

2009 EDITION



**THE AUSTRALIAN
RUGBY LEAGUE
LAWS OF THE GAME
AND
NOTES ON THE LAWS**

*OFFICIAL
FEBRUARY
2009*

PLEASE NOTE

**THE NOTES ON THE LAWS ACCOMPANYING EACH SECTION ARE
TO BE TAKEN AS OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS RELATING TO THE
PUBLICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE LAWS.**

**This publication replaces all existing Law
Books, Manuals, etc., and is the only official
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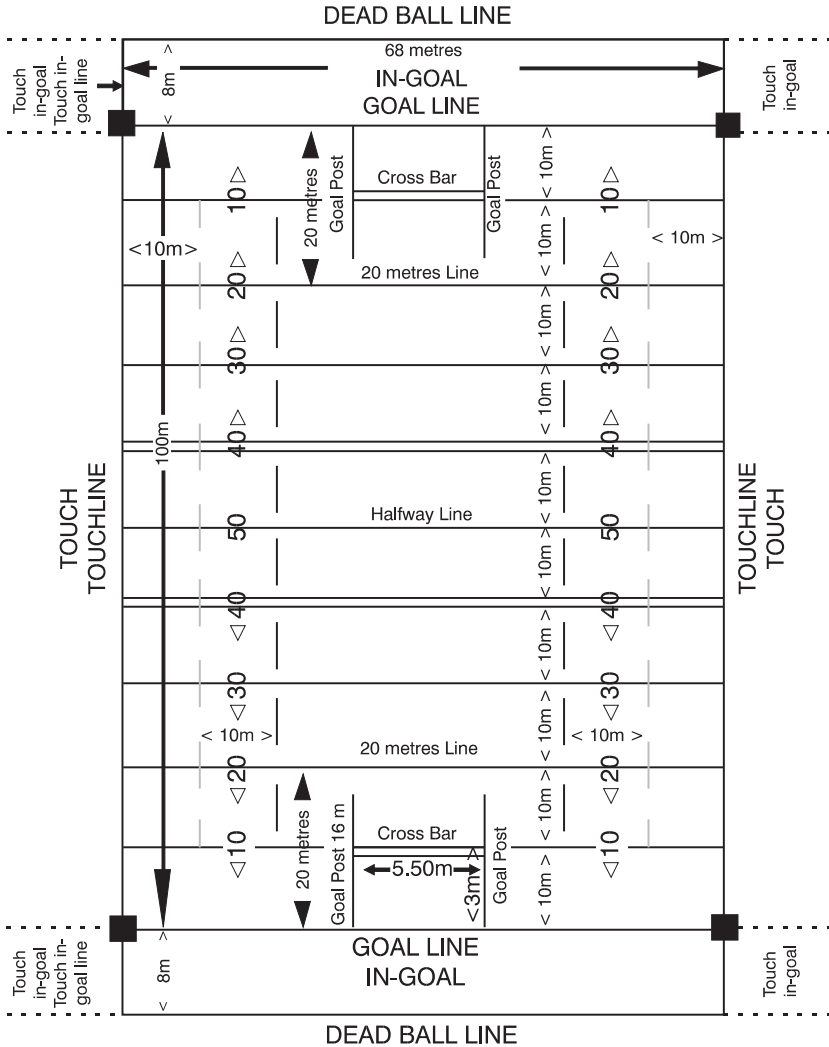
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**THE 2009 ARL LAWS OF THE GAME
AND
NOTES ON THE LAWS
(APPROVED BY THE AUSTRALIAN
RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE)**

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SECTION 1 THE PLAYING FIELD

The PLAN and markings thereon and the Notes relating thereto are part of these Laws.



Section 1. The Playing Field (Continued)

NOTES:-

1. The Touch Lines are in Touch, the Touch in-Goal lines are Touch in-Goal, the Goal Lines are in the In-Goal area and the Dead Ball Line is beyond In-Goal.
2. ■ indicates a corner post (see Glossary) placed at the intersection of each goal line and touch line. A corner post is in touch in-goal. Touch Judges should at all times ensure that corner posts are correctly positioned.
3. The goal posts are considered to extend indefinitely upwards. It is recommended that the bottom two metres of each upright be padded. ⊥ shaped goal posts are permissible provided the relevant dimensions are observed.
4. For adult games the dimensions should be as near maximum as possible to the dimensions stipulated.
5. The broken lines in the PLAN shall consist of marks or dots on the ground not more than 2 metres apart. All transverse lines must be marked across the full width of the field.
6. Two unbroken red lines, 10 cms in width, across the field and adjacent to the current white lines which presently mark the 40m lines are to be used.

IMPORTANT

THE PLAYING FIELD: 10m "broken" line markings

- Where the full field is marked to cater for International Laws and Mod League matches, both the 10m & 20m markings are to remain.

SECTION 2

GLOSSARY

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

ACCIDENTAL STRIKE	when a ball strikes a player who makes no attempt to play at the ball.
ADVANTAGE	allowing the advantage means allowing play to proceed if it is to the advantage of the team which has not committed an offence or infringement.
ATTACKING TEAM	is the team which at the time has a territorial advantage. If a scrum is to be formed on the halfway line the team which last played at the ball before it went out of play is the attacking team.
BACK	as applied to a player means one who is not taking part in the scrum.
BALL BACK	means to form a scrum from where the ball was kicked after it has entered touch on the full.
BEHIND	when applied to a player means, unless otherwise stated, that both feet are behind the position in question. Similarly "in front" implies "with both feet". When applied to a position on the field of play, "behind" means nearer to one's own goal line than the point in question. Similarly "in front of" means nearer to one's opponents' goal line.
BLIND SIDE	means the side of the scrum or of the play-the-ball nearer to touch (cf.open side).
CHARGING-DOWN	is blocking the path of the ball with hands, arm or body as it rises from an opponent's kick.
CONVERTING A TRY	is the act of kicking a goal following the scoring of a try.
CORNER POST	is a post placed at the intersection of each touch line and goal line. The post shall be of non-rigid material and shall be not less than 1.25m. high. The corner posts are in touch in-goal.
DEAD BALL	means that the ball is out of play.
DEFENDING TEAM	is the team opposing the attacking team (see above).
DIFFERENTIAL PENALTY	differs in one respect from a Penalty Kick in that a goal cannot be scored from it.
DROP GOAL	sometimes referred to as a Field Goal, is a goal scored by propelling the ball on the full, over the crossbar, by drop kicking it.
DROP KICK	is a kick whereby the ball is dropped from the hands (or hand) and is kicked immediately it rebounds from the ground.

Section 2. Glossary (Continued)

DROP-OUT	means a drop kick from between the posts or from the centre of the 20m line when bringing the ball back into play.
DUMMY	is the pretence of passing or otherwise releasing the ball while still retaining possession of it.
FIELD OF PLAY	is the area bounded by, but not including, the touch lines and goal lines.
FORWARD	means in a direction towards the opponents' dead ball line. As applied to a player it means one who is at the time packing down in the scrum.
FORWARD PASS	is a throw towards the opponents' dead ball line (see Section 10).
FOUL PLAY	refers to the types of Misconduct specified in Section 15 – Law 1(a) (b) (c) and (d).
FREE KICK	is the kick awarded to a team which kicks into touch from a penalty kick. The kick is taken 20 metres in from touch opposite the point of entry into touch and the ball may be kicked in any manner in any direction. A goal cannot be scored from it, nor can ground be gained by only kicking into touch on the full.
FULL TIME	means the end of the game.
GENERAL PLAY	refers to all aspects of play after a match has been started or re-started by a Place Kick, Drop-Out, Penalty Kick, Free Kick or Scrum.
GOAL	see Section 6.
GROUNDING THE BALL	means (a) placing the ball on the ground with hand or hands or (b) exerting a downward pressure on the ball with hand or arm, the ball itself being on the ground or (c) dropping on the ball and covering it with the part of the body above the waist and below the neck, the ball itself being on the ground.
HALF TIME	means the end of the first half of the game.
HANDOVER	is the surrendering of the ball to the opposition after a team has been tackled the statutory number of successive times (Section 11 Law 7).
HEEL	is when a player propels the ball behind him with the sole or heel of his foot.
HOOK	is the act of the hooker when he strikes with a foot for the ball in the scrum.
IN-GOAL	see Plan (Section 1).
IN POSSESSION	means to be holding or carrying the ball.

Section 2. Glossary (Continued)

KICK	means imparting motion to the ball with any part of the leg (except the heel) from knee to toe inclusive.
KICK OFF	see Section 8.
KNOCK-ON	means to knock the ball towards the opponents' dead ball line with hand or arm, while playing at the ball.
LOOSE ARM	is an offence by the hooker if he packs with one arm loose in the scrum.
LOOSE BALL	is when during play the ball is not held by a player and not being scrummaged.
LOOSE HEAD	refers to the front row forward in the scrum who is nearest to the referee.
MARK	is the point at which a penalty kick or free kick is awarded or a scrum is formed.
OBSTRUCTION	is the illegal act of impeding an opponent who does not have the ball.
OFF SIDE	as applied to a player means that he is temporarily out of play and may be penalised if he joins in the game (see Section 14.)
ON SIDE	means that a player is not off side.
ON THE FULL	means the ball is kicked over a given line without first bouncing.
OPTIONAL KICK	is the kick to be taken from the 20m restart. The kick can be taken in any manner and kicked in any direction. It is in play from the moment it is kicked.
OPEN SIDE	means the side of the scrum or the play-the-ball further from touch (cf. Blind Side).
PACK	refers collectively to the forwards of any one team. To pack down means to form a scrum.
PASS	is a throw of the ball from one player to another.
PENALISE	is to award a penalty kick against an offending player.
PENALTY KICK	see Section 13.
PLACE KICK	is to kick the ball after it has been placed on the ground for that purpose.
PLAYING AREA	is the area enclosed by the fence, or other such line of demarcation, which prevents the encroachment of spectators.
PLAYING FIELD	is the area bounded by, but not including, the touch lines and dead ball lines.
PLAY-THE-BALL	is the act of bringing the ball into play after a tackle. (See Section 11).

Section 2. Glossary (Continued)

PROP	is the front row forward in each team nearest to the scrum half who is putting the ball into the scrum.
PUNT	is a kick whereby the ball is dropped from the hand or hands and is kicked before it touches the ground.
PUT-IN (also known as FEEDING THE SCRUM)	is the rolling of the ball into the scrum.
REBOUND	see Accidental Strike
RICHOCET	see Accidental Strike
RUCK	is the area, at the play-the-ball, between the player playing the ball and the marker.
SCRUM	or Scrummage or Scrimmage (see Section 12). Where a team loses the advantages of the “Loose Head” and “Put-in” the scrum is said to be awarded against that team.
STRIKE	as applied to the foot means to attempt to secure possession of the ball in a scrum.
TACKLE	See Section 11.
TOUCH DOWN	is the grounding of the ball by a defending player in his own in-goal.
TOUCH IN-GOAL	See Section 9.
TRY	See Section 6.
UPRIGHT TACKLE	is where the player in possession is effectively tackled without being brought to the ground (see Section 11).
VOLUNTARY TACKLE	is where the player in possession voluntarily stops play when not effectively tackled. (See Section 11).
ZERO TACKLE	Where a breach occurs and possession changes hands, the following tackle will be a zero tackle notwithstanding that the team gaining possession may have gained a territorial advantage.

SECTION 3 THE BALL

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| Shape and Construction | 1. The game shall be played with an oval air-inflated ball the outer casing of which shall be of leather or other material approved by the ARL Board. Nothing shall be used in its construction which might prove dangerous to the players. |
| Size and Weight | 2. The dimensions of the ball shall be those approved by the Board of the Australian Rugby League. |
| Ball deflated | 3. The Referee shall blow his whistle immediately he notices that the size and shape of the ball no longer comply with the Laws of the Game. |
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| Colour of the Ball | 1. <i>In senior competitions the ball shall be light in colour so that it can be more easily seen by spectators.</i> |
| Ball bursts | 2. <i>If the ball bursts as a player is taking a place kick at goal he should be allowed another kick. If a player grounds the ball for a try and then it is noticed that the ball has burst, the try should be allowed. Otherwise, if the ball bursts, play is stopped, the ball is replaced and a scrum is formed to restart play at the point where the ball bursts. The team in possession or last in possession shall have the loose head and the put-in.</i> |

SECTION 4

THE PLAYER AND PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

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| 13-a-side | 1. The game shall be played by two teams each consisting of not more than thirteen players on the field at any one time. |
| Substitutes | 2. (a) Each team may effect up to four substitutions during the course of a match provided that the names of the substitute players are made known to the Referee before the commencement of the match. Substitutions shall be sanctioned by the Referee and will only be effected when the ball is out of play or play has been stopped owing to an injury, provided that when an injured player has left the field, his replacement may take the field immediately in an on side position with the permission of a Touch Judge.
(b) When a player is bleeding profusely, the Referee shall direct him to leave the field for attention in which event, he may be replaced and his replacement shall not count as one of the four substitutions referred to in the preceding paragraph. Should the player who left the field return, he must replace the player who replaced him. |
| Number and Naming of Players | 3. For ease of identification, players' clothing must bear the numbers 1 to 13 with additional numbers for the substitutes. The numbers relate to the positions of the players in their respective teams, these positions being referred to by name and number as set out hereunder. |
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| Backs
(1) Full Back
(2) Right Wing Threequarter
(3) Right Centre Threequarter
(4) Left Centre Threequarter
(5) Left Wing Threequarter
(6) Stand-off Half or Five-eighth
(7) Scrum Half | Forwards
(8) Prop
(9) Hooker
(10) Front Row Forward
(11) Second Row Forward
(12) Second Row Forward
(13) Lock Forward |
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| Substitutes | 2. <i>A player other than a player who is replacing an injured player who has left the field cannot be substituted during a play-the-ball except when play is stopped because of injury. If a substitution is effected when a kick at goal is to be taken, the substitute shall not be allowed to take the kick. Players who are returning to the field of play after having been directed to leave the field to receive attention for bleeding, OR are returning after serving a temporary suspension are NOT to be regarded as a substitute for this purpose and may take the kick.</i> |
| Local use of Substitutes | <i>The Law above applies to all matches involving teams from different countries. In view of the differing climates in which the game is played each League is permitted to operate its own system for its own games.</i> |
| Late arrival | <i>The laws relating to the replacement of players apply also to any player who, arriving late for the game, wishes to join in the play after the game has started.</i> |

Section 4. The Players and Players' Equipment (continued)

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| Players' Equipment | 4. (a) A player shall not wear anything that might prove dangerous to other players. |
| | (b) A player's normal gear shall consist of a numbered jersey of distinctive colour and/or pattern, a pair of shorts, socks of distinctive colour and/or pattern and studded boots or shoes. |
| | (c) Protective clothing may be worn provided it contains nothing of a rigid or dangerous nature. |
| Dangerous Equipment | (d) The referee shall order a player to remove any part of his equipment which might be considered dangerous and shall not allow the player to take any further part in the game until the order is obeyed. The player shall retire from the playing field to remove the offending item if the start or restart of the game would otherwise be delayed. |
| Similar Colours | (e) The colours of the jerseys worn by competing teams shall be easily distinguishable and, if, in the opinion of the Referee similarity between the jerseys might affect the proper conduct of the game he may, at his discretion, order either team to change jerseys in accordance with the rules governing the competition in which the game is played. |
| Studs | (f) Studs on boots or shoes shall be no less than 8mm diameter at the apex and, if made of metal, shall have rounded edges. |
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| Inspect Equipment | 4. (d) <i>Referees should inspect players' equipment before the start of the game or delegate this duty to the Touch Judges. This does not relieve the player of the responsibility of ensuring that nothing of an offending nature is worn, e.g. rings, rigid shoulder pads, projecting eyelets or nails on football boots or dangerous studs.</i> |
| Colours | 4. (e) <i>Referees should inspect the colours to be worn by the teams before the players enter the field of play so that, if a change is necessary, the start of the game is not delayed.</i>
<i>Clubs not wearing their registered colours should be reported to the appropriate authority by the Referee unless the reason for not so doing is self-evident or known beforehand.</i> |

SECTION 5 MODE OF PLAY

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| Object | 1. The object of the game shall be to ground the ball in the opponents' in-goal to score tries (see Section 6) and to kick the ball over the opponents' cross bar to score goals (see Section 6). |
| Start of Play | 2. The captains of the two teams shall toss a coin in the presence of the referee. The captain winning the toss shall decide to either kick off or choose which end of the field his team will defend. The losing captain shall take the other of the alternatives. |
| Mode of Play | 3. Once play has started any player who is on side or not out of play can run with the ball kick it in any direction and throw or knock it in any direction other than towards his opponents' dead ball line (See Section 10 for Knock-on and Forward Pass). |
| Tackling | 4. A player who during play is holding the ball may be tackled by an opposing player or players in order to prevent him from running with the ball or from kicking or passing it to one of his own team. (See Section 11 for Tackle). |
| Obstruction | 5. A player who is not holding the ball shall not be tackled or obstructed. (See Section 15). |

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| <i>Shoulder Charge</i> | 5. <i>If two players are running side by side, near to and towards the ball, it is permissible for one to charge the other with the shoulder.</i> |
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SECTION 6

SCORING – TRIES AND GOALS

Value	1. A try shall count four points.
Try and Goal	A conversion goal or a penalty goal shall count two points. A drop goal during play shall count one point.
Deciding winners	2. (a) The game shall be won by the team scoring the greater number of points. If both teams score an equal number of points, or if both teams fail to score, then the game shall be drawn. (b) FINALS EXTRA TIME (NRL COMPETITION ONLY) For all finals games, including the Grand Final, in the event of a draw at full time, extra time of 10 minutes each way will be played. If the scores are still level at the expiration of extra time, the coin will be tossed with the winner of the toss electing the end of the ground to defend and play will continue until the next score. That score will determine the winner.
Try – How scored	3. A try is scored when:– (a) a player first grounds the ball in his opponents' in-goal, provided that he is not in touch or touch in-goal or on or over the dead ball line. (b) opposing players simultaneously ground the ball in the in-goal area provided that the attacking player is not in touch or touch in-goal or on or over the dead ball line.
Sliding try	(c) 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 but provided that when the ball crosses the goal line the player is not in touch or touch in-goal or on or over the dead ball line.

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Picking up in in-goal	3. (a) <i>Picking up the ball is not grounding it and a player may pick up the ball in his opponents' in-goal in order to ground it in a more advantageous position.</i>
Ball on goal line	<i>As the goal lines themselves are in-goal a try can be scored by an attacking player grounding the ball on the goal line, but not at the foot of the posts in the field of play.</i>
Incorrectly grounding	<i>When an attacking player fails to ground the ball correctly, play continues unless stopped for some other reason, e.g. a knock-on or the ball goes dead.</i>
Release after grounding	<i>A try should not be disallowed because the player who correctly grounds the ball fails to retain it.</i>
Referee unsighted	<i>The Referee should not disallow a try because he was not in a position to see the grounding of the ball.</i>

Section 6. Scoring – Tries and Goals (continued)

- Penalty try** (d) the Referee 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.
- Touching Referee/Others** (e) an attacking player carrying the ball comes into contact with the Referee or a Touch Judge or an encroaching spectator in the opponents' in-goal and play is thereby irregularly affected.
- Position of Try** 4. The Try is awarded:–
- (a) where grounded if scored as in 3(a) and 3(b) above.
 - (b) where it first crosses the goal line if scored as in 3(c) above.
 - (c) between the posts if a penalty try.
 - (d) where contact took place if scored as in 3(e) above.
- Referee – sole judge** 5. Only the Referee may award a try but he may take into consideration advice given by the Touch Judges before arriving at his decision. He shall signal that a try has been scored by pointing to where the try has been awarded but should only do so after looking at the two Touch Judges to ensure they are not reporting a prior incident.
- Goal – how scored** 6. A goal is scored if the whole of the ball at any time during its flight passes on the full over the opponents' cross bar towards the dead ball line after being kicked by a player (and not touching or being touched in flight by any other player) in any of these circumstances:–
- (a) by a place kick after a try has been scored and counts two points
 - (b) by a place kick or a drop kick when a penalty kick has been awarded and counts two points.

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- No try in scrum** A try cannot be scored by grounding the ball when it is in the scrum.
- Boring through forwards** A player may pick up the ball at the base of the scrum and bore through his own forwards to ground the ball for a try.
- Ball blown back** 6. If, after passing completely over the cross-bar the ball is blown back, a goal is still allowed.

Section 6. Scoring – Tries and Goals (continued)

Drop Goal	7. A drop goal is scored by a drop kick during play from any position in the field of play and counts one point. A drop goal shall be awarded notwithstanding that the ball touches or has been touched in flight by an opposing player.
Where taken	8. A kick at goal after a try may be taken from any point on an imaginary line drawn parallel to the touch line in the field of play and through the point where the try was awarded. A kick at goal from a penalty kick may be taken from the mark or from any point on an imaginary line drawn from the mark towards the kicker's own goal line and parallel to the touch line.
Players' positions	9. When a kick at goal is being taken following a try, the opposing players shall stand outside the field of play. Players of the kicker's team must be behind the ball. When a kick at goal is being taken from a penalty kick, the opponents shall retire to their goal line or not less than 10 metres from the mark. (See Section 13).
Not to distract kicker	It is illegal to attempt to distract the attention of a player who is kicking at goal.
Goal Post(s)	10. For the purpose of judging a kick at goal, the goal posts are assumed to extend indefinitely upwards.

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No goal from kick off, etc.	7. A goal cannot be scored from a kick off, drop-out, a free kick or differential penalty.
Advise where to place the ball	8. A Referee should ensure that a kick at goal is taken from the correct position by advising the kicker beforehand. If the Referee's advice is ignored by the kicker no goal shall be allowed and the kick shall not be retaken.
Wasting time	If a player wastes time when kicking at goal, the Referee may caution him or, in an extreme case, dismiss him. He should not cancel the kick but should allow extra time to compensate for time lost.
Colleague holds ball if necessary	9. (a) When a kick at goal is being taken it is permissible for a teammate of the kicker to hold the ball in position by placing a hand on it. This may be necessary if there is a strong wind or the ground is extremely hard.
Authorised	9. (b) Kicking tees are permitted for starts of play, restarts after scoring and attempts at goal

Section 6. Scoring – Tries and Goals (continued)

**Judging kicks
at goal**

11. If a Touch Judge is of the opinion that a goal has been scored he shall raise his flag above his head. If the kick is unsuccessful he shall wave his flag in front of him and below the waist. If there is no disagreement between the Touch Judges their decision shall be accepted. In the event of disagreement, the Referee shall decide.

NOTES

**Accepting Touch
Judge's decision**

11. If the ball passes near to one upright, the Touch Judge assigned to that upright is in the better position of the two to decide whether the ball has passed inside or outside the post and, in the event of disagreement, the Referee should be more inclined to accept this particular Touch Judge's decision.

A Touch Judge should not necessarily remain stationary when the ball is in flight. He should move sufficiently to ensure that at all times he has a clear view of the ball.

**Pretending to kick
at goal**

It shall be misconduct for a player to pretend to kick at goal from a penalty kick and then deliberately kick it elsewhere. Such misconduct shall incur a penalty. Having informed the Referee of his intention to kick at goal from an awarded penalty kick the kicker shall not do otherwise.

SECTION 7 TIMEKEEPING

Length of game	1. The game shall normally be of eighty minutes duration.
Interval	At half time there shall be an interval of five minutes but this may be extended or reduced.
Changing ends	2. A team shall defend one in-goal for the first half of the game and then change ends for the second half.
End of play	3. If time expires in either half when the ball is out of play or a player in possession has been tackled and the ball has not been played the Referee shall immediately blow his whistle to terminate play. If the ball is in play when time expires, the Referee shall terminate play when next the ball goes out of play or a player in possession is tackled but time shall be extended to allow a penalty kick or a kick at goal to be taken in which case the half is terminated when next the ball goes out of play or a tackle is effected, unless a further penalty is awarded in which case time is again extended for the kick to be taken.

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Shortening length of game	1. <i>The duration of the game may be reduced by mutual agreement and if permitted by the rules governing the competition in which the game is played.</i>
Altering interval	<i>Clubs wishing to alter the length of the interval should apply to the appropriate authority who will then instruct the Referee accordingly.</i> <i>In adverse weather conditions it may sometimes be advisable to reduce or dispense with the half time interval.</i>
Using Timekeeper	3. <i>A timekeeper may be employed to signal half time and full time, in which case the referee on receiving the timekeeper's signal, terminates the half in the manner described above.</i> <i>A timekeeper may also assist the Referee in determining the end of a player's temporary suspension.</i>
Allow second kick	<i>If the ball is kicked into touch from a penalty the non-offending side should be allowed full advantage of the penalty awarded by extending time to allow play to be resumed with the free kick permitted by the Laws relating to the Penalty. (See Section 13).</i>
Scrum	<i>If a scrum has been set and fed before time expires play shall continue until a player in possession is tackled or the ball goes out of play.</i>
Time off for cautions	<i>Where time off applies, time should be taken off in the event of a caution being delivered to a player/players.</i>

Section 7. Timekeeping (continued)

- Extra time** 4. Extra time shall be added to each half to compensate for time wasted or lost from any cause. The Referee shall be the sole judge of extra time except where these duties have been delegated to a timekeeper.
- Recommencing play after injury** 5. (a) If the continuance of play endangers an injured player the referee may stop the game. If, when the game is stopped, a player is in possession of the ball the game shall be recommenced by that player playing-the-ball. Otherwise play shall be restarted with a scrum at the point where the ball was when play was stopped with the team then in possession or last in possession, having the loose head and the put-in.
- (b) If a player in possession is injured in a tackle and unable to play the ball and play has been stopped, play shall be resumed by a colleague playing the ball at the point where the injured player was tackled.
- (c) If a player in possession is injured in a tackle and unable to play the ball the Referee may without stopping the game, provided he is satisfied that continuance of play would not endanger the injured player, direct a colleague of the injured player to play the ball at a point five metres in-field from the point where the player was injured.

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- Signal extra time** 4. *If a timekeeper is employed, the referee shall signal that extra time is being allowed by raising both arms whereupon the timekeeper stops his watch and starts it again when the Referee waves one arm above his head to signal play is about to recommence.*
- Reduce stoppages** 5. *The Referee should endeavour to reduce stoppage to a minimum. Injured players should be removed from the playing field to receive attention as quickly as possible, taking into account the gravity and nature of the injury. Treatment to an injured player, by not more than one attendant, may be permitted while play proceeds if, in the opinion of the Referee, such treatment is not likely to interfere with play.*
- The attendant shall not place anything on the ground likely to interfere with play, or carry anything of a rigid nature likely to cause injury in the event of a rapid switch in play causing an unforeseen collision.*

SECTION 8

THE KICK OFF AND DROP-OUT

Kick off

1. The kick off is a place kick from the centre of the halfway line. The captains of the two teams shall toss a coin in the presence of the referee. The captain winning the toss shall decide to either kick off or choose which end of the field his team will defend. The losing captain shall take the other of the two alternatives.

When points have been scored, the team against which the points have been scored shall kick off to restart the game. The loose head and put-in goes to the kicking side when finding touch other than on the full. It should be noted that the law applies to goal line and 20 metre starts as well.

Restarting play at 20m – with an optional kick (i.e. any type of kick)

2. The game is restarted with an optional kick from the centre of the 20m line if:
 - (a) an attacking player last touches the ball before it goes out of play over the dead ball line or into touch in-goal except from a penalty kick (see Law 3), or from a kick off from the centre of the halfway line. (see 4(g) and 6(b) below).
 - (b) an attacking player infringes in the in-goal area. In the event of a deliberate breach by an attacking player a penalty kick is awarded 10 metres in the field of play in line with where the breach was committed. (See Section 13.)
 - (c) a defending player, in his in-goal, takes a kick in general play from an opponent on the full.

The ball may be kicked in any manner and in any direction and is immediately in play. Opposing players shall retire ten metres from the 20m line and shall not advance until the ball has been kicked. Defending players shall not advance in front of the ball before it is kicked. Any deliberate offence by either team shall incur a penalty to be awarded at the centre of the 20m line.

NOTES

V.I.P kicks offs

2. *If a person other than a player is invited to 'kick off', the ball after being kicked shall be brought back to the centre of the halfway line and the game shall then commence in the normal way as described above.*

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

- with drop-out after unsuccessful penalty
- Drop-out from Goal line
- Ball caught in-goal
3. If the ball goes dead in the opponents' in-goal from a penalty kick (not necessarily a kick at goal) the game is restarted with a drop-out by a defending player from the centre of the 20m line.
 4. The game is restarted with a drop-out by a defending player from the centre of his goal line if:
 - (a) a defending player last touches the ball before it goes over the dead ball line or into touch in-goal.
 - (b) a defending player accidentally infringes in the in-goal area.
 - (c) a defending player touches down in the in-goal area.
 - (d) a defending player in possession is tackled in the in-goal area.
 - (e) a defending player kicks the ball into touch on the full from his own in-goal.
 - (f) a defending player kicks or passes the ball in his own in-goal and the ball accidentally strikes an opponent and goes into touch in-goal or over the dead ball line.
 - (g) the ball or a defending player carrying the ball touches the referee, a touch judge or an encroaching spectator in the in-goal area and play is thereby irregularly affected.
 - (h) the ball goes over the dead ball line or into touch in-goal other than on the full from a kick off from the centre of the halfway line .
 5. See Law 2 of this Section re ball caught on the full before being made 'dead in-goal'.
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NOTES

- Intentional breach in-goal**
4. (b) *If a defending player in his own in-goal is penalised for an intentional breach of the law, the penalty is awarded in the field of play, 10 metres from the goal line and opposite where the breach occurred. (See Section 13, para 1).*

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

- Offences incurring penalties – kicker**
6. A player who kicks off or drops-out shall be penalised if he:–
- (a) advances in front of the appropriate line before kicking the ball.
 - (b) kicks the ball on the full over the touch line, touch in-goal, or over the dead ball line.
 - (c) kicks the ball so that it fails to travel at least ten metres forward in the field of play.
 - (d) kicks the ball other than in the prescribed manner.
- other players**
7. Any other player shall be penalised if he:–
- (a) willfully touches the ball from a kick off or drop-out before it has travelled ten metres forward in the field of play.
 - (b) runs in front of one of his own team who is kicking off or dropping out.
 - (c) approaches nearer than ten metres to the line from which the kick is being taken when an opponent is kicking off or dropping out.
- Penalties – where taken**
8. A penalty kick resulting from an offence at the kick off shall be taken from the centre of the halfway line. Any penalty kick arising from the restarting of play from the 20m line shall be taken from the centre of that line.
A penalty kick resulting from any offence at the drop-out from between the posts shall be taken from the centre of the line drawn parallel to and ten metres from the goal line.

NOTES

Players not retiring 10m

6. (a) *If a kick to start or restart play is taken quickly and the opposing players have not had adequate opportunity to retire ten metres, they may be penalised if they willfully interfere with play before the ball travels ten metres forward. If such interference is accidental a scrum shall be formed but if the offending player has had adequate opportunity to retire ten metres his offence must be assumed to be deliberate.*

Ball hits post

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

SECTION 9

TOUCH AND TOUCH IN-GOAL

Ball in touch	1. The ball is in touch when it or a player in contact with it touches the touch line or the ground beyond the touch line or any object on or outside the touch line except when a player, tackled in the field of play, steps into touch as he regains his feet in which case he shall play the ball in the field of play.
Tackled player in touch on rising	The ball is in touch if a player jumps from touch and while off the ground touches the ball. The ball is not in touch if during flight it crosses the touch line but is knocked back by a player who is off the ground after jumping from the field of play.
Jumping player knocks ball back	
Touch in-goal	2. The ball is in touch in-goal when it or a player in contact with it touches the touch in-goal line, or any object on or outside the touch in-goal line.
Points of Entry	3. When a ball has entered touch or touch in-goal, the point of entry shall be taken as the point at which the ball first crossed the touch or touch in-goal line.
Ball back	4. If the ball is kicked by or bounces off a player in a forward direction (except from in-goal – Section 8 No.4 (e) and it goes into touch on the full, a scrum is formed where contact with the ball was made (but not nearer than twenty metres to the touch line or ten (10) metres to the goal line) – (see Section 12).
Touch from Penalty	5. If the ball is kicked into touch from a penalty kick the game is restarted by a free kick ten metres in-field opposite the point of entry into touch. (see Section 13).
Scrum on ‘20’	6. Other than as outlined in paras. 4 and 5 above, the game is restarted after the ball has gone into touch by forming a scrum twenty metres in-field opposite the point of entry into touch but not nearer than ten (10) metres to the goal line – (see Section 12).
	7. In all aspects of play, a player who does not deliberately play at the ball (eg. ricochet or rebound) will not be disadvantaged by a consequent restart of play when the ball has gone dead or into touch.

NOTES

Player not “object”	1. and 2. A player is not considered to be an “object”. For example, the ball is not in touch when the player in possession, himself being in the field of play, is in contact with another player who is in touch.
Ball Dead	1. Where the ball which is stationary in the field of play or the in-goal area comes in contact with a player in touch, touch in-goal or over the dead ball line, the ball is deemed to have been made dead by that player.
Dead Ball line restarts	Should a kick be made dead by a defending player straddling the dead ball line or touch in-goal line, play will restart with a goal line drop-out.
Corner post touch in-goal	2. A corner post placed at the intersection of a touch line and a goal line is in touch in-goal. It is a duty of a touch judge to replace a corner post which is displaced during the game. 3. See Section 8. No.4 (e) in respect of kicking into touch on the full from in-goal.

SECTION 10 KNOCK-ON AND FORWARD PASS

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| Deliberate | 1. A player shall be penalised if he deliberately knocks on or passes forward. |
| Accidental | 2. If, after knocking-on accidentally, the player knocking-on regains or kicks the ball before it touches the ground, a goal post, cross bar or an opponent, then play shall be allowed to proceed. Otherwise play shall stop and a scrum shall be formed except after the fifth play-the-ball. |
| Charge-down | 3. To charge-down a kick is permissible and is not a knock-on. |
| Heading the ball | 4. It is illegal to head the ball in a forward direction. |
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NOTES

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| <i>Direction of Pass</i> | 1. <i>The direction of a pass is relative to the player making it and not to the actual path relative to the ground. A player running towards his opponents' goal line may throw the ball towards a colleague who is behind him but because of the thrower's own momentum the ball travels forward relative to the ground. This is not a forward pass as the thrower has not passed the ball forward in relation to himself. This is particularly noticeable when a running player makes a high, lobbed pass.</i> |
| <i>Scrum for Forward Pass</i> | <i>A forward pass in a passing movement is invariably caused by misjudgment and is rarely a deliberate offence. Play is restarted with a scrum after an accidental infringement.</i> |
| <i>Penalty for some forward passes</i> | <i>If the Referee is of the opinion that a player in giving a forward pass must have been well aware that the catcher was in front of him then the referee is justified in ruling that the ball has been deliberately thrown forward.</i> |
| <i>Ball is blown or bounces forward</i> | <i>If the ball is passed correctly but bounces forward or is blown forward by the wind, there is no infringement and play should continue.</i> |
| <i>Knock-on over Goal line</i> | <i>After a player, from the field of play, knocks on into his opponent's in-goal area and he or a colleague touches down, play is restarted with a scrum where the knock-on occurred, except after a play-the-ball subject to Section 12, Law 10.</i> |

SECTION 11

THE TACKLE AND PLAY-THE-BALL

Tackle player in possession	1. A player in possession may be tackled by an opposing player or players. It is illegal to tackle or obstruct a player who is not in possession.
When tackled: Grounded	2. A player in possession is tackled: (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.
Hand on player already grounded	(d) when he is lying on the ground and an opponent places a hand on him.

NOTES

Foul "throws"	1. (a) A tackler must not make use of any special "holds" or "throws" which are likely to cause injury or use his knees in the tackle. It is permissible for a tackler to bring a player in possession of the ball to the ground by pulling him over the outstretched leg provided he is holding the player with both arms before there is any contact with the leg.
Mid-air tackle	1. (b) It is illegal to tackle an opposing player attempting to field a kick whilst the player is in mid-air. The catcher must have returned to the ground before being tackled. (See Section 15.).Applies only when a player on the non-kicking team catches the ball on the full.
Moving tackled player	2. (a) Where opponents do not make a tackle effective in the quickest possible manner but attempt to push, pull or carry the player in possession, it is permissible for colleagues of the tackled player to lend their weight in order to avoid losing ground. Immediately this happens the referee should call "Held". 2. (b) Where the tackled player is held in an upright position, the ball shall not be played before the referee indicates that the tackle has been effected.
Broken tackle	Where the player in possession is brought to the ground, a tackle is not effective if the hold on the player in possession is broken before he is grounded. Before allowing play to proceed, referees should be sure in their own minds that the tackle was indeed broken otherwise the tackler who, playing in the true spirit of the game, releases the tackled player immediately he is brought to the ground, may be unfairly penalised.

