SITUATION OF THE WEEK

Situation: When are goalies allowed to return to their circles?

The goalie, while just below her goal circle, lost possession of the ball. Her opponent gained possession and made a fast pass to her teammate above the goal line, within 8m of goal. Before the goalie re-entered her goal circle, the attack player was fouled. The officials called the foul, placed the fouled player on the closest 8m hash, and began to clear the penalty zone, directing all players to exit the penalty zone by taking the shortest route out. The goalie was directed to move just below the dots as she was not in her circle, and was below the GLE at the time of the foul. Was this penalty administration correct for the goalie?

Answer: Incorrect.

The good news is that direction for the goalie with our new penalty zone is entirely consistent with how we have always determined whether she may, or may not, return to her circle. We know that if the goalie is NOT involved in the foul and is outside of her circle when the foul occurs, she may always return to her circle if she is in the area to be cleared. Previously, this meant if the 8m was being cleared and she was above the GLE and within 8m of goal, she could go back in. Or, if the lane was being cleared and she was in the lane to be cleared, she was allowed back in. The same thought process can be applied to the new penalty zone. If the goalie is anywhere in the area to be cleared – which now includes space below the GLE – and she is in that area, she may go back into her circle. Again, this is only if she was NOT involved in the foul. So, nothing new. If officials are clearing a space and the goalie is outside of her circle and inside that area – she can return to her circle.

Rule Reference: Pg. 57 and 58, PENALTIES, 4 “c” and “d” (Also illustrated on page 70 of USL Manual)
CLEARING THE PENALTY ZONE

**Question #1:** A coach was really angry with me today. He said my partner and I were completely wrong in how we are clearing the penalty zone because we didn’t let his defenders come across the 8m arc to take the hashes on either side of the ball carrier. Are we messing up, or is he wrong?

**Answer:** Short answer, you got it right! Just as in previous years, players within the CSA must stand on the whistle, and then will be instructed to exit areas to be cleared by taking the shortest route out. If the shortest route brings them to the hash adjacent to the ball carrier, new rule allows that the defender will always get that spot… even if there is an attack player clearing to the same hash. “Tie” goes to the defender. Officials are asked to take a quick mental snapshot of the players and work to be sure they take the shortest route vs. the most advantageous position.

**Rule Reference:** Pg. 58, 10-1 Penalties 4 Note

**Question #2:** What is the difference between major fouls taking place inside the 8m arc versus those that are called outside the 8m arch in the “pie” area?

**Answer:** I love this question, because we really need to understand that with the establishment of the penalty zone, there is no difference. If defense is called for a major foul, above the GLE, within 8m of goal inside OR outside of the 8m arc, officials will clear the entire penalty zone. So – think about that complete area, beginning at the GLE, working as a full 8m arc to the GLE on the other side. ANY major defensive foul, called anywhere in that arc, gets a hash and clears the entire penalty zone.

FIELD MARKING– THE PENALTY ZONE

**Question #1:** One of the schools in my area asked if they will be required to “mark” the penalty zone on their field. Is that required now…. do you think it’s coming?

**Answer:** Schools MAY, but are absolutely not required, to mark the penalty zone on their lacrosse field. At this time there is no active discussion about any such requirement being introduced to the game. If the schools are so inclined, it really does help the players get it right!

UNIFIED FIELDS

**Question #1:** I’m just starting to hear about the unified field. If we go to a school and they have one, is it legal for high school contests?

**Answer:** Yes! We haven’t seen a lot of schools move to the unified field in PA, but it’s certainly legal if the field is lined in compliance with the guidelines set forth by NFHS. The diagram and measurements are shared in your 2019 rulebook on page 14. Anecdotally, the only feedback I’ve had on the unified field is that, for the girls game, the sub area feels a bit large, but otherwise it’s very easy to work with.

**NOTES**

Officials, If you are provided a communication at any PIAA school contest that is a PIAA authorization for a player to wear uniform/equipment items as an exception to our NFHS rule book, please accept that allowance, confirm the player is in compliance with any safety provisions as noted by PIAA in the authorization, and let the player play. Thank you.