

Ask the Ref # 8, 2011 – The Goalkeeper.

Hi all football enthusiasts, coaches, referees, players and long suffering parents,

Welcome to the next slightly edited edition of Ask the Ref, the Adelaide Hills Referee Branch's nearly weekly bulletin on the rules of the game that is sent out each year.

This week we look in more detail at more situations affecting the **goalkeeper** in particular.



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There are some common misconceptions surrounding the goalkeeper. One of the most common is that the keeper gets or deserves 'special treatment' from the referee. It is understandable how this has come about, as the goalkeeper can get themselves into some very vulnerable situations ('down where the boots are flying' so to speak). However, there are no rules in the Laws of the Game that instruct the referee to provide special treatment to the goalkeeper, at least not in this sense.

BUT, there is a practical consideration that has everything to do with the dynamics of play and player safety and it does concern the goalkeeper's **vulnerability** when they jump up to play a ball or dive to take control before the arrival of an attacker. Referees will pay close attention to the **safety** of the keeper for this reason, particularly in junior competitions where skill levels are still developing.

Attackers generally can't jump high enough to head a ball at the level a keeper can play it with their hands, but players have the right to try to get to the ball. In this situation if the player makes contact with the goalkeeper before they have made contact with the ball then it is a foul and a DFK is awarded to the defending side.

How many times have you seen a goalkeeper jump up to catch a ball and lift one knee in front even though no attacker might be near? This is a way of jumping that allows for more lift. But in the penalty area, with other players present, all players, including the keeper, have to respect the safety of opponents by not playing in a dangerous manner. Timing is everything in this case and with a crowded penalty area it is up to the referee to be in an ideal position in order to detect any infringements either way.

When does the goalkeeper have **control** of the ball? The goalkeeper is deemed to have control of the ball when he or she is:

- applying pressure with one or two hands on the ball when it is on the ground
- holding the ball in either one or two hands
- kicking the ball from his or her hands and when the ball is between the hands and the kicking foot

Any player **preventing** the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his or her hands is liable to draw not only an IFK but also a yellow card for 'unsporting behaviour' by interfering with the goalkeeper. It is also illegal when players deliberately position themselves to block a keeper's run at the ball during corners. Specifically:

- it is an offence for a player to prevent a goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his or her hands
- a player must be penalised for playing in a dangerous manner if he or she kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it
- it is an offence to restrict the movement of the goalkeeper by unfairly impeding him or her at the taking of a corner kick.

Once the goalkeeper has possession of the ball from active play, it must be put back into play within **six seconds**. This can be done by:

- kicking it or throwing it to a teammate
- dropping the ball and then playing it with the feet **WITHOUT** picking it up again in that phase of play.

If the goalkeeper holds the ball for more than six seconds it is an Indirect Free Kick (IFK) to the opposition taken from where the goalkeeper was at the time of the infringement. Most referees will undertake a silent count as soon as the keeper has the ball and if the keeper has not legally released the ball in time and is not in mid-step to release the ball then they will blow for an IFK. Please note that **six seconds** is a surprisingly long time in a game of soccer!

The goalkeeper is subject to the Laws of the Game in exactly the same way as other players when they are outside of their own penalty areas. Inside their own penalty area, they may play the ball with their **hands**, but there are instances when they **cannot** do so. In particular:

- if a teammate throws the ball directly back to the goalkeeper
- if a teammate intentionally passes a ball directly back to the goalkeeper by kicking it, the goalkeeper cannot play it with his or her hands even in the penalty area. The ball can be picked up if it is passed using, say, a head or a chest.
- if a goalkeeper drops the ball or rolls it on the ground it cannot be picked up again in that phase of play. This isn't something that happens often, but it can with an inexperienced goalkeeper.
- in similar circumstances, if a goalkeeper decides to bounce the ball before delivering it and loses control of the ball as a consequence (a bad bounce or something), then it must be kicked away and not picked up.
- if the goalkeeper handles and then plays or releases the ball out of the penalty area it cannot be dribbled back in to the area to be picked up

Goalkeepers must wear **colours** which are easily differentiated from their own teammates, their opponents and from the referee and other officials.

Anyway, that's it for the goalkeeper, the loneliest position on the field of play and one of the most specialised. For some trivia check out this detailed website:

<http://www.goalkeepersaredifferent.com>

And have a look at these great saves:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zy-ZQ8NP_j0

I hope you have enjoyed this further attempt to clarify the LOTG. Please pass this email on as broadly and widely within the Hills comp as possible if you think it is worth sharing.

As usual, if you have any comments or questions, I will do my best to respond.

Peter van der Zwaag,
AHRB.

