

Please note: this rule interpretation should be implemented immediately in NZ domestic competitions.

Rules of Hockey 2009: Interpretation of Rule 13.2.h

At its meeting in November 2009, the Hockey Rules Board reviewed the interpretation of part of Rule 13.2.h. The Rule states:

Procedures for taking a free hit, centre pass and putting the ball back into play after it has been outside the field : from a free hit awarded to the attack within the 23 metres area, the ball must not be played into the circle until it has travelled at least 5 metres or has been touched by a player of either team other than the player taking the free hit.”

The Rule itself is unchanged but the following interpretation of a particular action is added and should be attached as a note beneath the Rule in printed copies:

It is permitted to play the ball high above the attacking circle so that it lands outside the circle subject to Rules related to dangerous play and that the ball is not legitimately playable inside or above the circle by another player during its flight

This interpretation will be applied with effect from 1 January 2010 (ie it will not be applied at any FIH tournaments conducted before 1 January 2010).

Practical interpretation to NZ context:

It is now generally understood that a player is unable to hit the ball directly into the circle from free hits etc inside the attacking 23 m area. However, there has been a debate whether playing the ball over the circle (essentially an overhead pass that travels through the circle) was hitting the ball into the circle or not? This additional wording has now clarified the interpretation – that is, you are allowed to pass the ball directly over the circle as long as no player within the circle is able to play it.