

Q) With red attacking white's (Pride's) goal, a long and powerful shot was taken. The Pride goalkeeper took a step or two back beyond his goal line, then came forward one step to catch the high ball with his hands out in front of him. His front foot was on the goal line and his back foot was well behind the goal line, but the ball was not across the goal line. A frantic red parent screamed excitedly to the referee that the goalkeeper's foot was behind the line. Should this have counted as a goal?

A) No. It sounds to me as if the Pride goalkeeper was well trained in his position. In soccer, unlike many other sports, we are only concerned with the position of the ball itself. The players' body positions are irrelevant in determining if a ball has crossed the goal line or the touchline (sideline). It is also relevant to understand that the lines of the field are included in the areas which they define. In other words, unlike in basketball, the line is not "out". Further, the ball is not deemed to have crossed the line until the entire width of the ball has fully crossed the entire width of the line. Since the lines are treated as "planes", there is no differentiation between a ball crossing a line in the air or on the ground. Sometimes, a player will bend a corner kick such that it crosses the plane of the goal line, but bends back into play before reaching its target. That's one reason why the Assistant Referee is positioned right on the goal line in corner kick situations to judge if the ball breaks the plane.