



Law Rulings 2004

RULING 10: 2004

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

23 December 2004

The WRU has requested a ruling with regard Law 19-Touch & line-out and Law 21 Penalty and Free Kicks

1. A player of the attacking team kicks the ball indirectly into touch just outside the defenders 22 metre area. A defender gathers the ball, runs a few metres (still in touch) to a place behind his 22 metre line where he throws the ball straight infield. He gathers it and kicks direct to touch. What is the correct decision?

2. A player in possession of the ball drops it onto his thigh and propels it forward. What is the correct decision?

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

Ruling

1. The defender is allowed to take the quick line-out in the manner specified. A line-out at the place where the ball went into touch from the defenders kick is the correct decision.

2. If this occurred in general play the following would apply. By definition 'A kick is made by hitting the ball with any part of the leg or foot, except the heel, from the toe to the knee but not including the knee...'. In the case described the ball has not been kicked but has been dropped onto the thigh and this is ruled as a knock-on or throw forward. If the action as described was taken by a player after his team had been awarded a penalty kick or free kick, then a PK or FK has not been correctly taken. Under Law 21.3(b) bouncing the ball on the thigh can in this case be taken to include the knee as this is also in the definition above. Thus, the player has infringed this Law and a scrum to the opposing team should be ordered.

RULING 9: 2004

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

23 December 2004

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**.

RULING 8: 2004

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

1 September 2004

The JRU has requested a ruling with regard Law 15-Tackle.

Team B ball carrier ("B-player") is "held" (not tackled) by two Team A players ("A1-", "A2-player") and A1-player held on to the legs of B-player while A2-player held on to the ball and the arm(s) of B-player. By momentum, B-player and A2-player (held on the ball and B-player's arms) changed/rotated the position with each other, as the result, A2 player is closer to the Team-B's goal line than B-player. Then B-player went to the ground on his



knee(s) as well as A1-player, which by definition forms a "tackle". After this tackle, A2-player is still on his feet, playing the ball and is about to gain the possession of the ball from the tackled B-player.

Law 15.7(b) provides, "After a tackle any players on their feet may attempt to gain possession by taking the ball from the ball carrier's possession." A2-player, by this law, can still continue to play the ball or to attempt to gain the possession. The JRFU Ruling said a player in A2-player's position should "release the ball in the tackled player's hands". However, no part in Law 15.7 states that such player must "release the ball." Clarification is sought whether a player in A2-player's position, who is on his feet and playing the ball while a tackle occurs without involving such player, could still play the ball.

For the purpose of this analysis, also assume that such player is not merely holding on to the part of ball carrier's body, just pulling an arm etc.

If the Ruling previously given on a request from the JRFU is applied to the above scenario, A2-player, who had been already playing the ball at the time when the tackle was made, has to release the ball and retire in order to play the ball again pursuant to Law 15.7(c) which result is also consistent with Law 15.8(b) prohibiting all players from preventing the release of the ball by the tackled player. A player on his feet could only play by virtue of Law 15.7(b), which applies "After a tackle", if and only if, he retires first in accordance with Law 15.7(c), which deals with "other players" "at or near to a tackle" (which is earlier in point of time than "after a tackle").

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

Ruling

The Annual Meeting of Council in 2004 agreed to approve changes to Law 15-Tackle. This related to the Definition which now reads:

" A tackle occurs when the ball-carrier is held by one or more opponents and is brought to ground. A ball-carrier who is not held is not a tackled player and a tackle has not taken place. Opposition players who hold the ball-carrier and bring that player to ground, and who also go to ground, are known as tacklers. Opposition players who hold the ball-carrier and do not go to ground are not tacklers."

The players who are not tacklers are covered by Law 15.7(c) specifically, and those players can only play the ball if they approach from behind the ball and from the directly behind the tackled player or the tackler closest to those players' goal-line.

RULING 7: 2004 **Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee**

23 June 2004

The SRU has requested a ruling with regard Law 19-Touch and Line-out.

1. Ruling 4:2004 states that a receiver can only enter a line-out after the ball has left the throwers hand. How can he support the jumper if the ball is already coming into the line-out?
2. Ruling 4:2004 states that the receiver can change places with any player in the line-out prior to the ball being thrown. This is contrary to 1. above, where the receiver cannot move until the ball is thrown

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

Ruling

1. **After the line-out commences** the receiver can enter the line-out, and is free to do that which is normally done by players in the line-out. The receiver's ability to support the jumper is not an issue in Law.
2. **Prior to the commencement of the line-out**, participating players may change places. The participating players in a line-out are those that line up in the line-out, the thrower and his immediate opponent, and the two players waiting to receive the ball from the line-out. Who the "receiver" actually is, cannot finally be determined until the very moment that the ball is thrown in. Until that time the players standing in the normal #9 positions



are merely participants and they can change their positions at any time until the ball is thrown.

RULING 6: 2004

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

4 June 2004

The FFR has requested a ruling with regard Law 3-Number of Players-The Team.

The following situations occur in the below order in a match in which each Team had 22 players.

Scenario 1

1. The hooker #2 gets injured. The replacement #16 replaces the hooker. Do the scrums remain contestable?
2. The left prop #1 is injured or is sent off. The replacement #17 replaces the left prop. Do the scrums remain contestable?
3. The right prop #3 is injured or is sent off. There is no replacement available to play in the front row. Do the scrums remain contestable?

Scenario 2

1. The hooker #1 gets injured. The replacement #16 replaces the hooker. Do the scrums remain contestable?
2. The right prop #3 is injured or is sent off. The replacement #17 replaces the right prop. This player is suitably trained and experienced to play in the right prop position and therefore scrums remain contestable. What happens if the replacement #17 advises the referee he is only able to play left prop?

Scenario 3

1. The left prop #1 gets injured or is sent off. The replacement #17 replaces the left prop. Do the scrums remain contestable?
2. The prop #17 or #3 is injured or sent off. There is no other suitably trained or experienced props available. Do the scrums remain contestable?

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

Ruling

The answers to the abovementioned questions are:

Scenario 1

1. The scrums remain contestable.
2. The scrums remain contestable.
3. Uncontested scrums commence. Note we have in accordance with Law a replacement hooker and a replacement prop.

Scenario 2

1. The scrums remain contestable.
2. The team must by Law have had five players who can play in the front row to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement hooker is required and, on the first occasion that a replacement prop forward is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums. The referee has no choice but to have uncontested scrums. Law 3.14(a) states that it is not the responsibility of the referee to determine the suitability of trained front row replacements nor their availability, as this is a team responsibility.

Scenario 3

1. The scrums remain contestable.
2. Uncontested scrums commence. The Law requires the team to be able to provide a replacement prop on the



first occasion and this has been complied with. The Law requires replacement hooker for replacement hooker, replacement prop for either tight head or loose head. I.e. the replacement prop or one of the starting props must be able to play both sides.

RULING 5: 2004

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

4 June 2004

The ARU has requested a ruling with regard Law 19-Touch and Line-out

1. If the receiver of the throwing team does not run into the gap, what are the options of the non-throwing receiver? Can he run into the gap and perform any of the actions available to any other player in the line-out without penalty?
2. If the non-throwing team has fewer number in the line-out (5 v 4 and both teams have a receiver in position), can the non-throwing team's receiver join the line-out, regardless of the actions of the throwing teams receiver?

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

Ruling

The answers to the abovementioned questions are:
The answers to the abovementioned questions are:

1. No. Refer to Ruling 4:2004, point 3.
2. Yes. Refer to Ruling 4:2004, point 3.

RULING 4: 2004

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

24 May 2004

The RFU has requested a ruling with regard Law 19 Touch and Line-out

Law 19.10

Exception 2-The Receiver may run into the gap and perform any of the actions available to any other player in the line-out. The receiver is liable to penalty for offences in the line-out as would be other players in the line-out.

1. When can the receiver enter the line-out to jump or support a team-mate? After formation of the line-out and before the ball is thrown OR when the ball is thrown in. i.e. when it leaves the throwers hands?
2. Can the receiver change places with any other player in the line-out prior to the ball being thrown in?
3. Can the non-throwing team's receiver enter the line-out to perform any action available to other players independently of the throwing receiver entering the line-out? I.e. does he have to wait for the throwing receiver to enter the line-out before he can?
4. Similarly does the receiver still have to receive the ball if he enters to jump for the ball?
5. Is there any set distance the receiver must be from the line-out to be



deemed the receiver?

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

Ruling

The answers to the abovementioned questions are:

1. The receiver can enter the line-out when the ball leaves the throwers hands.
2. Yes. The receiver can change places with any other player in the line-out prior to the ball being thrown-in.
3. The non-throwing teams receiver cannot enter the line-out unless the throwing in team's receiver has done so. If this occurred the non-throwing team would have more players in the line-out, and would be subject to penalty. The non-throwing receiver can only enter the line-out after the throwers receiver has done so. This would not apply if the non-throwing team had fewer players in the line-out, as there would not be a 'numbers' issue. The receiver can do anything that other players can do in the line-out.
4. The receiver may run into the gap and perform any of the actions available to any other player in the line-out.
5. There is no restriction on how close the receiver can stand to the line-out.

**RULING 3: 2004
Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee**

20 February 2004

The JRFU has requested a ruling with regard Law 15 Tackle

The players of Team A hold on to the ball carrier of Team B. The players from Team A drive the ball carrier towards the Team B's goal line (i.e. Team A players are going forward). After the ball carrier goes to the ground, one of the players of Team A holding on to the ball carrier also goes to the ground whilst the other player of Team A is still on his feet holding on to the ball and the opposition's arm.

By definition, a tackle occurs with the ball carrier being the tackled player and the player of Team A on the ground being the tackler.

In this situation,

- (1) Should the Team A's player still on his feet retire to the position behind the ball to approach from directly behind the tackled player or the tackler closest to his goal-line ?
- (2) Should that standing player in retiring to the position as aforementioned release the ball in the tackled player's hands?
- (3) Does the tackled player have to release the ball immediately?

If the answer to the 1) and 2) are yes, it may seem as though as far as the contest for the ball is concerned, it would be advantageous to go to the ground.

Our view is that the player on his feet in the above case should be allowed to continue to play as he is involved in the tackle from the beginning of the tackle without being defined as a tackler. It is not appropriate to define him as the other player.

In order to codify the spirit of the fair contestability of the ball in the Playing Charter, the concept and definition of an "arriving player" should be introduced to avoid such anomalous treatment of a player endeavouring to stay on his feet.

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

Ruling

The answers to the abovementioned questions are:



1. Yes
2. Yes
3. Yes

To reconfirm the position stated in Ruling 13:2003:

By definition, any opponents of the tackled player who go to ground are known as tacklers. Therefore a player on his feet is not a tackler as defined by Law.

A player on his feet in the situation described is not a tackler as defined by Law. That player is not part of the tackle, as he has not gone to ground. He can only therefore be described as an 'Other Player' in Law 15.7 Other Players. Specifically Law 15.7(c) would apply, where that player can only play the ball if he approaches from behind the ball and from directly behind the tackled player or the tackler closest to those players' goal-line.

RULING 2: 2004

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

10 January 2004

The FIR has requested a ruling with regard Law 3.5 (e) Suitably Trained and Experienced Players in the Front Row.

Are teams required to have front row replacements only amongst those players on the bench at the beginning of the match or can those front row replacements come also only from the players starting the match as opposed to bench replacements?

In case teams have the required front row replacements coming both from the bench and from the pitch, can a team use either one depending on the necessity?

We suggest the team can have suitable trained and experienced front row replacements even coming only from the players who started the match. E.g. 4 players among those who start the match if the list includes 16, 17 or 18 players.

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

Ruling

The Law states the number of suitably trained and experienced players in the front row who must come from the players who started the match or from the nominated replacements. Therefore designated front row players can come from either the bench or from the original starting fifteen. Replacements must also satisfy Law 3.5 (c) and (d).

The FIR has requested a ruling with regard Law 19.2 - Throw-In - No Gain In Ground.

A player is outside his team's 22 metre line, while he gets ready to catch the ball being kicked by an opponent. He drops the ball but not forward within his 22. The ball is then picked up by the same player who kicks it directly into touch.

Where is the game going to restart?

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

Ruling

In this scenario the player has played the ball outside his 22 metre line and it has then gone into his 22 metre area. This player is considered to have put the ball into his 22 metre area and therefore the line-out is in line with the place from where he kicked the ball into touch.



RULING 1: 2004

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

20 January 2004

The WRU has requested a ruling with regard Law 14 - Ball on the Ground-No Tackle

May a player lying on the ground during general play and not after a tackle, attempt to tackle a ball carrier?

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

Ruling

Law 14 states 'The game is to be played by players on their feet'. The action noted above is illegal.

The WRU has requested a ruling with regard Law 3 - Number of Players-The Team.

A front row player is sent from the field of play. At the next scrum a suitably trained front row replacement takes the field and a team-mate (flank forward) leaves as required. Subsequently, the other flank forward is injured. May he be replaced by the flank forward who left the field?

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

Ruling

The flank forward that left the field as required in the above scenario may replace the flank forward that was injured.

The WRU has requested a ruling with regard Law 3 - Number of Players-The Team.

A front row player has a blood injury and is temporarily replaced by a player who is subsequently sent off for foul play. He is replaced by a suitably trained player and a team-mate leaves as required. A second front row player is then injured. May the original blood player return to cover the position?

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

Ruling

If the player who has been temporarily replaced does not return to the field of play with 15 minutes (actual time) of leaving the playing area, the replacement becomes permanent and the replaced player must not return to the field of play. If however the sending off takes place within the fifteen minute period allowed for the original prop to have the wound repaired, and the fifteen minute period has not elapsed, the original prop may return to the field of play at the time the next scrum is awarded after the sending off.