



2013

NRL Laws and Interpretations

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The 2013 NRL season will be adjudicated in accordance with the current 'The Australian Rugby League Laws of the Game and notes on the laws' with specific interpretations for NRL.



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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 head 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[^]
- 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.

[^] *In a three man tackle the movement shall either be 2 defenders then 1 defender or 1 defender then 2 defenders but not one at a time.*

Defenders Responsibilities

- At the completion of the tackle the defender 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 **head referee to identify this tackle.**

Shoulder Charge

Is where a defender, without attempting to tackle, grab or hold the ball-carrier (or any opposing player) using the arms or hands, makes direct physical contact using the shoulder or the upper arm (tucked into the side).

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

The indicators will include:

1. Rotation of the defenders hips and shoulders
2. Defender has 'tucked' his arm into his body.

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.

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 the player in possession back to the original position to play the ball.

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.

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 defender 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)**

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 rowers 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 half putting the ball in, shall retire ten metres or more behind the mark where the scrum is formed and shall remain so 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 head referee calling 'out'.

Section 12 (2-9)

Time Off at Scrums

If a team is properly formed and ready to contest a scrum the head referee will call time off. However if any of the bound players break from the scrum formation before the ball is fed normal game time will be restarted.

Where a scrum is formed and 'time off' has been signalled, the referee may permit that team to stand (but remain in position) in circumstances of undue delays.



PLAYER MISCONDUCT

A player is guilty of misconduct if he:

1. *'Trips, kicks or strikes another player'*
2. *'When effecting or attempting to effect a tackle makes contact with the head or neck of an opponent intentionally, recklessly or carelessly'*
3. *'Uses any dangerous throw when affecting 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 head referee or video referee may:

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

Section 16 (6)

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

Sin Bin

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

1. Repeated infringements
2. Deliberately breaking down play particularly in a try scoring position
3. Cooling off period for a player
4. Dissent.

Dissent

1. A Captain may only approach the head referee to clarify a ruling
2. It will be at the discretion of the head referee if the clarification is required immediately or at a later stage of the match
3. In speaking to the referee a player must not question or refer to the referee's ability or integrity
4. The Referee will not debate decisions with the Captain.

RESTARTS OF PLAY

Goal line Drop Out

- a. The defending team is required to recommence play with a goal line drop out within 40 seconds of it being signalled by the referee
- b. The referee will give a warning as to the time that is remaining
- c. If, in the opinion of the referee the restart is being delayed due to the circumstances of the game the referee may call time off
- d. If, in the opinion of the referee the kicking team is deliberately delaying the restart a penalty shall be awarded
- e. 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.

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.

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'

The restart must only be taken when all officials are in position and the referee has indicated the mark both physically and verbally. Play will be allowed to commence when the referee has moved to a position from which he can officiate.



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.

Penalty Try

Further, if circumstances warrant it:

'The Referee (or Video 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.'

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 the player in possession makes contact with the 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. 'Block'* or 'Flat' runner[s] (who do not receive the ball) must not stop in the middle of the defensive line
2. '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
3. Ball Carriers must not run behind an active 'Block' or 'Flat' runner[s] and disadvantage the defensive line (ie a defender cannot be expected to defend against this play)
4. Attacking players who run a 'Sweep'^ line must receive the ball beyond the inside shoulder of the 'Block' or 'Flat' runner[s]
5. Defensive decisions that commit defender[s] to initiating contact with an attacking player(s) will not be deemed obstruction
6. 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

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.

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 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.

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

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.

VIDEO REFEREE

Try Scoring process

In the event that the on field officials require assistance of the video referee, the following procedure will occur:

1. The head referee after consultation with the other on field officials will make a 'Live Decision'
2. In the event that the head referee requires a video review, he will call time off and physically signal for a 'video referee review'
3. The head referee will then signal his 'Live Decision' (TRY OR NO TRY)
4. The video referee will then review the on field 'Live Decision'
5. The video referee will then assess if there is '**sufficient evidence**' to overturn the original on field officials 'Live Decision'
6.
 - a. If there is '**sufficient evidence**' the video referee will confirm that the 'Live Decision' is correct and this will be indicated to the head referee, players and spectators via the screen
 - b. If there is '**sufficient evidence**' that the 'Live decision' is incorrect, the video referee will overturn the 'Live decision' and the new decision will be indicated to the head referee, players and spectators via the screen
 - c. If there is '**insufficient evidence**' to confirm or overturn the 'Live decision', the video referee will revert to the original 'Live Decision' and this will be indicated to the head referee, players and spectators via the screen
7. If a 'Live Decision' has been overturned and after it has appeared on the screen, the head referee will communicate briefly the reasoning for the overturning.

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.

Foul Play

A video referee 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 Video Referee.’ **Section 16 (9) notes**

As a result of the advice of the Video Referee, the head referee may take any necessary action except to the extent where play has extended beyond the 1st 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 head referee can still place the player/players or incident on report.

High Tackle

The video referee only has power to advise the head referee of an act of foul play being a head high tackle when the incident is sufficient to be placed ‘on report’ or the offending player is to be dismissed.

Restarts

In the event of a video referee having access to a television replay prior to 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 video referee will instruct the head referee to recommence the game with the correct restart.



