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## THE RETREAT LINE

The Retreat Line has been introduced in the Small Sided Game (7v7 and 9v9). As with any new initiative, it takes time for full and proper implementation and the Retreat Line is no different. Please find some clarifications:

### Opponent Activation Point

As noted in the Laws of the Small Sided Game:

*“The ball is in play once it leaves the penalty area. All opponents must be behind the retreat line and cannot cross the retreat line until the ball:*

- *Is touched by a player of the team releasing the ball OR,*
- *Leaves the field of play OR,*
- *Goes over the retreat line. (If the goalkeeper chooses to play the ball across the retreat line prior to the opposition crossing the retreat line)”*

This may not happen in some instances. Referees and Coaches are reminded that the “opponent activation point” is the first touch of the team-mate of the goalkeeper in possession and NOT the goalkeeper releasing the ball.

### Ball Crossing the Retreat Line

In some instances, instead of choosing to play “out from the back”, the goalkeeper may kick the ball directly over the Retreat Line. Referees and coaches are advised that this is **not** against the rules and so the game should not be stopped. When the ball crosses the Retreat Line it can be touched by any player on the field and is deemed “in play”. Coach shall remind the goalkeeper of the benefit of playing out to a team-mate, and ask that they try that next time around.

### Goalkeeper Release (After a save)

In the Small Sided Game (7v7 and 9v9) if the goalkeeper releases the ball from its hands in order to kick the ball, opponents are still required to wait until one of the three conditions described in the “Opponent Activation Point” are met before they can cross the Retreat Line.



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## Restart after Infringement by Opponents

If an opposing player crosses the Retreat Line before one of the conditions described in the “Opponent Activation Point” is met, the Referee must blow the whistle, stop play and order a restart accordingly:

- If infringement is committed and play originated from a Goal Kick, goal kick is retaken
- If infringement is committed and play originated from goalkeeper releasing the ball after a save, an Indirect Free Kick is awarded to the defending team from the position where the opponent crossed the retreat line.

## Circumventing the Retreat Line

If the team releasing the ball decides to circumvent the retreat line by avoiding contact with the ball until the ball has travelled some distance or any other matter that is deemed by the Referee as circumventing the law, ball is deemed to be in play and can be challenged by opponents.

Although situations might not be identified at the first offense, Referees are reminded to communicate with players and coaches of the proper procedure.