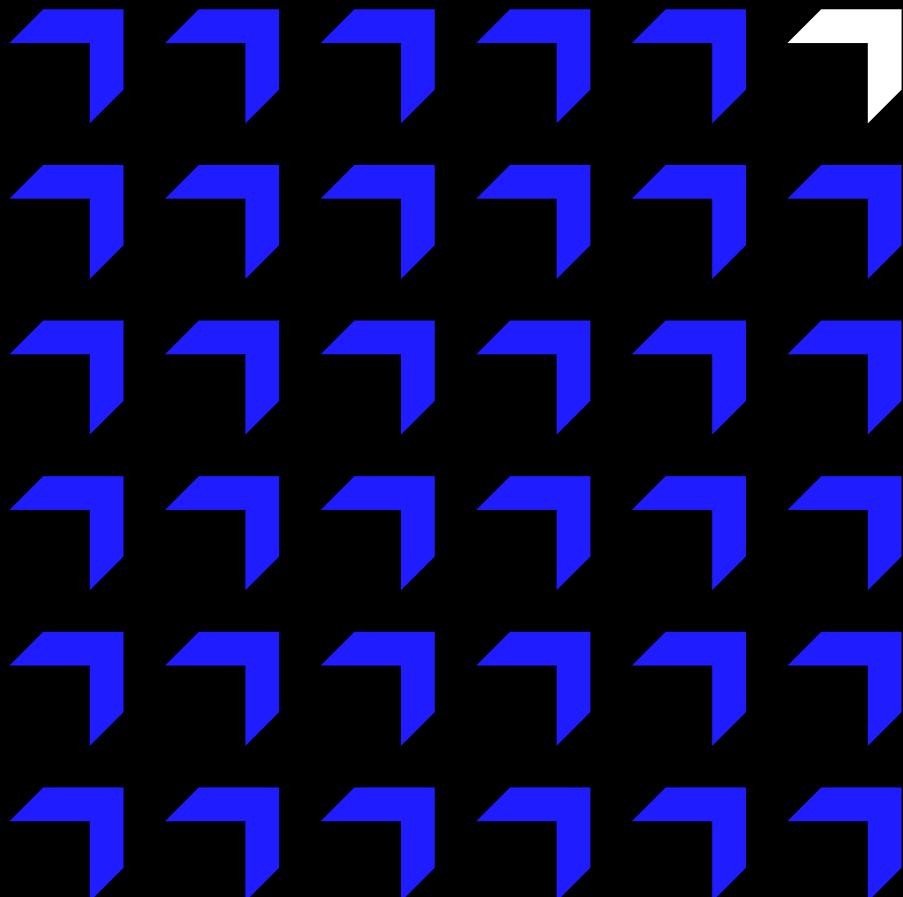
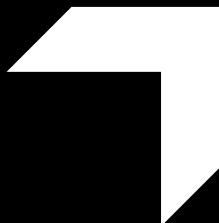
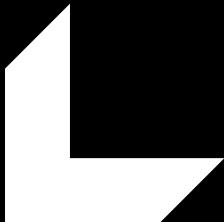


# INTERNATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE



2026 INTERNATIONAL  
LAWS OF THE GAME  
WITH NOTES ON THE LAWS



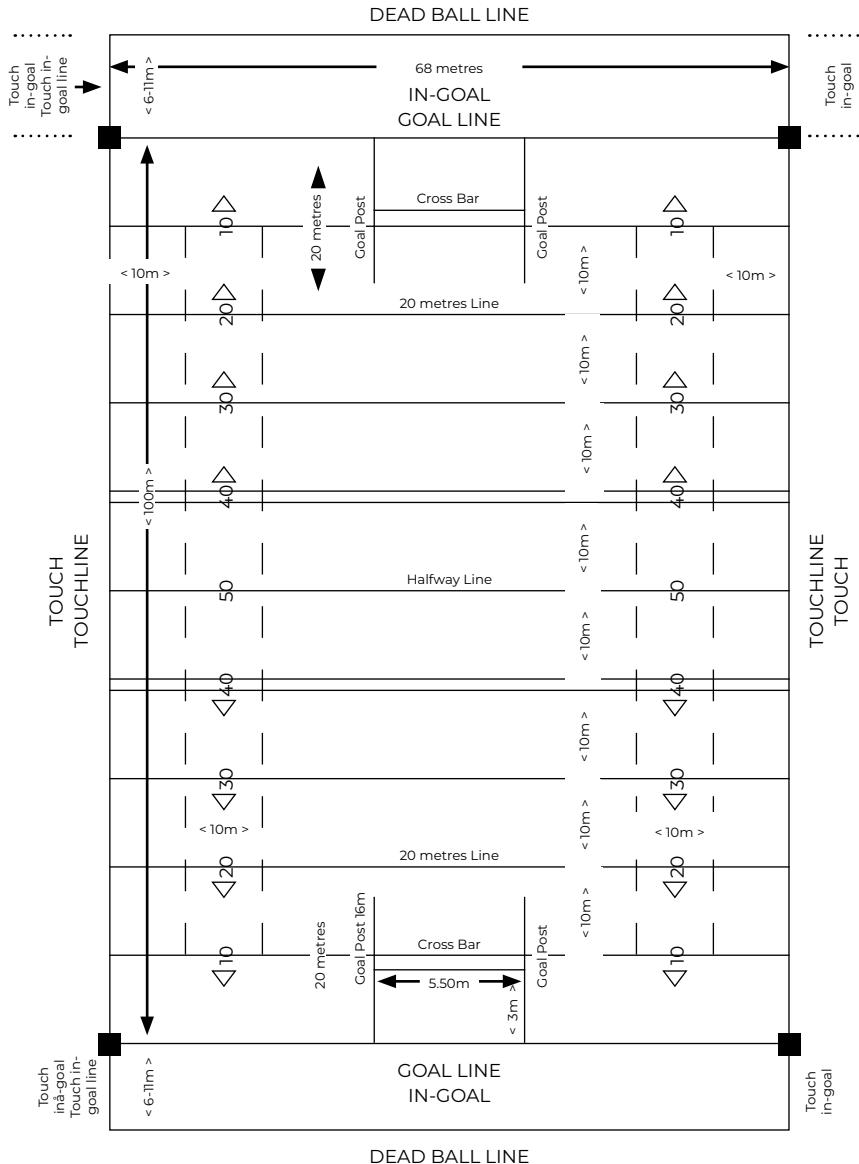


**THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
LAWS OF  
THE GAME  
AND NOTES ON  
THE LAWS**

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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)

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### 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. L-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.



## SECTION 2 - GLOSSARY

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

<b>ACCIDENTAL STRIKE</b>	when a ball strikes a player who makes no attempt to play at the ball.
<b>ADVANTAGE</b>	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.
<b>ATTACKING TEAM</b>	is the team which at the time has a territorial advantage.
<b>BACK</b>	as applied to a player means one who is not taking part in the scrum.
<b>BALL BACK</b>	means to play the ball from where the ball was kicked after it has entered touch on the full.
<b>BEHIND</b>	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.
<b>BLIND SIDE</b>	means the side of the scrum or of the play-the-ball nearer to touch (cf. open side).
<b>CHARGING DOWN</b>	is blocking the path of the ball with hands, arm or body as it rises from an opponent's kick.
<b>CONVERTING A TRY</b>	is the act of kicking a goal following the scoring of a try.
<b>CORNER POST</b>	is a post placed at the intersection of each touch line and goal line. The post shall be of non-rigid material and shall be not less than 1.25m. high. The corner posts are in touch in-goal.
<b>DEAD BALL</b>	means that the ball is out of play.
<b>DEFENDING TEAM</b>	is the team opposing the attacking team (see above).
<b>DIFFERENTIAL PENALTY</b>	differs in one respect from a Penalty Kick in that a goal cannot be scored from it.
<b>DROP GOAL</b>	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.
<b>DROP KICK</b>	is a kick whereby the ball is dropped from the hands (or hand) and is kicked immediately it rebounds from the ground.

## Section 2. Glossary (Continued)

<b>DROP-OUT</b>	means a drop kick from between the posts or from the centre of the 20m line when bringing the ball back into play.
<b>DUMMY</b>	is the pretence of passing or otherwise releasing the ball while still retaining possession of it.
<b>FIELD OF PLAY</b>	is the area bounded by, but not including, the touch lines and goal lines.
<b>FORWARD</b>	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.
<b>FORWARD PASS</b>	is a throw towards the opponents' dead ball line (see section 10).
<b>FOUL PLAY</b>	refers to the types of Misconduct specified in Section 15 – Law 1(a) (b) (c) (d) (l) and (m).
<b>FREE KICK</b>	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 kicking into touch on the full.
<b>FULL TIME</b>	means the end of the game.
<b>GENERAL PLAY</b>	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, tap restart, play the ball or Scrum.
<b>GOAL</b>	see Section 6.
<b>GROUNDING THE BALL</b>	means (a) placing the ball on the ground with hand or hands or (b) Exerting 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.
<b>HALF TIME</b>	means the end of the first half of the game.
<b>HANDOVER</b>	is the surrendering of the ball to the opposition after a team has been tackled the statutory number of successive times (Section 11 Law 7)
<b>HEEL</b>	is when a player propels the ball behind them with the sole or heel of their foot.
<b>HOOK</b>	is the act of the hooker when they strike with a foot for the ball in the scrum.
<b>IN-GOAL</b>	see Plan (Section 1).
<b>IN POSSESSION</b>	means to be holding or carrying the ball.



## Section 2. Glossary (Continued)

<b>KICK</b>	means making intentional contact with the ball with any part of the leg (except the heel) from knee to toe inclusive. An indicator is a change to the normal running gait.
<b>KICK OFF</b>	see Section 8
<b>KNOCK-ON</b>	means to knock the ball towards the opponents' dead ball line with hand or arm, while playing at the ball.
<b>LOOSE ARM</b>	is an offence by the hooker if he packs with one arm loose in the scrum.
<b>LOOSE BALL</b>	is when during play the ball is not held by a player and not being scrummaged.
<b>LOOSE HEAD</b>	refers to the front row forward in the scrum who is nearest to the referee.
<b>MARK</b>	is the point at which a penalty kick or free kick is awarded or a scrum is formed.
<b>OBSTRUCTION</b>	is the illegal act of impeding an opponent who does not have the ball.
<b>OFFSIDE</b>	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).
<b>ON SIDE</b>	means that a player is not offside.
<b>ON THE FULL</b>	means the ball is kicked over a given line without first bouncing.
<b>OPTIONAL KICK</b>	is the kick to be taken from the 20m restart. The kick can be taken in any manner and kicked in any direction. It is in play from the moment it is kicked.
<b>OPEN SIDE</b>	means the side of the scrum or the play-the-ball further from touch (cf. Blind Side).
<b>PACK</b>	refers collectively to the forwards of any one team. To pack down means to form a scrum.
<b>PASS</b>	is the throw of a ball from one player to another.
<b>PENALISE</b>	is to award a penalty kick against an offending player.
<b>PENALTY KICK</b>	see Section 13.
<b>PLACE KICK</b>	is to kick the ball after it has been placed on the ground for that purpose.
<b>PLAYING AREA</b>	is the area enclosed by the fence, or other such line of demarcation, which prevents the encroachment of spectators.
<b>PLAYING FIELD</b>	is the area bounded by, but not including the touch lines and dead ball lines.
<b>PLAY-THE-BALL</b>	is the act of bringing the ball into play after a tackle or when the ball goes into touch in general play. (see Section 11).

## Section 2. Glossary (Continued)

<b>PROP</b>	is the front row forward in each team nearest to the scrum half who is putting the ball into the scrum.
<b>PUNT</b>	is a kick whereby the ball is dropped from the hand or hands and is kicked before it touches the ground.
<b>PUT-IN</b>	(also known as FEEDING THE SCRUM) is the rolling of the ball into the scrum.
<b>REBOUND</b>	see Accidental Strike.
<b>RICOCHET</b>	see Accidental Strike.
<b>RUCK</b>	is the area, at the play-the-ball, between the player playing the ball and the marker.
<b>SCRUM</b>	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.
<b>SHOULDER CHARGE</b>	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 (tucked into the side). (Refer Section 15)
<b>STRIKE</b>	as applied to the foot means to attempt to secure possession of the ball in a scrum.
<b>TAP RESTART</b>	is the restart to the game following a successful 40 – 20 or 20 – 40 kick. The ball must remain in the hands of the player when it is touched by the foot at which point it is in play.
<b>TACKLE</b>	see Section 11.
<b>TIMEKEEPER</b>	An official who is appointed to keep the official time of the game
<b>TOUCH DOWN</b>	is the intentional grounding of the ball by a defending player in their own in-goal.
<b>TOUCH IN-GOAL</b>	see Section 9.
<b>TRY</b>	see Section 6.
<b>UPRIGHT TACKLE</b>	is where the player in possession is effectively tackled without being brought to the ground (see Section 11).
<b>VIDEO REFEREE</b>	A match official who the referee can refer decisions to and who will adjudicate on those decisions by looking at video replays.
<b>VOLUNTARY TACKLE</b>	is where the player in possession voluntarily stops play when not effectively tackled (see Section 11).
<b>ZERO TACKLE</b>	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.



## 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 IRL 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 IRL Board.

### Ball deflated

3. The Referee shall blow their whistle immediately they notice that the size and shape of the ball no longer comply with the Laws of the Game.

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### 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 they 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 play restarts from the previous play the ball. If a tackle has been completed and it is noticed that the ball has burst then the ball is changed and play continues from that play the ball.*

## SECTION 4 - THE PLAYER AND PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

### 13-a-side

1. The game shall be played by two teams each consisting of not more than thirteen players on the field at any one time.

### Substitutes

2. (a) Each team may nominate a maximum of four replacements before the start of the game. Their names along with those of the players must be given to the referee before the start of the game. A maximum of 8 interchanges will be allowed from the 17 named players.

Substitutions shall be sanctioned by the Referee or by an official appointed to oversee the substitution process.

(b) Where a player is bleeding, the Referee shall direct him/her to leave the field for attention in which event he/she may be replaced. This replacement counts for the purpose of 2(a) above.

(c) An 18th Player Replacement can be activated:

- Where two of a team's players in a match have been designated ineligible to return to the field by the team medical officer following a head injury assessment;
- Where one of a team's players is designated ineligible to return to the field by the Team Medical Officer due to any injury (head or otherwise), where the relevant injury:
  - (a) was caused by the foul play of an opposition player; and
  - (b) the opposition player was sin-binned or dismissed from the field as a result of the foul play.

### NOTES

#### Substitutes

2. *A player other than a player who is replacing an injured player who has left the field cannot be substituted during a play-the-ball except when play is stopped because of injury. If a substitution is effected when a kick at goal is to be taken, the substitute shall not be allowed to take the kick.*

#### Late Arrival

*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.*



## Section 4. The player and players' equipment (Continued)

### Number and Naming of Players

3. (a) For ease of identification, players' clothing must have 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 here under.

#### Backs

- (1) Full Back
- (2) Right Wing
- (3) Right Centre
- (4) Left Centre
- (5) Left Wing
- (6) Stand off or five eighth
- (7) Scrum Half

#### Forwards

- (8) Prop
- (9) Hooker
- (10) Prop
- (11) Second Row Forward
- (12) Second Row Forward
- (13) Loose or Lock Forward

(b) The minimum number of players per team allowed on the field in a match is 9. Should there be 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). Dismissed players are not deemed as current participants.

### Players' Equipment

4. (a) A player shall not wear anything that might prove dangerous to other players.

(b) A player's normal gear shall consist of a numbered jersey of distinctive colour and/or pattern, a pair of shorts, socks of a distinctive colour and/or pattern and studded boots or shoes.

(c) Protective clothing may be worn provided it contains nothing of a rigid or dangerous nature.

(d) The Referee shall order a player to remove any part of equipment which might be considered dangerous 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 restart of the game would otherwise be delayed.

### Dangerous Equipment

#### 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.*





## Section 4. The player and players' equipment (Continued)

### Similar Colours

(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 they may, at their discretion, order either team to change jerseys in accordance with the rules governing the competition in which the game is played.

### Studs

(f) Studs on boots or shoes shall not have sharp edges or pose a risk of injury to other players.

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### NOTES

#### Colours

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 necessary, the start of the game is not delayed.*

*Clubs not wearing their registered colours should be reported to the appropriate authority by the Referee unless the reason for not doing so is self-evident or known beforehand.*

## SECTION 5 - MODE OF PLAY

<b>Object</b>	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).
<b>Start of Play</b>	2. The captains of the two teams shall toss the coin in the presence of the Referee. The captain winning the toss shall decide to either kick off or choose which end their team shall defend. The losing captain shall take the other of the alternatives.
<b>Mode of Play</b>	3. Once play has started any player who is on side or not out of play can run with the ball kick it in any direction and throw or knock it any direction other than towards their opponents' dead ball line (see Section 10 for Knock-on and Forward Pass).
<b>Tackling</b>	4. A player who during play is holding the ball may be tackled by an opposing player or players in order to prevent them from running with the ball or from kicking or passing it to one of their own team (see Section 11 for Tackle).
<b>Obstruction</b>	5. A player who is not holding the ball shall not be tackled or obstructed (see Section 15).

### NOTES

*Shoulder Charge*

4. *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.*

## SECTION 6 - SCORING - TRIES AND GOALS

<b>Value</b>	1. A try shall count four points.
<b>Try and Goal</b>	A conversion goal or penalty goal shall count two points. A drop goal during play shall count one point.
<b>Deciding winners</b>	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>Try – How scored</b>	3. A try is scored when:- (a) A player first grounds the ball in their opponents' in-goal, provided that they are 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 them 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.
<b>Sliding Try</b>	

### NOTES

Drawn game	2. <i>In some competitions where the game, after 80 minutes is drawn, an extra period of time can be played in an attempt to determine a winner.</i>
Picking up in in-goal	3. (a) <i>Picking up the ball is not grounding it and a player may pick up the ball in their opponents' in-goal in order to ground it in a more advantageous position.</i>  <i>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.</i>
Ball on goal line	
Incorrectly grounding	<i>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.</i>
Release after grounding	<i>A try should not be disallowed because the player who correctly grounds the ball fails to retain it.</i>
Referee unsighted	<i>The Referee should not disallow a try because he was not in a position to see the grounding of the ball.</i>
No try in a scrum	3. (b) <i>A try cannot be scored by grounding the ball when it is in the scrum.</i>
Boring through	<i>A player may pick up the ball at the base of the scrum and bore through their own forwards to ground the ball for a try.</i>



## Section 6. Scoring – Tries and Goals (continued)

### Penalty Try

(d) The Referee may award a penalty try if, in their opinion, or that of the video referee, 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) An attacking player carrying the ball 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.

### 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, or if available, the Video Referee, may award a try, but the Referee may take into consideration advice given by the Touch Judges before arriving at their decision. They 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 (and not touching or being touched in flight by any other player) in any of these circumstances:-
  - (a) by a place kick or a drop 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

Ball blown back

6. *If, after passing completely over the cross-bar the ball is blown back, a goal is still allowed.*

## Section 6. Scoring – Tries and Goals (continued)

### Drop Goal

7. A drop goal is scored by a drop kick during play from any position in the field of play and counts one point. 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 differential penalty.*

Advise where to place the ball

8. *The 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 them or, in an extreme case, dismiss them. They 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.*

Kicking tee

9. (b) *Kicking tees are permitted for starts of play, restarts 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 they shall raise their flag above their head. If the kick is unsuccessful they shall wave their flag in front of them and below the waist. If there is no disagreement between the Touch Judges their decision shall be accepted. In the event of a disagreement, the Referee shall decide.

### NOTES

Accepting Touch 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. They should move sufficiently to ensure that at all times they have 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. Once having informed the Referee of their intention to kick at goal from a penalty award the kicker shall not do otherwise.*

## SECTION 7 - TIMEKEEPING

### Length of game

1. The game shall normally be of eighty minutes duration.

### Interval

At half time there shall be an interval of ten 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 their 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 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 award 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.

### 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. Otherwise play shall be restarted with a scrum at the point where the ball was when play was stopped with the team then in possession or last in possession, having the loose head and the put-in.
- (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 they are 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. In the event that a requirement to release the ball may endanger the injured player, the Referee may, at their discretion, order the ball to be played by a colleague of the injured player.

### 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 their watch and starts it again when the Referee waves one arm above their head to signal play is about to recommence.*

#### Reduce stoppages

5. *The Referee should endeavour to reduce stoppages 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 team which loses the toss for choice of ends kicks off to start the first half of the game and their opponents kick off to start the second half.

When points have been scored, the team against which the points have been scored shall kick off to restart the game. The kicking team will restart the game with a play the ball when finding touch other than on the full. It should be noted that the law applies to goal line, 20 metre restarts and optional kick restarts. The resulting play the ball will be taken on the 20 metre line opposite the point of entry to touch. The captain of the kicking team has the option to move the position of the play the ball to the 10 metre mark from touch or centre field.

### 20 Metre Restarts

2. The game is restarted with an optional kick from centre of the 20m line if:
  - (a) An 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), from a kick off from the centre of the halfway line, or from a goal line drop out (see 4(g) and 6(b) below).
  - (b) An attacking player infringes in the 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 defending 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. Defending players shall not advance in front of the ball before it is kicked. Any deliberate offence by either team shall incur a penalty (Refer Law 8, Page 20).

The first tackle following a 20m optional kick is 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

3. If the ball goes dead in the opponents' in-goal from a penalty kick (not necessarily a kick at goal) the game is restarted with a drop-out by a defending player from the centre of the 20m line.

### Drop-out from Goal line

4. The game is restarted with a drop-out by a defending player from the centre if their goal line if:
  - (a) A defending player last touches the ball before it goes over the dead ball line or into touch in-goal.
  - (b) A defending player accidentally infringes in the in-goal area.
  - (c) A defending player touches down in the in-goal area.
  - (d) A defending player in possession is tackled in the in-goal area.
  - (e) A defending player kicks the ball into touch on the full from their own in-goal.
  - (f) A defending player kicks or passes the ball in their 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 or a 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.
  - (h) 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 or a goal line dropout.
  - (i) Where a kick is made dead by a defending player straddling the dead ball line or touch in-goal line.
5. See Law 2 of this section re ball caught on the full before being made 'dead in-goal'.

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### NOTES

*Intentional breach in-goal*

4. (b) *If a defending player in their own in-goal is penalised for 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).*



## 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 they:
  - (a) Advance in front of the appropriate line before kicking the ball.
  - (b) Kick the ball on the full over the touch line, touch in-goal, or over the dead ball line.
  - (c) Kick the ball so that it fails to travel at least ten metres forward into the field of play.
  - (d) Kick the ball other than in the prescribed manner.

### NOTES

Players not retiring 10m

6. (a) If a kick to start or restart 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 their offence must be assumed to be deliberate.

Ball hits post

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

If a team kicks a drop out on the full over the touchline or kicks a drop out so that it fails to travel at least 10 metres forward in the field of play, play will restart with a play the ball 10 metres out from the goal line and 10m in from touch, rather than a penalty kick from the centre of the 10-metre line.

Contested 20m drop-outs

If a team kicks a drop out on the full over the touchline or kicks a drop out so that it fails to travel at least 10 metres forward in the field of play, play will restart with a play the ball 10 metres out from the 20-metre line and 10m in from touch, rather than a penalty kick from the centre of the 20-metre line.

Contested 20m optional kick

If a team takes a 20-metre optional kick and it travels on the full over the touch line, play will restart with a play the ball 10 metres out from the 20 metre line and 10 metres in from touch, rather than a penalty kick from the centre of the 20 metre line.



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

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### NOTES (Continued)

*For the avoidance of doubt, contested restart kicks described above (goal line and 20-metre drop outs) must be capable of being contested in the opinion of the referee. That is, a kick where there is a reasonable opportunity for a member(s) of the kicking team and receiving team to play at the ball to gain possession. Typically, these are either high cross-field kicks or bouncing cross-field kicks towards chasers from the kicking team with the clear intent to contest the ball.*

*The contested restarts described above apply only to breaches by the kicking team where the kick either does not travel 10 metres forward or goes into touch on the full. If players from either team make contact with the ball before it has the opportunity to travel 10 metres a full penalty will still apply.*

*If the contested restart as described above does not travel 10 metres forward or is kicked into touch on the full, and the half time/ full time hooter sounds prior to the play the ball taking place, time will be extended until the next tackle/ stoppage after the ball has been played.*



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

### - other players

7. Any other player shall be penalised if they:-
  - (a) Wilfully touch the ball from a kick off or drop-out before it has travelled ten metres forward in the field of play.
  - (b) Run in front of one of their own team who is kicking off or dropping out.
  - (c) Approach 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 restarting of play from an optional kick shall be taken where the offence took place.

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.



## 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 they regain their feet in which case, they shall play the ball in the field of play.

### 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. (a) The ball is in touch in goal when it or a player in contact with it touches the touch in goal line, or any object on or outside the touch in goal line. A player, who is in possession of the ball, is not in touch in goal if they make contact with the corner post.
- (b) The ball is dead in goal when it or a player in contact with it touches the dead ball line or any object on or outside the dead ball line.

### Dead in goal

#### 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, themselves being in the field of play is in contact with another player who is in touch.

Ball dead

Where the ball which is stationary in the in-goal area comes in contact with a player in touch in-goal or over the dead ball line, the ball is deemed to have been made dead by that player.

Straddling the dead ball line

2. A kick in general play is made dead by a defending player straddling the dead ball line or touch in goal line, other than being caught on the full.

When the ball is dead

The non kicking team must allow the ball to bounce on the ground on or outside of the dead ball line and/or touch in goal lines for it to be made dead by the kicking team, otherwise play will be restarted with a goal line drop out.

Corner post touch in-goal

A corner post placed at the intersection of a touch line and a goal line is in touch in goal if the ball touches it when no one is in possession. If a player carrying the ball comes into contact with the corner post during general play then they are not touch in goal. It is a duty of the touch judge to replace a corner post which is displaced during the game.





## Section 9. Touch and Touch In- Goal (continued)

### Points of entry

- 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.

### Ball back

- If the ball is kicked by or bounces off a player in a forward direction (except from in-goal – Section 8 Law 4 (e) and it goes into touch on the full, a handover is given where contact with the ball was made (but not nearer than twenty metres to the touch line or ten (10) metres to the goal line) – (see Section 12).

### Touch from penalty

- If the ball is kicked into touch from a penalty kick the game is restarted by a free kick ten metres in-field opposite the point of entry into touch (see Section 13).

### 40 - 20 kick

- (a) Where a player kicks the ball in general play from any point in the area bounded by their own dead ball line, 40 metre line and the touch lines, and the ball finds touch, otherwise than on the full, at a point on the touch line between the opponents' 20 metre line and goal line, then the kicker's team shall recommence play with a tap restart. The restart will be taken 20 metres in from the touchline and in line with where the ball first crossed the touchline but no closer than 10 metres from the goal line.

### 20 - 40 kick

- (b) Where a player kicks the ball in general play from an area bounded by their own dead ball line, 20 metre line and touch lines and the ball finds touch, otherwise than on the full, at a point on the touchline between the opponents 40 metre line and the goal line, the kicking team shall begin play with a tap restart.

### NOTES

- See Section 8. Law 4 (e) in respect of kicking into touch on the full from in-goal.

### 40-20, 20-40 kick restart

- The tap restart may only be taken when the referee blows the whistle to restart play. Prior to blowing the whistle, the referee will give the defending team a 'reasonable time' to get in position. This will only occur when all match officials are in position and ready to officiate.

## Section 9. Touch and Touch In- Goal (continued)

### Play the Ball

7. Other than as outlined in laws. 4, 5 and 6 above, the game is restarted after the ball has gone into touch with a play the ball on the 20 metre line opposite the point of entry into touch but not nearer than ten (10) metres to the goal line. The captain of the kicking team has the option to move the position of the play the ball to the 10 metre mark from touch or centre field.

### Accidental strike

8. In all aspects of general play, a player who does not deliberately play at the ball (eg. ricochet or rebound) will not be disadvantaged by a consequent restart of play when the ball has gone dead or into touch.



## SECTION 10 - KNOCK-ON AND FORWARD PASS

<b>Deliberate</b>	1. A player shall be penalised if they deliberately knocks on or passes forward.
<b>Accidental</b>	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.
<b>Charge-down</b>	3. To charge-down a kick is permissible and is not a knock-on.
<b>Heading the ball</b>	4. It is illegal to head the ball in a forward direction.

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### NOTES

*Direction of pass*

1. *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 their opponents' goal line may throw the ball towards a colleague who is behind them 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 themselves. This is particularly noticeable when a running player makes a high, lobbed pass.*

*Scrum for forward pass*

*A forward pass in a passing movement is invariably caused by misjudgement and is rarely a deliberate offence. Play is restarted with a scrum after an accidental infringement.*

*Penalty for some passes*

*If the Referee is of the opinion that a player in forward giving a forward pass must have been well aware that the catcher was in front of them then the Referee is justified in ruling that the ball has been deliberately thrown forward.*

*Ball is blown or bounces forward*

*If the ball is passed correctly but bounces forward or is blown forward by the wind, there is no infringement and play should continue.*

*Knock-on over goal-line*

*After a player, from the field of play, knocks on into their opponent's in-goal area and they or a colleague touches down, play is restarted with a scrum where the knock-on occurred, except after a play-the-ball subject to Section 12, Law 10.*





## 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.

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#### NOTES

Foul "throws"

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

Mid-air tackle

*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 (see Section 15).*

Tackle below the knee

*When a player in possession is held in an upright position by two defenders, any other defender(s) must make initial contact to the player in possession above the knees/knee joint regardless of the point of impact. A player can still be penalised for any 'forceful, dangerous or unnecessary contact' at the legs that involves an unacceptable risk of injury to the player in possession.*



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

### When tackled:

#### Grounded

2. A player in possession is tackled:

(a) When they are 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 they are held by one or more opposing players in such a manner that they 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 they have succumbed to the tackle and wishes to be released in order to play the ball.

### NOTES

#### 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". It is not permissible for an attacking player to impede any defender from making a tackle.

#### Moving tackled player

2. (a) It is not permissible for a player to lend weight to a teammate in possession to gain momentum. Immediately this happens the Referee should call "Held". Momentum already generated would be taken into account.

#### Moving tackled player

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 they are brought to the ground, may be unfairly penalised.

#### Succumbing to tackle

2. (c) A player who is held and wishes to play the ball can make it evident that they have succumbed to the tackle by grounding the ball. It is to their advantage to do this to avoid the possibility of another opponent attempting to complete the tackle.

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





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

**Hand on player already grounded**

2. (d) When they are lying on the ground and an opponent places a hand on them.

**Leg Lifted**

(e) When, being held by one or more opposing players, the tackled player has one or more of their legs lifted off the ground.

**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 them from the point where the tackle is effected.

**Voluntary Tackle**

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

### NOTES

*Second movement tackle*



2. (d) When an attacking player is tackled within easy reach of the goal line they should be penalised if they make a second movement to place the ball over the line for a try.

*If an attacking player in possession is brought down near the goal line and the ball is not grounded it is permissible to place the ball over 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 on the ball behind the tackled player in order to drop on the ball as it is heeled, they are guilty of a voluntary tackle and should be penalised.

*If there is no acting back 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, they immediately regain their feet.*



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

### **Sliding tackle**

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

### **Verbal instructions 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. If the referee calls 'held' and a player simultaneously continues to run or offloads, as they have not heard the call of 'held', the referee will stop play and send the player back to play the ball.



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

### Sixth Tackle

7. (a) A team in possession of the ball shall be allowed five successive play-the-balls. A handover shall occur AFTER the fifth tackle in the following circumstances.

- The team is tackled a sixth time.
- The team in possession commits an accidental breach for which a scrum would normally be set or the ball goes into touch.
- A player is held up in the opponent's in-goal.
- The ball is kicked into touch on the full.

The handover will occur either at the point of the sixth tackle or 20m opposite where it entered 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.

### Accidental breach “zero tackle”

(b) Where an accidental breach occurs (knock-on, forward pass) and possession changes hands, the following tackle will be a zero tackle, not with standing that the team gaining possession may have gained a territorial advantage.

### NOTES

#### Point of infringement

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 was kicked.*

#### Indicating last tackle

*The Referee shall indicate the fifth tackle by raising one arm vertically with fingers and thumb out-stretched and the sixth tackle by blowing their whistle, not to stop the game, but as a signal to players that the ball has to be released for the opponents to play the ball.*

#### Opponent “touches” ball

*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”.*

#### Charging down Cancels count

*Charging down a kick counts as a “touch”  
“Touching” the ball cancels the count of play-the-balls and the next tackle counts as the first of six.*





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

### **Losing possession** - intentionally - accidentally

8. A tackled player shall not intentionally part with the ball other than by bringing it back into play in the prescribed manner. If, after being tackled, they accidentally lose possession, a scrum shall be formed except after the fifth play-the-ball.

### **“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.

#### NOTES

##### *Losing possession*

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 their knees or brought to the ground on their back may still pass the ball – provided they have not made it evident that they have succumbed to the tackle. They 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.*

##### *Stealing ball*

9. *The ball can be stolen from the player in possession at any stage prior to a tackle being completed when there is only one defender effecting the tackle.*

*If there are two or more defenders effecting the tackle and the ball is stolen, a penalty should be awarded except if the player in possession is attempting to ground the ball.*



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

10. The play-the-ball shall operate as follows.

**Release tackled player immediately**

(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 their feet where they are tackled, lift the ball clear of the ground, face their opponent's goal line and place the ball on the ground in front of their 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 the tackled player must make a genuine attempt to play the ball backwards with the foot.. The ball must not be kicked or heeled by the player marking them. The ball is in play when it has been played backwards.

**Acting halfback**

(f) A player of each team, to be known as the acting halfback, may stand immediately and directly behind their own player taking part in the play-the-ball and must remain in this position, until the play-the-ball movement is complete.

**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 half back 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.

(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.



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

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### NOTES

#### Disputed possession

10. (a) If any doubt arises as to which player should play-the-ball (i.e. 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 they are "in possession". If with hand or arm they are fairly clasping the ball to some other part of their person then they are "in possession".*

*Where play is irregularly affected and the stoppage cannot be attributed to any particular team, the referee will decide that a mutual infringement has occurred and play will restart with a replaying of the previous play the ball.*

#### Interfering with heel

*The tackler who is on the opponent's side of the player should remove themselves as quickly as possible so as not to interfere with the heel. If they do interfere then the referee should reset the tackle count allowing the team in possession another set of six tackles.*

#### Regain feet

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

*Where a tackled player, who fails to lift the ball clear of the ground when regaining their feet or fails to play the ball correctly, the referee will blow their whistle and restart the game with a play the ball to the non offending team.*

#### Tackle count restarted

10. (c) Where a team interferes with the smooth process of the play the ball or where their markers split early to close the play down, the referee will immediately signal that the team in possession has another set of six tackles, except where the tackle is affected within the 40-metre zone from the goal-line of the team in possession, where a penalty will be awarded.

#### Handover for illegal play of ball

10. (d) Where the player playing the ball fails to play the ball correctly, the referee will blow their whistle and award a handover.

#### Accidental deflection

10. (e) When a tackled player attempts to play the ball backwards but accidentally deflects the ball forward, the referee will blow their whistle and restart the game with a play the ball to the non-offending team.



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

Acting halfback

10. (f) Two players take part in the play-the-ball. All other players except the 'acting halfbacks' are onside 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 half back 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.

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 themselves from the area in which play is taking place.

Off side player raising hands

A player who realises they are out of play and is near play should raise their hands above their head. Taking this action does not, however, exonerate them from penalty if they interfere with play and the Referee feels that they could have avoided such interference.

Indicating ten metres

The Referee should usually position themselves 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.





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

### **Speed essential**

11. The play-the-ball must be performed as quickly as possible. The referee will reset the tackle count, giving the team in possession a new set of six tackles if any player intentionally delays the bringing of the ball back into play.

### **Tackling on or near the goal line**

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 they are deemed to be tackled in the in-goal area.



## SECTION 12 - THE SCRUM

### When formed

1. A scrum is formed to restart play whenever play is not being restarted with a kick off, a drop-out (Section 8), a penalty kick (Section 13) play-the-ball (Section 11) or optional kick/Tap (Sections 8 and 9).

### Formation of a 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 their 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 their front row forwards.

The loose forward of each team shall pack behind their second row forwards by placing their head in the space between them and wrap their arms around the second-row forwards.. 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 their weight to it.

### Scrums

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.

### NOTES

#### Attacking player

1. *When an attacking player, in possession of the ball, is unable to ground the ball in the opponent's in-goal, play is restarted with a play-the-ball ten metres from the goal line opposite where the player was held. The attacking player held up will play the ball and the tackle count will continue except after the fifth play the ball when play will restart with a handover (Section 11, Law 7).*

#### Loose arm

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

#### Locking the ball in a scrum

2. *If a team deliberately locks the ball in the scrum, a full penalty will be awarded.*



## Section 12. The Scrum (continued)

### Number of backs and players in a 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.

### Pushing

4. It is permissible for forwards to push 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. At the scrum, the non-offending team shall have the loose head and put-in.

### NOTES

#### 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 3-2-1, 3-1-0 or 3-1-1 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

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

#### 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 or knock-on etc.*

## Section 12. The Scrum (continued)

### 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 they shall immediately retire behind their own pack of forwards.

### Other players

7. The scrum half of the team not having the put-in shall retire immediately behind their last row of forwards. All other players outside the scrum, other than the scrum half 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.

### NOTES

Referee's side

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

Retiring scrum half

- (d) *Assuming the ball has been correctly scrummaged it is permissible for the scrum half to pick up the ball in the act of retiring providing they commenced to retire immediately after putting the ball in. As the scrum half who puts the ball in must retire behind their own forwards it should, in the event of the opposing team winning possession, normally give them 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 their forwards.*

## Section 12. The Scrum (continued)

### 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 wilfully collapse a scrum or wilfully have any part of them other than their feet in contact with the ground.  
A player shall not wilfully delay the correct formation of a scrum.

### Ball in play

9. To be in play, the ball must emerge from the scrum after first emerging from between and behind the inner feet of the second row forwards.  
If the ball does not emerge correctly and the fault cannot be attributed to any one team then it should be put into the scrum once again.

### NOTES

#### Handling in scrum

9. *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.*



## Section 12. The Scrum (continued)

### Where formed

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. The team with the loose head and feed may elect, within 5 seconds of the Referee verbally indicating that the scrum has been awarded, to move the scrum to: (a) 10m in from touch (b) 20m in from touch (c) Centre field. The scrum will be set in line with the original point of infringement and the scrum can only be moved to one of the nominated points on the same side of the field to where the infringement occurred. If the team does not elect to move the scrum, or 5 seconds elapses prior to the team with the loose head and feed nominating where the scrum shall be moved to, or there is confusion as to where they would like the scrum moved to, the scrum will be formed at the point of the infringement, but not closer than 20m from the touch line or 10m from a goal line.

### Scrum wanders

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.

### Scrum wheels

12. If the ball emerges correctly from the scrum it is in play even though the scrum has wheeled. Any forward can detach themselves 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.

### NOTES

Offending pack take up position

10. *It is the responsibility of the pack of the offending correct team to take up the correct position for a scrum. The opposing pack of forwards will then move up to form the scrum.*

Butting

- Front row forwards who butt violently in the course of forming a scrum should be penalised.*



## SECTION 13 - PENALTY KICK

### When awarded

1. (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 defender in their own in-goal or an attacker in their 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

#### Advantages

1. *The advantages 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, the Referee shall award a penalty. The penalty applies to all players, even those outside the scrum, who should be penalised where they offend. A penalty is awarded for an offence which occurs before the scrum is properly formed. For the avoidance of doubt, the team winning the penalty is allowed the option to reset the scrum for early detachment and for backs being offside.*

## Section 13. Penalty Kick (continued)

<b>How taken</b>	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 note to Law 11, Section 6) the ball may be kicked in any direction, after which it is in play.
<b>When taken</b>	2. when a penalty is awarded the referee will give the team the 'mark'
<b>Position of players</b>	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.
<b>Retiring ten metres</b>	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.  The Touch Judge shall act as a guide to the team opposing the kicker by taking up a position ten metres beyond the mark (Section 16, law 17).

### 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 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 ten metres of the new mark.*



## Section 13. Penalty Kick (continued)

### Find touch from penalty kick

4. (a) If the ball is kicked into touch without touching any other play the kicking team shall restart 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. The captain of the team with head and feed at the scrum can opt to set the scrum 10 metres in from touch or centre field. 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.

- (b) If the ball touches an opponent in flight and then enters touch, a play the ball will take place with the kicking team playing the ball, 20 metres in from the touch line. The Captain of the kicking team has the option to set the scrum on the ten metre line or centre field.

### No delay

5. No player shall deliberately take any action which is likely to delay the taking of a penalty kick.

### NOTES

*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 themselves may pick up the ball after they have kicked it.*

*Dead ball from penalty kick*

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

*Refusing to surrender the ball*

5. *When a penalty has been awarded, the Referee should ensure that an opposing player does not hold on to the ball or deliberately kick or throw it further from the mark.*



## Section 13. Penalty Kick (continued)

### 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 they should explain the nature of the offence.

### Penalty for in-goal offence

8. If a penalty is awarded for an offence by the attacking team in the opponent's in-goal area the mark shall be ten metres in the field of play opposite where the offence occurred. For an offence in-goal by the defending team which incurs a penalty the mark is in the field of play ten metres from the goal line and opposite where the offence occurred except for foul play against a try scorer (see Law 9).

### Offence against try scorer

9. If a player fouls an opponent who is touching down 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 the kick has been taken the ball shall be deemed dead and play shall be restarted from the halfway line. Touching down includes a) In the act of scoring and b) Until the try scorer regains their feet.

### 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 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 restarted 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

#### *Penalty in-goal*

9. *For an offence in-goal by the defending team, a penalty try may be awarded depending on the gravity or the offence. (see Section 6, Law 3 (d)).*

## SECTION 14 - OFF SIDE

### When off side

1. A player is off side except when they are in their own in-goal if the ball touches, is touched, held or kicked, by one of their own team behind them.
2. An off side player shall not take any part in the game or attempt in any way to influence the course of the game. They 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. Offside players who are within ten metres must not play an active part in or impact any subsequent play (i.e. remain passive) up to the next play-the-ball/stoppages, unless they place themselves back onside by retiring behind the point of the kick.

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### NOTES

#### Catcher claiming off side

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

#### Accidental off side

*Where the Referee is satisfied that interference with play by an off side player is accidental they should order a scrum.*

#### When in front

*A player is offside if they have one foot (either on or off the ground) in front of a team mate who last touches, is touched by, held or kicked the ball.*

#### Interfering with catcher

2. *Any off side 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.*

## Section 14. Off Side (continued)

### Retire ten metres

### Placed onside

3. An off side 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 their own team in possession of the ball runs in front of them.
  - (d) One of their own team kicks or knocks the ball forward and takes up a position in front of them in the field of play.
  - (e) They retire behind the point where the ball was last touched by one of their own team.

### NOTES

“Out of play” as opposed “off side”

3. *Players who are out of play at a play-the-ball to (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 “on side” 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 off side players. This rule delays the movement of the off side players downfield in an attempt to encircle the ball receiver as he collects the ball.*

## SECTION 15 - PLAYER'S MISCONDUCT

### Definition of misconduct

1. A player is guilty of misconduct if they:
  - (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 them to unnecessary risk of injury.

### NOTES

#### Dangerous throw

1. (d) *If, in any tackle of, or contact with, an opponent that player is so lifted that they are placed in a position where it is likely that the first part of their body to make contact with the ground will be their 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.*

#### Law breakers

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



## Section 15. Player's Misconduct (continued)

### NOTES (Continued)

Explain reason for penalty

(g) A player may ask the Referee the reason why a penalty kick has been given provided they do so respectfully.

Delay restart of play

(i) To deliberately delay the restart of play from the goal line, 20 metre line or halfway line constitutes misconduct for the purpose of this law.

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 their kick in before their opponent commits to the tackle. Defenders must make a genuine attempt to tackle which is not late, high or dangerous (contact with the kicking player whilst in a vulnerable position).

Obstruction indicators

1. (a) 'Block' or 'Flat' runner[s] (who do not receive the ball) must not stop in the middle of the defensive line

(b) 'Block' or 'Flat' runner[s] (who do not receive the ball) must not run at (chest or outside shoulder of) defender[s] and initiate contact

(c) The Referee or Video Referee can determine the significance of contact initiated by the 'Block' or 'Flat' runner[s] (who does not receive the ball) in impeding a defender's involvement in a try scoring play

2. Ball Carriers must not run behind an active 'Block' or 'Flat' runner[s] and disadvantage the defensive line

3. It will be deemed obstruction if the attacking players who run a 'Sweep' line clearly receive the ball on the inside of the 'Block' or 'Flat' runner[s]

4. Defensive decisions that commit defender[s] to initiating contact with an attacking player(s) will not be deemed obstruction

5. Defensive decisions that commit defender[s] to change their defensive line will not be deemed obstruction.

Block runners

run lines towards an opposition goal line and are committed to receiving the ball close to the defensive line.

Sweep runners

run lines in an arc across the field behind a block runner.

The Wall

If two or more players form a wall (side by side) next to the play the ball and don't allow the opportunity for a defending player to move directly towards the player in possession, the referee will penalise for obstruction

## Section 15. Player's Misconduct (continued)

### NOTES (Continued)

#### Escorts

*A player is not to 'deliberately obstruct an opponent who is not in possession' Section 15 (j) It will be interpreted to be an obstruction in regard to a player catching the ball from a kick if:*

1. *A player arrives at the same time as an opponent and obstructs them deliberately; or*
2. *Deliberately runs an opponent off the ball. This applies to both the kicking and non-kicking teams.*

*It will NOT be considered an obstruction in regard to a player catching the ball from a kick if:*

1. *A defending player moves directly towards the ball; and*
2. *Takes up a position prior to the ball being caught.*

*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, they will be penalised for an obstruction*

#### Diving Through the Ruck

#### Sleeper

*An attacking player who loiters next to the play the ball area and who causes an obstruction will be penalised.*

#### Obstructing -off side player -knock on

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

#### Player in possession cannot obstruct

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

#### Third tackler

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



## SECTION 16 - DUTIES OF REFEREE AND TOUCH JUDGES

### One Referee

### Two Touch Judges

### Enforce Laws

1. In all matches a Referee and two Touch Judges shall be appointed or mutually agreed upon by the contesting teams.

### Timekeeper

2. The Referees shall enforce the Laws of the Game and may impose penalties for any deliberate breach of the Laws. They shall be the sole judge on matters of fact except those relating to touch and touch in-goal (see para. 11 below).
3. They shall be the sole timekeeper except where this duty has been delegated to another person (see Section 7).

### Power to stop game

4. They may, at their 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 their opinion, interferes with their control of the game.
5. They shall not allow anyone apart from the players onto the playing area without permission.

### Permission to enter playing area

### NOTES

#### Referee injured

1. When a Referee is unable to continue they 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. If the injury sustained by the Referee renders them incapable of blowing their whistle to stop the game, the game shall be deemed to have stopped at the time the injury was sustained.

#### Consult Touch Judge

2. Before giving a decision, it is permissible for the Referee to consult either or both Touch Judges.

#### Player returns to field

5. A player who has temporarily retired from the playing 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 their 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

*The power to temporarily suspend a player is not an encouragement to Referees to deal leniently in the event of misconduct which merits dismissal.*

#### End of temporary suspension

*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 they themselves will determine the end of the suspension.*

#### Dismissed player

*A dismissed player can take no further part in the match, nor shall they be permitted to take up a position near the playing area where their presence is likely to provoke further incident.*

#### Changing a player's position

*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 they so wish, 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 harassed a match, they League even match is ended.

*If a Referee or Touch Judge is assaulted or unduly by any person arising out of their control of should submit a report to the appropriate though such incident occurs after the*



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

### When to blow whistle

8.1 The Referee must carry a whistle which they 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:

- (a) When a try or goal has been scored.
- (b) When the ball has gone out of play.
- (c) When restarting play, other than at a scrum.
- (d) When they detect a breach of the Laws of the Game, except when to stop the play would be to the disadvantage of the non-offending team.
- (e) 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.
- (f) When any irregularity, not provided for in these Laws, occurs and one team unjustifiably gains an advantage.
- (g) When a stoppage is necessary in order to enforce the Laws or for any other reason.

8.2 Where a Referee has stopped play to administer a caution to a player or players they shall indicate extra time until they blows their whistle to restart play.

### NOTES

#### Whistle blown accidentally

8. *Play must stop even if the whistle is blown accidentally in which case play is restarted with a scrum where the ball was last touched by a player in the field of play before the whistle is blown, and their team shall be given the loose head and put-in.*

#### Apply advantage

*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.*



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

### Changing decision

9. The Referee judges on matters of fact and shall not subsequently alter those judgments. They may cancel any decision made if prior foul play of which they had no knowledge is reported to them 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 their 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 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, they can no longer be considered to be neutral. In this case, any decision made by a Touch Judge leading to their 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 they should attract the Referee's attention as quickly as possible in order to avoid an 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 their 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 their flag above their 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 they point to either the goal line or twenty metre line depending on where play should be restarted. 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, both Touch Judges shall take up a position near the touch line ten metres beyond the mark to act as markers for the team which is required to retire.

### Official inquiry

17. In cases where circumstances in connection with the match are likely to be made the subject of an 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.

### NOTES

*Ball swerving back playing into field*

13. A Touch Judge should not raise their flag immediately if 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.

*Controversial decisions*

15. If any decision by a Referee is likely to be controversial, the Referee may explain their reasons for making the decisions if by so doing unnecessary misunderstanding or controversy can be avoided.



## SECTION 17 - REFEREE'S SIGNALS

### Signal nature of offence

- When the Referee is required to give a decision they shall whenever possible indicate the nature of their decision by making the appropriate signal.

### Indicate how play restarts

- When the referee wishes to stop the game temporarily, they shall, after blowing their whistle, indicate the nature of the decision, point to the offending player and then signal as to how the game is to be restarted.

### Example

For example, if the scrum half puts the ball into their own side of the scrum the Referee:

- Blows their whistle and indicates the scrum half has put the ball in wrongly
- Points to the offending scrum half and then
- 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 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.

### Signals for restarting play

- 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.

### Relating to scoring



## Section 17. Referee's Signals (continued)

### Signals made when play is not necessarily stopped

**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.** Raise hand above the head.

**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.

**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.

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

### Signals indicating infringements

#### Scrum

**Scrum half feeds "own feet".** With hands and arms mime the action of the scrum half putting the ball into the scrum, but exaggerate the angle at which it was thrown.

**Scrum half "dummies".** Mime the action of the scrum half but emphasise the backward motion of the hands.

**Scrum half fails to retire.** Make a movement with the hand indicating the direction the scrum half should have taken.

**Scrum half throws the ball upwards into the scrum.** Mime the action of the scrum half exaggerating the upward movement of the hands.

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

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

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



## Section 17. Referee's Signals (continued)

<b>Play-the-ball</b>	<b>Handling in the scrum.</b> Make a backward scooping action with the hand.
	<b>Collapsing the scrum.</b> Make a lifting motion with the hand.
	<b>More than seven backs.</b> 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.
	<b>More than six players pushing in the scrum.</b> Point to the player who is pushing and who is not normally in the scrum and then hold up six fingers.
	<b>Tackled player delays regaining his feet.</b> Flick the hand in an upward direction.
	<b>Tackled player 'dummies' when dropping the ball.</b> Mime the action of the offending player exaggerating the upward direction.
	<b>Tackled player fails to drop the ball correctly.</b> 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.
	<b>Tackled player does not lift the ball clear of the ground.</b> Make a lifting movement with the hand.
	<b>Tackled player does not face opponents' in-goal.</b> Stand at the angle offending player adopted and then turn to face opponents' in-goal.
	<b>Tackled player fails to play the ball backwards or passes when he should have played the ball.</b> Mime the gesture of playing the ball.
<b>Tackled player obstructs or butts with his head after playing the ball.</b> Mime his action.	
<b>Voluntary tackle.</b> Make a lifting movement with hand.	
<b>The playing marking the tackled player kicks or heels the ball.</b> Make a kicking movement with the foot.	
<b>Player marking retains his hold on player playing the ball.</b> 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).	
<b>Tackler delays releasing tackled player.</b> Make a downward movement with the hands in front of the body below the waist.	
<b>Off side at play-the-ball.</b> With a backward movement of the hand indicate that the player should be further back.	

## Section 17. Referee's Signals (continued)

<b>Drop-out or penalty</b>	<b>Stealing of the ball from the tackled player.</b> Mime the action of snatching the ball from the opponent.
<b>Other infringements</b>	<b>Dragging tackled player after the tackle is effective.</b> Mime the action of dragging.
	<b>Team is tackled five successive times.</b> Raise arm vertically above head with fingers and thumb outstretched.
	<b>Team is tackled six successive times.</b> 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'.
	<b>Count of tackle is cancelled and starts again.</b> Wave clenched fist from side to side above head.
	<b>Kicker fails to bring foot into contact with the ball.</b> Tap the foot with one hand.
	<b>Off side. Indicate player should have been further back.</b> (See No. 25).
	<b>Player in possession touches official.</b> Point to the player in possession and tap the chest with one hand.
	<b>Obstruction.</b> Mime the offending player's action.
	<b>Tripping.</b> Extend one foot forward as if to trip.
	<b>Stiff arm tackle.</b> 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.
	<b>Disputing decisions.</b> Place one hand on the mouth.
	<b>Ball in touch.</b> Points to appropriate Touch Judge.
	<b>Extra time.</b> Raise both arms vertically above head.
	<b>Ending extra time for stoppage.</b> Wave one arm over head.
	<b>Temporary Suspension of a player.</b> Raise both arms with fingers outstretched for ten minutes suspension.
	<b>Player directed to leave the field to receive attention for bleeding.</b> Draw the hands across the chest from side to side.
	<p>Refer decision to the video referee. Starting just above the head with both hands together.</p>
	<p>Draw a square in front of you so that your hands come together at the waist simultaneously.</p>
<b>Touch Judge signals.</b>	<p>The Touch Judge cannot stop the play for any infringement but they may signal the nature of an infringement if the Referee is unsighted and seeks their guidance.</p>

## Section 17. Referee's Signals (continued)

Signals which may be used by a Touch Judge and which are not included in Para. 3 above are:-

**Touch.** Flag is raised above the head at the point of entry into touch.

**Ball back.** Flag waved above the 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 restarted. Do not point to the player who made the ball dead.

**Successful 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 restart position.

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