

2022



INTERNATIONAL LAWS OF THE GAME

2022 EDITION

The International Rugby League (IRL) is responsible for the development of the International Laws of the Game. The International Laws of the Game refer to the 13-a-side version of the game. The New Zealand Rugby League (NZRL) 2022 edition of the International Laws of the Game includes local variations approved by the RLIF to meet the needs and requirements of the domestic game in New Zealand. All players, match officials, coaches and administrators must adhere to this version for matches played in New Zealand. These laws apply to ages 13 years and above, including all games played under the jurisdiction of NZRL, excluding internationals.

2022 RUGBY LEAGUE LAWS OF THE GAME INTERNATIONAL LEVEL WITH NZRL VARIATIONS AND NOTES ON THE LAWS.

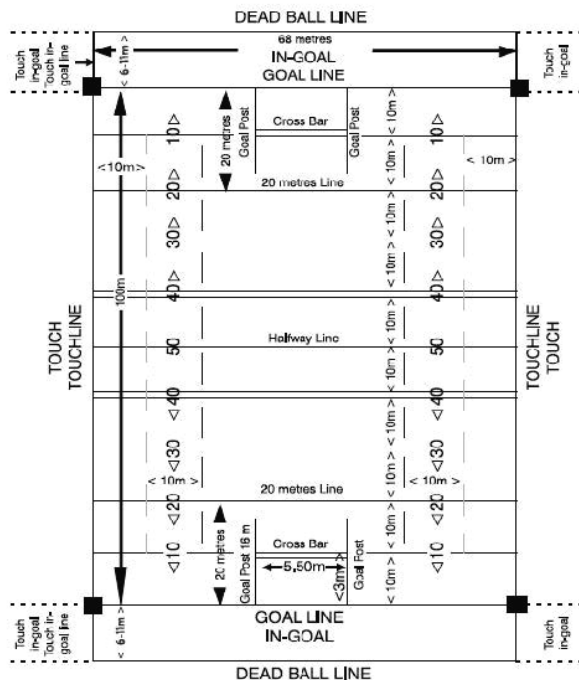
(Approved by the New Zealand Rugby League)

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SECTION 1



THE PLAYING FIELD

The PLAN and markings thereon and the Notes relating thereto are part of these Laws.



Section 1. The Playing Field (Continued)

NOTES:-

1. The Touch Lines are in Touch, the Touch in-Goal lines are Touch in-Goal, the Goal Lines are in the In-Goal area and the Dead Ball Line is beyond In-Goal.
2.  indicates a corner post (see Glossary) placed at the intersection of each goal line and touch line. A corner post is in touch in-goal. Touch Judges should at all times ensure that corner posts are correctly positioned.
3. The goal posts are considered to extend indefinitely upwards. It is recommended that the bottom two metres of each upright be padded.  Shaped goal posts are permissible provided the relevant dimensions are observed.
4. For adult games the dimensions should be as near maximum as possible to the dimensions stipulated.
5. The broken lines in the PLAN shall consist of marks or dots on the ground not more than 2 metres apart. All transverse lines must be marked across the full width of the field.
6. One unbroken red line, 15cm in width, across the field shall be used to mark each of the two 40m lines at either end of the field.

SECTION 2

GLOSSARY

"He is used throughout this Rule Book for "he/she" or "his/her".

The terms set out below shall have the meanings assigned to them.

ACCIDENTAL STRIKE	When a ball strikes a player who makes no attempt to play at the ball.
ADVANTAGE	Allowing the advantage means allowing play to proceed if it is to the advantage of the team which has not committed an offence or infringement.
ATTACKING TEAM	Is the team which at the time has possession of the ball.
BACK	As applied to a player means one who is not taking part in the scrum.
BALL BACK	Means when the ball is kicked directly into touch on the full in general play, in a forward direction.
BEHIND	When applied to a player means, unless otherwise stated, that both feet are behind the position in question. Similarly, "in front" implies "with both feet". When applied to a position on the field of play, "behind" means nearer to one's own goal line than the point in question. Similarly, "in front of" means nearer to one's opponents' goal line.
BLIND SIDE	Means the side of the scrum or of the play-the-ball nearer to touch (i.e. open side).
CHARGING-DOWN	Is blocking the path of the ball with hands, arm or body as it rises from an opponent's kick.
CONVERTING A TRY	Is the act of kicking a goal following the scoring of a try.
CORNER POST	Is a post placed at the intersection of each touch line and goalline. The post shall be of non-rigid material and shall be not less than 1.25m. high.
DEAD BALL	Means that the ball is out of play.
DEFENDING TEAM	Is the team which at the time does not have possession of the ball
DIFFERENTIAL PENALTY	A penalty for SELECT scrum infringements (specified in Section 13Note 1) , and differs in one respect from a Penalty Kick in that a goal cannot be scored from it.
DROP GOAL	Sometimes referred to as a Field Goal, is a goal scored by propelling the ball on the full, over the crossbar, by drop kicking it.
DROP KICK	Is a kick whereby the ball is dropped from the hands (or hand)and is kicked immediately it rebounds from the ground.
DROP-OUT	Means a drop kick from the centre of the goal line or from the centre of the 20m line when bringing the ball back into play.
DUMMY	Is the pretense of passing or otherwise releasing the ball while still retaining possession of it.
FIELD OF PLAY	Is the area bounded by, but not including, the touch lines and goal lines.

Section 2. Glossary (Continued)

FORWARD	Means in a direction towards the opponents' dead ball line. As applied to a player it means one who is at the time packing down in the scrum.
FORWARD PASS	Is a throw towards the opponents' dead ball line (see Section 10).
FOUL PLAY	Refers to the types of Misconduct specified in Section 15 — Law 1(a) (b) (c), (d), (k), (l) and (m).
FREE KICK	Is the kick awarded to a team which kicks into touch from a penalty kick. The kick is taken 10 metres in from touch opposite the point of entry into touch and the ball may be kicked in any manner in any direction. A goal cannot be scored from it, nor can ground be gained by only kicking into touch on the full.
FULL TIME	Means the end of the game.
GENERAL PLAY	Refers to all aspects of play after a match has been started or re-started by a Place Kick, Drop-Out, Penalty Kick, Free Kick, Scrum, 20m re-start or tap kick from a successful 40/20.
GOAL	See Section 6.
GROUNDING THE BALL	Means (a) placing the ball on the ground with hand or hands or (b) exerting a downward pressure on the ball with hand or arm, the ball itself being on the ground or (c) dropping on the ball and covering it with the front part of the body above the waist and below the neck, the ball itself being on the ground.
HALF TIME	Means the end of the first half of the game.
HANDOVER	Is the surrendering of the ball to the opposition after a team has been tackled the statutory number of successive times
HEEL	Is when a player propels the ball behind him with the sole or heel of his foot.
HOOK	Is the act of the hooker when he strikes with a foot for the ball in the scrum.
IN-GOAL	See Plan (Section 1).
IN POSSESSION	Means to be holding or carrying the ball.
KICK	Means making contact with the ball with any part of the leg (except the heel) from knee to toe inclusive.
KICK OFF	See Section 8.
KNOCK-ON	Means to knock the ball forward towards the opponents' deadball line with hand or arm while playing at the ball.
LOOSE ARM	Is an offence by the hooker if he packs with one arm loose in the scrum.
LOOSE BALL	Is when during play-the-ball is not held by a player and not being scrummaged.

Section 2. Glossary (Continued)

LOOSE HEAD	Refers to the front row forward in the scrum who is nearest to the referee.
MARK	Is the point at which a penalty kick or free kick is awarded or a scrum is formed.
MUTUAL INFRINGEMENT	Refers to any occurrence during a match which is not already provided for in the Laws of the Game and whereby play is irregularly affected and fault cannot be attributed to either team. see Section 16 Law 8.1 (e) and (f).
OBSTRUCTION	Is the illegal act of impeding an opponent who does not have the ball.
OFFSIDE	As applied to a player means that he is temporarily out of play and may be penalised if he joins in the game (see Section 14.)
ON THE FULL	Means that a player is not offside.
OPTIONAL KICK	Means the ball is kicked over a given line without first bouncing.
OPEN SIDE	Is the kick to be taken from the 20m re-start. The kick can be taken in any manner and kicked in any direction. It is in play from the moment it is kicked.
OUT OF PLAY	Means the side of the scrum or the play-the-ball further from touch (i.e. Blind Side).
PACK	Refers to a player out of play at a restart of play
PASS	Refers collectively to the forwards of any one team. To pack down means to form a scrum.
PENALISE	Is a throw of the ball from one player to another.
PENALTY KICK	Is to award a penalty kick against an offending player.
PLACE KICK	See Section 13.
PLAYING AREA	Is to kick the ball after it has been placed on the ground or approved tee for that purpose.
PLAYING FIELD	Is the area enclosed by the fence, or other such line of demarcation, which prevents the encroachment of spectators.
PLAY-THE-BALL	Is the area bounded by, but not including, the touch lines and dead ball lines.
PROP	Is the act of bringing the ball into play after a tackle. (See Section 11).
PUNT	Is the front row forward in each team nearest to the halfback who is putting the ball into the scrum.
PUT-IN (also known as FEEDING THE SCRUM)	Is a kick whereby the ball is dropped from the hand or hands and is kicked before it touches the ground.
REBOUND	Is the rolling of the ball into the scrum.
RICOCHET	See Accidental Strike.
RUCK	See Accidental Strike.
	Is the area, at the play-the-ball, between the player playing the ball and the marker.

Section 2. Glossary (Continued)

SCRUM	Or Scrummage or Scrimmage (see Section 12). Where a team loses the advantages of the "Loose Head" and "Put- in" the scrum is said to be awarded against that team.
SHOULDER CHARGE	Is where a defender, without attempting to tackle, grab or hold the ball-carrier (or any opposing player) using the arms or hands, makes direct physical contact with the shoulder or the upper arm. (Refer Section 15)
SIN BIN	A designated place where a period of temporary suspension is served.
STRADDLE (STRADDLING)	Means to have any part of the body on the ground in the playing field and any part of the body on the ground on, or over, the dead ball line, touch in-goal line or touch line.
STRIKE	As applied to the foot means to attempt to secure possession of the ball in a scrum.
SURRENDER (SURRENDER TACKLE)	Is when the ball-carrier surrenders their run in, or at, the defensive line
TACKLE	See Section 11.
TAP KICK	Making contact with the ball with any part of the leg (except the heel) from knee to toe inclusive; ground/territory cannot be gained from such a kick.
TOUCH DOWN	Is the grounding of the ball by a defending player in his own in-goal.
TOUCH IN-GOAL	See Section 9.
TRY	See Section 6.
UPRIGHT	Is where the player in possession is effectively tackled without being brought to the ground (see Section 11).
TACKLE	Is where the player in possession voluntarily stops play when not effectively tackled. (See Section 11).
VOLUNTARY TACKLE	
ZERO TACKLE	Where a breach occurs and possession changes hands, the following tackle will be a zero tackle notwithstanding that the team gaining possession may have gained a territorial advantage.
40/20	When a kick in general play and from inside a team's 40 metre zone, finds touch (other than on the full) inside the opposition's 20 metre zone, the resulting tap kick will take place 20m in from where the ball first crossed the touch line and no closer than 10 metres to the goal line.

NOTES

"He" is used for "he/she" or "his/her"

SECTION 3

THE BALL

Shape and Construction

1. The game shall be played with an oval air-inflated ball the outer casing of which shall be of leather or other material approved by the New Zealand Rugby League Board. Nothing shall be used in its construction which might prove dangerous to the players.

Size and Weight

2. The dimensions of the ball shall be those approved by the New Zealand Rugby League.

Ball deflated

3. The Referee shall blow his whistle immediately he notices that the size and shape of the ball no longer comply with the Laws of the Game.

NOTES

Colour of the Ball

1. *In senior competitions the ball shall be light in colour so that it can be more easily seen by spectators.*

Ball bursts

2. *If the ball bursts as a player is taking a place kick at goal he should be allowed another kick. If a player grounds the ball for a try and then it is noticed that the ball has burst, the try should be allowed. Otherwise, if the ball bursts, play is stopped, the ball is replaced and a scrum is formed to re-start play at the point where the ball bursts (except after the fifth play-the-ball). The team in possession or last in possession shall have the loose head and the put-in.*

SECTION 4

THE PLAYER AND PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

13-a side

Interchanges

Number and Naming of Players

1. The game shall be played by two teams each consisting of not more than thirteen players on the field at any one time.
2. (a) Each team may nominate a maximum of four Interchange players. Each team may utilise Interchange players during the course of a match provided that the names of the Interchange players are made known to the Referee before the commencement of the match. Interchanges will only be affected after a player has left the field. The replacement takes the field immediately in an onside position with the permission of a Touch Judge/Interchange Official. League Governing bodies may choose to adopt either unlimited or limited Interchange rules for individual competitions.
(b) When a player is bleeding excessively, the Referee shall direct him to either leave the field for attention or seek medical attention on-field. Should the player be replaced as a result of such bleeding, then his replacement shall count as one of the Interchanges referred to in Law 2 (a).
3. For ease of identification, players' clothing must bear the numbers 1 to 13 with additional numbers for the substitutes. The numbers relate to the positions of the players in their respective teams, these positions being referred to by name and number as set out hereunder.

Backs	Forwards
(1) Full Back	(8) Prop
(2) Right Wing Threequarter	(9) Hooker
(3) Right Centre Threequarter	(10) Front Row Forward
(4) Left Centre Threequarter	(11) Second Row Forward
(5) Left Wing Threequarter	(12) Second Row Forward
(6) Stand-off Half or Five-eighth	(13) Lock Forward
(7) Halfback	

NOTES

- Minimum Number of Players** 1. The minimum number of players per team to start the match is 10. The minimum number allowed on the field in a match is 9. Should less than 9 players - currently participating in the match then, for safety reasons, the match shall be terminated. Current participants are players on the field and players who have been temporarily suspended (sin bin/ or being treated for a blood related injury). Dismissed players are not deemed as current participants.
- Interchanges** 2. A Player other than a player who is replacing an injured player who has left the field cannot be replaced during a play-the-ball except when the play has been stopped because of injury.
If an interchange is affected when a kick at goal is to be taken the interchange player shall not be allowed to take the kick.
- Interchange (Foul Play)** A "free" interchange is permitted if a player is fouled and injured by a player who is dismissed from the field, sin binned or placed on report. it applies only when the injured player is immediately replaced. should the injured player later return to the field, the interchange is then counted.

Section 4. The Players and Players' Equipment (continued)

Local use of Substitutes	The Law above applies to all matches involving teams from different countries. In view of the differing climates in which the game is played each League is permitted to operate its own system for its own games. The laws relating to the replacement of players apply also to any player who, arriving late for the game, wishes to join in the play after the game has started.
Late arrival	
Players' Equipment	<p>4. (a) A player shall not wear anything that might prove dangerous to other players.</p> <p>(b) A player's normal gear shall consist of a numbered jersey of distinctive colour and/or pattern, a pair of shorts, socks of distinctive colour and/or pattern and studded boots, moulded soles or shoes.</p> <p>(c) Protective clothing may be worn provided it contains nothing of a rigid or dangerous nature.</p>
Dangerous Equipment	<p>(d) The Referee shall order a player to remove any part of his equipment which might be considered dangerous (including, without limitation, non- approved spectacles, visible piercings, etc.) and shall not allow the player to take any further part in the game until the order is obeyed. The player shall retire from the playing field to remove the offending item if the start or re-start of the game would otherwise be delayed.</p>
Similar Colours	<p>(e) The colours of the jerseys worn by competing teams shall be easily distinguishable and, if, in the opinion of the Referee similarity between the jerseys might affect the proper conduct of the game he may, at his discretion, order either team to change jerseys in accordance with the rules governing the competition in which the game is played.</p>
Studs	<p>(f) Studs on boots or shoes shall be no less than 8mm diameter at the apex and, if made of metal, shall have rounded edges.</p> <p>(g) Referees will ask a player to cut their nails if they determine that any nails protrude from the fingers when palms are facing up or, if sharp when the Referee's palm makes light contact with the nails when checking length.</p>
Mouth Guards	<p>(h) Mouth guards are compulsory. All players must wear a mouth guard during play. These are not allowed to be shared. (Refer Page 11).</p>

NOTES

Inspect Equipment	4. (d) Referees should inspect players' equipment before the start of the game or delegate this duty to the Touch Judges. This does not relieve the player of the responsibility of ensuring that nothing of an offending nature is worn, e.g. rings, rigid shoulder pads, projecting eyelets or nails on football boots or dangerous studs.
Colours	<p>4. (e) Referees should inspect the colours to be worn by the teams before the players enter the field of play so that, if a change is necessary, the start of the game is not delayed.</p> <p>Clubs not wearing their registered colours should be reported to the appropriate authority by the Referee unless the reason for not so doing is self-evident or known beforehand.</p>

SECTION 5

MODE OF PLAY

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Object | 1. The object of the game shall be to ground the ball in the opponents' in-goal to score tries (see Section 6) and to kick the ball over the opponents' cross bar to score goals (see Section 6). |
| Start of Play | 2. The captains of the two teams shall toss a coin in the presence of the referee. The captain winning the toss shall decide to either kick off or choose which end of the field his team will defend. The losing captain shall take the other of the alternatives. |
| Mode of Play | 3. Once play has started any player who is inside or not out of play can run with the ball kick it in any direction and throw or knock it in any direction other than towards his opponents' dead ball line (See Section 10 for Knock-on and Forward Pass). |
| Tackling | 4. A player who during play is holding the ball may be tackled by an opposing player or players in order to prevent him from running with the ball or from kicking or passing it to one of his own team. (See Section 11 for Tackle). |
| Obstruction | 5. A player who is not holding the ball shall not be tackled or obstructed. (See Section 15). |

NOTES

- Shoulder Contact** 5. If two players are running side by side, near to and towards the ball, it is permissible for one to make contact with the other with the shoulder.

Shoulder Charge See Note, Section 15 point (k) page 38.

Mouth guard replacements If during the course of the match the Referee finds a player who is not wearing a mouth guard and does not have one in his possession (due to having it dislodged as a result of a tackle), the Referee shall direct him to leave the field and not be replaced. On obtaining a replacement mouth guard the player may re-enter the field of play after reporting to a Touch Judge. In the event of the player being unable to obtain a replacement mouth guard, he shall take no further part in the game, but may be replaced with that replacement counting as one of the interchanges.

During the course of the match, any player found not to have a mouth Guard in their mouth, but to have one in their possession (in their sock or pocket) will be penalized and sin binned for 10 minutes.

Referee's are advised to use common sense in enforcing this rule in regard to players approaching a scrum with a mouth guard in their hand or other such incidents where there is a break in play.

SECTION 6

SCORING - TRIES AND GOALS

Value

1. A try shall count four points.

Try and Goal

A conversion goal or a penalty goal shall count two points. A drop goal during play shall count one point. Two points will be awarded for a successful field goal kicked during general play from outside the opposition 40 metre line.

Deciding winners

2. (a) The game shall be won by the team scoring the greater number of points. If both teams score an equal number of points, or if both teams fail to score, then the game shall be drawn.
(b) **FINAL'S EXTRA TIME** League Governing bodies should set rules and regulations where extra time is required to determine a winner following a drawn match at the completion of normal time. A coin toss will take place prior to the commencement of extra time (refer S5, Page 11, Law 2).

Try – How scored

3. A try is scored when:-
(a) a player first grounds the ball in his opponents' in-goal, provided that he is not in touch or touch in-goal or on or over the dead ball line.
(b) opposing players simultaneously ground the ball in the in-goal area provided that the attacking player is not in touch or touch in-goal or on or over the dead ball line.
(c) a tackled player's momentum carries him into the opponents' in-goal where he grounds the ball even if the ball has first touched the ground in the field of play but provided that when the ball crosses the goal line the player is not in touch or touch in-goal or on or over the dead ball line.

Sliding try

NOTES

Picking up in in-goal

3. (a) *Picking up the ball is not grounding it and a player may pick up the ball in his opponents' in-goal in order to ground it in a more advantageous position.*

Ball on goal line

As the goal lines themselves are in-goal a try can be scored by an attacking player grounding the ball on the goal line, but not at the foot of the posts in the field of play.

Incorrectly grounding

When an attacking player fails to ground the ball correctly, play continues unless stopped for some other reason, e.g. a knock-on or the ball goes dead.

Release after grounding

A try should not be disallowed because the player who correctly grounds the ball fails to retain it.

Referee unsighted

The Referee should not disallow a try because he was not in a position to see the grounding of the ball.

Corner post

It is permissible for a player in possession to touch the corner post and not be deemed touch-in-goal provided he is not contacting any area or object outside the field of play

Section 6. Scoring – Tries and Goals (continued)

Penalty try	(d) The Referee may award a penalty try if, in his opinion, a try would have been scored but for the unfair play of the defending team. A penalty try is awarded between the goal posts irrespective of where the offence occurred.
Touching Referee/Others	(e) A player carrying the ball in their opponents in goal comes into contact with the Referee or a Touch Judge or an encroaching spectator in the opponents' in-goal and play is thereby irregularly affected and the Referee may award a try.
Position of Try	4. The Try is awarded:– (a) Where grounded if scored as in 3(a) and 3(b) above. (b) Where it first crosses the goal line if scored as in 3(c) above. (c) Between the posts if a penalty try. (d) Where contact took place if scored as in 3(e) above.
Referee – sole judge	5 Only the Referee may award a try but he may take into consideration advice given by the Touch Judges before arriving at his decision. He shall signal that a try has been scored by pointing to where the try has been awarded but should only do so after looking at the two Touch Judges to ensure they are not reporting a prior incident.
Goal – how scored	6. A goal is scored if the whole of the ball at any time during its flight passes on the full over the opponents' cross bar towards the dead ball line after being kicked by a player in any of these circumstances:– (a) by a place kick after a try has been scored and counts two points (b) by a place kick or a drop kick when a penalty kick has been awarded and counts two points.

NOTES

No try in scrum	<i>A try cannot be scored by grounding the ball when it is in the scrum.</i>
Boring through forwards	<i>A player may pick up the ball at the base of the scrum and bore through his own forwards to ground the ball for a try once the ball has emerged from the scrum.</i>
Diving through ruck	<i>If, in the process of scoring a try, an attacking player dives through the ruck or into a teammate, including the player who played the ball, and impacts on the defence, he will be penalised for an obstruction.</i>
Video Referee	5. <i>Where competitions include the appointment of a Video Referee, the Referee may seek advice to confirm a decision under that League's prescribed process.</i>
Ball blown back	6. <i>If, after passing completely over the cross-bar the ball is blown back, a goal is still allowed.</i>

Section 6. Scoring – Tries and Goals (continued)

Drop Goal	7. A drop goal is scored by a drop kick during general play from any position in the field of play and counts one point. Two points will be awarded for a successful drop goal kicked during general play from outside the opposition 40 metre line. A drop goal shall be awarded notwithstanding that the ball touches or has been touched in flight by an opposing player.
Where taken	8. A kick at goal after a try may be taken from any point on an imaginary line drawn parallel to the touch line in the field of play and through the point where the try was awarded. A kick at goal from a penalty kick may be taken from the mark or from any point on an imaginary line drawn from the mark towards the kicker's own goal line and parallel to the touch line.
Players' positions	9. When a kick at goal is being taken following a try, the opposing players shall stand outside the field of play. Players of the kicker's team must be behind the ball. When a kick at goal is being taken from a penalty kick, the opponents shall retire to their goal line or not less than 10 metres from the mark. (See Section 13).
Not to distract kicker	It is illegal to attempt to distract the attention of a player who is kicking at goal.
Goal Post(s)	10. For the purpose of judging a kick at goal, the goal posts are assumed to extend indefinitely upwards.

NOTES

No goal from kick off, etc.	7. A goal cannot be scored from a kick off, drop-out, a free kick or a differential penalty.
Advise where to place the ball	8. A Referee should ensure that a kick at goal is taken from the correct position by advising the kicker beforehand. If the Referee's advice is ignored by the kicker no goal shall be allowed and the kick shall not be retaken.
Wasting time	If a player wastes time when kicking at goal, the Referee may caution him or, in an extreme case, dismiss him. He should not cancel the kick but should allow extra time to compensate for time lost.
Colleague holds ball if necessary	9. (a) When a kick at goal is being taken it is permissible for a teammate of the kicker to hold the ball in position by placing a hand on it. This may be necessary if there is a strong wind or the ground is extremely hard.
Authorised	9. (b) Kicking tees are permitted for starts of play, re-starts after scoring and attempts at goal

Section 6. Scoring – Tries and Goals (continued)

- Judging kicks at goal** 11. If a Touch Judge is of the opinion that a goal has been scored he shall raise his flag above his head. If the kick is unsuccessful he shall wave his flag in front of him and below the waist. If there is no disagreement between the Touch Judges their decision shall be accepted. In the event of disagreement, the Referee shall decide.

NOTES

- Accepting Touch Judge's decision** 11. If the ball passes near to one upright, the Touch Judge assigned to that upright is in the better position of the two to decide whether the ball has passed inside or outside the post and, in the event of disagreement, the Referee should be more inclined to accept this particular Touch Judge's decision.
- A Touch Judge should not necessarily remain stationary when the ball is in flight. He should move sufficiently to ensure that at all times he has a clear view of the ball.*
- Pretending to kick at goal** It shall be misconduct for a player to pretend to kick at goal from a penalty kick and then deliberately kick it elsewhere. Such misconduct shall incur a penalty. Having informed the Referee of his intention to kick at goal from an awarded penalty kick the kicker shall not do otherwise.
- Penalty Goal Touched in Flight** 6. A Penalty Goal or Conversion to be awarded notwithstanding (in spite of) that the ball touches or has been touched in flight by a Player from the non-kicking team before travelling over the posts.
- Non-Kicking team At Conversion** 9. Players from the non-kicking team must remain outside the field of play until the Touch Judges have made their decision for a conversion kick. Players from the non-kicking team cannot interfere with, run towards or distract the attention of the kicker prior to the conversion being taken.

SECTION 7

TIMEKEEPING

Length of game Interval

1. The game shall normally be of eighty minutes duration.
At half time there shall be an interval of five minutes but this may be extended or reduced.

Changing ends

2. A team shall defend one in-goal for the first half of the game and then change ends for the second half.

End of play

3. If time expires in either half when the ball is out of play or a player in possession has been tackled and the ball has not been played the Referee shall immediately blow his whistle to terminate play. If the ball is in play when time expires, the Referee shall terminate play when next the ball goes out of play or a player in possession is tackled but time shall be extended to allow a penalty kick or a kick at goal to be taken in which case the half is terminated when next the ball goes out of play or a tackle is effected, unless a further penalty is awarded in which case time is again extended for the kick to be taken.

NOTES

Shortening length of game

1. *The duration of the game may be reduced by mutual agreement and if permitted by the rules governing the competition in which the game is played.*

Altering interval

Clubs wishing to alter the length of the interval should apply to the appropriate authority who will then instruct the Referee accordingly.

In adverse weather conditions it may sometimes be advisable to reduce or dispense with the half time interval.

Using Timekeeper

3. *A timekeeper may be employed to signal half time and full time, in which case the referee on receiving the timekeeper's signal, terminates the half in the manner described above.*

A timekeeper may also assist the Referee in determining the end of a player's temporary suspension.

Allow second kick

If the ball is kicked into touch from a penalty the non-offending side should be allowed full advantage of the penalty awarded by extending time to allow play to be resumed with the free kick permitted by the Laws relating to the Penalty. (See Section 13).

Scrum

If a scrum has been set and fed before time expires play shall continue until a player in possession is tackled or the ball goes out of play.

Time off for cautions

Where time off applies, time should be taken off in the event of a caution being delivered to a player/players.

Section 7. Timekeeping (continued)

Extra time

4. Extra time shall be added to each half to compensate for time wasted or lost from any cause. The Referee shall be the sole judge of extra time except where these duties have been delegated to a timekeeper. In the event of extra time being played, an additional two interchanges will be added to the team's interchanges not already used at the conclusion of normal time. To protect player safety the maximum length a game may be played is 25% longer than its allocated time i.e. 80 minute game can last no longer than 100 minutes. 60 minute games can last no longer than 75 minutes.

Recommencing play after injury

5. (a) If the continuance of play endangers an injured player, the Referee may stop the game. If, when the game is stopped, a player is in possession of the ball the game shall be recommenced by that player playing-the-ball.
- (b) If a player in possession is injured in a tackle and unable to play-the-ball and play has been stopped, play shall be resumed by a colleague playing the ball at the point where the injured player was tackled.
- (c) If a player in possession is injured in a tackle and unable to play-the-ball the Referee may without stopping the game, provided he is satisfied that continuance of play would not endanger the injured player, direct a colleague of the injured player to play-the-ball at a point five metres in-field from the point where the player was injured.
- (d) If a player in possession is injured, prior to a tackle being affected (and maintains possession of the ball) and is unable to play-the-ball or play on the Referee should stop play. Play shall be resumed by a colleague playing the ball at the point where the player was injured. In these circumstances this play-the-ball will be included in the tackle count. If this occurs after the fifth play-the-ball, a handover will occur at the same mark.

NOTES

Signal extra time

4. If a timekeeper is employed, the referee shall signal that extra time is being allowed by raising both arms whereupon the timekeeper stops his watch and starts it again when the Referee waves one arm above his head to signal play is about to recommence.

Reduce stoppages

5. The Referee should endeavour to reduce stoppage to a minimum. Injured players should be removed from the playing field to receive attention as quickly as possible, taking into account the gravity and nature of the injury. Treatment to an injured player, by not more than one attendant, may be permitted while play proceeds if, in the opinion of the Referee, such treatment is not likely to interfere with play.

The attendant shall not place anything on the ground likely to interfere with play, or carry anything of a rigid nature likely to cause injury in the event of a rapid switch in play causing an unforeseen collision.

SECTION 8

THE KICK OFF AND DROP-OUT

Kick off

1. The kick off is a place kick from the centre of the halfway line.

The captains of the two teams shall toss a coin in the presence of the referee. The captain winning the toss shall decide to either kick off or choose which end of the field his team will defend. The losing captain shall take the other of the two alternatives.

When points have been scored, the team against which the points have been scored shall kick off to re-start the game. The ball must travel 10 metres in a forward direction. If the ball is touched before travelling over the 10 metre mark either on the full or along the ground the non offending side will receive a penalty on the centre of the halfway line. A scrum will be awarded to the kicking team when finding touch other than on the full. It should be noted that the law applies to goal line drop out and 20 metre drop out restarts.

Re-starting play at 20m – with an optional kick (i.e. any type of kick)

2. The game is re-started with an optional kick from the centre of the 20m line if:

- (a) A attacking player last touches the ball before it goes out of play over the dead ball line or into touch in-goal except from a penalty kick (see Law 3), or from a kick off from the centre of the halfway line. (see 4(g) and 6(b) below).
- (b) A player infringes in an opponents in-goal area. In the event of a deliberate breach by an attacking player a penalty kick is awarded 10 metres in the field of play in line with where the breach was committed. (See Section 13.)
- (c) a player in their in-goal, takes a kick in general play from an opponent on the full.

The ball may be kicked in any manner and in any direction and is immediately in play. Opposing players shall retire ten metres from the 20m line and shall not advance until the ball has been kicked. Attacking players shall not advance in front of the ball before it is kicked. Any deliberate offence by either team shall incur a penalty to be awarded at the centre of the 20m line.

The initial tackle affected on the team taking the 20 metre optional kick re-start shall be a zero tackle.

NOTES

V.I.P kicks offs

2. If a person other than a player is invited to 'kick off', the ball after being kicked shall be brought back to the centre of the halfway line and the game shall then commence in the normal way as described above.

Section 8. The Kick off and Drop-out (continued)

– with drop-out after unsuccessful penalty

Drop-out from Goal line

Ball caught in-goal

3. If the ball goes dead in the opponents' in-goal from a penalty kick (not necessarily a kick at goal) the game is re-started with a drop-out by a defending player from the centre of his own 20m line.
4. The game is re-started with a drop-out by a defending player Goal from the centre of his goal line if:
 - (a) a player in his own in goal last touches the ball before it goes over the dead ball line or into touch in-goal.
 - (b) a player in his own in goal accidentally infringes in the in-goal area.
 - (c) a player in his own in goal intentionally grounds the ball in their own in-goal area.
 - (d) a player in his own in goal in possession is tackled in the in-goal area.
 - (e) a player in his own in goal kicks the ball into touch on the full from his own in-goal.
 - (f) a player in his own in goal kicks or passes the ball in his own in-goal and the ball accidentally strikes an opponent and goes into touch in-goal or over the dead ball line.
 - (g) the ball goes over the dead ball line or into touch in-goal other than on the full from a kick off from the centre of the halfway line
 - (h) the ball, in general play, is made dead by a player straddling their own dead ball line or touch in-goal line, other than a ball being caught on the full from a kick in general play.
 - (i) The ball or defending player carrying the ball touches the Referee, a Touch Judge or an encroaching spectator in the in-goal area and play is thereby irregularly affected.
5. See Law 2(c) of this Section re ball caught on the full in-goal before being made 'dead in-goal'.

NOTES

Intentional breach In-goal

Ball Dead

4. (b) If a player in his in-goal is penalised for an intentional breach of the law, the penalty is awarded in the field of play, 10 metres from the goal line and opposite where the breach occurred. (See Section 13, para 1).

For the ball to be deemed "dead" (for the purpose of ruling a goal line drop-out or 20m optional re-start) it must first touch the ground, or an object on, or over, the dead ball or touch in-goal lines.

Section 8. The Kick off and Drop-out (continued)

Offences incurring penalties – kicker

6. A player who kicks off or drops-out shall be penalised if he:-
- (a) advances in front of the appropriate line before kicking the ball.
 - (b) kicks the ball on the full over the touch line, touch in-goal, or over the dead ball line.
 - (c) kicks the ball so that it fails to travel at least ten metres forward in the playing field.
 - (d) kicks the ball other than in the prescribed manner.

– other players

7. Any other player shall be penalised if he:-
- (a) willfully touches the ball from a kick off or drop-out before it has travelled ten metres forward in the field of play.
 - (b) runs in front of one of his own team who is kicking off or dropping out.
 - (c) approaches nearer than ten metres to the line from which the kick is being taken when an opponent is kicking off or dropping out.

Penalties – where taken

8. A penalty kick resulting from an offence at the kick off shall be taken from the centre of the halfway line.

Any penalty kick arising from the re-starting of play from the 20 metre line shall be taken from the centre of that line.

A penalty kick resulting from any offence at the drop-out from between the posts shall be taken from the centre of the line drawn parallel to and ten metres from the goal line.

NOTES

Players not retiring 10m

6. (a) *If a kick to start or re-start play is taken quickly and the opposing players have not had adequate opportunity to retire ten metres, they may be penalised if they willfully interfere with play before the ball travels ten metres forward. If such interference is accidental a scrum shall be formed but if the offending player has had adequate opportunity to retire ten metres his offence must be assumed to be deliberate.*

Ball hits post

- (b) *Hitting the post or cross bar in flight does not negate the breach*

Mutual Infringement

Following a kick off, goal line drop-out, 20m optional restart or 20m drop-out if a mutual infringement has occurred, the Referee shall re-start play by returning to the point where the kick off, Goal line drop, 20m optional restart or 20m drop-out was taken and ruling that the kick off, drop out, 20m optional restart or 20m drop-out be retaken.

SECTION 9

TOUCH AND TOUCH IN GOAL

Ball in touch	1. The ball is in touch when it or a player in contact with it touches the touch line or the ground beyond the touch line or any object on or outside the touch line except when a player, tackled in the field of play, steps into touch as he regains his feet in which case he shall play-the-ball in the field of play.
Tackled player in touch on rising	
Jumping player knocks ball back	The ball is in touch if a player jumps from touch and while off the ground touches the ball. The ball is not in touch if during flight it crosses the touch line but is knocked back by a player who is off the ground after jumping from the field of play.
Touch in-goal	2. The ball is touch-in-goal when it touches the corner post, in-goal line, or any object on or outside the touch in-goal line, however, if a player (whether in possession of the ball or not) touches the corner post it will not be deemed as touch in-goal unless any part of their body has made contact with the touch-in-goal line, or the ground (or an object) beyond the touch-in-goal line.
Points of Entry	3. When a ball has entered touch or touch in-goal, the point of entry shall be taken as the point at which the ball first crossed the touch or touch in-goal line.
Rebound into Touch	4. If the ball is kicked and rebounds off an opposition player in a forward direction (except from in-goal – Section 8 No.4 (e) and it goes forward into touch on the full, play will restart with a play-the-ball by the non-offending team. The position of the play the ball will be 20 metres from the touchline and no closer than 10 metres from a goal line. The referee will give 'reasonable' time to restart play. – (see Section 12).
Touch from Penalty	5. If the ball is kicked into touch from a penalty kick the game is re-started by a free kick ten metres in-field opposite the point of entry into touch. (see Section 13).
Play the ball on '20'	6. Where play is stopped because the ball, or a player in possession of the ball has entered touch in general play, other than a restart (kick off, goal line drop-out, 20 metre drop out or 20 metres optional restart), a 40/20, play will restart with a play-the-ball by the non-offending team. The position of the play the ball will be 20 metres from the touchline and no closer than 10 metres from a goal line. The Referee will give 'reasonable' time to restart play. – (see Section 12).
	7. A player who does not deliberately play at the ball (eg. ricochet or rebound) will not be disadvantaged by a consequent re-start of play when the ball has gone dead or into touch.
40/20 rule	8. The tap kick may only be taken when the Referee blows his whistle to restart play. Prior to blowing the whistle the Referees will give the defending team a 'reasonable time' to get into position. This will only occur when all match officials are in position and ready to officiate. (refer Glossary Page 7)

NOTES

Player not "object"	1 and 2. A player is not considered to be an "object". For example, the ball is not in touch when the player in possession, himself being in the field of play, is in contact with another player who is in touch.
Ball Dead	1. Where the ball which is stationary in the field of play or the in-goal area comes in contact with a player in touch, touch in-goal or over the dead ball line, the ball is deemed to have been made dead by that player. Should the ball, whilst in general play, be made dead by a player straddling, or over, their own dead ball line or touch in-goal line, play will re-start with a goal line drop-out (S8, Law 4)(Page 19).
Dead Ball line re-starts	2. A corner post placed at the intersection of a touch line and a goal line is in touch in-goal. It is a duty of a touch judge to replace a corner post which is displaced during the game.
Corner post touch in-goal	3. See Section 8. No.4 (e) in respect of kicking into touch on the full from in-goal.
Points of entry	

SECTION 10

KNOCK-ON AND FORWARD PASS

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Deliberate | 1. A player shall be penalised if he deliberately knocks on or passes forward. |
| Accidental | 2. If, after knocking-on accidentally, the player knocking-on regains or kicks the ball before it touches the ground, a goal post, cross bar or an opponent, then play shall be allowed to proceed. Otherwise play shall stop and a scrum shall be formed except after the fifth play-the-ball. |
| Charge-down | 3. To charge-down a kick is permissible and is not a knock-on. |
| Heading the ball | 4. It is illegal to head the ball in a forward direction. |

NOTES

- | | |
|---|---|
| Direction of Pass | 1. <i>The direction of a pass is relative to the player making it and not to the actual path relative to the ground. A player running towards his opponents' goal line may throw the ball towards a colleague who is behind him but because of the thrower's own momentum the ball travels forward relative to the ground. This is not a forward pass as the thrower has not passed the ball forward in relation to himself. This is particularly noticeable when a running player makes a high, lobbed pass.</i> |
| Scrum for Forward Pass | <i>A forward pass in a passing movement is invariably caused by misjudgement and is rarely a deliberate offence. Play is re-started with a scrum after an accidental infringement.</i> |
| Penalty for some forward passes | <i>If the Referee is of the opinion that a player in giving a forward pass must have been well aware that the catcher was in front of him then the referee is justified in ruling that the ball has been deliberately thrown forward.</i> |
| Ball is blown or bounces forward | <i>If the ball is passed correctly but bounces forward or is blown forward by the wind, there is no infringement and play should continue.</i> |
| Knock-on over Goal line | <i>After a player, from the field of play, knocks on into his opponent's in-goal area and he or a colleague touches down, play is re-started with a scrum where the knock-on occurred, except after a play-the-ball subject to Section 12, Law 10.</i> |
| Advantage | <i>The Referee should allow the opposing team the advantage of gaining possession</i> |

SECTION 11

THE TACKLE AND PLAY-THE-BALL

Tackle player in possession

1. A player in possession may be tackled by an opposing player or players. It is illegal to tackle or obstruct a player who is not in possession.

When tackled:

Grounded

2. A player in possession is tackled:
 - (a) when he is held by one or more opposing players and the ball or the hand or arm holding the ball comes into contact with the ground.

Upright

- (b) when he is held by one or more opposing players in such a manner that he can make no further progress and cannot part with the ball.

Succumbing

- (c) when, being held by an opponent, the tackled player makes it evident that he has succumbed to the tackle and wishes to be released in order to play-the-ball.

Hand on player already grounded

- (d) when he is lying on the ground and an opponent places a hand on him.

NOTES

Foul "throws"

1. (a) *A tackler must not make use of any special "holds" or "throws" which are likely to cause injury or use his knees in the tackle. It is permissible for a tackler to bring a player in possession of the ball to the ground by pulling him over the outstretched leg provided he is holding the player with both arms before there is any contact with the leg.*

Mid-air tackle

1. (b) *It is illegal to tackle an opposing player attempting to field a kick whilst the player is in mid-air. The catcher must have returned to the ground before being tackled.*

Moving tackled player

2. (a) *Where opponents do not make a tackle effective in the quickest possible manner but attempt to push, pull or carry the player in possession, it is permissible for colleagues of the tackled player to lend their weight in order to avoid losing ground. Immediately this happens the referee should call "Held".*
2. (b) *Where the tackled player is held in an upright position, the ball shall not be played before the referee indicates that the tackle has been effected.*

Broken tackle

Where the player in possession is brought to the ground, a tackle is not effective if the hold on the player in possession is broken before he is grounded. Before allowing play to proceed, referees should be sure in their own minds that the tackle was indeed broken otherwise the tackler who, playing in the true spirit of the game, releases the tackled player immediately he is brought to the ground, may be unfairly penalised.

Section 11. The Tackle and Play-the-Ball (continued)

No moving of tackled player

3. Once a player in possession has been tackled it is illegal for any player to move or try to move him from the point where the tackle is effected.

Voluntary tackle

4. A player in possession shall not deliberately and unnecessarily allow himself to be tackled by voluntarily falling to the ground when not held by an opponent. If a player drops on a loose ball he shall not remain on the ground waiting to be tackled if he has time to regain his feet and continue play.

Sliding tackle

5. If a tackled player, because of his momentum slides along the ground, the tackle is deemed to have been effected where his slide ends. (See Section 6, 3(c).)

Verbal instructions to resolve doubt

6. If any doubt arises as to a tackle, the Referee should give a verbal instruction to "play on" or shout "held" as the case may be. (See note 6. Simultaneous Page 25).

NOTES

Succumbing to tackle

- 2 (c) A player who is held and wishes to play-the-ball can make it evident that he has succumbed to the tackle by grounding the ball. It is to his advantage to do this to avoid the possibility of another opponent attempting to complete the tackle. Succumb includes a player in possession being lifted off the ground (one or both legs) and resulting in the calling of 'held' by the referee.

Second movement after tackle



When an attacking player is tackled within easy reach of the opponents goal line he should be penalised if he makes a second movement to place the ball over, or on, the line for a try.

If an attacking player in possession is brought down near the opponents goal line and the ball is not grounded it is permissible to place the ball over, or on, the line for a try. In this case, the tackle has not been completed.



Player marking dives on the ball

4. If the player marking the tackled player at the play-the-ball dives behind the tackled player in order to drop on the ball as it is heeled, he is guilty of a voluntary tackle and should be penalised. If there is no acting halfback it is permissible for a player to dive behind the tackled player and drop on the ball after it has been heeled provided that, unless tackled, he immediately regains his feet.

Section 11. The Tackle and Play-the-Ball (continued)

Sixth tackle	<p>7. (a) A team in possession of the ball shall be allowed five successive play-the-balls. A handover shall occur AFTER the fifth play-the-ball in the following circumstances.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">The team is tackled a sixth time.The team in possession commits an accidental breach for which a scrum would normally be set.A player is held up in the opponent's in-goal.The ball is kicked directly into touch on the full from a kick in general play <p>The handover will occur either at the point of the sixth tackle or where the scrum would normally be set - but, in the latter case, not closer than 20 metres from touch. The play-the-ball for this purpose shall not be counted for the purposes of the tackle count and shall operate as provided for in Law 10 of this Section.</p>
Kick out on Full	<p>(b) When the ball is kicked directly into touch in general play in a forward direction on the full, a handover (play-the-ball) is awarded to the non-kicking team at the point where the ball was kicked (but no closer than 20 metres from the touch line and 10 metres from the goal line). If the ball is kicked directly into touch in general play in a backward direction on the full, a handover (play-the-ball) is awarded to the non-kicking team at the point from where the ball first crossed the touch line (but no closer than 20 metres from the touch line and 10m from the goal line).</p>
Accidental breach "Zero tackle"	<p>(c) Where an accidental breach occurs (i.e. knock-on, forward pass) and possession changes hands, the following tackle will be a zero tackle, notwithstanding that the team gaining possession may have gained a territorial advantage.</p>
Losing possession – intentionally – accidentally	<p>8. A tackled player shall not intentionally part with the ball other than by bringing it into play in the prescribed manner. If, after being tackled, he accidentally loses possession, a scrum shall be formed except after the fifth play-the-ball.</p>

NOTES

Simultaneous Held	<p>6. If the referee calls 'HELD' and a player simultaneously continues to run or offloads, as he has not heard the call, the referee will stop play and send the player back to the play the ball.</p>
Opponent "touches" ball	<p>By 'touching' the ball is meant intentionally playing it with any part of the person when it is not held by an opposing player. A ricochet or rebound does not count as a 'touch'.</p>
Charging down Cancels count	<p>Charging down a kick counts as a 'touch' but not as a knock on. 'Touching' the ball cancels the count of play-the-balls and the next tackle counts as the first of six.</p>
Losing possession	<p>8. If a tackled player loses possession of the ball at the moment of impact with an opponent or with the ground, play shall proceed unless stopped for some other reason, e.g. the ball has been knocked forward. A player in possession brought to his knees or brought to the ground on his back may still pass the ball – provided he has not made it evident that he has succumbed to the tackle. He should not be wrongly penalised otherwise all players will become reluctant to pass the ball as the tackle nears completion in case they too are penalised. The continuity of play would consequently be adversely and unnecessarily affected.</p>
Point Of Infringement	<p>7. For the purpose of this Law the point of infringement in the case of a kick into touch on the full shall be the point from which the ball is kicked.</p>

Section 11. The Tackle and Play-the-Ball (continued)

"Stealing" from tackled player	9. Once a tackle has been completed, no player shall take or attempt to take the ball from the tackled player.
Release tackled player immediately	10. The play-the-ball shall operate as follows. (a) The tackled player shall be immediately released and shall not be touched until the ball is in play.
Regain feet	(b) The tackled player shall without delay regain his feet where he was tackled, lift the ball clear of the ground, face his opponent's goal line and place the ball on the ground in front of his foremost foot.
Player marking	(c) One opponent may take up the position immediately opposite the tackled player. (d) The tackled player may not play-the-ball before the players effecting the tackle have had time to clear the ruck.
Play with foot	(e) When the ball touches the ground it must be heeled (i.e. backwards) by the tackled player. The ball must not be kicked or heeled by the player marking him. The ball is in play when it has been played backward.
Acting halfback	(f) A player of each team, to be known as the acting halfback, may stand immediately and directly behind his own player taking part in the play-the-ball and must remain in this position, until the play-the-ball movement is complete.

NOTES

Stealing Ball	9. (a) <i>The ball can be stolen from the player in possession at any stage prior to a tackle being complete when there is only one defender effecting the tackle.</i> (b) <i>If there are two or more defender[s] effecting the tackle, irrespective of whether all but one 'drops off' the tackle, and the ball is subsequently taken from the tackled player and the ball is stolen a penalty should be awarded against the player or players affecting the tackle except if the player in possession is attempting to ground the ball for a try.</i>
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Disputed possession	10. (a) <i>If any doubt arises as to which player should play-the-ball (ie possession is disputed) the referee should call "... 's ball" naming the team in possession. In the case of a player lying on the ground and not holding the ball with both hands or arms, circumstances may arise where there is some doubt as to whether he is "in possession". If with hand or arm he is fairly clasping the ball to some other part of his person then he is "in possession".</i>
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Mutual Infringement	<i>Following a play the ball, if a mutual infringement occurs, the Referee shall re-start play by returning to the point of the previous play the ball and allowing the team which was in possession at that point to play the ball again if a mutual infringement has occurred. The play the ball to restart the game is not counted as an additional tackle and the player who was previously tackled with the ball immediately prior to the mutual infringement is to play the ball to restart the game.</i>
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Section 11. The Tackle and Play-the-Ball (continued)

Retire at play-the-ball

- (g) Players of the side not in possession other than the player taking part in the play-the-ball and the acting halfback are out of play if they fail to retire ten (10) metres from the point at which the ball is played or to their own goal lines. Players of the side in possession other than the player taking part in the play-the-ball and the acting halfback must retire behind their players involved in the play-the-ball or to their own goal line. Players of the side not in possession other than the player taking part in the play-the-ball and the acting halfback when retiring to their own goal line must be touching the goal line with a foot and cannot place their front foot past the centre of the ruck.
- (h) Having retired the distance prescribed in the preceding paragraph no player of the team not in possession may advance until the ball has cleared the ruck. A player who is out of play may again take part in the game when the advantage gained by not retiring has been lost.

NOTES

Interfering with heel

The tackler who is on the opponent's side of the player should remove himself as quickly as possible so as not to interfere with the heel. If he does interfere he should be penalised.

Regain feet

10. (b) No part of the tackled player's person other than his feet should be in contact with the ground when he releases the ball.

Not lifting the ball clear

A tackled player, failing to lift the ball clear of the ground when regaining his feet, is to be penalised.

Accidental deflection

10. (e) When a tackled player attempts to play-the-ball backwards but accidentally deflects the ball forward, a scrum ensues with the non-offending team having the loose head and put-in.

Acting halfback

10. (f) Two players take part in the play-the-ball. All other players except the 'acting halfbacks' are outside if they retire the prescribed distance. The acting halfbacks must take up a position immediately and directly behind the player playing the ball.



No marker

10. (f) If no marker takes up a position opposite the tackled player, and no acting halfback is present, the ball is deemed to be 'clear' immediately it is heeled by the tackled player, who may immediately regain possession and play on.

Section 11. The Tackle and Play-the-Ball (continued)

Speed essential

11. The play-the-ball must be performed as quickly as possible.
Any player who intentionally delays the bringing of the ball into play shall be penalised.

Tackling on or near the goal line in or goal

12. If part of the tackled player is on or over the goal line but the ball is in the field of play the tackled player shall play-the-ball where the ball lies.

If a player is tackled in an upright position bestriding the goal line he is deemed to be tackled in the in-goal area.

Held Up In-Goal

13. When a player, in possession of the ball, is unable to ground the ball in the opponents' in-goal, play is re-started with a play-the-ball ten (10) metres from the goal line opposite where the player was held up. The player who was held up will play the ball and the tackle count will continue – except after the fifth play-the-ball when play will re-start with a handover 10 metres into the field of play adjacent to where the player was held up.(refer also p.25 Section 11, Law 7).

NOTES

Penalise intentional interference

10. (g) *If the ball is played quickly, all players will not necessarily have time to retire the prescribed distance. They should be penalised only if they intentionally interfere with play – either actively or passively.*

Accidental interference

If the interference with play is accidental, a scrum should be formed. Interference should not be considered accidental when the player concerned has had opportunity to remove himself from the area in which play is taking place.

Offside player raising hands

A player who realises he is out of play and is near play should raise his hands above his head. Taking this action does not, however, exonerate him from penalty if he interferes with play and the referee feels that he could have avoided such interference.

Indicating ten metres*

The Referee should usually position himself ten metres behind and to one side of the point at which the ball is played as a guide to the team not in possession. If tackling is excessively keen or play is unnecessarily rough, the referee may forsake the ten metres* position in order to be nearer the players involved in the tackle.*

Out of play: play-the-ball

10. (h) *Any player who is in front of the kicker in general play is not permitted to advance beyond the point of the play-the-ball until the ball has gone past the offside player.*

SECTION 12

THE SCRUM

When formed

1. A scrum is formed to re-start play whenever play is not being re-started with a kick off, a drop-out (Section 8), a penalty kick (Section 13) or a play-the- ball (Section 11).

Formation of Scrum

2. To form a scrum not more than three forwards of either team shall interlock arms and heads and create a clear tunnel at right angles to the touch line. The forward in the centre of a front row (i.e. the hooker) shall bind with his arms over the shoulders of the two supporting forwards. Not more than two second row forwards on each team shall pack behind their respective front rows by interlocking arms and placing their heads in the two spaces between the hooker and his front row forwards. The loose forward of each team shall pack behind his second row forwards by placing his head in the space between them. All forwards must pack with their bodies and legs at right angles to the tunnel and the upper parts of their bodies horizontal. Once the ball has been put in the scrum, no other player can lend his weight to it.

Scrum

Both prop forwards, on the side where the ball is put into the scrum, **MUST** have their outside feet forward and the halfback must feed the ball into the scrum using the space between their feet. All players must remain in the scrum until the ball is out of the scrum.

Number of backs and players in scrum

3. No more than six players on each team shall assist in the formation of a scrum and when the ball is in the scrum no more than seven players of each team shall act as backs.

NOTES

Loose Arm

2. *Referees must ensure that a hooker does not pack with a loose arm.*

Depleted pack

3. *The 3-2-1 formation is compulsory if six forwards pack down. If injuries deplete the team, the back three forwards may be withdrawn to give 3-2-0, 3-1-0 or 3-0-0 formations (subject to there being no more than seven backs – see para 3 above). There should always be at least three forwards packing down.*

Forward withdrawing

3. *A forward may detach himself from the scrum at any time provided there are not already seven players acting as backs on his team. If the ball emerges from the scrum between the legs of the second row forwards, the loose forward may detach himself from the scrum and pick up the ball.*

Section 12. The Scrum (continued)

Pushing

4. It is permissible for forwards to push - except where the Safeplay Code applies, once the scrum has been correctly formed but if it moves an appreciable distance to the disadvantage of any one team before the ball is put in then the Referee shall order the scrum to reform in its original position.

Loose Head and Put-in

5. (a) At the scrum, the non-offending team shall have the loose head and put-in.
(b) Where the ball is kicked from the start or a re-start of play and finds touch other than on the full after travelling the prescribed distance the kicking team shall be deemed to be the non-offending team.
(c) Where a player kicks or passes the ball in general play and the ball enters touch after accidentally striking an opponent the team of the player who passed or kicked the ball shall be deemed to be the offending team.

Put-in or Feeding the Scrum

6. (a) The ball is to be fed into the tunnel from the Referee's side with the halfback standing square with both hands on the ball.
(b) The ball shall not be put in before the scrum has been correctly formed.
(c) There shall be no undue delay in putting the ball into the scrum.
(d) The player putting the ball in shall not hesitate or dummy and after putting it in he shall immediately retire behind his own pack of forwards.

NOTES

Pushing

4. *To avoid unnecessary reforming of scrums, the Referee should restrain the opposing packs from joining together until the ball is available and can be put into the scrum without delay.*

Offending Team

5. *The 'offending' team is the team which stops the play by a forward pass, knock-on, kick into touch, etc.*

Mutual Infringement

Following a scrum, if a mutual infringement has occurred, the Referee shall re-start play by returning to the point where the scrum was set and giving the team in possession at that point the loose head and feed.

Section 12. The Scrum (continued)

Other players

7. The halfback of the team not having the put-in shall retire immediately behind his last row of forwards. All players outside the scrum, other than the halfback putting the ball in, shall retire five metres or more behind the last row of forwards of their respective teams in the scrum and shall remain so until the ball has emerged correctly from the scrum.

Forwards in Scrum

8. When the ball is in the scrum it can only be played with the foot.

The front row forwards shall not advance their feet into the tunnel or have one foot raised before the ball is put in or strike for the ball before the hookers.

A hooker may strike for the ball with either foot once it has contacted the ground in the tunnel.

After the hookers have struck for the ball the other forwards in the scrum may kick or heel the ball.

No player shall willfully collapse a scrum or willfully have any part of him other than his feet in contact with the ground.

A player shall not willfully delay the correct formation of a scrum.

NOTES

Referee's side

6. (a) *The Referee may stand on either side of the scrum at his discretion. It is advisable to favour the blind side.*

Retiring Scrum half

- (d) *Assuming the ball has been correctly scrummaged it is permissible for the halfback to pick up the ball in the act of retiring providing he commenced to retire immediately after putting the ball in. As the halfback who puts the ball in must retire behind his own forwards it should, in the event of the opposing team winning possession, normally give him very little chance of tackling the opposing scrum half. If the latter is tackled in possession the Referee should ensure that the scrum half who puts the ball in is indeed retiring behind his forwards.*

Hookers

8. *Hookers striking prematurely is one of the more common scrum offences. If one hooker strikes prematurely and escapes penalty the other hooker will be tempted to commit the same offence. Referees should endeavour to detect and punish the initial offender.*

Section 12. The Scrum (continued)

Ball in Play	<p>9. To be in play, the ball must emerge from the scrum between and behind the inner feet of the second row forwards and the scrum is not to break until the referee calls "release".</p> <p>If the ball does not emerge correctly, and the fault cannot be attributed to any one team, then the ball should be put into the scrum again.</p>
Where formed	<p>10. If a scrum is ordered, it shall normally be formed where the breach of Laws occurs. If such breach is within twenty metres of a touch line or ten metres of a goal line, the scrum shall be brought in twenty metres from the touch line and ten metres from the goal line.</p>
Scrum wanders	<p>11. If a penalty kick is awarded relating to a scrum offence and the scrum has wandered from its original position, the mark is where the scrum was first formed.</p>
Scrum wheels	<p>12. If the ball emerges correctly from the scrum, it is in play even though the scrum has wheeled. Any forward can detach himself from the scrum to gather or kick the ball. Any back can similarly play it provided he remained behind the scrum until the ball emerged.</p>

NOTES

<i>Handling in scrum</i>	<p>9. <i>The players' feet are continually moving in a scrum and it is not easy to define accurately the exact moment when the ball can be considered to be truly "out" of the scrum.</i></p>
<i>Offending Pack take up correct position</i>	<p>10. <i>It is the responsibility of the pack of the offending team to take up the correct position for a scrum. The opposing pack of forwards will then move up to form the scrum.</i></p>
<i>Butting</i>	<p><i>Front Row Forwards who butt violently in the course of forming a scrum should be penalised.</i></p>

SECTION 13

PENALTY KICK

When awarded

- (a) A penalty kick shall be awarded against any player who is guilty of misconduct (Section 15) provided that this is not to the disadvantage of the non-offending team. Unless otherwise stated, the mark is where the offence occurs. If misconduct occurs in touch the mark shall be ten metres from the touch line in the field of play and opposite where the offence occurred or, in the case of obstruction, where the ball next bounces or is caught, in the field of play, or ten metres opposite the point of entry if the ball enters touch on the full, or ten (10) metres from the goal line if the ball crosses the goal line on the full, whichever is to the greater advantage of the non-offending team. If the offence is committed by a player in his own in-goal or a player in his opponents' in-goal, the mark is taken ten metres into the field of play opposite where the offence occurred. In the event of further misconduct by the offending team, the referee shall advance the mark once only ten metres towards the offending team's goal line.
- (b) In the event of a breach by the kicker's team a scrum shall be formed at the point where the penalty kick was awarded. In the event of a breach by the opposing team a further penalty kick shall be awarded at a point opposite where the breach occurred on a line parallel to the goal line ten metres from where the penalty kick was awarded.

NOTES

Advantage

- The advantage to the non-offending team must be readily obvious if the Referee is to allow play to proceed. Allowing play to proceed does not mean that the offending player cannot subsequently be disciplined. A penalty kick for a scrum offence is, except in very exceptional circumstances, of greater advantage to the non-offending team than allowing play to proceed.*

Differential Penalty

- In respect of misconduct at the scrum other than foul play or the use of offensive or obscene language a Referee shall award a differential penalty which differs only from a penalty kick in that a goal cannot be scored from it. The differential penalty applies to all players, even those outside the scrum, who should be penalised where they offend. A full penalty is awarded for an offence which occurs before the scrum is properly formed.*

Section 13. Penalty Kick (continued)

How Taken

2. A player may take a penalty kick by punting, drop kicking, or place kicking the ball from any point on or behind the mark and equidistant from the touch line. Other than when kicking for goal (see notes to Section 6, Law 11 - "Pretending to kick at goal") the ball may be kicked in any direction, after which it is in play.

Position of Players

3. Players of the kicker's team must be behind the ball when it is kicked. Players of the team opposing the kicker shall retire to their own goal line or ten metres or more from the mark towards their own goal line and shall not make any attempt to interfere with or distract the attention of the kicker. They may advance after the ball has been kicked.

Find Touch from Penalty Kick

4. (a) If the ball is kicked into touch without touching any other player the kicking team shall re-start play with a free kick. Opposing players shall retire ten metres from the point of entry into touch or to their own goal line.

In the event of a breach by the kicker's team, a scrum shall be formed twenty metres in-field from touch in line with where the free kick was awarded but no closer than ten metres from the goal line. In the event of a breach by the opposing team a penalty kick shall be awarded at a point opposite where the breach occurred on a line parallel to the goal line ten metres from where the free kick was awarded.
4. (b) If the ball touches an opponent in flight and then enters touch, play will restart with a play the ball as per section 9(6) twenty metres in-field from where the ball crossed the touch line.

NOTES

The Mark

2. As the mark cannot be conveniently marked on the ground a player who punts or drop kicks may deviate slightly from it. This is permissible provided no unfair advantage is gained. The kicker himself may regather the ball after it has been kicked.

If a player takes the ball back from the mark for a kick at goal the original mark is cancelled and the new mark is where the ball is to be kicked, and opponents may advance to within 10 metres of the new mark.

- Retiring ten metres** 3 and 4. If the kicker takes a penalty kick or the subsequent free kick quickly, the opposing players may not have all retired ten metres, in which case they should be penalised only if they interfere with play. These players may join in the play when any advantage which they may have gained through not retiring has been lost.

- Free Kick (Second Kick)** 4. The ball may be kicked in any direction in any manner when bringing it into play after entering touch and the kicker himself may pick up the ball after he has kicked it.

Dead Ball from Penalty Kick

4. Play is re-started with a 20m drop-out if the ball is kicked dead in the opponents' in-goal from a penalty kick (Section 8, Law 3).

Section 13. Penalty Kick (continued)

No delay	5. No player shall deliberately take any action which is likely to delay the taking of a penalty kick.
Kicker's side infringes	6. If the kick is not taken as stated or if a player of the kicker's team infringes, a scrum shall be formed at the mark, provided it is no closer than twenty metres to the touch line.
Explain why Penalised	7. When the Referee penalises a player he must explain the nature of the offence.
Penalty for in-goal offence	8. If a penalty is awarded for an offence by either team in the in-goal area the mark shall be ten metres in the field of play opposite where the offence occurred except for foul play against the try scorer (see Law 9).
Offence against Try scorer	9. If a player fouls an opponent who is touching down for a try, a penalty kick at goal shall be taken from in front of the goal posts after the attempt to convert the try. After his kick has been taken the ball shall be deemed dead and play shall be re-started from the halfway line. This law applies to the period during which the ball is touched down for a try and not to any subsequent period.
Drop Goal Foul Play on Kicker	10. (a) If a player fouls an opponent who is attempting a drop goal, a penalty kick shall be awarded 10m in front of the goal posts. (b) If the attempt at drop goal is successful, a kick at goal must be taken from the penalty kick and play re-started from the centre of the halfway line irrespective of the outcome of that kick. (c) If the attempt at drop goal is unsuccessful, the penalty kick can be taken in any manner provided for in the Laws and play re-started according to the outcome of that kick.

NOTES

Refusing to surrender ball	5. When a penalty has been awarded, the Referee must ensure that an opposing player does not hold on to the ball or deliberately kick or throw it further from the mark.
Penalty in-goal	9. For an offence in-goal by the defending team, a penalty may be awarded depending on the gravity of the offence. (Section 6)
Mutual Infringement	Following a penalty restart, the Referee shall re-start play by returning to the point where the penalty was awarded and ruling that the penalty restart be retaken if a mutual infringement has occurred.
Offence against try scorer	Touching down for a try means the act of scoring or while the player is Regaining his feet.
Possible eight point try	A penalty in front of the posts may be awarded to be taken after the Conversion attempt.

SECTION 14

OFFSIDE

When offside

1. A player is offside except when he is in his own in-goal if the ball touches, is touched, held or kicked, by one of his own team behind him.

Out of Play

2. An offside player shall not take any part in the game or attempt in any way to influence the course of the game. He shall not encroach within ten metres of an opponent who is waiting for the ball and shall immediately retire ten metres from any opponent who first secures possession of the ball.

Retire ten metres

Placed onside

3. An offside player is placed onside if:
 - (a) an opponent moves ten metres or more with the ball.
 - (b) an opponent touches the ball without retaining it.
 - (c) one of his own team in possession of the ball runs in front of him.
 - (d) one of his own team kicks or knocks the ball forward and takes up a position in front of him in the field of play.
 - (e) he retires behind the point where the ball was last touched by one of his own team, or to his own in-goal.

NOTES

Catcher claiming offside

1. A player who catches the ball near an offside opponent must not go out of his way to make interference in play by the offside player unavoidable. He should proceed with normal play and rely on the Referee to penalise the offside player if the latter interferes with play. If the catcher deliberately and unnecessarily runs into the offside player then play should proceed.

Accidental offside

Where the Referee is satisfied that interference with play by an offside player is accidental he should order a scrum.

Interfering with Catcher

2. Any offside player who remains within ten metres of an opponent who is set to catch a kick up field by an opposing player shall be deemed to be interfering with or attempting to interfere with the catcher and shall be penalised unless the non-offending team gains an immediate advantage.

"Out of Play" as opposed to "offside"

3. Players who are out of play at a play-the-ball (Section 11), a scrum (Section 12), a kick off or drop-out (Section 8) a penalty kick (Section 13) or a free kick (Section 13) are not put "onside" in the manner described in para 3 above. (See appropriate Sections).

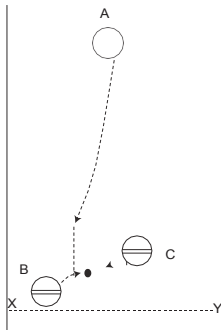
"Down town"

Any player who is in front of the kicker in general play is not permitted to advance beyond the point of the previous play-the-ball until the ball has gone past the offside players. This rule delays the movement of the offside players downfield in an attempt to encircle the ball receiver as he collects the ball.

Section 14. Offside (continued)

Example 3 (d)

Player A kicks the ball and opponent B fails to catch it, the ball bouncing forward off his hands. Player C is offside if he plays the ball unless B advances in front of the ball before C reaches it, in which case a scrum would be ordered for a knock-on.

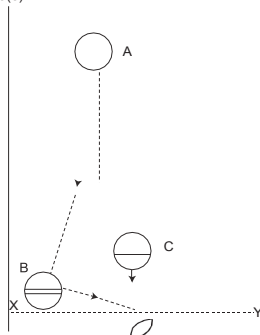


Example of offside player retrieving ball

3. (e) player retrieving ball

Player A kicks the ball and opponent B attempts to catch it. He drops the ball which rolls behind him. His colleague C who was originally in front of him drops back to retrieve the ball. When he gets to it he is behind the point at which it was played by B, indicated by the line XY, and is not offside.

3(e)



SECTION 15

PLAYER'S MISCONDUCT

Definition of misconduct

1. A player is guilty of misconduct if he:
 - (a) trips, kicks or strikes another player.
 - (b) when effecting or attempting to effect a tackle makes contact with the head or neck of an opponent intentionally, recklessly or carelessly.
 - (c) drops knees first on to an opponent who is on the ground
 - (d) uses any dangerous throw when effecting a tackle.
 - (e) deliberately and continuously breaks the Laws of the Game.
 - (f) uses offensive or obscene language.
 - (g) disputes a decision of the Referee or Touch Judge.
 - (h) re-enters the field of play without the permission of the Referee or a Touch Judge having previously temporarily retired from the game.
 - (i) behaves in any way contrary to the true spirit of the game.
 - (j) deliberately obstructs an opponent who is not in possession.
 - (k) uses a shoulder charge on an opponent
 - (l) applies any unnecessary pressure or twists, including grapples, crushers or performs a "chicken wing" style hold on a player in possession.
 - (m) forcefully spears at the legs of a player in possession, exposing him to unnecessary risk of injury.

NOTES

Law breakers

1. (e) *When a player repeatedly breaks the Laws in a 'specialist' position, e.g. hooker or halfback, the Referee should, when administering the final caution, inform the player's captain. The latter may, at his discretion, move the offending player to another position. The Referee cannot order a player to change his position.*

Dangerous throw

- (d) *If, in any tackle or, or contact with, an opponent that player is so lifted that he is placed in a position where it is likely that the first part of his body to make contact with the ground will be his head or neck ("the dangerous position"), then that tackle or contact will be deemed to be a dangerous throw unless, with the exercise of reasonable care, the dangerous position could not have been avoided.*

Explain reason for penalty

- (g) *A player may ask the Referee the reason why a penalty kick has been given provided he does so respectfully.*

Delay re-start of play

- (i) *To deliberately delay the re-start of play from the goal line, 20 metre line or halfway line constitutes misconduct for the purposes of this rule.*

Obstruction after kick

- (j) *A common form of obstruction occurs when a player, after kicking the ball forward, is tackled or impeded by an opponent. However, a tackler cannot be expected to delay making a tackle because the player in possession might decide to kick the ball. The onus is on the kicker to get his kick in before his opponent commits himself to the tackle.*

Spearing at the legs

- (m) *when a player in possession is held in an upright position by two or more defenders, any other defender(s) must make initial contact to the player in possession above the knees/knee joint.*

Section 15. Players' Misconduct (continued)

If the player in possession has delayed kicking the ball until the tackler has commenced to dive, the tackler should not be penalised.

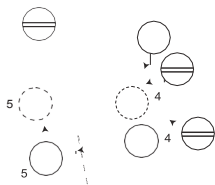


The ball has been kicked before the opponent commits himself to the tackle. He should be penalised if he obstructs the kicker.

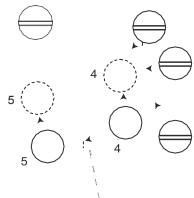


Obstructing passing movement

Obstruction sometimes occurs in a passing movement as follows:-



It is permissible for player 4, after passing the ball, to slow down in order to position himself for a return pass from player 5. He must give 'right of way' to opponents who are running across in front of him to tackle player 5 but is not guilty of obstructing opponents who are coming from behind him.



Player 4 passes to player 5 but continues to run in front of him in order to obstruct opponents who are running across to tackle. Player 4 should be penalised.

Accidental obstruction

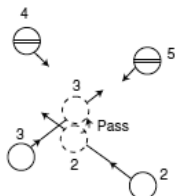
Obstruction can be either active or passive. Passive obstruction is where a player impedes an opponent by deliberately remaining in his path although he has had the opportunity to remove himself. If a player is in position which is likely to cause obstruction and he feels that any movement by him may aggravate the situation he should raise his hands above his head and thus indicate to the Referee that he is taking no part in the play.

Section 15. Players' Misconduct (continued)

'Scissors' move

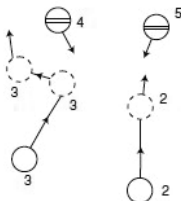
Player 3 is in possession and veers towards the wing bringing his/her opposite number, player 4, across with him/her, and opponent 5 in towards him/her.

Player 2 runs across and when just behind him/her receives a back pass. After giving the pass, player 3's momentum carries him/her in the direction in which he/she was running. It is quite easy to see that he/she may collide with opponent 5. It would not be fair to penalise him/her for deliberate obstruction and a scrum should be formed for accidental obstruction only if player 5 is actually prevented from tackling player 2.



'Dummy'

Player 3 is in possession and veers towards the wing. This time he/she dummies to pass to colleague 2 but sidesteps to the left and runs in-field. Player 2, expecting the pass, has his/her eye on the ball and his/her momentum carries him/her forward. He/she can easily collide with player 5 without being guilty of obstruction, and once again the Referee will allow play to proceed unless player 5 was actually prevented from making the tackle, in which case a scrum will be ordered.



Obstructing

- offside player
- after knock-on

Player in possession cannot obstruct

It is illegal to obstruct any opponent not in possession, even one who is offside or one who is endeavouring to get to the ball after it has been knocked-on or thrown forward.

The player who is in possession of the ball cannot be guilty of obstruction. He/she can make use of the goal posts to avoid a tackle, or dodge behind a ruck of his/her own players or bore a way through his/her own pack.

SECTION 16

DUTIES OF REFEREE AND TOUCH JUDGES

One Referee Two Touch Judges	1. In all matches, a Referee and two Touch Judges shall be appointed or mutually agreed upon by the contesting teams.
Enforce Laws	2. The Referees shall enforce the Laws of the Game and may impose penalties for any deliberate breach of the Laws. He shall be the sole judge on matters of fact except those relating to touch and touch in-goal (refer Law 10, page 44).
Timekeeper	3. He shall be the sole timekeeper except where this duty has been delegated to another person. (See Section 7).
Power to stop game	4. He may, at his discretion, temporarily suspend or prematurely terminate a match because of adverse weather, undue interference by spectators, misbehaviour by players, or any other cause which, in his opinion, interferes with his control of the game.
Permission to enter playing area	5. He shall not allow anyone apart from the players onto the playing area without permission.

NOTES

Referee injured	<p>1. When a Referee is unable to continue he should appoint a substitute, preferably a neutral Touch Judge. If the Referee is not able to appoint a substitute, the respective captains should mutually agree, failing which the Touch Judge with the greater experience should take control.</p> <p><i>If the injury sustained by a Referee renders him incapable of blowing his whistle to stop the game, the latter shall be deemed to have stopped at the time the injury was sustained.</i></p>
Consult Touch Judge	2. Before giving a decision, it is permissible for the Referee to consult either or both Touch Judges.
Player returns to playing field	5. A player who has temporarily retired from the game shall inform the nearer Touch Judge before re-entering the playing field.

Section 16. Duties of Referee and Touch Judges (continued)

- Power to dismiss** 6. In the event of misconduct by a player, the Referee shall, at his discretion, caution, temporarily suspend for ten minutes, or dismiss the offender.
- Control of players** 7. The players are under the control of the Referee from the time they enter the playing area until they leave it.

NOTES

- Caution** 6. A caution may be administered to a team as a whole in which case each player is considered to have received an individual caution.
- When a final caution is given, the nature of the offence and the time must be recorded by the Referee and must be quoted if the player is subsequently dismissed.*
- Temporary Suspension** 6. The power to temporarily suspend a player is not an encouragement to Referees to deal leniently in the event of misconduct which merits dismissal for ten (10) minutes.
- End of Temporary Suspension** 6. A temporarily suspended player shall re-enter the playing field when permitted to do so by the Referee. The Referee shall be guided by the timekeeper if one is employed, otherwise the referee will determine the end of the suspension. This player is NOT to be regarded as a substitute.
- Dismissed player** 6. A dismissed player can take no further part in the match, nor shall he be permitted to take up a position near the playing area where his presence is likely to provoke further incident.
- Changing player's position** 6. When administering a final caution to a player who has persistently committed breaches of the Laws, the Referee shall advise the player's Captain so that the latter may, if he so wishes, change the player's position in the team.
- Playing area** 7. Where there is no actual enclosure, the area of control is that within the natural boundaries of the field in which the playing area is located.
- Harassing Referee** 7. If a Referee or Touch Judge is assaulted or unduly harassed by any person arising out of his control of a match, he should submit a report to the appropriate League even though such incident occurs after the match is ended.

Section 16. Duties of Referee and Touch Judges (continued)

- When to blow whistle** 8 (a) The Referee must carry a whistle which he shall blow to commence and terminate each half of the game. Except for these occasions the blowing of the whistle shall temporarily stop the play. The Referee shall blow the whistle:
- (i) when a try or a goal has been scored
 - (ii) when the ball has gone out of play
 - (iii) when re-starting play, other than at a scrum
 - (iv) when he detects a breach of the Laws of the Game, except when to stop the play would be to the disadvantage of the non-offending team
 - (v) when play is irregularly affected by the ball or the player carrying the ball coming into contact with the Referee, a Touch Judge, or with any person not taking part in the match or with any object which should not normally be on the playing field
 - (vi) when any irregularity, not provided for in these Laws, occurs and one team unjustifiably gains an advantage
 - (vii) when a stoppage is necessary in order to enforce the Laws or for any other reason.
- (b) Where a Referee has stopped play to administer a caution to a player or players he shall indicate extra time until he blows his whistle to re-start play.

NOTES

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| Whistle blown accidentally | 8. <i>Play must stop even if the whistle is blown accidentally in which case play is re-started with a scrum where the ball was last touched by a player in the field of play before the whistle is blown, and his team shall be given the loose head and put -in.</i> |
| Apply advantage | 8. <i>The advantage law applies to all phases of play, but where a team infringes in a strong tactical position the advantage should be allowed only if the ball goes immediately into the possession of the non-offending team. The Referee is the sole judge of what constitutes an advantage be it tactical or territorial. An infringement is not 'negated' simply because the ball touches or is touched by an opponent. The opponent must have adequate opportunity to take advantage and endeavour to do so before play is allowed to proceed. Application of the advantage laws does not deprive the Referee of subsequently dealing with an offending player.</i> |
| Mutual Infringement | 8.1(e) and (f) <i>Where play has been irregularly affected in the playing field, the Referee shall re-start play by returning to the previous play. In the event of a play-the-ball re-starting play, this will not be counted as an additional tackle, and the player who was previously tackled with the ball immediately prior to the mutual infringement, is to play the ball to re-start the game. If, there is a turnover in possession prior to the mutual infringement occurring, the Referee shall re-start play by awarding a zero tackle re-start where the mutual infringement occurred (but no closer than 10m from the goal line if the mutual infringement occurred in the in-goal) to the team in possession at that time. The referee is the sole judge of what constitutes a mutual infringement and whether or not play has been irregularly affected. Contact between a defender and Referee may not constitute a mutual infringement". Except where Section 6 3 (e) applies.</i> |

Section 16. Duties of Referee and Touch Judges (continued)

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| Changing decision | 9. The Referee judges on matters of fact and shall not subsequently alter those judgments. He may cancel any decision made if prior foul play of which he had no knowledge is reported to him by a Touch Judge. |
| Accept Touch Judge decision | 10. The Referee shall accept the decision of an official Touch Judge relating to touch and touch in-goal play and to kicks at goal. |
| Touch Judge | 11. Each Touch Judge shall remain in touch, one on each side of, and near to, the playing field except:–

(a) when judging kicks at goal (see Section 6) and

(b) when reporting a player's misconduct which has escaped the notice of the Referee. |
| Flag | 12. Each Touch Judge must carry an approved flag. |

NOTES

Infringement by attacking team

If a team infringes when in a strong attacking position territorial or tactical, the Referee should stop play promptly, unless the ball is immediately possessed by the defending team because a loose ball cannot be considered to be of advantage to a team in a weak, defensive position.

Applying the advantage law does not deprive the Referee of his power to deal subsequently with any offending player.

Awarding a Try

9. *The circumstances referred to in this Law will not arise when a try is scored as the Referee shall look at both Touch Judges before awarding a try.*

Touch Judge under control of Referee

10. *A Touch Judge is at all times under the control of the Referee and may be dismissed and replaced if, in the opinion of the Referee, he can no longer be considered to be neutral. In this case, any decision made by a Touch Judge leading to his dismissal may be disregarded. Any misconduct by a Touch Judge should be reported by the Referee to the appropriate authority.*

Report misconduct quickly

11. *(b) If a Touch Judge wishes to report a player's misconduct he should advise the Referee as quickly as possible in order to avoid any unnecessary continuation of play. Any subsequent penalty is awarded where the offence occurred and not where play is subsequently stopped.*

No undue interference

A Touch Judge must not unduly interfere with the Referee's control of the game by reporting incidents which have obviously been seen by the Referee.

Section 16. Duties of Referee and Touch Judges (continued)

Indicating Touch	13. A Touch Judge shall indicate when and where the ball goes into touch by raising his flag and standing opposite the point of entry into touch except in the case of 'ball back' (see Section 9 para. 4) when the Touch Judge must indicate that no ground has been gained by waving his flag above his head accentuating the movement in the direction of the kicker's goal-line.
Indicating Touch in-Goal	14. If the ball enters touch in-goal the Touch Judge shall wave the flag across the body and below the waist. With the other hand he/she points to either the goal line or twenty metre line depending on where play should be re-started. Do not point to the player who made the ball dead.
Judge kicks at goal	15. Touch Judges shall assist the Referee in judging kicks at goal. (See Section 6 para.10).
Indicating 10 Metres	16. When a free kick is being taken, and the referee chooses to take up a position at the mark, both Touch Judges shall take up a position near the touch line ten metres beyond the mark to act as a guide for the team which is required to retire. (See Section 13 Note to Laws 3 and 4 "Retiring ten metres".)
Official Inquiry	17. In cases where circumstances in connection with the match are likely to be made the subject of official investigation, the Referee and Touch Judges shall report to the investigating authority only and shall refrain from expressing criticism or comment through other channels.
Touch Judge Responsibility	18. It is a duty of the Touch Judges to replace a corner post which is displaced during a game, or ensure that it is replaced appropriately without causing delay to a game.

NOTES

<i>Ball swerving back into Playing Field</i>	13. A Touch Judge should not raise his flag immediately the ball in flight crosses the touch line if there is a possibility of it swerving or being blown back into the playing field because play is not stopped if the ball does drop back into the playing field.
<i>Controversial decisions</i>	15. If any decision by a Referee is likely to be controversial, the Referee may explain his reasons for making the decisions if by so doing unnecessary misunderstanding or controversy can be avoided.

SECTION 17

REFREE'S SIGNALS

Signal nature of offence

Indicate how play re-starts

Example

Signals for Re-starting Play

Relating to Scoring

1. When the Referee is required to give a decision he shall whenever possible indicate the nature of his decision by making the appropriate signal.

2. When he wishes to stop the game temporarily, he shall, after blowing his whistle, indicate the nature of the decision, point to the offending player and then signal as to how the game is to be re-started.

For example if the halfback puts the ball into his own side of the scrum the referee:

- (1) blows his whistle and indicates the scrum half has put the ball in wrongly.

- (2) points to the offending halfback

- (3) signals that a penalty has been given.

The Referee can, with advantage, repeat the signal indicating the nature of the offence in order to reduce the need for verbal explanations to the players. This applies particularly to scrum offences where some of the forwards may miss the first signal if they still have their heads down in the scrum.

3. The signals to be given by a Referee are set out below.
Scrum. With bent arms, palms of hands facing each other at shoulder level, fingers together and slightly bent, bring the tops of the fingers together with a slight downward movement and then point to the team awarded the loose head and put-in.

Penalty Kick. Face the non-offending team and extend an arm forward with the hand slightly higher than the shoulder level and the palm of the hand at right angles to the ground.

Differential Penalty. Extend the arm as for an ordinary penalty then move the arm to the upright position. Perform this action twice with the whole movement being continuous and decisive.

Drop-out. Point to the place from which the drop kick is to be taken.
Try. Point to where try is awarded. Instruct the Touch Judge to stand on this point temporarily as a guide to the player who is to take the goal kick.

Penalty Try. Point to midway between the posts and take up position temporarily on this point as a guide to the kicker.

Possible Eight Point Try. This term is used to indicate that a penalty kick has been awarded for foul play against a try scorer. Instruct a Touch Judge to take up position in front of the posts ten metres from the goal line before retiring behind the goal posts to judge on the conversion attempt.

Goal & Field Goal. Raise hand above head.

2 Point Field goal. Raise hand above head with two fingers pointed upwards and face the tunnel or official timekeeper. (Refer S6, Page 12 Law 1)

Section 17. Referee's Signals (continued)

Signals made when play is not necessarily stopped

Try disallowed. Wave hands, palms facing downwards across and in front of the body below the waist.

Play on. Wave the hands chest high palms facing away from the chest across and in front of the body.

Ball touched in flight. Raise one hand above the head and tap the tips of the fingers with the fingers of the other hand.

Count of Tackles is cancelled. Raise clenched fist above head and wave from side to side.

Player "held" and to play-the-ball. Indicate that players not concerned with the play-the-ball must retire by making a signal chest-high, similar to the breast stroke in swimming.

Signals indicating infringements

1. **Knock-on.** With hands in front of the body, below the waist, slightly apart, palms facing forward and fingers pointing towards the ground, make two or three forward movements of the hands.

2. **Forward Pass.** Make a forward movement with the straight arm indicating the line of flight of the ball.

Scrum

3. **Halfback feeds "own second row".** With hands and arms mime the action of the halfback putting the ball into the scrum, but exaggerate the angle at which it was thrown.

4. **Halfback "dummies".** Mime the action of the halfback but emphasise the backward motion of the hands.

5. **Halfback fails to retire.** Make a movement with the hand indicating the direction the halfback should have taken.

6. **Halfback throws the ball upwards into the scrum.** Mime the action of the halfback exaggerating the upward movement of the hands.

7. **Hooker strikes prematurely.** Raise a foot from the ground in front of the body with the leg straight.

8. **Hooker packs with a Loose Arm.** Raise one arm sideways with elbow bent so that the hand hangs downwards.

9. **Prop strikes for the ball.** Raise a foot from the ground by extending the leg sideways from the body.

10. **Handling in the scrum.** Make a backward scooping action with the hand.

11. **Collapsing the scrum.** Make a lifting motion with the hand.

12. **More than seven backs.** Point to one of the players who is detached from the scrum and who normally is in the pack and then hold up seven fingers.

13. **More than six players pushing in the scrum.** Point to the player who is pushing and who is not normally in the scrum and then hold up six fingers.

Section 17. Referee's Signals (continued)

Play-the-ball

14. **Tackled player delays regaining his feet.** Flick the hand in an upward direction.
15. **Tackled player 'dummies' when dropping the ball.** Mime the action of the offending player exaggerating the upward direction.
16. **Tackled player fails to drop the ball correctly.** If the ball has been dropped between the legs indicate the path of the ball. If the ball has been dropped to the side, point with one hand to the side.
17. **Tackled player does not lift the ball clear of ground.** Make a lifting movement with the hand.
18. **Tackled player does not face opponents' in-goal.** Stand at the angle offending player adopted and then turn to face the opponents' in-goal.
19. **Tackled player fails to play-the-ball backwards or passes when he should have played the ball.** Mime the gesture of playing the ball.
20. **Tackled player obstructs or butts with his head after playing the ball.** Mime his action.
21. **Voluntary tackle.** Make a lifting movement with hand.
22. **The player marking the tackled player kicks or heels the ball.** Make a kicking movement with the foot.
23. **Player marking retains his hold on player playing the ball.** Make a decisive backward movement with one hand. This signal applies to any interference by the player marking when the ball is actually being played other than kicking prematurely or dangerously (paragraph 22 above).
24. **Tackler delays releasing tackled player.** Make a downward movement with the hands in front of the body below the waist.
25. **Offside at play-the-ball.** With a backward movement of the hand indicate that the player should be further back.
26. **Stealing of the ball from the tackled player.** Mime the action of snatching the ball from the opponent.
27. **Dragging tackled player after tackle is effective.** Mime the action of dragging.
28. **Team is tackled five successive times.** Raise arm vertically above head with fingers and thumb outstretched.
29. **Team is tackled six successive times.** Blow the whistle, raise the arm vertically above the head, then point to the side which is to gain possession and mime the gesture of playing the ball. The surrendering of the ball is referred to as the 'handover'.
30. **Count of tackle is cancelled and starts again.** Wave clenched fist from side to side above head.

Section 17. Referee's Signals (continued)

**Drop-out
or Penalty
Other
Infringements**

31. **Kicker fails to bring foot into contact with the ball.**
Tap the foot with one hand.
32. **Offside.** Indicate player should have been further back.
(See No. 25).
33. **Player in possession touches official.** Point to the player in possession and tap the chest with one hand.
34. **Obstruction.** Mime the offending player's action.
35. **Tripping.** Extend one foot forward as if to trip.
36. **Stiff arm tackle.** Raise an arm in front of the body with fist clenched and as the arm is moved forward tap the forearm with the other hand.
37. **Disputing decisions.** Place one hand on the mouth.
38. **Ball in Touch.** Point to appropriate Touch Judge.
39. **Extra time.** Raise both arms vertically above head.
40. **Ending Extra Time for Stoppage.** Wave one arm over head.
41. **Temporary Suspension of a Player.** Raise both arms with fingers outstretched for ten minutes suspension.
42. **Player directed to leave the field to receive attention for bleeding.** Draw the hand across the chest from side to side.
43. The Touch Judge cannot stop the play for any infringement but he may signal the nature of an infringement if the Referee is unsighted and seeks his guidance.
Signals which may be used by a Touch Judge and which are not included in Para. 3 above are:-
Touch. Flag is raised about the head at the point of entry into touch..
Ball Back. Flag waved above head accentuating backward movement.
Touch in-Goal. Flag waved across the body, below the waist, and, with the other hand, point to either the goal line or 20 metre line depending on where play should be re-started. Do not point to the player who made the ball dead.
Successful Kick at Goal. Raise flag above head.
Unsuccessful Kick at Goal. Wave flag across and in front of the body below the waist. If the ball goes over the dead ball line, tap the ground with the end of the flag stick.
Dead Ball Line. Wave flag up and down between shoulder and knee and then point to appropriate re-start position.

**Touch Judge
signals**

This index to the laws of rugby league is based on *RUGBY LEAGUE LAWS OF THE GAME INTERNATIONAL LEVEL WITH NOTES ON THE LAWS* as published by the New Zealand Rugby League.

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2022 SAFEPLAY CODE



**MORE
THAN A
GAME.**

NATIONAL SAFEPLAY CODE

For players in teams aged 15 years and under

The Safeplay Code was developed to emphasise safety and good conduct within the game of Rugby League by creating the best possible on-field environment and actively controlling undesirable actions. The code applies to all players up to and including the under 15 years age group.

The NZRL trusts that players, coaches, parents and supporters will wholeheartedly embrace the code to help ensure a positive rugby league experience is had by all to promote a life long passion for the game and sport.

Club officials, coaches, supporters players and referees are the key to the successful application of the Safeplay code.

1

Tackle Zone

THE CODE: *Tackles above the armpits are not permitted.*

APPLICATION:

- (a) When the ball-carrier is running with an upright posture, any tackle in which the defender's arm(s) make contact above the armpit constitutes an infringement.
- (b) It is an infringement for a defender/tackler to set upon the head or neck region of the ball-carrier.
- (c) A defender, in front of a ball-carrier who is diving or running with a "stooped" or "burrowing" posture, is permitted to come in contact with the ball-carriers shoulder provided the defender's arm(s) extends down the shoulder and trunk i.e. underneath the ball-carrier,

2 Dangerous Tackles

THE CODE: 2.1 The tacklers legs cannot be used to trip or to throw.

APPLICATION:

The use of the legs in a tackle is not permissible. Using the legs (even if the defender has a handhold on the ball-carrier) to **trip** or **throw** constitutes an infringement.

THE CODE: 2.2 Adopting a crotch hold is misconduct.

APPLICATION:

Adopting a crotch hold i.e. by placing either a hand or arm in the crotch region is an infringement.

THE CODE: 2.3 No vertical lift in a tackle is permitted.

APPLICATION:

Vertical lifting in a tackle is an infringement.

No defender(s) during the course of a tackle are permitted to vertically lift the ball-carrier.

If the possibility of a **vertical** lift occurs i.e. **one** or both feet of the ball-carrier have been lifted off the ground, the referee must immediately blow the whistle to prevent the tackle from continuing. (*This is not to be confused with a tackle that, in the same motion, knocks a player off their feet.*)

THE CODE: 2.4 Ball-Carrier cannot be lifted and driven.

APPLICATION:

A tackle that results in the ball-carrier being lifted and remaining off the ground while the tackler takes two (2) or more steps to drive the player (in any direction and while the ball-carriers feet are off the ground) is an infringement.

THE CODE: 2.5 The additional following action(s) by a tackler will also incur an immediate penalty.

APPLICATION:

When a player in possession is running, it is an infringement for a defender chasing from behind to lift and attempt to lift (hitch up) the trailing foot of the ball-carrier.

3 Shoulder Charge

THE CODE: A defender cannot "shoulder charge" a ball-carrier to affect a tackle.

APPLICATION:

Application: A defender who runs at a ball-carrier and **without attempting to tackle, grab or hold the ball-carrier**, charges to make contact with the shoulder or with the upper arm (tucked into the side) is guilty of an infringement.

4 Vicious Palm

THE CODE: *An attacking player cannot thrust out an arm to contact the defender above the shoulder.*

APPLICATION:

Any **attacking** player who violently **punches or thrusts** out an arm or uses an outstretched stiff arm so that the hand or fist contacts the neck, face or head of a defender commits an infringement. (This section does not state that a player cannot legitimately 'palm' the head, neck or face).

5 Slinging

THE CODE: *The use of the ball-carriers arm, or jersey to sling or swing a player is prohibited.*

APPLICATION:

A defender who uses the arm or jersey of the ball-carrier to **sling or swing** the player in a tackle commits an infringement.

6 Flopping

THE CODE: *A defender cannot drop or fall on a prone player.*

APPLICATION:

It is an infringement for a defender to drop, dive or fall on a player in possession of the ball who is prone or stationary on the ground and not attempting to play-on.
(A simple hand-on completes the tackle).

7 Surrender (in the tackle)

THE CODE: *Ball-carriers may surrender in the tackle. When small and/or inexperienced players are involved in a "surrender", defenders must not complete the tackle.*

APPLICATION:

This rule is designed to protect beginners and small players by minimising risk and eliminating excessively robust play.

The referee, not the player, calls "held". Players who are at an obvious disadvantage because of low levels of experience, are of small stature or show a lack of skill are to be protected when in possession of the ball and being tackled.

A halt to play is called (by the referee) when these players submit to the tackle or are held, subdued or their progress is halted by bigger or more experienced players.

Failure by a tackler(s) to respond to the referees call is an infringement.

8

Verbal Abuse / Foul Language

THE CODE: *The use of obscene expletives, threatening or denigrating words is not permitted.*

APPLICATION:

Verbal abuse, obscene language and sledging, including comments or words that threaten or denigrate an opponent, referee or supporter's hauora/wellbeing is an infringement. (If the individual cannot be identified, the team should be cautioned through the coach and the captain).

9

Scrum

THE CODE: *Pushing or pulling in, or rotating a scrum is not permitted.*

APPLICATION:

All scrums are to be de-powered.

Scrum will form as per the following instructions: Form, Engage & Hold. A team that deliberately **pushes or pulls** in, or **rotates** a scrum is guilty of an infringement.

Once the ball has been fed into the scrum, hookers **only** may strike for the ball. Second row players can **lift** a foot to rake the ball out of the scrum, but cannot step forward over the ball to cause the ball to come out of the scrum.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

It is mandatory that any act that transgresses the Safeplay code be followed by a penalty, plus a caution & instruction to the offender. The 'sin-bin' does not apply to Kiwi league Kids (Development & Education) football. Any additional action to a penalty is "temporary suspension" with a replacement of the offender for the remainder of that period of play. A player returning to the field after suspension and who is guilty of further misconduct is to be dismissed without replacement.

For players aged 13-15 years, international law will apply for misconduct.

Advantage Play & the Safeplay Code

A penalty kick must follow any infringement.

1. If no advantage occurs, the penalty is to be awarded immediately.
2. If an advantage occurs, the penalty is to be awarded either at the breakdown in play immediately after the misconduct occurred (unless a try is imminent) or where the act of misconduct occurred, whichever is to the greater advantage to the non-offending team.
3. When a try has been scored in the same play in which the act of misconduct occurred or in the immediate play thereafter (the imminent factor) the penalty kick, additional to the conversion, will be awarded in front of the goal posts. A kick at goal must be taken from the penalty kick (place or drop) and play restarted from the centre on the half-way line irrespective of the outcome of the kick.





**MORE
THAN A
GAME.**

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