

Guidelines and Interpretations of the IHF Rules of the Game

Edition: 1 July 2019

The PRC in collaboration with the IHF rules experts have discussed several different topics in relation with rules interpretations and agreed to publish a new version of the Guidelines and Interpretations with the intention of clarifying the correct decisions on certain situations.

There are some new Guidelines and some updated versions of the previous Guidelines from the editions of 1 July 2016 and 1 July 2018.

This new version of the Guidelines and Interpretations is valid as of 1 July 2019.

Last 30 seconds rule

Rules 8:10c and 8:10d were modified in 2016 with the aim of preventing certain unsportsmanlike player behaviours in the last moments of matches from giving the guilty player's team the opportunity to win the match. At the same time, these rules facilitate the losing team's chance to score one or more goals, while keeping the attention of the spectators until the last second of the game.

Under Rule 8:10c, a player or team official who prevented or delayed the execution of a throw in the last moments was punished with a 7-metre throw, and under Rule 8:10d, a 7-metre throw was given against the team of which a player or official received a disqualification for an action with the ball in play in the last seconds. The latter did not pose major interpretation difficulties.

Rule 8:10c was applicable only when the ball was not in play and a defender prevented or delayed the execution of a throw. But that rule has led to erroneous interpretations by referees, players and other handball stakeholders, as well as to identifying certain very unsportsmanlike behaviours that could not be properly punished according to the current wording of this rule, allowing the team of the offender to win the match and giving a bad image to handball.

For this reason, the IHF, through the Game and Rules Development Working Group (GRDWG), formerly New Rules Working Group (NRWG), from the Playing Rules and Referees Commission (PRC) and the Commission of Coaching and Methods (CCM), decided to make a slight change in the interpretation of this rule by updating the existing Guideline of 'not respecting the distance (Rule 8:10c)', including an additional interpretation when the 7-metre and disqualification also applies during an execution if an active illegitimate action from a defender occurs during the execution of the throw as follows:

2018 – Update to the existing Guideline

Not respecting the distance (Rule 8:10c)

‘Not respecting the distance’ leads to a disqualification and 7-metre throw, if a throw during the last 30 seconds of the game cannot be executed.

The Rule is applicable if the infraction is committed during the last 30 seconds of the game or at the same time as the final signal (see Rule 2:4, 1st paragraph). In this case, the referees will decide on the basis of their observations of facts (Rule 17:11).

If the game is interrupted during the last 30 seconds due to an interference that is not directly related to the preparation or the execution of a throw (for example faulty substitution, unsportsmanlike conduct in the substitution area), Rule 8:10c is to be applied.

If the throw, for example, is executed but blocked by a player standing too close and **actively destroying** the result of the throw or disturbing the thrower during the execution, Rule 8:10c must also be applied.

If a player is standing less than three metres from the thrower but does not actively interfere with the execution, there will be no punishment. If the player standing too close uses this position to block the shot or intercept the pass from the thrower, Rule 8:10c also applies.

2019 – New Guideline

Rule 2:5

If the goalkeeper is injured in connection with a free throw after the final signal, the defending team is permitted to substitute the goalkeeper. This exception is not applicable to defensive field players.

2019 – New Guideline

Free throw after final signal (Rules 2:6 and 8:10c)

In case of infractions or unsportsmanlike conduct by defenders during the execution of a free throw or 7-metre throw after the final signal, these defenders must be punished personally under Rules 16:3, 16:6 or 16:9. The throw has to be repeated (Rule 15:9, paragraph 3). Rule 8:10c is not applicable in such cases.

2019 – New Guideline

Rule 3:3

The IHF, Continental Confederations and National Federations have the right to allow the use of reserve balls that are not placed at the timekeeper's table. The use of a reserve ball is decided by the referees according to Rule 3:4.

2019 – New Guideline

Rules 4:7-4:9

The IHF, Continental Confederations and National Federations have the right to allow technical equipment in the substitution area. The equipment has to be used in a fair manner, and it does not include equipment for communication with a suspended official or player.

2018 – Update to the existing Guideline

Assisting injured players (Rule 4:11)

In cases where several players of the same team have been injured (for example, due to a collision), the referees or the delegate may give permission for additional eligible persons to enter the court to assist those players, with a maximum of two persons per injured player. In addition, the referees and the delegate monitor paramedics who may enter the court.

2018 – New Guideline

Passive play count of passes (Rule 7:11 Clarification 4 Appendix 3, examples 13/14)

It is counted as a pass, if a shot on goal is blocked and the ball returns to the thrower or a teammate.

2018 – New Guideline

2019 – Update to the existing Guideline

Disqualification of the goalkeeper according to Rule 8:5 Comment

This applies when the goalkeeper comes from within the goal area or is in a similar position outside the goal area and causes a frontal collision with an opponent. It does not apply when:

- a) the goalkeeper runs in the same direction as an opponent, for example, after re-entering the court from the substitution area.
- b) the attacker runs after the ball, and the ball is between the attacker and the goalkeeper.

In such situations, the referees take a decision based on their observations of facts.

2018 – New Guideline

7-metre decision with empty goal (Rule 14:1 and Clarification 6c)

The definition of a clear chance of scoring in situations described in Clarification 6c when there is a clear and unimpeded opportunity to throw the ball into the empty goal requires that the player has possession of the ball and clearly attempts to shoot directly at the empty goal. This definition of a clear chance of scoring applies regardless of the type of violation and whether the ball is in or out of play, and any throw is to be executed from a correct position of the thrower and teammates.

2018 – New Guideline

Use of video proof

When a goal/no-goal decision is required after the use of the video proof technology, there will be an extended deadline for disallowing a goal, which under Rule 9:2 is only until the subsequent throw-off has been taken, extending this limitation until the next change of ball possession.

2018 – New Guideline

Player entering with wrong colour or number (Rules 4:7 and 4:8)

An infringement regarding Rules 4:7 and 4:8 will not lead to a change of ball possession. It will only lead to the interruption of the game to order the player to correct the mistake and restart with a throw for the team which were in possession of the ball.

2019 – New Guideline

Rule 16:9d

If a player, after receiving a disqualification, is guilty of extremely unsportsmanlike conduct due to rule 8:10a, the player is punished with an additional disqualification with a written report, and the team is reduced by one player for 4 minutes.

2019 – New Guideline

Goals anti-overturn (Rule 1:2)

The goals must be firmly attached to the floor or the walls behind them, or provided with an anti-overturn system. This new provision is approved with the objective to avoid accidents.