

**To:** Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership

**From:** Hugh H. Penman-Head of Council and Member Services

**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

**Ruling:** 7: 2003

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> July 2003

**Number of pages (incl. cover):**

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**The Argentinian Rugby Union has requested a ruling with regard to Law 10.2 (c) & 19.1 (d) as follows :**

“A player inside the field hits the ball that has been kicked by an opponent with the head with the purpose of making the ball go outside the field. Should a penalty be awarded to the other team?”

**The Designated Members have ruled as follows in answer to the question raised:**

1. A player inside the field hits the ball that has been kicked by an opponent with the head with the purpose of making the ball go outside the field. Should a penalty be awarded to the other team?

**Ruling**

Law 10.2 (c) relates to a player intentionally knocking or throwing the ball out of the playing area. The term ‘knock’ infers with the arms or hands.

Law 19.1 (d) applies in this case, where a player kicks the ball and it touches or is touched by an opposition player and then goes into touch. There is no penalty.

**Yours sincerely,**

Hugh H. Penman  
**Head of Council and Member Services**

**To:** Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership  
**From:** Hugh H. Penman-Head of Council and Member Services  
**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Rugby Committee  
**Ruling:** 9: 2004  
**Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2004

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The IRFU has requested a ruling with regard Law 10-Foul Play and Law 22-In Goal

#### Law 10 – Foul Play

Rewrite and amendment of 10.2(a), and consequential addition to Law 22.

The first paragraph states:

***Intentionally Offending.*** *A player must not intentionally infringe any Law of the Game, or play unfairly. The player who intentionally offends must be either admonished, or cautioned that a send off will result if the offence or a similar offence is committed, or sent-off. After a caution a player is temporarily suspended from the match for a period of ten minutes playing time. After a caution, if the player commits the same or similar offence, the player must be sent-off.*

Penalty: Penalty Kick

The final paragraph states:

*A penalty try must be awarded if the offence prevents a try that would probably otherwise have been scored. A player who prevents a try being scored through foul play must either be cautioned and temporarily suspended or sent off.*

The final paragraph does not appear to offer the possibility of an 'admonishment' by the referee; nor does it refer to 'intentionally'.

*The clarification sought is:*

Is it the intention of the Law (as now rewritten) to ensure that in each and every circumstance, where a penalty try is awarded, that the offending player is temporarily suspended, whether or not the foul is intentional?

Is it the intention to remove the discretion of the referee to admonish, rather than temporarily suspend or send off a player in such circumstances?

**The reason clarification is sought is that there are circumstances where the offence is not intentional: e.g. mistimed (early or late, but not dangerous) tackle; unintentional instinctive high, but not dangerous, tackle - when an attacker steps inside a defender; certain incidences of scrum collapsing.**

In these circumstances, the sanction of a penalty try, and a temporary suspension appear exceptionally severe. While it will not be a frequent

occurrence, the effect on a match outcome could be hugely significant. It could also, in the event of a front row forward, lead to uncontested scrums. Finally, it would appear inconsistent for an offence which, taking place in mid-field, would not merit a temporary suspension but would merit a temporary suspension close to a goal-line.

**The Designated Members have ruled the following in answer to the question raised:**

Ruling

**Law 10.2(a) is Unfair Play relating to Intentional Offending.**

**The two paragraphs in Law 10.2(a) must be read in conjunction, having due regard to the heading 'Intentionally Offending'.**

**Therefore, if a penalty try is awarded as the result of a player intentionally offending, then the player must be either be cautioned and temporarily suspended or sent off.**

**Examples of this would be after penalty tries resulting from:**

- a collapsed scrum
- a collapsed maul
- a defending player intentionally offside
- a defending player intentionally knocking down the ball.

**If a penalty try is awarded as the result of a player unintentionally offending, the player, as well as being liable to cautioning and temporary suspension or send off, can be admonished by the referee.**

**Examples of this may be after penalty tries resulting from:**

- mistimed tackle (early or late, but not dangerous)
- unintentional reactionary high tackle, but not dangerous.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh H. Penman

**Head of Council and Member Services**

**To:** Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership  
**From:** Hugh H. Penman-Head of Council and Member Services  
**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Rugby Committee  
**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005  
**Ruling:** 5: 2005

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**The IRFU has requested a ruling with regard Law 10-Foul Play**

Current Law prohibits the tackling of a player who is in the air, either in the line out or in open play. The Law is designed to protect players, and to prevent them landing on the ground, on their heads or upper body.

It appears a serious anomaly, therefore, that a player(s) can deliberately lift an opponent off his feet and then may drop (or 'spear') the opponent so that he lands head down or on his upper body.

1. 10 4(e) Foul Play – Dangerous tackling.

Does the action of deliberately lifting an opponent off his feet in a tackle so that he may then be dropped (or 'speared') so that he lands on his head or upper body constitute tackling 'dangerously' as defined in this Law.

2. Law 10 – Foul Play

Does the action described in 1. by definition contrary to the letter and spirit of the laws and constitutes, per se, an act of foul play should it occur in general play; e.g. a player, on the fringes of ruck or maul, so lifted.

**The Designated Members have ruled the following in answer to the questions raised:**

## **Ruling**

1. The act of lifting an opponent off his feet in a tackle AND dropping or 'spearing' that player so that his head and/or upper body comes into contact with the ground first, is a dangerous tackle.
2. The dangerous play described in 1. above is considered dangerous play no matter where it occurs in the game.

Yours sincerely,

**Hugh H. Penman**  
**Head of Council and Member Services**

**To:** Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership  
**From:** David Carrigy, Council & Member Services Manager  
**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Rugby Committee  
**Date:** November 14, 2006  
**Ruling:** 7: 2006

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**The SRU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 10.2 Obstruction and Law 10.4(n) Flying Wedge**

Team A win their lineout and as the jumper returns to the ground his team mates bind onto him and stay and drive him forward. At no point do players from team B contest for the ball or bind on to any members of their own team or members of team A.

Is this deemed to be a "flying wedge" if the ball remains with the initial ball carrier who is at the front of the group of team A players and not preventing any player from team B tackling the ball carrier?

Is this deemed to be a "flying wedge" if the ball is transferred to a player in the middle of the group of team A players and preventing any player from team B from tackling the ball carrier?

Is this deemed to be a "flying wedge" if the ball is transferred to a player on the edge or at the back of the group of team A players and not preventing any player from team B tackling the ball carrier.

If the scenarios listed above are not deemed to be in the flying wedge category should they be considered obstruction?

**The Designated Members have ruled the following in answer to the question raised:**

1. In this situation, players of the defending Team B have not committed to make any contact or tackle of the ball carrying Team A. Play should continue as the actions of the Team A players are not preventing Team B players from making a tackle. Subsequently if the ball is not held by the lead player of the group of Team A players, and a Team B player attempts to tackle the ball carrier and cannot, then a PK should be awarded against Team A for obstruction.

Yours sincerely,

**David Carrigy**  
**Council & Member Services Manager**

**To:** Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership  
**From:** David Carrigy, Council & Member Services Manager  
**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Rugby Committee  
**Date:** November 14, 2006  
**Ruling:** 6: 2006

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**As there appears to be a variation in interpretation in certain instances of high tackles, the IRFU request a ruling on Law 10.4(e) Dangerous tackling.**

Situation:

A tackle is made, or attempted, where the initial contact is made below the line of the shoulder, but the arm(s) of the tackler subsequently make contact with the head or neck of the tackled player.

Question:

Even if the subsequent contact with the head or neck is not intentional, but the contact is dangerous, should the referee rule on the intent (initial tackle) ie. No sanction; or should the referee rule on the consequence ie. Sanction?

If the ruling is sanction, would the referee be correct in considering the dangerous aspect as accidental, and consider cards only if he deemed the tackling action to be careless?

**The Designated Members have ruled the following in answer to the question raised:**

The referee should not rule on intent, but on the outcome. In this situation the outcome was a dangerous tackle in that the tackler made contact with the head or neck of the ball carrier. For this type of tackle the referee has three options available: penalty only, penalty and yellow card, penalty and red card.

Yours sincerely,

**David Carrigy**  
**Council and Member Services Manager**

**To:** Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership

**From:** David Carrigy, Council & Member Services Manager

**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Rugby Committee

**Date:** November 29, 2006

**Ruling:** 10: 2006

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**The IRFU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 10 Foul Play**

Foul Play is anything a person does within the playing enclosure that is against the letter and spirit of the Laws. It includes obstruction, unfair play, repeated infringements, dangerous play and misconduct. Is this inclusive of half time and after the final whistle?

The definition refers to a person not specifically a player. Are team officials within the enclosure subject to this Law and therefore can be dealt with the same way as a player?

What is the extent of the authority of the referee in applying sanctions under this Law: in the dressing room before the match, at half time and after the match; en route to/from the dressing room at half time; en route to/from the dressing room at full time?

**The Designated Members have ruled the following in answer to the question raised:**

From the time the referee blows the whistle to start the match and blows it to finish the match, including half time, the Laws of Rugby and appropriate sanctions apply.

The definition of 'person' includes players and team officials if they are in the playing enclosure, and the latter can be dealt with in the same way as a player.

For incidents in the dressing room and en route to and from the dressing room, IRB Regulation 17.21 Misconduct can be applied which also covers non-players.

**Yours sincerely,**

**David Carrigy  
Council & Member Services Manager**