



Law Rulings 2003

RULING 14: 2003

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

2 September 2003

The UAR has requested a ruling with regard the Line-out, in Law 19.

If a player with one or both feet inside the 22 metre line, picks up the ball, which was lying on the field of play outside the 22 metre line, and kicks it directly into touch. Where does the line-out form; 1) Where the ball went into touch, or 2) where the ball was kicked?

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

Ruling

If a player with one or both feet inside the 22 metre line, picks up the ball which was stationary outside the 22 metre line, and kicks it directly into touch, then the player has taken the ball back inside the 22-metre line, and therefore the line-out is formed in line with where the ball was kicked.

If a player with one or both feet inside the 22 metre line, picks up the ball which was in motion outside the 22 metre line, and kicks it directly into touch, then the player has not taken the ball back inside the 22-metre line, and therefore the line-out is formed in line with where the ball crossed the touch-line.

RULING 13: 2003

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

18 August 2003

The SRU has requested a ruling with regard the tackler, in Law 15.

Under the definition of a tackle, "any opponents of the tackled player who go to ground are known as tacklers." Can a tackler stay on his feet?

If the answer to the above is yes, under 15.5 The Tackler it states in (a) that "when a player tackles an opponent and they both go to ground, the tackler must immediately release the tackled player."

Can a tackler who is on his feet hold on to the tackled player or must he release the tackled player?

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

Ruling

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

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

RULING 12: 2003

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

5 August 2003

The RFU has requested a ruling with regard clarification and interpretation of Law 3.5 (d) as follows.

'The starting tight-head prop is injured and replaced by the starting loose-head prop with the prop on the bench replacing the starting loose-head prop at loose-head. The player now playing at tight-head prop (the starting-loose head prop) is injured and there is no replacement. Is the team in breach of Law 3 in such



circumstances?'

Ruling

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

In the scenario given, the team complied with Law on the first occasion. Due to the injury of their first replacement in that specific front-row position, they could not replace on the second occasion in the same position. They are not in breach of Law 3.5 (d). However, if the player who came on to play loose-head prop was the next player injured, and uncontested scrums ensued because there was no suitable replacement, then the team would be in breach of Law 3.5 (d).

RULING 11: 2003 Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

24 July 2003

NZRFU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 15 Tackle and Law 17 Maul:

The NZRFU is in receipt of Ruling 3:2003. The Union seeks further clarification on the interpretation implicit in Ruling 3. In order to bring further clarity to what is involved in forming a maul and collapsing a maul we would request answers to the following questions.

1. Team A wins a 5m attacking scrum. The #8 detaches with the ball, and #6 binds on immediately and they drive towards the line.

a. A defending player drives in low and wraps his arms around the legs (knee height) of the #8, who still has his #6 bound to him. The #8 still in possession of the ball is brought to ground.

By his actions is the defender:

- i. Forming a maul?
- ii. Collapsing a maul?

2. Team A wins a 5m attacking scrum. The #8 detaches with the ball, and #6 binds on immediately and they drive towards the line.

a. A defending player, while remaining on his feet, grasps his jersey (shoulder region) of the #8, who still has his #6 bound to him, and immediately brings him to ground.

By his actions is the defender:

- i. Forming a maul?
- ii. Collapsing a maul?

3. Team A wins a 5m attacking scrum. The #8 detaches with the ball, and #6 binds on immediately and they drive towards the line.

a. A defending player, while remaining on his feet, drives into the #8, who still has his #6 bound to him, and binds on him in an effort to prevent their forward progress.

By his actions is the defender:

- i. Forming a maul?

If the answer to 3.a.i. is yes, and the defender now drags the maul to the ground, is he:

- ii. Collapsing a maul?

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

1. Team A wins a 5m attacking scrum. The #8 detaches with the ball, and #6 binds on immediately and they drive towards the line.

a. A defending player drives in low and wraps his arms around the legs (knee height) of the #8, who still has his #6 bound to him. The #8 still in possession of the ball is brought to ground.

By his actions is the defender:



- i. Forming a maul?
- ii. Collapsing a maul?

Ruling

The defender has not formed a maul, nor has he collapsed a maul.

2. Team A wins a 5m attacking scrum. The #8 detaches with the ball, and #6 binds on immediately and they drive towards the line.

a. A defending player, while remaining on his feet, grasps his jersey (shoulder region) of the #8, who still has his #6 bound to him, and immediately brings him to ground.

By his actions is the defender:

- i. Forming a maul?
- ii. Collapsing a maul?

Ruling

The defender, if he has not bound (by definition) to the ball-carrier #8, has not formed a maul, nor has he collapsed a maul.

3. Team A wins a 5m attacking scrum. The #8 detaches with the ball, and #6 binds on immediately and they drive towards the line.

a. A defending player, while remaining on his feet, drives into the #8, who still has his #6 bound to him, and binds on him in an effort to prevent their forward progress.

By his actions is the defender:

- i. Forming a maul?

If the answer to 3.a.i. is yes, and the defender now drags the maul to the ground, is he:

- ii. Collapsing a maul?

Ruling

The defender has formed a maul, and has collapsed a maul, and is therefore subject to penalty.

RULING 10: 2003

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

24 July 2003

NZRFU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 3 Number of Players-The Team, and Law 3.10 (a) Temporary Replacement:

IAS the teams return to the field at the end of the 10 minute half time break, Team A advised their substitution/replacement controller (No. 4), that Team A #3 (a prop) was a blood bin and was to be temporarily replaced by Team A #17. The Team A management had not advised anyone of the blood bin as they left the field of play at half time.

It transpired that the 15 minute blood bin time was recorded as starting at 40.01 and the player was given 15 minutes from that time in which to return to the field of play. Should Team A #3 have been given only 5 minutes, as he had already had 10 minutes of the maximum 15 minutes permitted in Law?

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

1. As the teams return to the field at the end of the 10 minute half time break, Team A advised their substitution/replacement controller (No. 4), that Team A #3 (a prop) was a blood bin and was to be temporarily replaced by Team A #17. The Team A management had not advised anyone of the blood bin as they left the field of play at half time.

It transpired that the 15 minute blood bin time was recorded as starting at 40.01 and the player was given 15 minutes from that time in which to return to the field of play.

Should Team A #3 have been given only 5 minutes, as he had already had 10 minutes of the maximum 15



minutes permitted in Law?

Ruling

1. If a player does not advise the referee of the injury as the team leaves the field at half time, then the 15 minutes allowed for the blood injury will be deemed to have commenced at the end of the first half. The amount of time available for the expiry of the 15 minute blood bin after half time will be dependent on the time taken for half time.

RULING 9: 2003 **Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee**

24 July 2003

IRFU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 3.5 (d) and the Rulings of 12 June-NZRFU (4:2003) and 27 June-ARU (5:2003):

It is clear from the rulings in response to the NZRFU queries that: A team is not in breach of Law if it fails to cover the second injury to a hooker; or the second injury to a loose head prop; or the second injury to a tight-head prop.

However, the response to the ARU query states that: A team is in breach if it fails to cover the second injury when the injury to the tight head is followed by injury to the loose-head, or vice-versa.

This anomaly appears to be clearly inequitable and in contradiction of the rulings to the NZRFU queries.

We ask the Board to consider the above and to clarify that the intention is that: "A team must have a minimum of two replacements who are suitably trained and experienced to ensure that on the first occasion a replacement hooker is required, and/or the first occasion a replacement prop is required the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums".

This would mean that teams have the option of selecting a replacement hooker and a replacement prop capable of playing in both tight head and loose head positions; or of selecting an additional replacement front row at the expense of another position.

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

1. "A team must have a minimum of two replacements who are suitably trained and experienced to ensure that on the first occasion a replacement hooker is required, and/or the first occasion a replacement prop is required the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums. This would mean that teams have the option of selecting a replacement hooker and a replacement prop capable of playing in both tight head and loose head positions; or of selecting an additional replacement front row at the expense of another position."

Ruling

1. The intent of the Law is that on both the first and second occasions that a replacement is required in any front row position, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums. The first two occasions combinations can be for example; hooker/tight-head prop, hooker/loose-head prop, tight-head prop/loose-head prop. This could be described as replacement 'across' the front row. Teams who cannot comply with this are in breach of Law 3.5 (d).

2. The issue of replacements on the first two occasions with regards to the one position would be for example: hooker/hooker, loose-head prop/loose-head prop, tight-head prop/tight-head prop. A previous ruling has dealt with this issue. Teams who comply with Law on the first occasion, and due to the injury of their first replacement in that specific front-row position, cannot replace on the second occasion in the same position, are not in breach of Law 3.5 (d).

3. The Designated Members do not believe there to be an anomaly in Rulings given in this a area of Law.

RULING 8: 2003 **Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee**

24 July 2003



IRFU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 15 Tackle & Law 17 Maul:

We would be grateful for clarification of your ruling of 7th June (Ruling 3:2003) in response to the query from S.R.U.

Our understanding is that:

1. Team A win the ball and the ball carrier is joined by several of his team mates and they move towards the opponents goal line. If a player from Team B grasps an opponent and thus forms a maul, which he then collapses, he is liable to penalty.

2. However, if the player from Team B instantaneously brings the ball carrier to ground, then, under Law 7 mode of play, he is not liable to penalty, as this constitutes a tackle. Otherwise the defence of certain situations would appear impossible e.g.:

- Players of Team A joined together, breaking away from a maul with the ball carrier (at the front of this group) not being tackleable.
- Player of Team A, in open play, running towards Team B's goal line is joined by a team mate(s), and not being tackleable.

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

1. Team A win the ball and the ball carrier is joined by several of his team mates and they move towards the opponents goal line. If a player from Team B grasps an opponent and thus forms a maul, which he then collapses, he is liable to penalty.

2. However, if the player from Team B instantaneously brings the ball carrier to ground, then, under Law 7 mode of play, he is not liable to penalty, as this constitutes a tackle.

Ruling

1. It is assumed by the wording of the original Law Ruling request from the SRU, and again in this request, that the ball and players had moved off the line of touch.

In this scenario, if the player from Team B grasps an opponent who is not the ball-carrier, then a maul has not been formed, and he is playing an opponent without the ball.

If the player was to have grasped the ball-carrier, and did not bind to the ball-carrier as per the definition of binding, then a maul has not been formed. If the grasping player then brings the ball-carrier to ground, there is no penalty as there was no maul formed.

Binding-Definition: Grasping firmly another player's body between the shoulder and the hip with the whole arm in contact from hand to shoulder.

If a player binds on an opposition player who is a ball-carrier (who is already bound to a team mate) from shoulder to hip with at least one arm around the body, by definition he has bound onto the player and therefore any action taken to bring the ball carrier to ground constitutes an illegal collapse of the maul.

If however, the player of the team not in possession of the ball is the first player from his team to make contact with the ball-carrier (who is bound with a team mate), and that player does not bind the ball-carrier around the body from shoulder to hip (i.e grasps the ball-carrier below the hip) he is not bound to the ball-carrier and can complete a tackle in accordance with Law.

2. It is assumed by the wording of the original Law Ruling request from the SRU, and again in this part of the request, that the ball and players had moved off the line of touch.

In this second scenario, the same issues as noted in Ruling 8.1 above apply, plus the following.

The word 'instantaneously', does not affect the outcomes listed under the Ruling 8.1.

Note: If at a line-out, the catcher of the ball comes to ground (hereafter called the ball-carrier), and then an opposition player **immediately** brings the ball-carrier to ground, he is not liable to penalty.

RULING 7: 2003



Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

3 July 2003

UAR has requested a ruling with regard to Law 10.2 (c) & 19.1 (d):

A player inside the field hits the ball that has been kicked by an opponent with the head with the purpose of making the ball go outside the field. Should a penalty be awarded to the other team?

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

1. A player inside the field hits the ball that has been kicked by an opponent with the head with the purpose of making the ball go outside the field. Should a penalty be awarded to the other team?

Ruling

Law 10.2 (c) relates to a player intentionally knocking or throwing the ball out of the playing area. The term 'knock' infers with the arms or hands.

Law 19.1 (d) applies in this case, where a player kicks the ball and it touches or is touched by an opposition player and then goes into touch. There is no penalty.

RULING 6: 2003

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

3 July 2003

SRU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 17:

I refer to Ruling 3: 2003 contained in your fax of 7th June 2003 in response to the SRU with regard to a ruling under Law 15 - Tackle and Law 17 - Maul.

It is noted that the designated members ruled that the player is liable to penalty for collapsing the maul.

I would ask you to refer the definition of Law 17 - Maul to the designated Members for further consideration.

Under the definition, " A maul occurs when a player carrying the ball is held by **one or more opponents** and one or more of the ball carriers team mates bind onto the ball carrier."

If this is deemed to be sequential, a maul is not formed if players from the ball carrier's team join on to the ball carrier before the opposition.

It is noted under a previous Ruling that where three players move beyond the line of touch to receive the ball they are treated as one player and are not liable to penalty. In our opinion, if we treat the ball carrier and his team mates as one player, this would allow the ball carrier to be brought to ground under the Tackle Law.

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

1. Under the definition, " A maul occurs when a player carrying the ball is held by **one or more opponents** and one or more of the ball carriers team mates bind onto the ball carrier."

If this is deemed to be sequential, a maul is not formed if players from the ball carrier's team join on to the ball carrier before the opposition.

Ruling

Whilst a maul is considered to be built by the ball carrier, one or more opponents and one or more of the ball carriers team mates, it does not have to have any of the three player components joining in any specific order.

RULING 5: 2003

Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee



27 June 2003

Australian Rugby Union has requested a ruling with regard to Law 3.5 (d):

This Law states:

"When 19, 20, 21 or 22 players are nominated in a team there must be sufficient front row players to play at hooker, tight-head prop and loose-head prop who are suitably trained and experienced to ensure that on both the first and second occasions that a replacement in any front row position is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums."

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

1. If in an International fixture, the loose-head prop [No.1] was permanently replaced due to injury [by No.17] and then a little later, a tight-head was injured permanently, would this team be in breach of Law 3.5 [d] if they did not have another player, either on the field or the bench, who was able to fill this position, therefore ensuring that the fixture was able to continue with safe and contestable scrums?

Ruling

The team would be in breach of Law 3.5(d) as they have not satisfied the Law by being able to ensure that on the second occasion that a replacement in any front row position was required, the team had not been able to continue to play safely with contested scrums.

**RULING 4: 2003
Law 3.5 (d) - By designated members of Laws Committee**

12 June 2003

NZRFU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 3.5 (d):

This Law states:

"When 19, 20, 21 or 22 players are nominated in a team there must be sufficient front row players to play at hooker, tight-head prop and loose-head prop who are suitably trained and experienced to ensure that on both the first and second occasions that a replacement in any front row position is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums."

1. What does the IRB actually mean by the phrase 'suitably trained and experienced'? Does this mean that a replacement player must be able to play in the position in a manner that ensures that the match can continue safely with fully contested scrums? Or is the IRB requiring that a replacement player be a specialist hooker, specialist tight-head or specialist loose-head prop?
2. If in an International Test fixture, the starting hooker was permanently replaced due to injury and then his replacement hooker also received an injury which meant he had to leave the field permanently, would this team be in breach of Law 3.5(d) if they did not have another player, either on the field or the bench, who was able to fill this position, therefore ensuring that the fixture was able to continue with safe and contestable scrums?
3. If in an International Test fixture the loose-head prop was permanently replaced due to injury and then a little later the replacement loose-head was replaced permanently due to injury, would this team be in breach of Law 3.5(d) if they did not have another player, either on the field or the bench, who was able to fill this position, therefore ensuring that the fixture was able to continue with safe and contestable scrums?
4. If in an International Test fixture the hooker was permanently injured and replaced by the hooker from the bench and then a little later in the fixture the tight-head prop was permanently injured and replaced by the reserve prop on the bench, would this team be in breach if any of the front row now on the field left the field with a permanent injury and the team did not have another player, either on the field or the bench, who was able to fill this position, therefore ensuring that the fixture was able to continue with safe and contestable scrums?

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

1. What does the IRB actually mean by the phrase 'suitably trained and experienced'? Does this mean that a replacement player must be able to play in the position in a manner, which ensures that the match can continue safely with fully contested scrums? Or is the IRB requiring that a replacement player be a specialist hooker, specialist tight-head or specialist loose-head prop?

Ruling



A replacement player must be able to play in the position in a manner which ensures that the match can continue safely with fully contested scrums.

2. If in an International Test fixture, the starting hooker was permanently replaced due to injury and then his replacement hooker also received an injury which meant he had to leave the field permanently, would this team be in breach of Law 3.5(d) if they did not have another player, either on the field or the bench, who was able to fill this position, therefore ensuring that the fixture was able to continue with safe and contestable scrums?

Ruling The team would not be in breach of Law 3.5(d) as they had already replaced the hooker and as such are not required to have another player available to play at hooker.

3. If in an International Test fixture the loose-head prop was permanently replaced due to injury and then a little later the replacement loose-head was replaced permanently due to injury, would this team be in breach of Law 3.5(d) if they did not have another player, either on the field or the bench, who was able to fill this position, therefore ensuring that the fixture was able to continue with safe and contestable scrums?

Ruling The team would not be in breach of Law 3.5(d) as they had already replaced the loose-head prop and as such are not required to have another player available to play at loose-head prop.

4. If in an International Test fixture the hooker was permanently injured and replaced by the hooker from the bench and then a little later in the fixture the tight-head prop was permanently injured and replaced by the reserve prop on the bench, would this team be in breach if any of the front row now on the field left the field with a permanent injury and the team did not have another player, either on the field or the bench, who was able to fill this position, therefore ensuring that the fixture was able to continue with safe and contestable scrums?

Ruling The team would not be in breach of Law 3.5(d) as they had satisfied the Law by being able to ensure that on both the first and second occasions that a replacement in any front row position was required, the team had been able to continue to play safely with contested scrums.

Note 1: The IRB will monitor adherence to Law 3.5(d), and if it becomes evident that the Law is being abused, the issue will be readdressed.

Note 2: In tournaments under the control of the IRB, the Tournament Disputes Committee will treat non-adherence to Law 3.5(d) as a serious matter, and will be empowered to cancel and/or vary the result of a match and/or the points awarded in relation thereto, and to impose such other punishment as it considers appropriate.

Note 3: This Ruling is to be implemented immediately as of 12th June 2003 in both the northern and southern hemispheres.

RULING 3: 2003

Law 15-Tackle & Law 17 Maul - By designated members of Laws Committee

7 June 2003

SRU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 15-Tackle & Law 17 Maul:

Team A win the ball in a line-out. The ball carrier is joined by several of his team mates and they move off the line of touch towards their opponents' goal-line. One player of team B on his own grasps the ball -carrier and brings him to ground.

1. Is the maul formed under Law 17 as soon as the player from Team B grasps the player from Team A and he then collapses the maul.
2. Is the player from Team B tackling the ball-carrier under Law 15 and play should therefore continue.

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



1. Is the maul formed under Law 17 as soon as the player from Team B grasps the player from Team A and he then collapses the maul?

Ruling

By definition, given the abovementioned scenario, a maul has formed. Therefore given this scenario, if the player from Team B collapses the maul, then he is liable to penalty.

2. Is the player from Team B tackling the ball-carrier under Law 15 and play should therefore continue?

Ruling

By definition, given the abovementioned scenario, a tackle has not occurred

RULING 2: 2003

Front row - By designated members of Laws Committee

7 June 2003

SRU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 3.5-Suitably Trained and Experienced Players in the Front Row:

1. Who is responsible prior to the commencement of the match for ensuring teams comply with Law 3.5?
2. What is the sanction if they do not comply?
3. During the match, if a team fails to comply with Law 3.5, what is the sanction?

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

1. Who is responsible prior to the commencement of the match for ensuring teams comply with Law 3.5?

Ruling

Teams and team management are responsible to ensure that prior to a match, they can comply with Law 3.5.

2. What is the sanction if they do not comply?

Ruling

It is the responsibility of the team and team management to ensure that a team is able to comply with Law 3.5 prior to the match. It is the responsibility of the Union to authorise any sanctions with regard to non-compliance prior to the match.

3. During the match, if a team fails to comply with Law 3.5, what is the sanction?

Ruling

If a team is unable to comply with Law 3.5, then the referee will order uncontested scrums. There are no sanctions during the match. A Union may apply sanctions in accordance with its competition policy after the match has ended.

RULING 1: 2003

Lineouts - ratified by Council

15 JANUARY 2003

SARFU has requested further rulings with regard to the line-out Law 19.10 Exception 2. (The original request for a ruling came from the IRFU and a response from the Designated Members was sent out on 5 September 2002.)

1. Must (or may) the receiver running into the gap receive/take the ball irrespective of the throw-in?
2. What happens if it is an involuntary bad throw?
3. Are dummy jumpers allowed and may the receiver act as a "dummy jumper"?
4. What must/may the opposing receiver do?

Ruling



The Designated Members of the Laws Committee have ruled as follows:

1. Must (or may) the receiver running into the gap receive/take the ball irrespective of the throw-in?

Exception 2 states that a receiver may run into a gap in the lineout and receive the ball. If he does not receive the ball he is therefore liable to penalty. The September 2002 ruling made it clear that the same principle should apply to the receiver of the non-throwing team.

2. What happens if it is an involuntary bad throw?

The receiver who has run into the lineout and does not take the ball is liable to penalty. However, the referee would need to make a decision on the reason for him not taking the ball. The receiver should not be penalised if he makes a genuine attempt to take the ball.

3. Are dummy jumpers allowed and may the receiver act as a "dummy jumper"?

Dummy jumpers are not illegal but the receiver who enters the lineout must make a genuine attempt to take the ball. (Please note the ruling of November 15, 2002 regarding the timing of entry into the lineout). The receiver may not act as a dummy jumper.

4. What must/may the opposing receiver do?

The opposing receiver may attempt to take the ball but is liable to penalty for any other action.