



NRL Laws & Interpretations

2020

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This document is intended to provide explanatory notes relating to the most commonly scrutinised rules in the Telstra Premiership, and the on-field interpretations to be adopted by NRL match officials. It does not deal with every aspect of the laws of the game and should not be considered a comprehensive summary of all situations match officials may be confronted with during the course of the 2020 season.

Telstra Premiership match officials have a responsibility to contribute to the game as a spectacle for the benefit of all stakeholders. To achieve this requires not only a complete knowledge of the laws of the game and many years of practical experience, it also requires the application of sound judgement, discretion, effective people management, and a fair degree of good old fashioned common sense.

The hundreds of decisions made by match officials during 80 minutes of intense NRL pressure can obviously have a significant bearing on each game during the season. This carries enormous responsibility and public scrutiny. Match officials are not only required to adjudicate on the laws of the game, they must also ensure each

participating team is provided with equal opportunity to determine the outcome by finding the right balance between enforcement of the rules, and contributing to the game as a spectacle without unwarranted intervention. However, it is important to acknowledge the ability of the match officials to meet this objective will vary depending on the approach taken by players in complying with the rules and interpretations as set out in this document.

In 2020, match officials have been directed by the NRL to allow games to flow where possible, at least to the extent the actions of the players permit that to occur. Match officials have not been instructed to minimise penalty counts by ignoring deliberate breaches of the rules, nor have they been instructed to enforce unrealistically elevated standards of compliance. They have simply been directed to judge each game and each team on merit, and respond accordingly, while at all times bearing in mind the broader game objectives referred to above.

Graham Annesley

Head of Football – Elite Competitions





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TACKLE AND PLAY THE BALL

A player in possession is tackled:

Grounded

- a. *'when he is held by one or more opposing players and the ball or the hand or arm holding the ball comes into contact with the ground.'*

Upright

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

Succumbing

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

**succumb includes a player in possession being lifted off the ground and resulting in the calling of held by the Referee*

Hand on player

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

Section 11 (2) (a-d)

At the completion of the tackle

The player in possession:

'shall be immediately released' by the defender and/or defenders.

Section 11 (10) (a)

Methods that impede the immediate release of the player in possession

- a. Flop onto the player in possession who is grounded
- b. Working the player in possession
- c. Leg pulls
- d. Leaving or placing the hands or arms on the ball or the arms of the player in possession once the tackle is complete
- e. Spinning on the player in possession once the tackle is complete
- f. Defenders 'peeling off' the player in possession^a
- g. Climbing over the player in possession once the tackle is complete
- h. Crowding the player in possession once the tackle is complete using their knees, arms or body
- i. Pulls the player in possession to the ground once the tackle is complete.

^aIn a tackle involving two or more defenders, after the tackle is complete, all defenders must release simultaneously.

Defenders Responsibilities

- » At the completion of the tackle the defenders must take up a position as a Marker or retire the 10 metres
- » A Marker must take up a position directly 'opposite the tackled player' and not float or be too deep from the play the ball
- » The Marker 'must not kick the ball' whilst it is being played
- » A second Marker 'must stand immediately and directly behind' the first marker.

Section 11 (10) (c) (f)

Surrender Tackle

Occurs when the player in possession surrenders his run in or at the line.

Defender[s] are permitted to work the player on the ground, move to a bear hug position, lay on the player in possession or spin to the front of the tackle.

It is the sole responsibility of the Referee to identify this tackle.

If a player surrenders, he cannot be lifted or dragged into touch or in-goal.

Shoulder Charge

A shoulder charge is made when the tackling player uses his shoulder and/or upper arm without, at the same time, using his arms to tackle or otherwise take hold of the opposing player. The term "arms" obviously includes hands. The requirement to use "the arms" means that both arms must be used. Unless both arms are used, then providing the actions of the player are at least careless, any case involving forceful contact that has been primarily generated by the shoulder and/or upper arm of the tackling player, will be a shoulder charge.

It will be considered misconduct, if any player effects a tackle in the manner as defined.

Third Man In

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.

In relation to this type of tackle, the Referees will call 'held' and then 'release'.

Mid-Air Tackle

It is illegal to tackle an opposing player attempting to field a kick on the full whilst the player is in mid-air. The catcher must have returned to the ground before being tackled (See Section 15).

Tackling a Kicker

When affecting a tackle on a kicker, the defender must make a genuine attempt to tackle which is not:

1. Late
2. High or
3. Dangerous.

Responsibilities of the player in possession

The tackled player shall:

- a. *without delay regain his feet where he is tackled,*
- b. *lift the ball clear of the ground,*
- c. *face his opponent's goal line,*
- d. *place the ball on the ground,*

and make a genuine attempt to play the ball with the foot while maintaining balance.

Section 11 (10) (b)

Player in possession returning to the mark

If the player in possession simultaneously offloads the ball or continues to run after the tackle is complete, the Referee will direct that player back to the original position to play the ball.

Section 11 (6) notes

Stealing the Ball

- a. *The ball can be stolen from the player in possession at any stage prior to a tackle being complete when there is only one defender effecting the tackle,*
- b. *If there are two or more defender[s] 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 for a try.*

Section 11 (9) notes

Dummy Half Passing Ball into Defending Player at Ruck

Where a dummy half deliberately passes the ball into a defending player caught in and around the ruck who is not actively taking part in the play, such an act will be deemed to be contrary to the true spirit of the game and constitute misconduct under section 15(1)(i) of the Laws of the Game, and a penalty will be awarded against the attacking team.

Section 15 (1) notes

This does not in any way absolve a defender of his responsibilities to clear the ruck and the defending team will still be penalised if it is deemed that they are interfering with play.

10 METRES

All defending players except those who have taken up a position as Marker[s] must *'retire 10 metres from the point at which the ball is played or to their own goal line'*.

Section 11 (10) (g)

All defending players are required to be 'in line' with the Referee marking the 10 metres. The Referee will call "go" when the ball has been played backwards and then the defensive line is entitled to move forward.

If the defensive line is within 10 metres of their own goal line, the players:

1. Must be touching the goal line with a foot; and
2. The defenders cannot place their front foot past the centre of the ruck.

Offside

A player is offside if he has one foot (either on or off the ground) in front of a teammate who *'last touches, is touched, held or kicked the ball'*.

Section 14 (1)

In relation to kick, an active offside player shall not encroach within 10 metres of the ball, when there is an opponent waiting for the ball.

ACTIVE OR PASSIVE:

Active is:

An offside player who takes part in and/or influences the course of the game.

Passive is:

An offside player who does not influence the course of the game.

WAITING FOR THE BALL

A player from the non kicking team who is moving in the direction of the ball and who can actively participate in play.

Where an onside player takes possession of the ball, an offside team mate who is within 10 metres of an opponent 'waiting for the ball' may participate in the play when the onside player and/or the ball itself travels 10 metres or more (this includes if the ball is kicked a second time).

KICK

Making an intentional motion to kick 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.

Out of Play

A player from the team in possession is out of play if he does not *"retire behind his own players involved in the play the ball or to their own goal line."*

Section 11 (10) (g)

An 'out of play' player may again participate in the play if he retreats to a position where he has both feet behind the point where the ball was placed on the ground in the prior play the ball.

Where an 'out of play' player becomes involved in the ensuing play, he is to be penalised with the penalty being awarded in line with the previous play the ball, at the point where the player became out of play.

Downtown Chasers

A player is considered 'downtown' when:

A player who is in front of the kicker in general play who intentionally advances beyond the point of the previous play the ball before the ball has gone past him.

Section 14 (3) notes

SCRUMS

A scrum is to be formed and decided by:

1. The front row *'interlock[ing] arms and heads and creating a tunnel'*
2. The second row forwards *'interlock[ing] arms and placing their heads in the two spaces between the hooker and his front row forwards'*
3. The loose forward (lock) *'shall pack behind his second row forwards by placing his head in the space between them' and wrap their arms around the second row forwards'*
4. All players outside the scrum, other than the scrum halves shall retire 10 metres or more behind the mark where the scrum is formed and shall remain until the ball has emerged correctly from the scrum.
5. The ball is to be fed on the same side as the Referee into the tunnel by the scrum half who must stand square with both hands on the ball
6. *'The ball must emerge from the scrum after first emerging from between and behind the inner feet of the second row forwards'. This will be indicated by the Referee calling 'out'.*

Section 12 (2-9)

Scrum Clock and Position of Scrums

1. Where play is recommenced by a scrum, both teams must be Properly Bound and Packed within 30 seconds from the time the Referee has verbally indicated that the "scrum clock" has started.
2. The team with the loose head and feed may elect, within 5 seconds of the Referee verbally indicating that the scrum clock has started, to move the scrum to:
 - (a) 10m in from touch
 - (b) 20m in from touch
 - (c) Centre field (in line with the black dots marked on the cross bar)
3. Each team must nominate two players on the team sheet prior to the match as able to inform the referee where the scrum should be set. If both nominated players are off the field, one additional Player may be nominated to the Touch Judge by the Head Trainer during the match.
4. 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:
 - (a) In the case of an infringement, at the point of the infringement, but not closer than 20m from the touch line or 10m from a goal line; or
 - (b) In the case of the ball going into touch, 20m from the touch line, but not closer than 10m from a goal line.*
5. The scrum can only be moved to one of the nominated points on the same side of the field to where the infringement occurred or where the ball went into touch.
6. If the scrum clock is not started due to an injury, or a reason outside of the team with the loose head and feeds control, they are required to advise the Referee of the nominated position as the Referee moves to check on the injured player.

* To remove any doubt, if a 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 per the 2019 rules.

- 8.** If one team is properly bound and packed then the Referee will call "time off", at which time the "game clock" will stop, but the "scrum clock" will continue to run. This team will be obliged to hold this formation until such time as:
 - (a) The Referee indicates that they may stand; or
 - (b) The opposing team packs and the scrum is formed.
- 9.** If the "scrum clock" has counted down to zero seconds (indicated by a siren sounding) and one team is not properly bound and packed, the Referee shall award a penalty to the non-offending team. This will not be a differential penalty.
- 10.** If the "scrum clock" has counted down to zero seconds (indicated by a siren sounding) and both teams are not properly bound and packed, the Referee shall award a penalty to the team which has the feed. This will not be a differential penalty.
- 11.** If, in the opinion of the Referee, the scrum is being delayed by factors outside of a team's control, the Referee may call "time off" on the "game clock". If "time off" is called, the "scrum clock" will also be stopped and only re-started once the Referee has called "time on".
- 12.** In the event of a player suffering an injury after the "scrum clock" has commenced and the player is unable to re-join play or is preventing play from restarting after the "scrum clock" has counted down to zero seconds (indicated by a siren sounding), the player will be required to leave the field of play and either:
 - (a) Be interchanged; or
 - (b) Not return to the field of play until the earlier of the next stoppage or when their team regains possession.
- 13.** If, in the opinion of the Referee, a team deliberately does not attempt to pack a scrum, a penalty will be awarded to the non-offending team at the mark. This will not be a differential penalty.

* "Properly Bound and Packed" means all players in the scrum bound together, both teams packed together and the half back ready to feed the ball into the scrum.

* "Stoppage", for the purposes of the "scrum clock", means a scrum, drop out, 20 metre restart or a handover.

PLAYER MISCONDUCT

A player is guilty of misconduct if he:

1. *'Trips, kicks or strikes another player'*
2. *'When affecting or attempting to affect a tackle makes contact with the head or neck of an opponent intentionally, recklessly or carelessly'*
3. *'Uses any dangerous throw when effecting a tackle'*
4. Applies any unnecessary pressure or twists including grapples, crushers or performs a chicken wing on a player in possession
5. Unnecessarily contacts a player not in possession or a kicker (see Tackle and Play the ball)
6. When a defender forcefully spears at the legs of a player in possession exposing him to unnecessary risk of injury
7. Shoulder Charge (see Tackle and Play the ball)
8. *'Disputes a decision of the Referee or Touch Judge'*

In these circumstances:

'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.'

Section 13 (1) (a)

Additionally a Referee or Review Officials may:

'In the event of misconduct by a player at his discretion, caution, temporarily suspend for 10 minutes (Sin Bin), or dismiss the player'

Section 16 (6)

If an incident is significant enough a Referee will also place the player(s) or incident on report.

Sin Bin

The six main reasons for a player to be temporarily suspended for ten minutes are:

1. Repeated infringements
2. Professional Foul
3. Cooling off period for a player
4. Dissent
5. Striking
6. Foul Play*

* Foul Play - A player will be sin binned for foul play in circumstances where, in the opinion of the referee, the act of foul play is of a serious nature, but does not warrant sending off. Acts of foul play of a serious nature include:

- » High Tackles with direct contact with the head or neck which are deemed forceful
- » Dangerous Throws in which the head or neck of the attacking player make forceful contact with the ground
- » Shoulder charges which make forceful contact with the head or neck of the attacking player or make forceful movement of the head or neck of the attacking player (whiplash)
- » Crusher tackles in which a defending player has a grip/hold of the attacking player with both arms and applies unnecessary pressure or force to the head/neck/spinal column of the player
- » Any other act of foul play which the referee deems to be of a serious nature, but does not warrant sending off.

Captains Communication

1. A Captain may only approach the Referee at a "stoppage of play"
2. In speaking to the Referee, a player must not question or refer to the Referee's ability or integrity
3. The Referee will not debate decisions with the Captain
4. The Captain of a team is entitled to speak to a Referee to clarify a ruling at any stoppage including tries, injuries or goal-line dropout (within the 25 seconds, however this does not stop the drop-out clock) and at half time, siren prior to leaving the field.

A penalty or a scrum is not considered a stoppage for the purpose of Captains Communication with the Referee. In relation to the communication at half time this is optional for either team captain.

If required, it will occur in the following manner:

- » The home team captain will speak to the Referee first
- » The away team captain will speak to the Referee second
- » The maximum time allocated to a team is 1 minute.

RESTARTS OF PLAY

Penalty or Free Kick

A Penalty or Free Kick is to be taken in compliance with Section 13 (1) (a) and Section 13 (4) (a) of 'The Australian Rugby League Laws of the Game and notes on the laws'.

A quick penalty restart is permitted on any infringement against the team not in possession, except:

- » 10 metre penalties
- » Within 10 metres of the opposition goal line
- » Penalties resulting from kicks in general play
- » Where the Referee is required to take any further action
- » Where the mark has been advanced.

The Referee will give the team the 'mark' and all players from the team awarded the penalty must be onside.

Section 12 (5)(d)

Goal Line Drop Out

TOUCH IN GOAL

'The ball is touch in-goal when it touches the corner post, in-goal line or any object on or outside the touch in-goal line.'

A player is NOT considered to be an 'object'.

'Where the ball which is stationary in the in goal area comes into 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'

'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'.

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.

Section 9 (2)

Section 9 notes

Section 9.1 notes

Section 8 (4) (i)

DROP OUT CLOCK

1. Where a team is required to recommence play with a goal line or 20 metre drop-out, they must do so within 25 seconds from the time the Referee has ruled the goal line or 20 metre drop-out and verbally indicated that the "drop-out clock" has started.
2. The kick will deemed to be completed when the kicker's foot has struck the ball.
3. If the "drop-out clock" has counted down to zero seconds (indicated by a siren sounding) without the drop-out having been taken, the Referee shall award a penalty to the non-kicking team:
 - (a) In the case of a goal line drop-out –at the centre of the 10 metre line; or
 - (b) In the case of a 20 metre drop-out –at the centre of the 20 metre line.
4. If, in the opinion of the Referee, the drop-out is being delayed by factors outside of a team's control, the Referee may call "time off" on the "game clock". If "time off" is called, the "drop-out clock" will also be stopped and only re-started once the Referee has called "time on".

5. In the event of a player suffering an injury after the “drop-out clock” has commenced and the player is unable to re-join play or is preventing play from restarting after the “drop-out clock” has counted down to zero seconds (indicated by a siren sounding), the player will be required to leave the field of play and either:
 - (a) Be interchanged; or
 - (b) Not return to the field of play until the earlier of the next stoppage or when their team regains possession.
6. If, in the opinion of the Referee, a team deliberately does not attempt to take a drop-out, a penalty will be awarded to the non-kicking team:
 - (a) In the case of a goal line drop-out –at the centre of the 10 metre line; or
 - (b) In the case of a 20 metre drop-out –at the centre of the 20 metre line.

* “Stoppage”, for the purposes of the “drop-out clock”, means a scrum, drop-out, 20 metre restart or a handover.

A drop-out may be taken quicker if:

1. All officials are in position; and
2. It is taken in compliance with Section 2 and Section 8 (a-h) of ‘The Australian Rugby League Laws of the Game and notes on the laws’.

20 Metre Restart

A 20 metre optional kick is to be taken in compliance with Section 2 and Section 8 (2) (a-b) of ‘The Australian Rugby League Laws of the Game and notes on the laws’.

The 20 metre optional kick must only be taken when all officials are in position and the whistle is blown. The initial tackle effected on the team taking the 20 metre optional re-start shall be a zero tackle.

A “quick tap” will not be permitted where the ball has been returned to the 20 metre line by a pass greater than 10 metres, has been passed more than once, or has been kicked.

Kick Off

A kick off is to be taken in compliance with Section 8 (1) of ‘The Australian Rugby League Laws of the Game and notes on the laws’.

A kick off may only be taken when all officials are in position.



40/20 Kick

Where a player kicks the ball in general play bounded by their own dead ball line, 40 metre lines and touchlines and the ball finds touch, otherwise than on the full, at a point on the touchline between the opponents 20 metre line and the goal line, the kickers team shall recommence play with a tap kick.

Section 12 (5)(d)

The tap kick 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.

Prior to blowing the whistle, the Referees will give the defending team 'reasonable time' to get into position.

The tap kick may only be taken when the Referee blows his whistle to restart play. This will only occur when all match officials are in position and ready to officiate.

20/40 Kick

Where a player kicks the ball in general play bounded by their own dead ball line, 20 metre lines and touchlines 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 recommence play with a tap kick.

The tap kick 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.

Prior to blowing the whistle, the Referee will give the defending team 'reasonable time' to get into position.

The tap kick may only be taken when the Referee blows his whistle to restart play. This will only occur when all match officials are in position and ready to officiate.

Kick Out on the Full

A handover shall occur when the ball is kicked directly into touch on the full.

The handover will occur at the point where the ball was kicked, but no closer than 10 metres from the goal line and no closer than 10 metres from the touchline.

In the event that the ball goes into touch on the full behind the point at which it was kicked, play will recommence with a handover in line with where it crossed the touchline, no closer than 10 metres from the touchline or goal line.

The play-the-ball to recommence play shall not be counted for the purposes of the tackle count.

Mutual Infringement

It is proposed that the following drafting amendments be made to the mutual infringement definition on page 43 of the Rugby League Laws of the Game International Level with Notes on the Laws and NRL Telstra Premiership interpretations:

Where play is irregularly affected by a mutual infringement:

- (a) Following a play-the-ball, the Referee shall re-start play by returning to the point of the previous play the ball and allowing the team which was in possession at that point to play the ball again. The play-the-ball to restart the game is not counted as an additional tackle and the player who was previously tackled with the ball immediately prior to the mutual infringement is to play the ball to restart the game.
- (b) Following a scrum, the Referee shall re-start play by returning to the point where the scrum was set and giving the team in possession at that point the loose head and feed.
- (c) Following a penalty restart, the Referee shall re-start play by returning to the point where the penalty was awarded and ruling that the penalty restart be retaken.
- (d) Following a goal line or 20m drop-out, the Referee shall re-start play by returning to the point where the drop out was taken and ruling that the drop out be retaken.
- (e) Following a 20m optional kick, the Referee shall re-start play by returning to the point where the 20m optional kick was taken and ruling that the 20m optional kick be retaken.
- (f) Following a kick off, the Referee shall re-start play by returning to the point where the kick off was taken and ruling that the kick off be retaken.

If, in any of the above circumstances, there is a turnover in possession prior to the mutual infringement occurring, the Referee shall re-start play by awarding a zero tackle restart where the mutual infringement occurred (or 10m out from the goal line if the mutual infringement occurred in the in-goal) to the team in possession at that time.

The referee is the sole judge of what constitutes a mutual infringement and whether or not play has been irregularly affected. Contact between a defender and Referee may not constitute a mutual infringement.

SCORING A TRY

Scoring a Try

A try is scored when:

- a. A player first grounds the ball in his opponents in goal
- b. Opposing players simultaneously grounds the ball in the in goal area
- c. A tackled player's momentum carries him into the opponents in goal where he grounds the ball.

Section 6 (3)

Grounding

Grounding the Ball includes:

- a. Placing the ball on the ground with hand or hands, wrist or forearm
- b. Exerting a downward pressure on the ball in contact with the ground
- c. Dropping on the ball and covering it with the front part of the body above the waist and below the neck.

Section 2

A player who has had possession or touches/touched the ball and knocks the ball forward must regain possession (catch, hold or grip) prior to the ball hitting the ground, another player, goal post or cross bar.

For the ball to be deemed grounded, pressure must be applied by the player's fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or torso so as to create a reasonable influence on the plane of the ball including the spin, rotation, momentum or bounce.

Double Movement

A try will be awarded if:

'a tackled player's momentum carries him into the opponents' in-goal where he grounds the ball even if the ball has first touched the ground in the field of play.'

Section 6 (3) (c)

In the process of scoring a try, a player in possession must not promote the ball from the position the ball has been grounded.

If the momentum of the player in possession carries him into the opponents in goal area, it will not be a double movement if the ball would have finished over the goal line regardless of any subsequent movement of the ball or the arm carrying the ball.

Penalty Try

Further, if circumstances warrant it:

'The Referee (or Review Officials) may award a penalty try if, in his opinion, a try would have been scored but for the unfair play of the defending team. A penalty try is awarded between the goal posts irrespective of where the offence occurred.'

Section 6 (3) (d)

Possible Eight Point Try

If a player fouls an opponent who is touching down for a try, a penalty kick at goal shall be taken from in front of the goal posts after the attempt to convert the try.

Section 13 (9)

Touching down includes:

- a.** In the act of scoring; and
- b.** Until the try scorer regains his feet.

Grounding the Ball in own In Goal

For the ball to be deemed dead the player in possession must intentionally ground the ball in his own in-goal.

Corner Post

If a player makes contact with a corner post he will not be deemed to be out of play unless any part of his body made contact with either the touch-in-goal line or the touch line or the ground beyond.

If the ball is not in possession of a player and it makes contact with the corner post (e.g. from a kick) the ball will be deemed to be touch-in-goal as per section 9(2).

OBSTRUCTION

Obstruction

The indicators for an obstruction include:

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 Review Officials 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.

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 regards to a player catching the ball from a kick if:

1. A player arrives at the same time as an opponent and obstructs him 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 regards 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.

Diving Through the Ruck

If, in the process of scoring a try an attacking player dives through the ruck or into a teammate including the player who played the ball and impacts on the defence, he will be penalised for an obstruction.

Sleeper

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

Lending Weight

It is permissible for a player to *'lend weight to a teammate in possession in order to avoid losing ground'*.

Section 11 (2) (a) notes

1. It is not permissible for the player lending weight to impede a defender from making the tackle
2. The Referee will take into account any momentum the tackle has already generated.

TIME OFF

Time should be taken off by the Referee:

1. (a) *After 1 minute and 20 seconds from the time which any try has been awarded up until the time the conversion is taken, or*
(b) *After 1 minute and 20 seconds from the time which a penalty has been awarded up until the penalty kick for goal is being attempted, and*
(c) *Following an attempted conversion for a minimum of 30 seconds before play is restarted at the centre of half way.*
2. *In the last five minutes of the second half:*
(a) *Following a conversion, a successful penalty kick at goal or field goal until the play is restarted at the centre of the half way or*
(b) *Following a unsuccessful penalty kick at goal or field goal that goes touch in-goal or over the dead ball line.*

Restart Clock

- a. *Following the completion of each attempted conversion kick at goal during NRL matches, the Referee shall immediately call time out,*
- b. *The NRL Timekeeper will immediately start a 30 second restart clock when time is called out by the Referee,*
- c. *The 30 second restart clock will indicate to all players and officials that play will only recommence at the halfway line once the clock has counted down to zero,*
- d. *When the clock has counted down to zero, the Referee will immediately call time back on with all players to be ready to restart the match with a place kick from the halfway mark,*
- e. *Players will not be permitted to restart play until such time as the restart clock has counted down to zero and the Referee has called time back on,*
- f. *In the event that a referee believes a team is intentionally wasting time by not restarting play after the restart clock has counted down to zero, the Referee may again call time out at his discretion,*



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- g. In the event that a team declines the opportunity to attempt a conversion kick at goal following a try, the Referee will immediately call time out following this request of the team captain. The restart clock shall immediately begin following the time out call from the Referee,*
 - h. In the event of a possible 8 point try, time off and the restart clock will commence at the completion of the second attempted kick at goal.*

NRL BUNKER – OFFICIAL REVIEW ROOM

Captain's Challenge

1. Challenges may be only initiated by the captain or a nominated replacement player in their absence

Process

- Only the captain can initiate a challenge. If the captain is off the field, an additional player may be nominated to the Referee, or to the Touch Judge by the Head Trainer during the match.
- The captain (or nominated replacement player) must inform the referee of which element of the decision they are challenging. If the Bunker determines that an infringement occurs prior to the element of the incident that is being challenged, the first identified infringement will supersede the challenge.
- The captain can only challenge decisions by the Referee which cause play to stop. (i.e. any decision by the referee to 'play-on' cannot be challenged)
- Teams with multiple captains, must advise the referee at the coin toss which captain will be communicating with the referee during the game.

2. A challenge is only permissible in instances where the referee makes a decision that results in the match recommencing with a structured restart

Process

- A structured restart includes the following: Scrum, Penalty (quick tap, free-kick into touch, penalty goal attempt), 6th tackle handover, 20m restart, goal line drop-out.
- For clarity, as detailed in point 1 above, a challenge cannot be requested during general play if a whistle has not already been blown to indicate a stoppage e.g. a defending captain/player who suspects that the referee has missed a knock-on from an attacking player may not stop general play by requesting a challenge.
- Decisions that can and cannot be challenged are set out below:

Decision / Category	CAN be Challenged	CANNOT be Challenged
Penalties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offside (Kick chase, s14 Laws of the Game) Restart infringements Stealing the Ball Foul Play Obstruction Mid-Air Tackle/Contact 	Discretionary penalties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10m offside Ruck and marker Infringements Time-wasting Dissent/backchat Deliberate forward pass Scrum penalties
Changes in possession resulting in a Structured Restart (i.e. scrum, penalty restart, handover, 20m restart and drop-out)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knock-on/strip Ball/player into touch Drop-out/20m restart Charge down Tackle count not restarted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward pass
Point Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try decisions not referred to Bunker No Try decisions not referred to the Bunker which result in a Structured Restart Field goal awarded (obstruction elements only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

- Stealing the ball is deemed to occur only if a player demonstrates the intent to strip the ball. Incidental contact with the ball that occurs while making contact with the player will not be classified as stealing the ball.
- In the case of foul play, it can only be challenged by a team which has been penalised. All other incidents of foul play are separately reviewed by the Bunker.
- If a captain is in any doubt about whether a particular decision can be challenged, he may ask the referee if the decision is challengeable. Such question will not extend the 10 second time limit to confirm a challenge.

3. Each team will be entitled to one unsuccessful challenge per match

Process

- Each team will be allowed to make a maximum of one unsuccessful challenge per game.
- Where a request for a challenge results in the original on-field decision being changed, the challenge will be categorised as successful and not count towards the game limit.
- Where a request for a challenge results in the original on-field decision remaining unchanged, the challenge will be categorised as unsuccessful and no further challenges will be permitted for the remainder of the game.
- If, based on the available technology:
 - (a) The Bunker determines that the original on-field decision should be changed, the challenge will be successful.
 - (b) The Bunker is unable to determine that the original on-field decision is incorrect, the decision will remain unchanged and the challenge will be unsuccessful.

4. A time limit of 10 seconds will apply to initiate a challenge unless the match is restarted earlier

Process

- A captain has until the earlier of the following two events to initiate a challenge:
 - (I) The match being restarted
 - (II) 10 seconds from the referee making the decision
- A captain can verbally indicate to any of the four on-field Officials (Referees or Touch Judges) that he wishes to challenge the decision
- If a Touch judge receives the indication, they will communicate this to the Referee so that play is stopped.
- Once the captain has indicated within the required timeframe that he wishes to challenge, he is required to advise the Referee the specific aspect of the decision to be challenged.
- The Referee will then use the existing Bunker referral signal and verbally confirm the decision that is being challenged.

5. The following restart procedures will apply following a challenge:

Process

- If a challenge is successful, the match will recommence with the referee overturning his original decision in the correct manner.
- If a challenge is successful and there is no formal restart, it will be treated as a mutual infringement.
- If the challenge is unsuccessful, the match will recommence as originally determined by the referee.

Try Scoring Process

In the event that the on-field officials require assistance of the Review Officials, the following procedure will occur:

1. The Referee, after consultation with the other on field officials, will make a 'Live Decision'
2. In the event that the Referee requires a review, he will call time off and physically signal for a referral to the 'Review Officials'
3. The Referee will then signal his 'Live Decision' (TRY OR NO TRY)
4. The Review Officials will then review the on-field 'Live Decision'
5. The Review Officials will then assess if there is 'sufficient evidence' to overturn the 'Live Decision'
6. If there is 'sufficient evidence' that the 'Live Decision' is incorrect, the Review Officials will overturn the 'Live Decision' and the new decision will be indicated to the Referee, players and spectators via the screen
7. The Referee will communicate briefly the reason for a 'Live Decision' being overturned after it has appeared on the screen.

The Review Officials may review any potential point-scoring play. In relation to a field goal, the Referee may only review that the ball has gone between the uprights and over the cross bar, or in relation to foul play.

Foul Play

A Review Official possesses a similar power in reporting foul play to that of a Touch Judge.

'He may cancel any decision made if prior foul play of which he had no knowledge is reported to him by a Touch Judge or Review Official.'

Section 16 (9)

As a result of the advice of the Review Officials, the Referee may take any necessary action except to the extent where play has extended beyond the first play the ball of the next set or in the event of a scrum has been formed and decided.

In circumstances where the play has extended beyond those points, the Referee can still place the player(s) or incident on report.

The Review Officials only have power to advise the Referee of an act of foul play (other than in point-scoring referrals) when the incident is required to be placed 'on report' or the offending player is to be dismissed.

Restarts

In the event of the Review Officials reviewing a replay prior to the completion of a goal line drop-out, or 20 metre optional kick being taken and there is sufficient evidence to overturn the original on-field decision, the Review Officials will instruct the Referee to recommence the game with the correct restart.



Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.





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