

Goalkeeping Privileges According to the 2007/08 Rules

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During the past 10 years, the rule interpretation surrounding goalkeeper's privileges has become more liberal, however, the rules have remained unchanged. In the 2007/08 rule book, the rules governing goalkeeper's privileges have been updated so as to align them with modern hockey. The rule now states:

Goalkeepers may use their stick, feet, kickers, legs or leg guards to propel the ball forcefully.

Goalkeepers are also permitted to use their stick, protective equipment or any part of their body to push the ball away, deflect the ball (in any direction, including over the backline) or stop the ball. This permits goalkeepers to use their hands, arms or any part of their body to move the ball away as part of a goal saving action. However, they should not propel the ball forcefully so that it travels a long distance.

In practical terms, what does this rule change mean? Actually, due to the fact that the hockey community has allowed goalkeeper's privileges to expand, the new rule merely reflects what is already happening in modern hockey. However, the following points should be noted:

- Goalkeepers may use any part of their body (including gloves) to save, deflect or push the ball away.
- The rule does mention that the ball should not be 'propelled a long distance' with the stick or glove. Essentially, as long as goalkeepers are not taking 'baseball swings' at the ball we should play on (assuming no danger). At worst a penalty corner should be awarded for an infringement – not a penalty stroke!
- Let goalkeepers clear the ball aerially if they choose to. Only penalise under the danger rule if players are genuinely forced to take evasive action (which is rare – most times, players try to manufacture danger from goalkeeper clearances).
- Essentially let goalies be goalies! Allow them to slide, kick, save, clear, deflect, hit away and do what they need to do to save goals (pending danger).

Modern hockey is becoming less technical. Reducing the amount of whistle with regard to goalkeeper's actions is part of creating more exciting circle play. Celebrate good saves! Don't search for technical breaches and reasons to blow the whistle!