



By allowing an individual referee the latitude to decide if a collapsed scrum is dangerous or not will not only lead to perceived inconsistency in referees' interpretation in separate games by players and spectators but also to perceived inconsistency by a referee at identical situations in a particular game.

The Welsh Rugby Union is very concerned that this interpretation is the opposite of how referees, particularly in the Northern Hemisphere, have refereed collapsed scrum penalties. Not only is player safety endangered but also referees, and the IRB as the governing body, are laid open to a claim for negligence if a forward is seriously injured because a scrum is not stopped immediately when it has collapsed."

## RULING

**The Designated Members of the Laws Committee have ruled as follows:**

**If a scrum collapses then:**

**Law 6 A 9 (g) states "The referee must blow the whistle when it would be dangerous to let play continue. This includes when a scrum collapses, or when the front row player is lifted into the air or is forced upwards out of the scrum, or when it is probable that a player has been seriously injured."**

**If there is an injury then:**

**Law 6 A 10 (a) states "If a player is injured and continuation of play would be dangerous the referee must blow the whistle immediately."**

**Law 10.5 does not state when the player must be admonished or cautioned and temporarily suspended or sent off. These actions can take place after another phase of play.**

**Law 8.3 (d) states that "Advantage must not be applied when a scrum collapses. The referee must blow his whistle immediately". It does not preclude a quick tap kick after the whistle is blown, as any action after the blowing of the whistle is not playing advantage.**

**Law 8.3 (d) does not state that "the referee must stop play immediately until the players in the collapsed scrum are no longer in danger i.e. disengaged from each other".**

**The Designated Members therefore rule that there is no Law which precludes the referee from allowing a free kick/penalty kick taken in the form of a quickly taken tap kick, from the correct position.**

**Yours sincerely,**

Hugh H.Penman  
General Manager/Secretary

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

**From:** Hugh H. Penman  
General Manager/ Secretary

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**Date:** 29 October 2002  
**No. of Pages** 1 *(including cover page)*

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### **RULING OF THE DESIGNATED MEMBERS**

The Canadian Rugby Union has requested a Ruling with regard to the following question:

“At the Canadian Women’s Championships in Winnipeg a Canadian lock forward was allowed to bind in the right lock position with proper binding up to the armpits but her head was fully out from between the hooker and tight heads hips. Her head was turned to the side and raised upwards to sight the ball when it came out. Is this legal and safe?”

### **RULING**

The Designated Members of the Laws Committee have ruled as follows:

**Locks in the scrum must have their heads between the hips of the hooker and the prop forward.**

**Yours sincerely,**

Hugh H. Penman  
General Manager/Secretary

**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:** 25<sup>th</sup> October 2005  
**Ruling:** 7: 2005

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**The ARU has requested a ruling with regard Law 20.12-Off side at the scrum**

One of the changes that were made to the 2005 Laws of the Game was the deletion of the definition (in the box) under Law 20.12. The reason provided for this was that the provisions of the definition were covered elsewhere in the Laws. This now appears to be the case, with one exception. The definition in part provided that: "If the hindmost foot of a team is on or behind that team's goal-line, the off-side line is the goal-line."

Can you please clarify that it was the intention to remove this provision from the Law (thus changing the off-side line in this situation) or was this an oversight?

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

Law 22.6 indicates that a scrum can only take place in the field of play, and also covers the scrum moving across the goal-line and, that a defending player may legally ground the ball as soon as the ball reaches the goal-line.

In conjunction with the above statement, the scrum half is also a defending player and therefore can legally ground the ball. The off-side line must be the goal-line in the above situation otherwise the scrum half would not be able to physically get to the ball to ground it.

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, Head of Member Services

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

**Date:** February 16, 2007

**Ruling:** 1: 2007

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**The RFU has requested a ruling with regard to Law Scrum 20.1(h)**

In the letter to all Unions from the IRB dated November 29, 2006 it was stated that this amendment would apply at all levels of the game. There has been some confusion within the game in England as to whether the new Law 20.1(h) applies to Age Grade Rugby in place of the previous Age Grade Variations.

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

The amendment to Law 20.1(h) applies to all levels of the game. 'All levels of the game' encompasses and includes all stages in the Union's Player Pathway where the Laws provide for a scrum, or modified 3 person scrum to be played. By example, if a 3 person scrum is played in Under 8's, or a full scrum is played in Under 19's, or it is a game of Seven-a-side, then this Law must be applied.

Yours sincerely,

**David Carrigy**  
**Head of Member Services**

**To:** Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership  
**From:** David Carrigy, Head of Member Services  
**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Rugby Committee  
**Date:** April X, 2008  
**Ruling:** 3: 2008

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**The NZRU has requested a ruling relating to Law 20.3**

Law 20 was amended with effect from January 2007 - a four stage engagement process was introduced. This was promulgated to reduce that impact and the velocity of the engagement process. There are some teams who employ a practice whereby the Number 8 does not bind in accordance with Law prior to the scrum engagement. The Number 8 stands and pulls back on the locks shorts and then pushes the locks forward which would appear to increase the impact of the engagement process.

Law 20.3 (f) states - "**Binding by all other players.** All other players in a scrum, other than front-row players must bind on a lock's body with at least one arm. The locks must bind with the props in front of them. No players other than a prop may hold an opponent".

The NZRU believe that this means that the Number 8 is obliged to bind in accordance with Law 20.3 (f) on engagement and if he does not do so renders himself liable to sanction with a penalty kick.

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

The Designated Members confirm that all players including the Number 8 are required to bind in accordance with Law 20.3 on engagement. Additionally Law 20.7 heading states "WHEN THE SCRUM BEGINS" whilst 20.7 (a) states:

"Play in the scrum begins when the ball leaves the hands of the scrum half"

The word "play" is within the body of the Law indicates the start of the contest for the ball rather than the engagement process. Players must therefore conform to the Laws from the time that the scrum is awarded including Law 20.3.

Salutations

**To:** Secretaries / CEOs of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership

**From:** David Carrigy, Head of Member Services

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

**Date:** May 13, 2008

**Ruling:** 3: 2008

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**The NZRU has requested a ruling relating to Law 20.3**

Law 20 was amended with effect from January 2007 - a four stage engagement process was introduced. This was promulgated to reduce the impact and the velocity of the engagement process. There are some teams who employ a practice whereby the Number 8 does not bind in accordance with Law prior to the scrum engagement. The Number 8 stands and pulls back on the locks shorts and then pushes the locks forward which would appear to increase the impact of the engagement process and can increase instability.

Law 20.3 (f) states - ***Binding by all other players.*** *All other players in a scrum, other than front-row players must bind on a lock's body with at least one arm. The locks must bind with the props in front of them. No players other than a prop may hold an opponent.*

The NZRU believe that this means that the Number 8 is obliged to bind in accordance with Law 20.3 (f) on engagement and if he does not do so renders himself liable to sanction with a penalty kick.

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

The Designated Members confirm that all players including the Number 8 are required to bind in accordance with Law 20.3 on engagement.  
Additionally Law 20.7 heading states *WHEN THE SCRUM BEGINS* whilst 20.7 (a) states:

*Play in the scrum begins when the ball leaves the hands of the scrum half*

The word *play* within the body of the Law indicates the start of the contest for the ball rather than the engagement process. Players must therefore conform to the Laws from the time that the scrum is awarded including Law 20.3.

Yours sincerely,

**David Carrigy**  
**Head of Member Services**



**To:** Secretaries / CEOs of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership  
**From:** David Carrigy, Head of External & Member Relations  
**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Rugby Committee  
**Date:** September 24, 2008  
**ELV Ruling:** 4 : 2008

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**The NZRU has requested a ruling relating to Law 20 12 and ELV Ruling 2**

“ELV Ruling 2 refers to Law 20.12 (d) and (e) Offside at the Scrum.

The Ruling by the Designated Members was asked for by the FIR.  
Law 20.12 (e) states:

*(e) The scrum half whose team does not win possession of the ball must not move away from the scrum and then remain in front of the offside line. For that scrum half that runs through the hindmost foot of that player's team in the scrum.*

This means that the scrum half must stay close to the scrum and not in front of the offside line being the hindmost foot of his scrum.

It could also be inferred that providing the scrum half remains behind the offside line running through the hindmost foot of his scrum he does not have to stay close to the scrum.

The NZRU asks the Designated Members for a ruling please”.

For the sake of clarity and completeness the Law relating to offside at the scrum is produced below

**20.12 OFFSIDE AT THE SCRUM**

(a) When the scrum is set, the scrum half not throwing the ball into the scrum must take up a position either at the same side of the scrum as the scrum half throwing in the ball or behind the offside line defined for other players.



(b) **Offside for scrum-halves.** When a team has won the ball in a scrum, the scrum half of that team is offside if both feet are in front of the ball while it is still in the scrum. If the scrum half has only one foot in front of the ball, the scrum half is not offside.

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick

(c) When a team has won the ball in a scrum, the scrum half of the opposing team is offside if that scrum half steps in front of the ball with either foot while the ball is still in the scrum.

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick

(d) The scrum half whose team does not win possession of the ball must not move to the opposite side of the scrum and overstep the offside line for that scrum half that runs through the hindmost foot of that player's team in the scrum.

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick

(e) The scrum half whose team does not win possession of the ball must not move away from the scrum and then remain in front of the offside line for that scrum half that runs through the hindmost foot of that player's team in the scrum.

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick

(f) Any player may be scrum half, but a team can have only one scrum half at each scrum.

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick on the offside line

(g) **Offside for players not in the scrum.** Players who are not in the scrum and who are not the team's scrum half, are offside if they remain in front of their offside line or overstep the offside line which is a line parallel to the goal lines and 5 metres from the hindmost player of each team in a scrum .

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick on the offside line

#### **Ruling - ELV Ruling 4 - Superseding ELV Ruling 2**

The scrum half who is not throwing the ball into the scrum must either

- o take up a position at the same side of the scrum as the scrum half throwing in the ball, or



- o behind the offside line for players not participating in the scrum (5 metres back from the hindmost player in that player's scrum).  
**Reference Law 20. 12 (a)**

Once the ball has been won by a team, the scrum half of the team that does not win possession (and who has been either the scrum half throwing in the ball or the opposition scrum half who took up a position on the same side of the scrum as the scrum half throwing in the ball) may follow the ball in the scrum providing that that player does not put either foot in front of the ball. **Reference Law 12. 12 (c)**

The other option available to the scrum half is to move behind his or her offside line that runs through the hindmost foot of that player's team in the scrum. Providing that scrum half whose team does not win possession does not move away from the scrum until he or she reaches the offside line (**Reference Law 20. 12 d**). The scrum half can take up any position behind that offside line providing that he or she does not step over that offside line on either side of the scrum (**Reference Law 20.12 (d)** and **Reference Law 20. 12 (e)**) Providing the scrum half in opposition to the team that wins the ball does not go across the offside line (a line that runs through the hindmost foot of that player's team in the scrum) he or she does not have to stay close to the scrum.

### **In Summary**

1. Both scrum halves must take up a position on the same side of the scrum as the scrum half throwing in the ball (the scrum half not throwing in the ball may be positioned behind the offside line for the non participants and must stay there until the scrum is over).
2. After the ball has been won the scrum half of the team who has not won the ball who was positioned next to the player throwing in the ball can do one of two things:
  - a. Follow the ball whilst remaining on side
  - b. Go directly back to the hindmost foot in the scrum and then take up a position anywhere behind this offside line.

**Yours faithfully**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Carrigy', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

**David Carrigy**  
**Head of External and Member Relations**