



Implementation of the adopted recommendations of the Football Review Committee in 2025 and 2026

Dear Referees,

as you all know there were various rule changes and new rules introduced to men's Gaelic Football in 2025, followed by some further slight amendments which have come into effect for 2026.

This is a brief document highlighting the rules changes or additional rules and their implementation into GGE's non-15-a-side format.

So, first and foremost, and in order to keep this as straightforward as possible, the main difference is that GGE has **not** introduced a 40m arc into its non-15-a-side format. So, any rules that have anything to do with the 40m arc (e.g. 2 point scores) do not apply. This is also the case with any changes to the attacking mark rule, as GGE never implemented this rule in the past anyway.

This document is only intended to serve as an explanation of the rule changes that have come into effect and how GGE has implemented them. It is **not** a substitute for reading the 2026 rule book but rather to supplement it.

Rules of Control

Commencing Play

- The referee shall toss a coin in the presence of the team captains. The team which wins the coin toss will choose ends; the other team will choose which sideline their player will stand on for the throw-in. Teams will change ends and the sidelines on which their players are positioned for the throw-in at the start of the second half. This procedure shall be repeated for extra time, where played.
- One player from each team shall stand on their own defensive side of the 10m dashed halfway line, and shall face the referee, for the throw-in. A second player on each team shall be positioned on opposite sidelines, centred on the sideline and facing the players contesting the throw-in. These players will swap sides for the second half. The other players shall be in their respective positions behind the 45m line.

Misconduct at Games by Team Officials (Rule 5)

In addition to issuing a card to the team official that commits a Category Ia.2, Category Ia.3, Category IIa, Category IVa.1 or Category Va infraction, the team of the official that commits the infraction shall also be penalised by a free kick being awarded on the offending team's 13m (20m in 2025) line at the centre of the scoring space.

Rules of Fair Play

The Goalkeeper may only receive the ball from a teammate:

- (a) Inside the large rectangle when both the goalkeeper and the teammate passing the ball are inside the large rectangle; or
- (b) when the goalkeeper is in the opposition half of the field

The team captain or a nominated deputy if the captain is the goalkeeper or is no longer on the field, are the only players who may speak to the referee to seek clarification of a decision made by the referee and such clarification may only be sought during a break in play.

(implemented by GGE with following addition: the team captain, or nominated deputy, will wear an armband to identify them).

Rules of Set Play

Solo and Go

A free kick, other than a penalty kick, a 45m free kick or a free kick awarded for a kick-out mark, may be taken from the hands or from the ground or by means of a **Solo and Go**. A player having indicated their option to the referee shall not be permitted to change that decision. A **Solo and Go** is defined as a “toe-tap”, i.e. the ball must be released from the hand(s) to the foot and kicked back into the hand(s). Any player may take a **Solo and Go**, in the case of an aggressive foul, it does not have to be the player that was fouled.

Where a **Solo and Go** is available, it must be taken from a position within four metres of where the foul has occurred and must be taken immediately after the free has been awarded and without undue delay unless the referee has stopped play for any purpose such as to allow for attention to be given to an injured player or to deal with a disciplinary issue. The ball must not travel backwards, otherwise it is a free kick to the opposition. A player taking a **Solo and Go** may not be challenged within four metres of the position where the **Solo and Go** was taken. A **Solo and Go** may not be taken within the opposition 20m line. Where a **Solo and Go** is not taken immediately, the free must be taken from the hands or from the ground, at the point where the foul occurred.

Kick-Outs

As already mentioned, the 40m arc is not being implemented in GGE's non-15-a-side formats. In keeping with the intention of the new 15-a-side kickout rule (i.e. that the ball must travel a minimum forward distance), GGE has implemented the following:

- kick-outs to be taken from the centre point of the 13m line
- the ball must travel at least 13m and past the 20m line before being played by another player on the defending team. Otherwise, a free-kick will ensue to the opposition from where the foul occurred.
- players must be 13m from the kickout but may remain inside the 13m line

Kick-Out Mark

In GGE non-15-a-side games, a player may not score directly after making a kick-out mark.

If the player who makes the kick-out mark decides to play on immediately and is challenged within four metres of the position from where the mark is made, he will be

awarded a free-kick from where the foul occurred (and not 50m/30m more advantageous which was the case in the first half of 2025).

4 Back, 3 Up Rule

Rule 2.14. of Set Play states that “During play, a team must have at least 4 players (which may include the goalkeeper) in their half of the field and at least 3 outfield players in the opposition half of the field”.

GGE have reduced the number of required players in each half of the field by one for the 11- and 9-a-side format. So what this means is that

- teams must always keep a minimum of 3 players in their defensive half of the pitch (this may include the goalkeeper)
- teams must always keep a minimum of 2 outfield players in their attacking half of the pitch

Breaches and penalties of this rule are as follows:

- leaving one less player than required in the respective half of the pitch by crossing the halfway line in the act of carrying, receiving or intercepting the ball
Penalty – free kick from the halfway line where the breach occurred
- leaving one less player than required in the respective half of the pitch in circumstances other than above.

Penalty – free kick from the centre point of the offending team's 20m line

A breach of this rule does not occur where the player who would otherwise cause the breach

- a) have done so unintentionally
- b) are within 4m of the halfway line
- c) are not interfering with play
- d) are not interfering with the opponent, and
- e) are not gaining an advantage

Discipline

Where a penalty of 50m advance is listed in the GAA rulebook, this is implemented as a 30 advance in the GGE 9- and 11-a-side format.

New in 2026

Rule 4.23. If a player advances the ball deliberately from the place where a free or side-line kick should be taken or takes a side-line from a position not outside the boundary line, then **a free is awarded to the opposition**. Previously a throw-in was awarded in these situations.

Rule 4.40. For a player to move from the sideline or 45m line before the referee has thrown in the ball to start the game or to restart it after half-time or for extra-time.

Penalty: free kick from the mid-point of the half-way line.

Rule 5.41. Deliberately denying a goal-scoring opportunity by pulling an opponent's jersey has now joined the list of cynical behaviour infractions which are penalised with a black card and a penalty. Please see the definition of goal-scoring opportunity in the rulebook. What to consider:

- did the offence occur close to the side-line or 25m from the side-line?
- Was there a clear pathway to the goals for the attacker?
- how many covering defenders were in position?
- would the team in possession have had the opportunity to get a clear kick at goal?

It can be a goal scoring opportunity for the team in possession of the ball rather than the sole individual in possession.

Rule 6.7 (c) (ii) Disruptive Conduct – Dissent. If a team official commits dissent immediately before the start of the game or during half-time, the game will (re)start with a 13m free to the opposing team.