

1-Wall Legal Hinder

Over the years I've received many questions relating to the rules of handball. Without doubt the majority of them deal with hinders. To further complicate the matter one-wall handball allows a player to legally hinder the receiving side. The cover shot on the October 1994 issue of Handball should give subscribers an idea of what a legal hinder is.

Standing still (Rule 4.7B1 of the 1995 USHA One-Wall Rule Book) states "If a player attempting to play a ball is interfered with by an opponent, who, after his side has played the ball, was perfectly still in front or aside the player, it is NOT a hinder.". In one-wall referees should not call screen balls. Unlike three and four-wall handball you do NOT have to let the receiving side see the ball. In addition the defensive side, that has just served or returned the ball, is NOT obligated to move so the offensive side may go straight in to the ball. If you observe a game between seasoned players you will notice that just the opposite is occurring.

One-wall handball is quite similar to basketball where players set picks and constantly jockey for position under the backboard. Remember that the important part of this rule is "in front or aside". Don't get hung up on "perfectly still". You don't have a snowball's chance in Hell of getting a hinder if the ball is down by your opponent's foot and he wiggles his ear.

After a recent conversation with John Bike Jr., who has participated in one-wall events since he was a junior player, I realized that the situation of a player moving back into an opponent needed to be addressed. If a player of the side that has just hit the ball stands perfectly still, but his opponent moves back into him in trying to play the ball, not necessarily making contact, and is thus kept from having a fair chance to play to ball, it is a hinder. It is the duty of the player farther from the wall to get out of the way.

To make it simple just think of driving a car. If you arrive at an intersection with a broken traffic light it would be far from safe for everyone to move at once in all different directions. When the light is fully operationally traffic can flow without danger. If the light is green it is your turn to proceed, and vice versa when the light is red. Continuing along this avenue of thought we all know that when the car in front stops it is our duty not to rear end it. The majority of the time players are looking at the front wall and for safety reasons similar cardinal rules apply to driving motor vehicles and creating legal blocks. In handball your side has the right of way when it is on offense.

By now your probably wondering "How do I retrieve the ball if my opponent hits it in front of himself, or his partner, and stands still?". If you flip back to the October 1994 cover you'll see two of your choices. Paul Williams exhibits the first choice which is to play the ball from behind your opponent. His partner, Eduardo Maisonet, quickly determined that Paul wouldn't be successful and tried to help out by taking the long road and going around the blocker. In the semifinals (pictured) you'll notice a controversial situation which arose. The top referees shared the common opinion that Paul was within the intent of the rules which allow a receiver to play the ball but not his opponent. On the other hand if the referee felt that the receiver played his opponent and not the ball the player should either be charged with an avoidable hinder or defaulted. In Torres' creation of a legal hinder he submits himself to certain inherent risks. The solution is a simple one. If you do not want to take the risks do not create the situation. It is obvious that this contact might have distracted, or prevented, Al from making the return. Physical contact is NOT an automatic hinder and it is up to the referee as to whether or not the contact impeded the play and a hinder should be called.

Now that we have an understanding of the legal hinder I'll make you aware of the following rule differences:

- A legally served ball that travels between the legs of the server's partner is NOT an automatic "hinder serve". Remember that this call is based on movement by the serving side. The penalties are the same as the screen serve.

- During a rally if a player on the serving side creates a hinder called by the referee, the serving side starts the ensuing service with a fault, except if the hinder was on the serve. I'm a firm believer that this "hinder fault" rule should be adopted by three and four-wall handball.

- A player in his attempt to create a legal hinder is entitled to remain still until the last moment before moving to avoid being struck by his side's return. This privilege does NOT grant him immunity from the rules governing avoidable hinders (see rule 4.8).

In summary once you've played one-wall you'll notice that the hinders are actually quite similar to three and four-wall. The golden rule to remember is the side which has just struck the ball is entitled to stand still in front or aside of the opponent(s).