



NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE

LEAGUE TAG

LAWS OF THE GAME

International

1/1/2015

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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 two 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.*
- 7. Whilst the diagram above indicates an in-goal area of between 6 and 11 metres, the accepted "norm" for the in-goal area is 8 metres.*

SECTION 2

THE BALL

Shape

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 National Rugby League.

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 National 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.

SECTION 3 THE PLAYER

11-a-side

1. The game shall be played by two teams each consisting of not more than eleven players on the field at any one time.
2. There shall be unlimited interchange 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.
 - (a) Each team may utilise Interchange players during the course of a match provided that the names of the Interchange players are made known to the Referee before the commencement of the match. Interchanges will only be affected after a player has left the field. The replacement takes the field

Immediately in an onside position with the permission of a Touch Judge/Interchange Official League Governing bodies may choose to adopt either unlimited or limited Interchange rules for individual competitions.

- (b) When a player is bleeding excessively, the Referee shall direct him/her to either leave the field for attention or seek medical attention on-field. Should the player be replaced as a result of such bleeding, then his replacement shall count as one of the Interchanges referred to in Law 2 (a).

Minimum Number

The minimum number of players per team allowed on the field at any one time in a match is 8. Should less than 8 players – currently participating in the match then, for safety reasons, the match shall be terminated. Current participants are players on the

field and players who have been temporarily suspended (sin bin or blood bin). Dismissed players are not deemed as current participants.

NOTES: Substitutes

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.

SECTION 4 PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

A player shall not wear anything that might prove dangerous to other players;

A player's normal gear shall consist of a numbered jersey of distinctive colour and/or pattern, a pair of shorts with Velcro tab attached, football socks of distinctive colour and/or pattern and studded boots or shoes.

Skin tight shorts (bicycle shorts, Skins) are not permitted. Skins may be worn under the shorts but must not have the Velcro patch attached. Jerseys must be tucked into shorts to ensure that the tags are not obstructed. Each team will have a set of NRL sanctioned tags of distinctive colour.

Protective clothing may be worn provided it contains nothing of a rigid or dangerous nature;

The referee shall order a player to remove any equipment which might be considered dangerous, and shall not allow the player to take any further part in the game until

the player has complied with this request. The player shall retire from the playing field to remove the offending item if the start or re-start 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/she** may, at **his/her** discretion, order either team to change jerseys in accordance with the rules governing the competition in which the game is played.
- (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.

Inspect Equipment

- (g) 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.

Colours

- (h) 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.

NOTES:

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.

SECTION 5

MODE OF PLAY

The game is played over two twenty five [25] minute periods with a five [5] minute interval between halves.

The object of the game shall be to ground the ball in the opponents' in-goal to score tries and to kick the ball over the opponents' cross bar to score goals.

Start of Play

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/her** team will defend. The losing captain shall take the other of the alternatives.

When points have been scored, the team against which the points have been scored shall kick off to re-start the game.

The changeover goes to the kicking side when finding touch other than on the full.

Re-starting play

The game is re-started with an optional kick from the centre of the 20m line if 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.

If the ball goes dead in the opponents' in-goal from an unsuccessful penalty kick (not necessarily a kick at goal) the game is re-started with a drop-out by a defending player from the centre of the 20m line.

The game is re-started 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 tagged 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/her** 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.

Ball caught:

See Law 2(c) of this Section - ball caught on the full in-goal before being made 'dead in-goal'.

Offences incurring:

A player who kicks off or drops-out shall be penalised if he/she:

- (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:

Any other player shall be penalised if he/she

- (a) Wilfully touches the ball from a kick off or dropout 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:

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 re-starting of play from the 20 metre line shall be taken from the centre of that line.

A penalty kick resulting from any offence at the dropout from between the posts shall be taken from the centre of the line drawn parallel to and ten metres from the goal line.

Tagged player

A player in possession may be tagged by an opposing player or players. It is illegal to tag or obstruct a player who is not in possession of the ball. A defending player cannot make a tag unless both of the tags are attached.

The player in possession cannot fend defenders or protect the tag by fending.

The player in possession cannot jump to avoid being tagged.

The player in possession cannot run directly at a defender and should be penalised if a collision occurs in this situation.

A player in possession cannot perform a 360 degree turn in the defensive line to avoid being tagged and will be penalised. A player who is not holding the ball shall not be obstructed.

A Player in possession is tagged when:

- (a) at least one of the tags is removed by an opposing player;
- (b) a tag is accidentally removed by the player in possession.

A player in possession shall not play-the-ball before being tagged.

If a player drops on a loose ball he/she shall not remain on the ground waiting to be tagged if he/she has time to regain their feet and continue play.

NOTES:

Shoulder Contact

If two players are running side by side, near to and toward the ball, it is not permissible for one to make contact with the other with the shoulder.

SECTION 6

SCORING – TRIES AND GOALS

A try shall count for four (4) points.

A successful conversion goal or a penalty goal shall count for two (2) points.

A drop goal during play shall count for one (1) point.

When scoring a try, two [2] tags must be intact. If a try is scored with only one [1] tag, it shall result in a “no-try” - unless the tag came off when the player made contact with the ground in the act of scoring, or in the event of a “late tag” a penalty shall be awarded. A changeover will take place five [5] out from the goal line opposite where the no-try occurred, and at least ten [10] metres in from touch.

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.

A try is scored when:

- (a) a player first grounds the ball in his/her opponent's in-goal, provided that he/she is not in touch or touch in-goal, or on or over the dead ball line;
- (b) a player grounds the ball before being tagged while in-goal, and has not dived through the defensive line or past a defending player who is in a position to legally affect a tag.

NOTES:

Sliding try not allowed

As soon as a tag has been removed from the ball-carrier **he/she** must play the ball at the point where he/she was tagged. A tagged player's momentum cannot be used to progress the ball into the opponents' in goal if a tag has been legally removed from the ball-carrier or if the ball-carrier is only carrying one tag (i.e. one tag has fallen off or has not been replaced correctly).

Diving to score

A player cannot dive through the defensive line, for example, from acting halfback, or past a defensive player who is in a position to tag the attacker, to score as the defending team does not have a fair chance to prevent the try being scored by the attacking player.

An attacking player can dive to score a try if the defending players are behind him/her (the defending players can also dive to tag the ball-carrier).

Tagged in-goal before grounding

If the ball-carrier is tagged while in the opponent's in-goal before being able to ground the ball, play is re-started with a play-the-ball 10 metres out from the point at which

he/she was tagged unless it is the sixth tag (this is similar to being “held-up” in-goal in the International Laws of Rugby League).

Kicking tees are permitted for starts and re-starts after scoring.

Picking up in the in-goal area

Picking up the ball is not grounding it and a player may pick up the ball in his/her opponents’ in-goal in order to ground it in a more advantageous position.

Ball on goal line

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.

Incorrectly grounding the ball

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.

A try should not be disallowed because the player who correctly grounds the ball fails to retain it.

The Referee should not disallow a try because he was not in a position to see the grounding of the ball.

SECTION 7

TOUCH AND TOUCH IN-GOAL

Ball in touch

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 in-goal line except when a player has been tagged in the field of play, and, on rising, steps into touch as

he/she regains his/her feet, in which case that player shall play-the-ball in the field of play.

Jumping player

The ball is in touch if a player jumps from touch and knocks the ball back while off the ground. 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.

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, however, if a player whilst in possession touches the corner post, it will not be deemed as touch-in goal.

Points of Entry

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.

If the ball is kicked by, or bounces off, a player in a forward direction (except from in-goal – Section 8, Law 4 (e)) and it goes into touch on the full, a play-the-ball will occur where contact with the ball was made (but not nearer than ten metres from the touch line or ten metres from the goal line).

If the ball is kicked into touch from a penalty kick, the game is re-started by a free kick ten metres in-field opposite the point of entry into touch.

Sixth Tag

A team in possession of the ball shall be allowed five successive play the-balls. A handover shall occur AFTER the fifth play-the-ball in the following circumstances:

- i. The team is tagged a sixth time; the handover will occur either at the point of the sixth tag but, in the latter case, not closer than 10 metres from touch and 10 metres from in goal [10x10]. The play-the-ball for this purpose shall not be

counted for the purposes of the tackle count and shall operate as provided for in Law 10 of this Section;

- ii. The team in possession commits an accidental breach for which a change of possession to the non-offending side occurs;
- iii. A player is tagged in the opponent's in-goal; the changeover will occur 10 metres out from goal line;

Accidental Breach

Where an accidental breach occurs (i.e. knock-on, forward pass) and possession changes hands, the following tackle will be a zero tackle, notwithstanding that the team gaining possession may have gained a territorial advantage.

Losing Possession

A tagged player shall not intentionally part with the ball other than by bringing it into play in the prescribed manner. If, after being tagged, he/she accidentally loses possession, a handover will occur, except after the fifth play-the-ball.

NOTES:

Simultaneous Tag

If the referee calls 'tagged' and a player simultaneously continues to run or offloads, as he/she has not heard the call, the referee will stop play and send the player back to the play-the-ball.

Mid-air Tag

It is illegal to tag 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 tagged.

(See Section 15) This Law applies only when a player on the *non-kicking team catches the ball on the full*.

Points of Infringement

For the purpose of this Law, the point of infringement in the case of a kick into touch on the full shall be the point from which the ball was kicked.

Indicating Last Tag

The referee shall indicate the fifth tag by raising one arm vertically with fingers and thumb out-stretched

Opponent “touches”

‘Touching’ the ball is meant intentionally playing at the ball.

A ricochet or rebound does not count as a ‘touch’.

Charging down a kick counts as a ‘touch’.

Cancels count

‘Touching’ the ball cancels the count of play-the-balls and the next tackle counts as the first of six.

Stealing

Once a tag has been completed, no player shall take, or attempt to take, the ball from the tagged player.

There is no “Stripping” or stealing the ball in any situation.

PLAY-THE-BALL

The play-the-ball shall operate as follows:

As soon as a tag has been removed from the ball-carrier he/she must play the ball at the point where the tag occurred. A tagged player’s momentum cannot be used to progress the ball into the opponents’ in-goal if a tag has been legally removed from

the ball-carrier or if the ball-carrier is only carrying one tag, i.e., one tag has fallen off or has not been replaced correctly, then the tagged player shall face his/her opponent's goal line and place the ball on the ground in front of his/her foremost foot, in accordance with the International Laws, to play-the-ball.

Player marking

One opponent may take up the position of marker, one metre immediately opposite the tagged player.

When the ball touches the ground it must be played with the foot and heeled (i.e. backwards) by the tagged player. The marker cannot play at the ball.

A player from each team, to be known as the acting halfback, may stand immediately and directly behind his/her own player taking part in the play-the-ball and must remain in this position until the play-the-ball movement is complete.

The ball is in play when it has been played backward.

Retire at Play the Ball

Players from the team not in possession, other than the ball-player taking part in the play-the-ball and the acting halfback, are out of play if they fail to retire ten (10) metres* from the point at which the ball is played or to their own goal lines.

Players from the team in possession, other than the player taking part in the play-the-ball and the acting halfback, must retire behind their players involved in the play-the-ball or to their own goal line.

Having retired the distance prescribed in the preceding paragraph no player of the team not in possession may advance until the ball has cleared the ruck. A player who is out of play may take part in the game when the advantage gained by not retiring has been lost.

PENALTY KICK

When a penalty is awarded:

The International Laws of Rugby League will apply. Further penalties, may be awarded for conduct unbecoming on the field, such as:

- Avoidable contact
- Protecting tags
- Fending off defenders
- Late Tag
- Deliberate contact
- Deliberate grabbing of clothing
- Jumping through tag

The Sin Bin applies in LeagueTag and is of 10 minutes' duration

(International Laws - Section 15, page 38), and may be applied for:

- Deliberately and continuously breaks the Laws of the game;
- Uses offensive language;
- Disputes the decision of the referee;
- Deliberately obstructs an opponent who is not in possession;
- Uses a shoulder charge on an opponent.

A penalty kick shall be awarded against any player who is guilty of misconduct (Refer to International Laws, Section 15) provided that this is not to the disadvantage of the non-offending team. Unless otherwise stated, the mark is where the offence occurs. If misconduct occurs in touch the mark shall be ten metres from the touch line in the field of play and opposite where the offence occurred or, in the case of obstruction, where the ball next bounces or is caught, in the field of play, or ten metres opposite the point of entry if the ball enters touch on the full, or ten (10) metres from the goal line if the ball crosses the goal line on the full, whichever is to the greater advantage of the non-offending team. If the offence is committed by a defender in his/her own in-goal or an attacker in his opponents' in-goal, the mark is taken ten metres into the field of play opposite where the offence occurred. In the event of further misconduct by the offending team, the referee shall advance the mark once only ten metres towards the offending team's goal line.

In the event of a breach by the kicker's team, a change of possession to the non-offending side will occur where the penalty kick was awarded. In the event of a breach by the opposing team a further penalty kick shall be awarded at a point opposite where the breach occurred on a line parallel to the goal line ten metres from where the penalty kick was awarded.

How Taken

A player may take a penalty kick by punting, dropkicking, or place kicking the ball from any point on or behind the mark and equidistant from the touch line.

Other than when kicking for goal "Pretending to kick at goal") the ball may be kicked in any direction, after which it is in play.

Players of the kicker's team must be behind the ball when it is kicked.

Players of the team opposing the kicker shall retire to their own goal line or ten metres or more from the mark towards their own goal line and shall not make any attempt to interfere with or distract the attention of the kicker.

Find Touch

- (a) If the ball is kicked into touch from a Penalty Kick without touching any other player, the kicking team shall re-start play with a free kick. Opposing players shall retire ten metres from the point of entry into touch or to In the event of a breach by the opposing team a penalty kick shall be awarded at a point opposite where the breach occurred on a line parallel to the goal line ten metres from where the free kick was awarded;
- (b) If the ball touches an opponent in flight and then enters touch, a change of possession to the non-offending side 10 metres in-field from where the ball crossed the touch line. [Play the Ball];
- (c) Where a player kicks the ball in general play from any point in the area bounded by his own dead ball line, 40 metre line and the touch lines and the ball finds touch, otherwise than on the full, at a point on the touchline between the opponents' 20 metre line and goal line the kicker's team shall be deemed to

be the non-offending team. Play-the-ball 20 metres in from where the ball crossed the touch line and no closer than 10 metres to the goal line.

Free Kick

The ball may be kicked in any direction in any manner when bringing it into play after entering touch and the kicker may pick up the ball after he/she has kicked it [tap kick].

Dead Ball from Penalty Kick

Play is re-started with a 20m drop-out if the ball is kicked dead in the opponents' in-goal from a penalty kick.

No player shall deliberately take any action which is likely to delay the taking of a penalty kick, the kick is not taken as stated or if a player of the kicker's team infringes; a change of possession to the non-offending side at the mark, provided it is no closer than ten metres from touch line. When the referee penalises a player, he must explain the nature of the offence.

If a penalty is awarded for an offence by the attacking team in the opponent's in-goal area, the mark shall be ten metres in the field of play opposite where the offence occurred. For an offence in-goal by the defending team which incurs a penalty, the mark is in the field of play ten metres from the goal line and opposite where the offence occurred except for foul play against a try scorer.

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. After his/her kick has been taken the ball shall be deemed dead and play shall be re-started from the halfway line. This law applies to the period during which the ball is touched down for a try and not to any subsequent period (Possible 8 Point Try).

Drop Goal

If a player fouls an opponent who is attempting a drop goal, a penalty kick shall be awarded in front of the goal posts.

If the attempt at drop goal is successful, a kick at goal must be taken from the penalty kick and play re-started from the centre of the halfway line irrespective of the outcome of that kick.

If the attempt at drop goal is unsuccessful, the penalty kick can be taken in any manner provided for in the Laws and play re-started according to the outcome of that kick.

OFFSIDE

A player is offside except when he/she is in his/her own goal if the ball touches, is touched, held or kicked, by one of his own team behind him.

An offside player shall not take any part in the game or attempt in any way to influence the course of the game. He/she shall not encroach within ten metres of an opponent who is waiting for the ball and shall retire ten metres immediately from any opponent who first secures possession of the ball.

Placed onside

An offside player is placed onside if:

- (a) An opponent moves ten metres or more with the ball;
- (b) An opponent touches the ball without retaining it;
- (c) One of his/her own team in possession of the ball runs in front of him.
- (d) One of his/her own team kicks the ball forward and takes up a position in front of him in the field of play;
- (e) he/she retires behind the point where the ball was last touched by one of his/her own team.

“Down Town”

Any player who is in front of the kicker in general play is not permitted to advance beyond the point of the previous play-the-ball until the ball has gone past the offside players. This rule delays the movement of the offside players downfield in an attempt to encircle the ball receiver as he/she collects the ball.

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