



Advice to *Defenders* concerning Penalty Corners

The Penalty Corner routine can be a complex affair and quite often Defending Players are penalised by Umpires for “Breaking Early” and they may not know why. Rule 13.3 ‘Taking a penalty corner’ details how a penalty of this type should be carried out and paragraph ‘f’ discusses the position of defenders:

*“Not more than five defenders, including the goalkeeper or player with goalkeeping privileges if there is one, must be positioned **behind** the back-line with their sticks, hands and feet **not touching** the **ground inside the field.**”*

Paragraph ‘h’ of Rule 13.3 goes on to explain that:

*“Until the ball has been played, no attacker other than the one taking the push or hit from the back-line is permitted to enter the circle and **no defender is permitted to cross the centre-line or back-line.**”*

These elements of rule 13.3 are what Umpires will focus on; therefore defending players need to remember:

1. The back-line and the centre-line are part of the field of play;
2. No part of their body or playing equipment may touch the field of play (including the lines);
3. No Defenders should enter the field of play, by crossing the back/centre-line, until the ball is played;
4. No Defender can stand within 5 metres from the ball, when the push or hit is taken;
5. Rule 13.3 paragraph ‘l’ states that *“A defender who is clearly running into the shot or into the taker without attempting to play the ball with their stick must be penalised for dangerous play.”*

How will Umpires penalise Penalty Corner offences by Defenders?

Rule 12.4 paragraph ‘c’ states that *“A penalty stroke is awarded”*:

*“for defenders **persistently** crossing over the back-line **before** permitted during the taking of penalty corners.”*

Obviously the phrase “persistently” is somewhat ambiguous and so Umpires should follow this routine:

1. **First Offence** – warn defenders they are breaking early and award another Penalty Corner (PC);
2. **Second Offence** – issue the offending player with a *Green Card* and award another PC;
3. **Third Offence** – speak to the offending player as detailed below and award another PC:
 - a. the *same* player - issue a *Yellow Card* and issue a *Green Card* to the other four PC defenders;
 - b. another player - issue them and the other three PC defenders with a *Green Card*;
4. **Fourth Offence** – issue a *Yellow Card* to the offending player, issue a *Green Card* the defending team captain and award another PC;

Remind the Defending team captain and PC defenders that this is their FINAL WARNING!

5. **Fifth Offence** – award a *Penalty Stroke* to the attacking team and consider upgrading any previous personal penalties, as appropriate.

This process should be completed during the course of the **entire** match, not just for a single penalty corner.

We hope this clarifies the rules around defending a Penalty Corner and how Umpires will enforce them.

Thanks for reading

NNHC Executive Committee

PS – Attackers should remember that if they enter the circle early, the Umpire will award a ‘16m Hit-Out’.