



How to Play Ringette

Ringette has a major advantage over hockey in that it is a team participation sport. It forces the passing of the ring across the blue lines to another player on the team. Basic Ringette rules states that the last player to touch the ring prior to the ring crossing the blue line may not touch the ring again in the next zone before another player has touched it. This encourages and enforces team play.

A maximum of six players per team are on the ice at any time; teams consist of a goaltender, two defensive players, two forwards, and one centre.

Zone Play – Any 3 In The deep offensive and defensive zones from behind the goal net to the Free Play Line – the thin red line at the top of the face off circles. Within these deep offensive and defensive zones, each team is allowed only three skaters (not including the goalie) while at full strength. If a team has more than one penalty they are only permitted two skaters in their deep defensive zone.

The free play line or Ringette line is the red line running across the ice at the top of the free pass circles in each end of the ring. On offence, the two forwards and the center usually play in the restricted area and on defence; the two defensive players and the center usually are defending their end.

The Game begins much like soccer with the Visiting team being awarded a Free Pass in the Centre Ice Free Pass Circle; known in hockey or lacrosse as face-off circles. Free Passes are also ringette's way of restarting games after penalties, violations, goals or any other stoppage of the game such as when two players from opposite teams have joint control of the ring and it becomes frozen or immovable.

Free Passes in ringette are like free kicks or throw-ins in soccer, like throw-ins in basketball, like the quick restart in lacrosse after a violation, or the "face-off" of hockey. The ring is placed in the Free Pass Circle; in the side nearest their own goal, there are two blue placement dots inside each of the five free pass circles. The referee determines which free pass circle is to be used and which team has the free pass. One player takes possession and on the whistle has five seconds to either shoot or pass to a teammate; they must pass it completely out of the circle; they cannot skate past the middle of the circle or out of the circle with the ring. Failure to move the ring results in the free pass being given to the other team. During these five seconds, no other player is allowed in the Free Pass circle. A shot on goal is permitted during a Free Pass.

Joint Control Joint possession of the ring, or as the rulebook calls it, "Joint Control," is when two or more opposing players place their sticks in the ring and it becomes immovable. The concept of the rule is very simple. The ring is awarded to the team gaining second control. That simply means the ring is awarded to the team that did not initially control it when that struggle for possession began. If the player first in control momentarily removes her stick from the ring, allowing an opponent to gain control and then takes joint control again, the ring is still awarded to the team that gained second control from the start of that play. The reason for the rule is very simple. Possession of the ring in ringette is so important and by the very nature of the stick inside the ring, it is very difficult to "take the ring away" from a player in possession. The rule exists to encourage and reward defensive teams to attempt to gain possession.



Blue Line Violation A player cannot carry the ring over a Blue Line in either direction. The ring must be passed over the blue line to another teammate. That teammate is permitted to skate ahead of the ring carrier and already be across the Blue Line before the ring crosses it. This is quite different from hockey where the puck must cross the Blue Line before any offensive player does. Ringette does not have an 'offside' call.

The requirement to pass the ring over the blue line eliminates the situation where one player can carry the ring from one end to the other. It also is one of the keys to ringette being such a "Team Game."

Goal Crease If the ring lands in or on the crease, the only player who can touch it is the goalie. The goalie usually picks up the ring and throws it like a Frisbee to a teammate. The Goalie may not throw the ring beyond the Blue Line. If the Goalie does, then the offensive team regains possession on a Free Pass back inside the Goalie's deep defensive zone. The goalie has five seconds to pass it out of her crease. She may also choose to hit it with her stick or skate, instead of picking it up and throwing it.

Neither team can enter the goal crease, not even their stick. If the team with the ring enters the crease then they lose possession. If the defensive team loses the ring then the offensive team gains the ring on a Free Pass in the attacking zone. If the offensive team loses the ring, play is restarted with a Goalie Ring.

Goalie Ring Replaces a defensive zone Free Pass on all violations by the offensive team inside their offensive zone. On a Goalie Ring, the goalie is given five seconds to throw the ring towards a teammate after the referee blows the whistle to signify restarting of play. The main difference between the Goalie Ring and a normal Free Pass is speed of restarting the game as play is not held up for player substitution (you can't change players on a goalie ring). This adds much to the speed and excitement of the game.

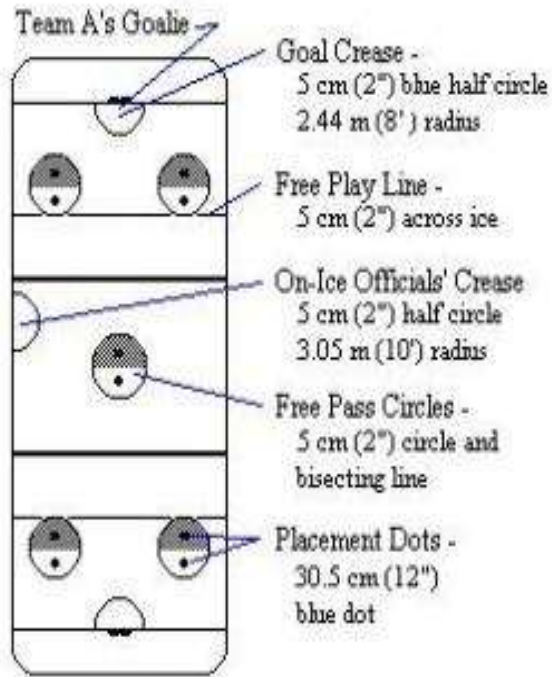
Two Blue Line Pass There is no icing in Ringette, but there is a two-line Pass, called slightly different than in hockey. The feet have nothing to do with it and there is no Center Ice Red Line in Ringette. When the ring crosses both blue lines, untouched, no player from the team that put it there can touch the ring until one of their opponents does first. For example, an offensive two-line pass, no member of the offensive team can touch it before the defence gets control of the ring. Touching it prematurely is a violation that sends the ring all the way back to the zone it originally was in for a Free Pass by the non-offending team.

Penalties similar to hockey exist for various infractions. Most penalties in Ringette are unintentional and are the result of accidentally running into someone when trying to stop or when checking the ring carrier and missing the opponent's stick. Rough intentional body contact of any type is not allowed and the penalty for that is much more severe. However, like basketball and soccer, bodies sometimes accidentally collide.

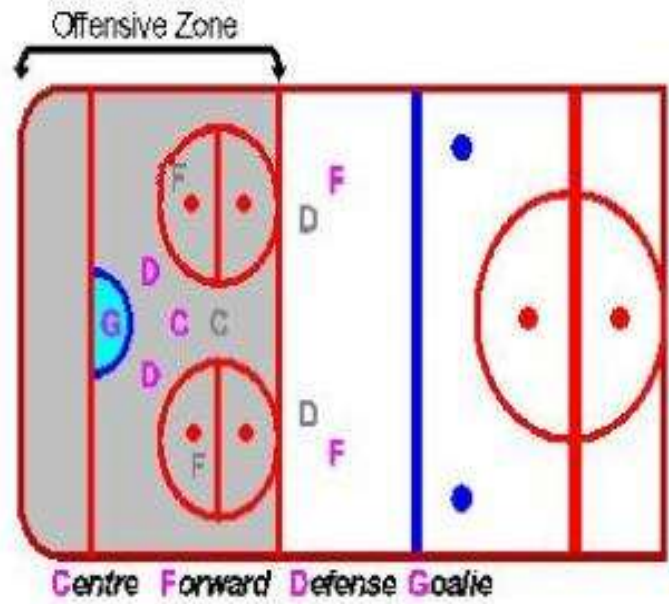
Violations similar to basketball are also called for various infractions, such as skating over the blue line in possession of the ring or unintentionally shooting or holding the ring out of play, or as detailed above, in the two-line pass.

At no time can a player raise the playing end of the stick above the shoulder height – this includes celebrating a goal for safety reasons and failure to comply will result in a high sticking penalty.

Team A's Deep Defensive Zone



Team A's Deep Offensive Zone



Thanks to Ringette Canada for the above illustration.

RINGETTE AGE DIVISIONS

U6 (Pre-Bunny) - 5 years and under

U9 (Bunny) - 6 & 7 years, 8 (w/no exp)

U10 (Novice) - 8 & 9 years

U12 (Petite) - 10 & 11 years

U14 (Tween) - 12 & 13 years

U16 (Junior) - 14 & 15 years

U19 (Belle) - 16, 17 & 18 years

Open (AA only) - 19 years and over

Intermediate - 21 years and over

Deb - 23 years and under

Masters - 30 years and over