

THE REFEREE'S CREASE

John Herd

The one rule, which is most misunderstood, is Rule 39, CREASE PLAY.

The Crease is a 9' radius circle cut off flat 6' behind the goal line. A 2" wide white line encloses it. The crease is an imaginary vertical cylinder that includes the line and goes all the way to the root.

Team must get the ball out of their crease in 5 seconds.

You may not reach into your opponent's crease to take a pass, touch a loose ball, or interfere with a player's/goalkeeper's stick (loss of possession). If you intentionally check an opposing player's/goalkeeper's stick within the crease, you will be assessed a minor penalty.

An attacking ball carrier may fake into the crease, or jump/dive through a part of the crease, provided the FEET stay outside the cylinder, and they do not make contact with the floor or an opponent.

You may not cut through your opponent's crease to check the ball carrier (minor penalty), or gain a distinct advantage to recover a loose ball (loss of possession).

A player may not intentionally direct the ball back into his or her own crease (loss of possession).

Now the part that gets a lot of people confused:

- A goalkeeper is considered in the crease if they have at least one of their feet inside the cylinder. A goalkeeper may completely leave the crease to get a pass from a teammate, and cannot carry the ball back in. A goalkeeper, in the crease, may reach out with the stick to get a loose ball, or intercept an opponent's pass and bring the ball back in.
- With players, it is the position of the BALL which determines a back in or not.
- A player with both feet outside his or her own crease may reach into the crease and pick up a loose ball and then step into the crease. This is not back in, because the BALL was already in the cylinder. A player with both feet in the crease may reach out with the stick to pick up a loose ball, provided their next move is to step out of the cylinder (the player did not bring the BALL back into the cylinder). If the player brings the BALL back into the cylinder, they lose possession.

I hope this has clarified CREASE PLAY.