

EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP (FOOTBALL)

Media Briefing

30ú Méan Fómhair 2026



EAG
2026



FRC RECOMMENDATIONS



19. GAELIC FOOTBALL EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP

The FRC recommends the establishment of a Gaelic Football Expert Advisory Group, comprising former inter-county and club managers, players, referees, and other experienced stakeholders.

Supported by the Games Intelligence Unit, this group would report to the Standing Committee on Playing Rules and provide informed advice on emerging trends in Gaelic Football, as well as potential rule amendments aimed at continued enhancement of the game.

- Kevin McStay (Chair)
- David Coldrick
- Conor McManus
- Maurice Fitzgerald
- John Tobin
- Johnny Bradley
- Pat Doherty
- Séamus Kenny

FRC RECOMMENDATIONS

2. OVER AND BACK RULE

The FRC recommends that analysis be undertaken to assess the merits of introducing an 'over and back' rule in Gaelic Football.

Under this proposed rule, once a team moves the ball into the opposition's half, they would be prohibited from playing it back into their own half. Any breach of this rule would result in a free kick awarded from the point where the ball crossed 'back over' the halfway line. The objective is to incentivise teams to press forward and actively seek to regain possession. However, careful consideration is needed regarding how this rule would apply to kick-outs and other transitional phases of play.

4. SCORING VIA HAND PASS OR FIST PASS

The FRC recommends that analysis be undertaken to assess the merits of allowing a score when the ball is hand-passed or fisted over the crossbar.

This review should carefully consider the potential impact on game dynamics, skill execution, and overall scoring patterns before any formal rule change is proposed — including the possible removal of the ability to score via hand pass or fist pass.

FRC RECOMMENDATIONS

6. INCREASING THE VALUE OF A GOAL

The FRC recommends that analysis continue on the merits of increasing the value of a goal to four points.

This evaluation should consider the potential incentive for teams to create more goal-scoring opportunities, the strategic balance a four-point goal offers compared to a two-point score, and the impact that consecutive four-point goals could have on the overall dynamic and momentum of a game.

10. PHYSICAL DEMANDS IN GAELIC FOOTBALL

The FRC recommends that further analysis be conducted during the 2026 inter-county season, due to the limited GPS data currently available from inter-county teams regarding the physical demands of recent rule enhancements.

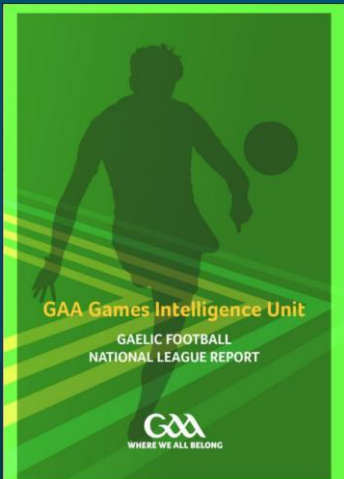
This analysis is essential before making any decisions on increasing the number of substitutions or introducing rolling substitutions. Robust data will ensure that any changes are evidence-based and aligned with player welfare and the evolving nature of the game.

FRC RECOMMENDATIONS

18. GAMES INTELLIGENCE UNIT

The FRC recommends that the Games Intelligence Unit be established as a permanent unit within the Association, reporting directly to the Director of Games Development.

This would ensure continuity in data-driven analysis and strategic insights to support the ongoing evolution and enhancement of Gaelic Games.



GUIDANCE ON THE APPLICATION OF RULE ADJUSTMENTS

For trialing in the Ryan Cup (Division 1) HEC League 2026

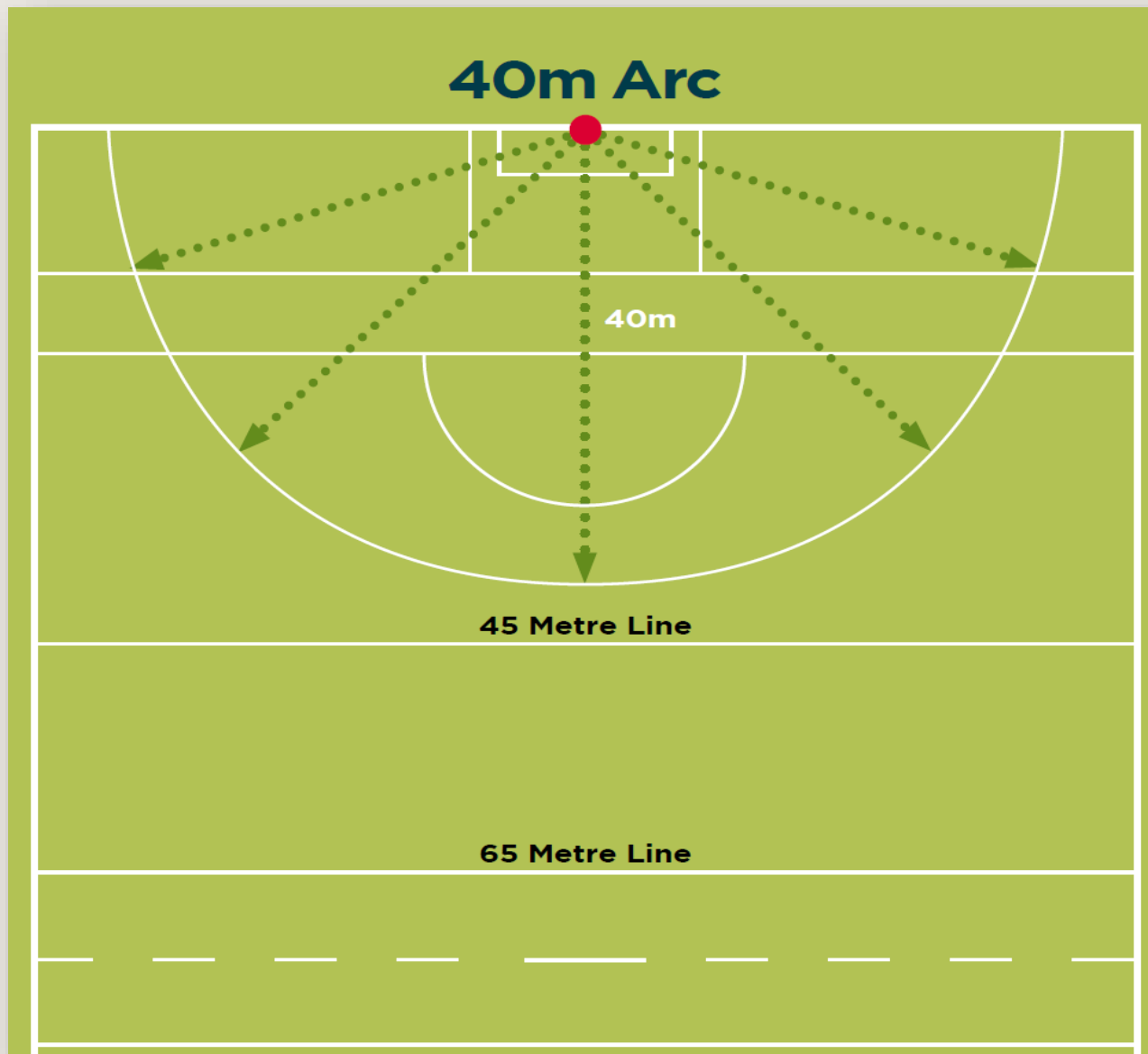
**Clarifies and uniformly enforces the rule adjustments being
trialed**

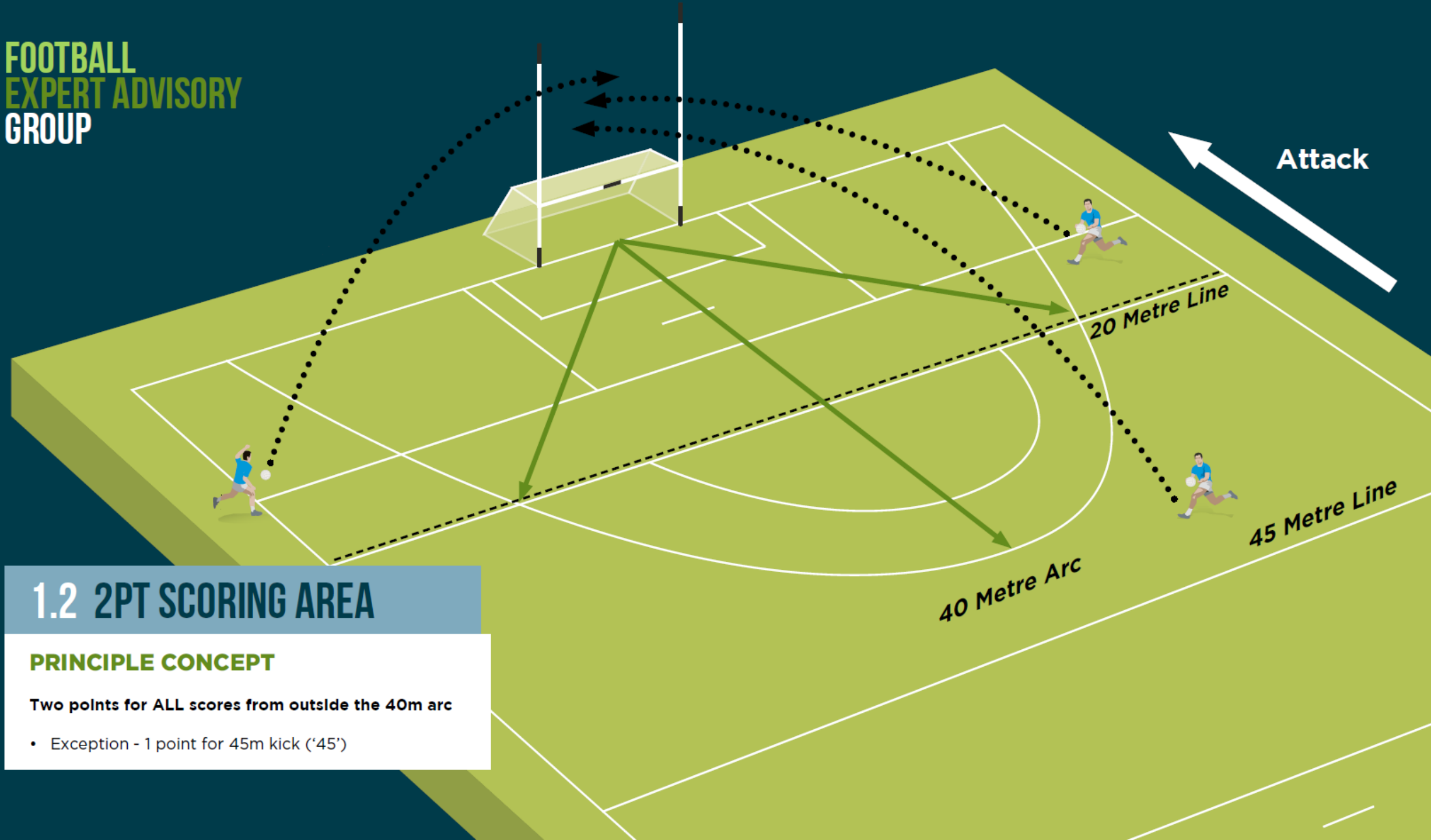
**Developed with the Expert Advisory Group (Football),
SCPR, HEC and National Inter County Referees Panel**

1.1 Extension of the 40m arc

The 40m arc is extended to the endline

1. SCORING





1.2 2PT SCORING AREA

PRINCIPLE CONCEPT

Two points for ALL scores from outside the 40m arc

- Exception - 1 point for 45m kick ('45')

1.3 4PTS FOR A GOAL

PRINCIPLE CONCEPT

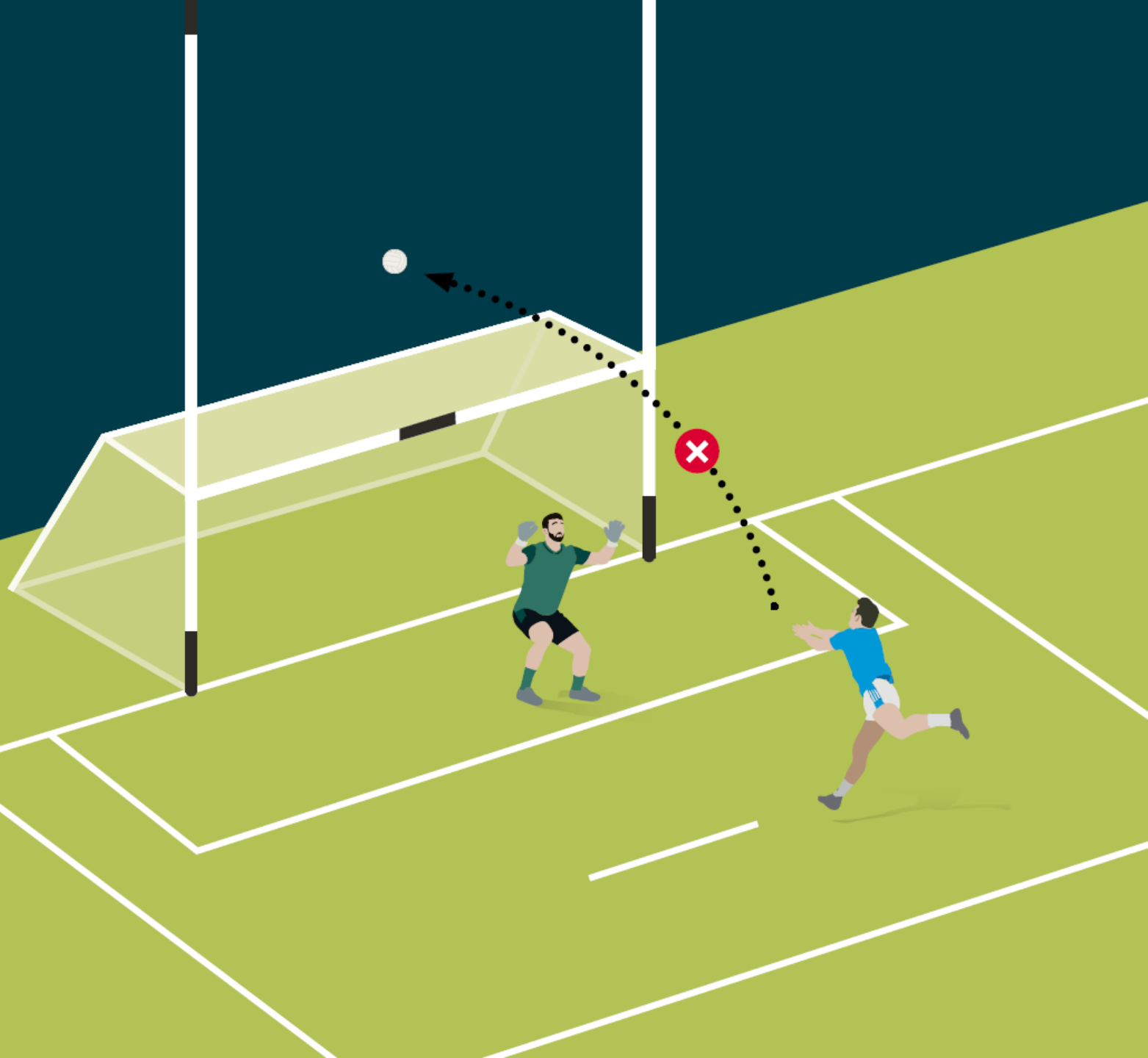
A goal will be awarded 4pts.



1.4 NO HANDPASSED OR FISTED POINTS

PRINCIPLE CONCEPT

No scores by hand (fist or open) other than
'in-flight' scores



2. LIMITING CONSECUTIVE HAND/FIST PASSES

PRINCIPLE CONCEPT

No more than three consecutive hand-passes are allowed by fist or open hand.

- Following the third handpass, the next play must use the foot/feet to propel the ball (NOT a solo)
- Sanction: Free Kick to opposing team from where foul occurred
- Once an opponent touches the ball in play, this will be considered a break in the hand pass chain and reset to zero

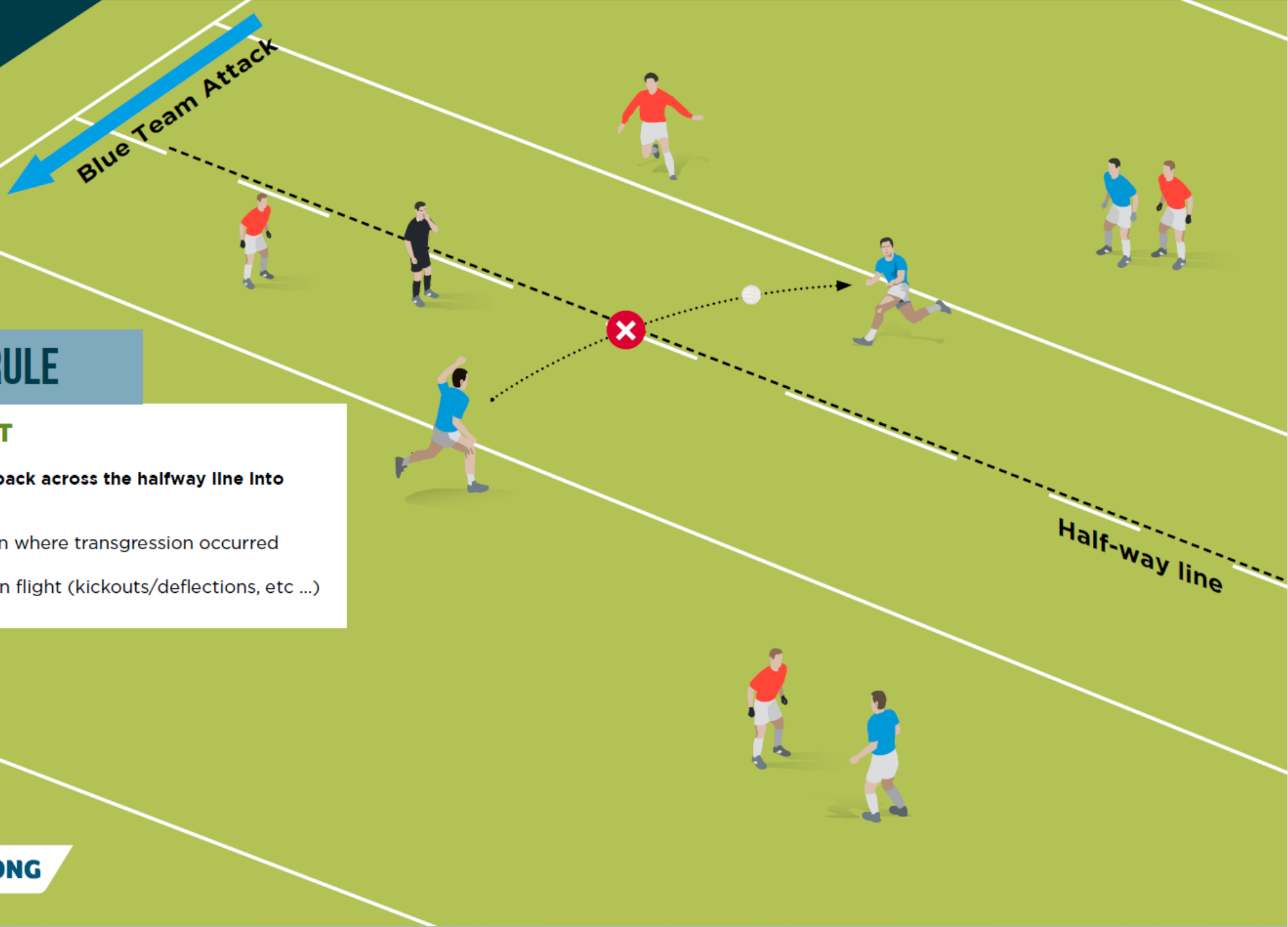
4th Play - FOOT
(Kick - not a solo)

3. BACK COURT RULE

PRINCIPLE CONCEPT

A team cannot play the ball back across the halfway line into their own half of the field

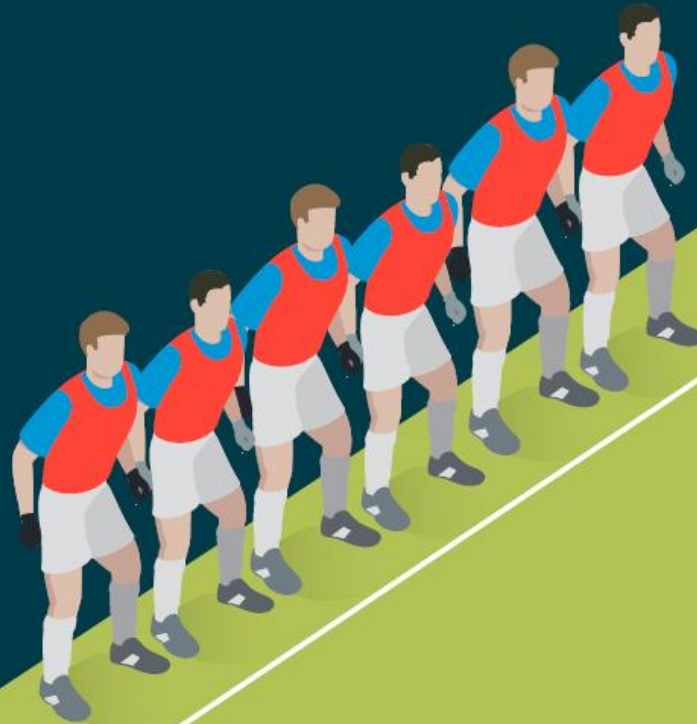
- Free awarded to opposition where transgression occurred
- Where ball is struck while in flight (kickouts/deflections, etc ...)



4. SUBSTITUTIONS

Increased from 5 to 6

***Will not be trialed in Ryan Cup**

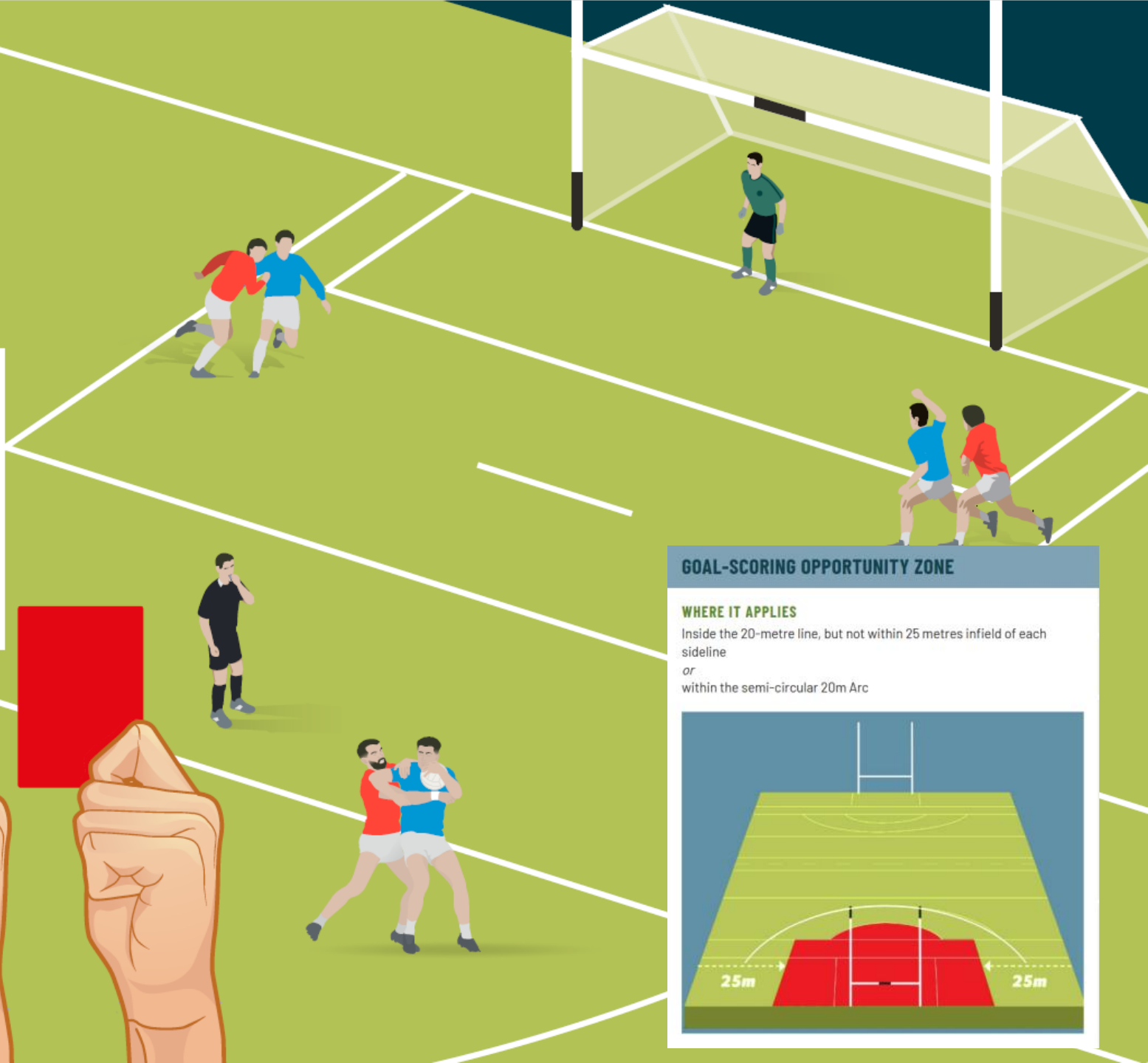
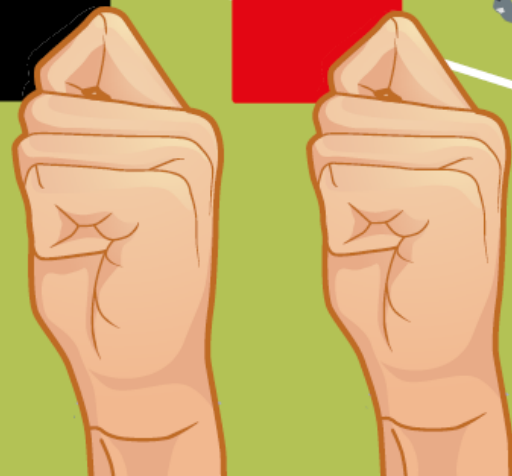


5. DENIAL OF A GOAL SCORING OPPORTUNITY

PRINCIPLE CONCEPT

Denial of Goal-Scoring Opportunity

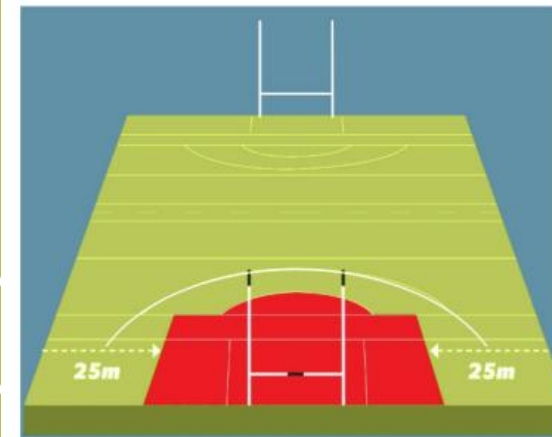
- **Black card** (minimum) or **red card** (if appropriate) for ALL aggressive fouls which deny a goal scoring opportunity
- **NO** requirement for fouled player to be in possession of the ball



GOAL-SCORING OPPORTUNITY ZONE

WHERE IT APPLIES

Inside the 20-metre line, but not within 25 metres infield of each sideline
or
within the semi-circular 20m Arc



6. AWARD OF 50M ADVANCEMENT PENALTY

PRINCIPLE CONCEPT

If a player takes a Kick-Out Mark (claims/does NOT claim) and is subsequently illegally challenged within his 4m 'space', the sanction is 50m advancement penalty

- In both cases above, the player taking the free may choose to take free kick from outside the 40m arc

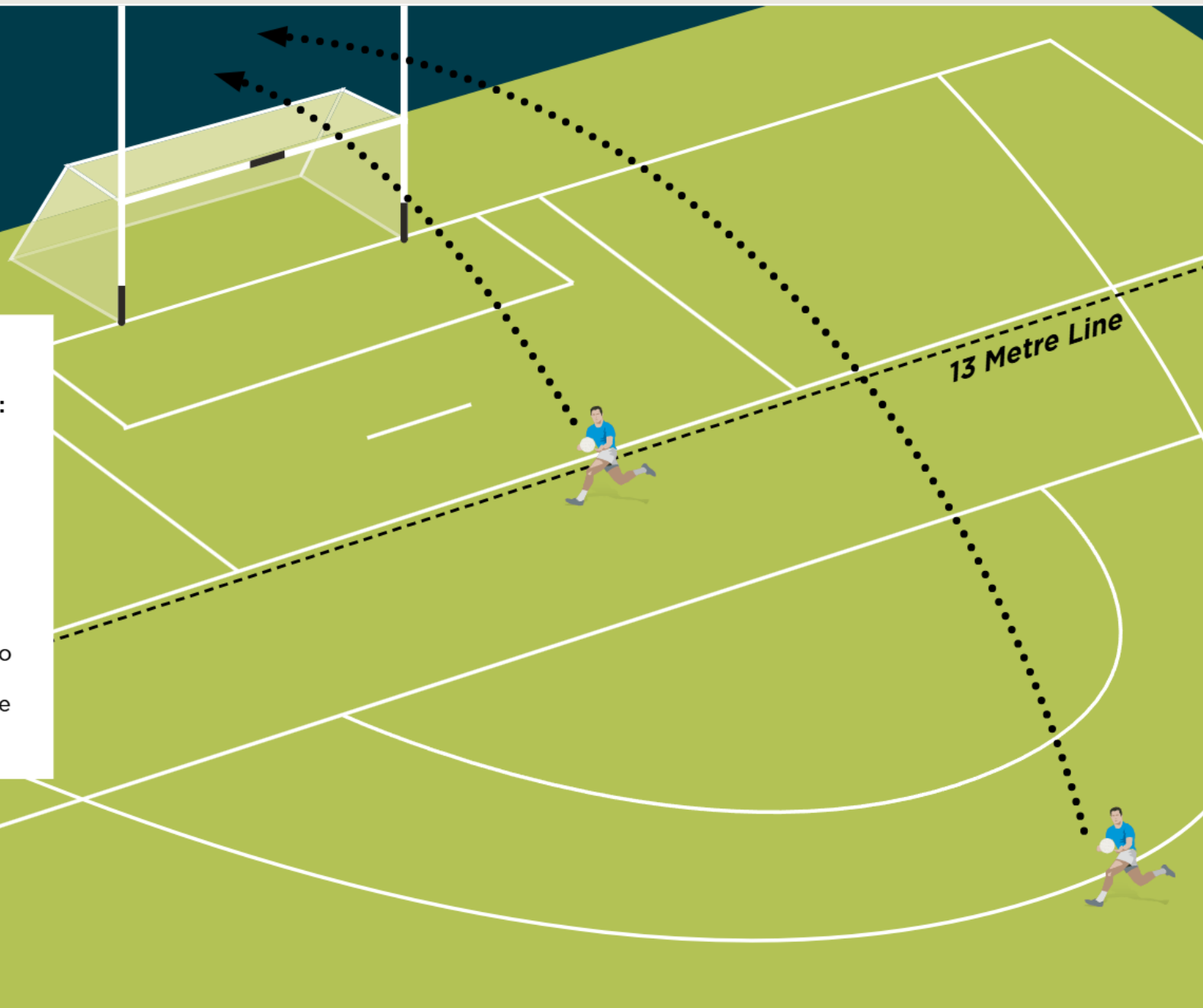


7. ALIGNING SANCTIONS

PRINCIPLE CONCEPT

Award a 13m free kick from the centre point of 13m line for:

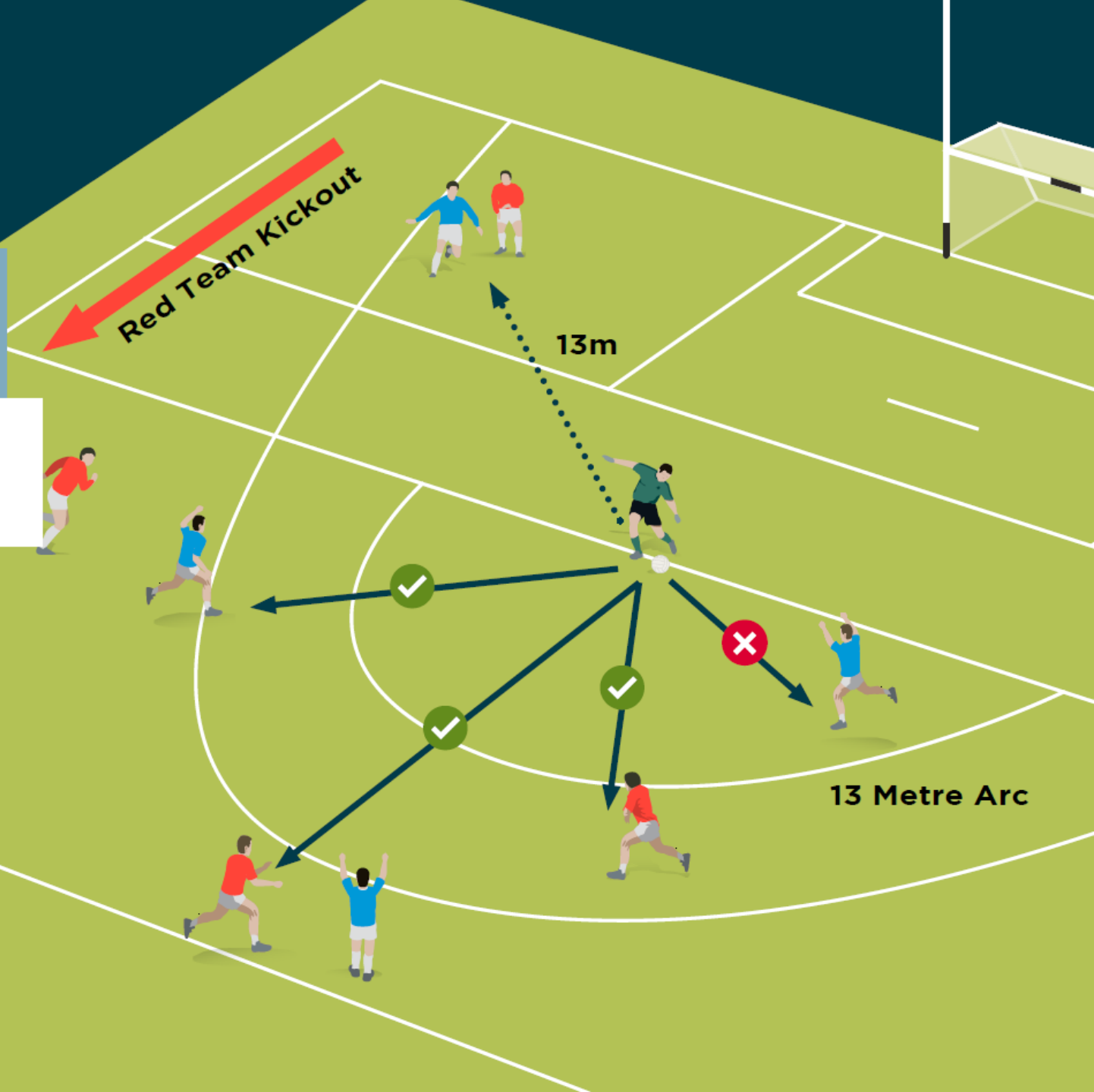
- (1) Dissent/Abuse from member of backroom team (Rule 6.7)
 - (2) Kickout infractions (Rule 4.26 & Rule 4.29)
 - (3) '4/3 Breach' sanction (Rule 2.14)
- The free can be taken back outside the 40m arc to avail of a 2 pointer only applies to numbers **1 & 3**. Important to note that number **2** (kickout infractions) has to be taken from the **13m line**, i.e. the kickout infractions **CANNOT** be brought back outside the 40m line.



8. KICK-OUTS: THE BALL MUST TRAVEL BEYOND THE 13M ARC

PRINCIPLE CONCEPT

ALL Kick outs MUST cross the 13m arc ('D') rather than 40m arc



9. SIDELINE FREE KICKS

PRINCIPLE CONCEPT

Sideline free kicks from on or behind the sideline rather than behind the line

- A player **MUST** have at least one foot on or behind the sideline when taking the sideline free kick

