifications rarely apply alone, but must generally be judged in their entirety by the referees. In particular, the impact of active defensive work in conformity with the rules must be taken into account.

B. The Utilization of the Forewarning Signal

The forewarning signal should be shown particularly in the following situations:

B1. Forewarning signal when substitutions are made slowly or when the ball is moved slowly down the court

Typical indications are:

- players are standing around in the middle of the court waiting for substitutions to be completed;
- a player is delaying the execution of a free-throw (by pretending not to know the correct spot), a throw-off (by a slow recovery of the ball by the goalkeeper, by an intentionally erratic pass to middle, or by slow walking with the ball to the middle), a goalkeeper-throw, or a throw-in, after the team has previously been admonished to refrain from such delaying tactics;
- a player is standing still bouncing the ball;
- the ball is played back into the team's own half of the court, even though the opponents are not putting on any pressure;

B2. Forewarning signal in connection with a late substitution during the build-up phase

Typical indications are:

- all players have already taken up their attacking positions ;
- the team starts the build-up phase with a preparatory passing play ;
- not until this stage does the team undertake a substitution.

Comment:

A team which has attempted a rapid counter-attack from its own half of the court, but has failed to get to an immediate scoring opportunity after reaching the opponents' half of the court, must be allowed to undertake a quick substitution of players at that stage.

B3. During an excessively long build-up phase

In principle, a team must always be allowed a build-up phase with a preparatory passing play before they can be expected to start a targeted attacking situation.

Typical indications of an excessively long build-up phase are:

- the team's attack does not lead to any targeted attacking action;

Comment:

A targeted attacking action exists particularly when the team in ball possession uses tactical methods to move in such a way that they gain spatial advantage over the defenders, or when they increase the pace of the attack in comparison with the build-up phase:

- *players are repeatedly receiving the ball while standing still or moving away from the goal ;*
- *repeated bouncing of the ball while standing still;*
- *when confronted by an opponent, the attacking player turns away prematurely, waits for the referees to interrupt the game, or gains no spatial advantage over the defender ;*
- *active defensive actions : active defensive methods preventing the attackers from increasing the pace because the defenders block the intended ball movements and running paths;*
- *a special criterion for excessively long build-up phases is when the attacking team achieves no clear increase in pace from the build-up phase to the finishing phase.*

C. How the Forewarning Signal should be used

If a referee (either the court referee or the goal-line referee) recognizes the emergence of passive play, he lifts the arm (hand signal no.17), to indicate the judgment that the team is not trying to get into a position to take a shot on goal. The other referee should also give the forewarning signal.

The forewarning signal conveys that the team in possession is not making any attempt to create a scoring opportunity, or that it is repeatedly delaying the restart of the game.

The hand signal is maintained until:

- the attack is over, or
- the forewarning signal is no longer valid (see advice below).

An attack begins when the team gets into possession of the ball, and is considered over when the team scores a goal or loses possession.

The forewarning signal normally applies for the entire remainder of the attack. However, during the course of an attack, there are two situations where the judgment of passive play is no longer valid, and the forewarning signal is to be stopped :

- a) the team in possession takes a shot on goal and the ball rebounds to the team from the goal or the goalkeeper (directly or in the form of a throw-in)
- b) a player or team official of the defending team is given a personal punishment under Rule 16 due to a foul or unsportsmanlike conduct.

In these two situations, the team in possession must be allowed a new build-up phase.

D. After the forewarning signal has been shown

After showing the forewarning signal, the referees should allow the team in possession of the ball some time to change their action. In this regard, the skill level in different age and performance categories must be taken into account.

The team forewarned should thus be allowed the possibility to prepare a targeted attacking action towards the goal.

If the team in possession does not make a recognizable attempt to get into position to take a shot on goal, then one of the referees decides that their is passive play (Rules 7:11-12). (See also below the 'Decision-making criteria after showing the forewarning signal').

Remark:

Passive play should not be whistled during a forwards movement with a chance for a shot on goal, or when the player with the ball gives an indication that he is about to try to take a shot.

Decision-making criteria after showing the forewarning signal

D1. The attacking team

- no clear increase in pace
- no targeted action towards the goal
- 1-on-1 actions where no spatial advantage is achieved
- delays when playing the ball (e.g., because the passing routes are blocked by the defending team)

D2. The defending team

- the defending team tries to prevent an increase in pace or a targeted attacking action, through correct and active defensive methods
- passive play must not be called, if an aggressive defense interferes in the attacking flow through constant fouls

E. Appendix

Indications of a reduction of pace

- Action sideways and not in depth towards the goal.
- Frequent diagonal running in front of the defenders without putting any pressure on them
- No action in depth, such as confronting an opponent 1-on-1 or passing the ball to players between the goal-area line and the free-throw line
- Repeated passing between two players with no clear increase of pace or actions towards the goal
- Passing of the ball with all positions involved (wing players, pivot and back-court players) with no clear increase of pace or recognizable actions towards the goal

Indications of 1-on-1 actions where no spatial advantage is gained

- 1-on-1 action in a situation where it is obvious that there is no room for a break-through (several opponents block the room for a break-through.)
- 1-on-1 action without any aim to break through towards the goal
- 1-on-1 action with the objective of simply being awarded a free-throw (e.g., letting oneself 'get stuck', or ending the 1-on-1 action even though it might have been possible to break through)

Indications of active defensive methods in conformity with the rules

- Trying not to commit a foul, so as to avoid an interruption in the game
- Obstructing the running path of the attacker, perhaps by using two defenders
- Moving forward to block the passing routes
- Moving defenders forwards to as to force the attackers further back in the court
- Provoking attackers to pass the ball far back into harmless positions

5 Throw-Off (10:3)

As a guiding principle for the interpretation of Rule 10:3, the referees should keep in mind the objective of encouraging teams to make use of a quick throw-off. This means that the referees should avoid being pedantic and should not search for opportunities to call back or penalize a team trying to throw quickly.

For instance, the referees must avoid letting note-taking or other tasks interfere with their readiness to check the player positions quickly. The court referee should be ready to whistle at the very moment when the thrower reaches the correct position, assuming that there is no clear need for corrections of other player positions. The referees must also keep in mind that the teammates of the thrower are allowed to move across the center line as soon as the whistle is blown. (This is an exception from the basic principle for the execution of formal throws.)

Although the rule states that the thrower must step on the center line and be within 1.5 meter from the center, the referees should not be excessively precise and concerned about centimeters. The main thing is to avoid unfairness and uncertainty for the opponents regarding when and where the throw-off is taken.

Moreover, most courts do not have the center point marked, and some courts may even have the center line interrupted due to advertising at the center. In such cases, both the thrower and the referee will obviously need to estimate the correct position, and any insistence on exactness would then be unrealistic and inappropriate.

6 Definition of Clear Chance of Scoring (14:1)

For the purposes of Rule 14:1, a clear chance of scoring exists when:

- a) a player who already has ball and body control at the goal-area line of the opponents has the opportunity to shoot on goal, without any opponent being able to prevent the shot with legal methods;

this also applies if the player does not yet have the ball but is ready for an immediate reception of the ball; there must not be an opponent in a position to prevent the reception of the ball with legal methods;

- b) a player who has ball and body control is running (or dribbling) alone towards the goalkeeper in a counter-attack, without any other opponent being able to come in front of him and stop the counter-attack;

this also applies if the player does not yet have the ball but is ready for an immediate reception of the ball, and the opposing goalkeeper through a collision as under 8:5 Comment prevents the reception of the ball; in this special case, the positions of the defending players are irrelevant;

- c) a goalkeeper has left his goal area and an opponent with ball and body control has a clear and unimpeded opportunity to throw the ball into the empty goal.

7 Intervention by the Timekeeper or a Delegate (18:1)

If the timekeeper or a delegate intervenes, when the game is already interrupted, then the game is restarted with the throw that corresponds to the reason for the interruption.

If the timekeeper or a delegate intervenes, and thereby interrupts the game when the ball is in play, then the following regulations apply:

A Faulty substitution or illegal entry by a player (Rules 4:2-3, 5-6)

The timekeeper (or delegate) must interrupt the game immediately, without regard for the 'advantage' concept under Rules 13:2 and 14:2. If due to such an interruption, due to violation by the defending team, a clear chance of scoring is destroyed, then a 7-meter throw must be awarded in accordance with Rule 14:1a. In all other cases, the game is restarted with a free-throw.

The guilty player is punished in accordance with Rule 16:3a. However, in the case of illegal entry under Rule 4:6, during a clear chance of scoring, then the player is punished in accordance with Rule 16:6b in conjunction with Rule 8:10b.

B Interruption for other reasons, e.g., unsportsmanlike conduct in the substitution area

a. Intervention by the timekeeper

The timekeeper should wait until the next interruption in the game and then inform the referee.

If nevertheless the timekeeper interrupts the game while the ball is in play, then the game is restarted with a free-throw for the team that was in possession at the time of the interruption. If the interruption is due to a violation by the defending team, and thereby a clear chance of scoring is destroyed, then a 7-meter throw must be awarded in accordance with Rule 14:1b.

(The same applies if the timekeeper interrupts the game due to a request for a team time-out, and the referees refuse the team time-out because the timing is wrong. If a clear chance of scoring is destroyed due to the interruption, then a 7-meter throw must be awarded).

The timekeeper does not have the right to pronounce a punishment against a player or a team official. The same applies to the referees, if they have not themselves observed the violation. In such a case, they can only give an informal caution. If the reported violation falls under Rules 8:6 or 8:10, they must submit a written report.

b. Intervention by a delegate

Technical delegates from the IHF, a continental federation or a national federation, who are on duty in a game, have the right to inform the referees about a possible decision in violation of the rules (except in the case of a referee decision on the basis of an observation of facts) or about a violation of the substitution area regulations.

The delegate may interrupt the game immediately. In this case, the game is restarted with a free-throw for the team that did not commit the violation that led to the interruption.

If the interruption is caused by a violation from the defending team, and the interruption causes a clear scoring chance to be destroyed, then a 7-meter throw in accordance with Rule 14:1a must be awarded.

The referees are obligated to give out personal punishments in accordance with the instructions of the delegate.

The facts related to a violation of Rules 8:6 or 8:10 are to be reported in writing.

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Substitution Area Regulations

1. The substitution areas are situated outside the sideline, to the left and right of the extension of the center line, up to end of the respective team benches, and also behind the benches if there is space (Rules of the Game : diagram 1).

The regulations for IHF and continental federation events/competitions prescribe that the team benches, and thereby also the respective 'coaching zones', shall start at a distance of 3.5 meters from the center line. This is also a recommendation for games at all other levels.

No objects of any kind may be placed at the side line in front of the team benches (for at least 8 meters from the center line).

2. Only the players and team officials entered in the score sheet are allowed to be in the substitution area (4:1-2).

If an interpreter is needed, he must take up a position behind the team bench.

3. The team officials in the substitution area must be fully dressed in sportswear or civilian clothing. Colors which may cause confusion with the court players of the opposing team are not allowed.
4. The timekeeper and scorekeeper shall support the referees in monitoring the occupancy of the substitution area before and during the game.

If before the game there are any infringements of the rules as regards the substitution area, the game must not start until the infringements have been remedied. If these rules are infringed during the game, the game must not be continued after the next interruption until the matter has been resolved.

5. The team officials have the right and duty to guide and manage their team also during the game, in a fair and sporting spirit within the framework of the rules. In principle, they should sit on the team bench.

However, the officials are **permitted** to move around within the 'coaching zone'. The 'coaching zone' is the area directly in front of the bench and, if this is feasible, also directly behind the bench.

The movements and the positioning in the 'coaching zone' are allowed for the purposes of giving tactical advice and to provide medical care. In principle, only one official of the team is allowed to stand or move at a time.

It is, of course, permitted for one team official to leave the 'coaching zone' when he immediately wants to submit the 'green card' to request a team time-out. However, the team official is not allowed to leave the 'coaching zone' with the 'green card' and stand waiting at the table for the moment to request the team time-out.

The 'responsible team official' may also leave the 'coaching zone' in special situations, for instance, for necessary contact with the timekeeper or scorekeeper.

In principle, players in the substitution area should sit on the team bench.

The players are however **permitted** to:

- move around behind the bench to warm up, without ball, provided that there is sufficient space and that it is not disruptive.

It is **not permitted** for team officials or players to:

- interfere with or insult referees, delegates, timekeeper/scorekeeper, players, team officials, or spectators, by behaving in a provocative, protesting, or otherwise unsportsmanlike manner (speech, facial expression or gestures);
- leave the substitution area in order to influence the game;

Team officials and players are generally expected to remain in the substitution area of their team. If a team official nevertheless leaves the substitution area for another position, he loses the right to guide and manage his team and must return to the substitution area to regain his right.

More generally, players and team officials remain under the jurisdiction of the referees throughout the game, and the normal rules for personal punishments apply also if a player or official decides to take up a position away from the court and the substitution area. Therefore, unsportsmanlike conduct, seriously unsportsmanlike conduct, and extremely unsportsmanlike conduct are to be punished in the same manner as if the violation had taken place on the court or in the substitution area.

6. If the Substitution Area Regulations are infringed, the referees are obliged to act in accordance with Rules 16:1b, 16:3d or 16:6b (warning, suspension, disqualification).

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Guidelines for Playing Courts and Goals

- a) The playing court (diagram 1) consists of a rectangle which measures 40 x 20m. It should be checked by measuring the length of the two diagonals. From the outer side of one corner to the outside of the opposite corner they should measure 44.72m. The length of the diagonals for one half of the court should measure 28.28m. from the outside of each of the corners to the opposite outer middle of the center line.

The playing court is provided with marking lines which are called «lines». The width of the goal lines (between the goalposts) is 8cm like the goalposts, all other lines have a width of 5cm. Lines which separate adjacent areas of the playing court can be replaced by a change in colors between the adjacent areas.

- b) The goal area in front of the goals consists of a 3 x 6m rectangle and two connecting quarter circle sectors each with a radius of 6m. It is constructed by drawing a 3m long line parallel to the goal line at a distance of 6m from the rear edge of the goal line to the front edge of the goal-area line. On both sides this line continues in two quarter-circle arcs with the center at the rear inside edge of the respective goalposts and with a radius of 6m. The lines and arcs which enclose the goal area are called the goal area line. The outer distance between the points where the two arcs meet the outer goal line in this way will measure 15m (diagram 5).
- c) The broken free-throw line (9m line) is made parallel and concentric to the goal-area line with a 3m larger distance from the goal line. The segments as well as the spaces between them measure 15cm. The segments should be cut off right-angled and radially respectively. The measurements of the curved segments are taken over the outer chord (diagram 5).
- d) The 1m long 7-meter line is drawn directly in front of the goal, parallel to the goal line, at a distance of 7m from the rear edge of the goal line to the front edge of the 7m line (diagram 5).
- e) The goalkeeper's restraining line (the 4m line) directly in front of the goal is 15cm long. It is parallel to, and 4m away from, the goal line measured from the rear edge of the goal line to the front edge of the 4m line, which means that the widths of both lines are included in this measure.

- f) The playing area should be surrounded by a safety zone of at least 1m along the side lines and 2m behind the outer goal lines.
- g) The goal (diagram 2) is placed in the center of each outer goal line. The goals must be firmly attached to the floor or to the wall behind them. The interior measures are 3m in width and 2m in height. The goal frame must be a rectangle, which means that the inside diagonals will measure 360.5cm (max. 361cm – min. 360cm, in one and the same goal the difference must be maximum 0.5cm).

The rear side of the goalposts shall be in line with the rear edge of the goal line (and the outer goal line), which means that the front side of the goalposts is placed 3cm in front of the outer goal line.

The goalposts and the horizontal crossbar which joins them shall be made of a uniform material (e.g. wood, light metal or synthetic material) and have a square cross section of 8cm with rounded edges with a rounding radius of 4 ± 1 mm. On the three sides which are visible from the court, the goalposts and the crossbar must be painted in bands of two colors which contrast clearly with each other and with the background; the two goals on one and the same playing court must have the same colors.

The color bands of the goals measure in the corner between posts and bar 28cm in each direction in the same color. All other color bands shall be 20cm long. The goals must have a net, called goal net, which must be attached in such a way that a ball thrown into the goal cannot immediately rebound or pass through the goal. If necessary, an additional net, placed in the goal behind the goal line can be used. The distance from the goal line to this additional net should be approximately 70cm, but minimum 60cm.

- h) The depth of the goal net should at the top be 0.9m behind the goal line, and at the bottom 1.1m, both measures with a tolerance of ± 0.1 m. The size of the meshes should not be more than 10 x 10cm. The net must be fixed to the post and the crossbar at least at every 20cm. It is allowed to bind together the goal net and the additional net in such a way that no ball can go between the two nets.

- i) Behind the goal in the middle of the outer goal line at a distance of approximately 1.5m, there should be a vertical barrage net with a length of 9 - 14m and a height of 5m from the floor.
- j) In the middle of the substitution area at one of the side lines the table for the timekeeper is placed. The table of a length of max. 4m should be placed 30-40cm above the floor of the playing court in order to secure the field of vision.
- k) All measurements without specification of a tolerance must correspond to the ISO-Norm (International Standard Organization - ISO 2768-1:1989).
- l) Handball goals are standardized by the European Committee for Standardization, CEN (Comité Européen de Normalisation) as EN 749 in connection with EN 202.10-1.

Diagram 5: The Goal Area and Surroundings

