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N.B. Any reference to him or he does not apply a preference gender.

INSTANT RUGBY

THE REFEREE

- The referee is trying to help you enjoy the game
- Abusing the referee and disputing decisions does not help him or you
- Remember, the referee will make fewer mistakes in a match than you will

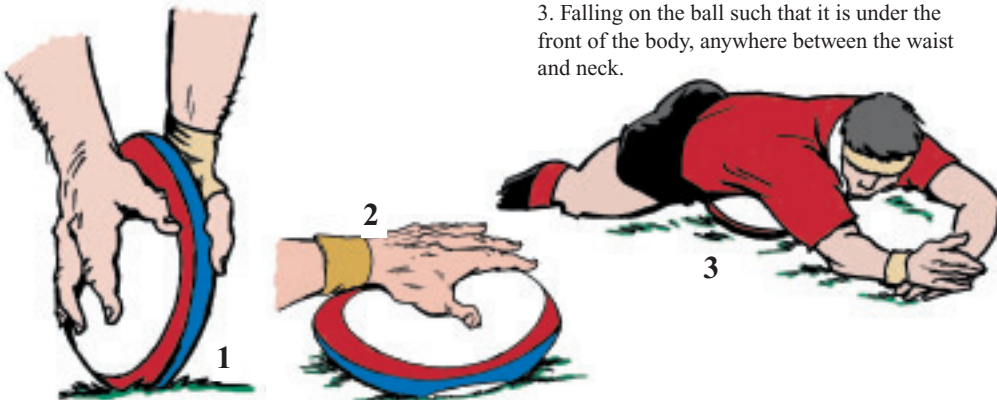


Tony Spreadbury, International Referee

TRY AND TOUCH-DOWN

The difference between try and touch-down

An attacking player scores a **try** by being the first to ground the ball in his opponents' in-goal. A defending player can prevent a try by **touching down** before an opponent.



Grounding the ball

There are three ways to ground the ball in in-goal:

1. Holding the ball and touching it to the ground.
2. Pressing down on the ball when it is already on the ground.
3. Falling on the ball such that it is under the front of the body, anywhere between the waist and neck.

KNOCK-ON AND THROW FORWARD

The only way to gain ground is to run or kick. Throwing or knocking the ball forward is not permissible.

Throw forward

When the ball is passed, it must travel along or behind an imaginary line which runs through the ball, parallel to the goal-lines. If the ball goes in front of that line, it is deemed to be a throw forward (usually called a forward pass).

Knock-on

If the ball hits a player's hand or arm and goes forward and touches the ground or another player, this is deemed to be a knock-on. If the ball hits the hand or arm and goes forward but is caught before it touches the ground or another player, there is no offence and play continues.

What is 'forward'?

'Forward' means towards an opponents' in-goal. If the ball is fumbled and it bounces towards that player's own in-goal, this is not a knock-on.

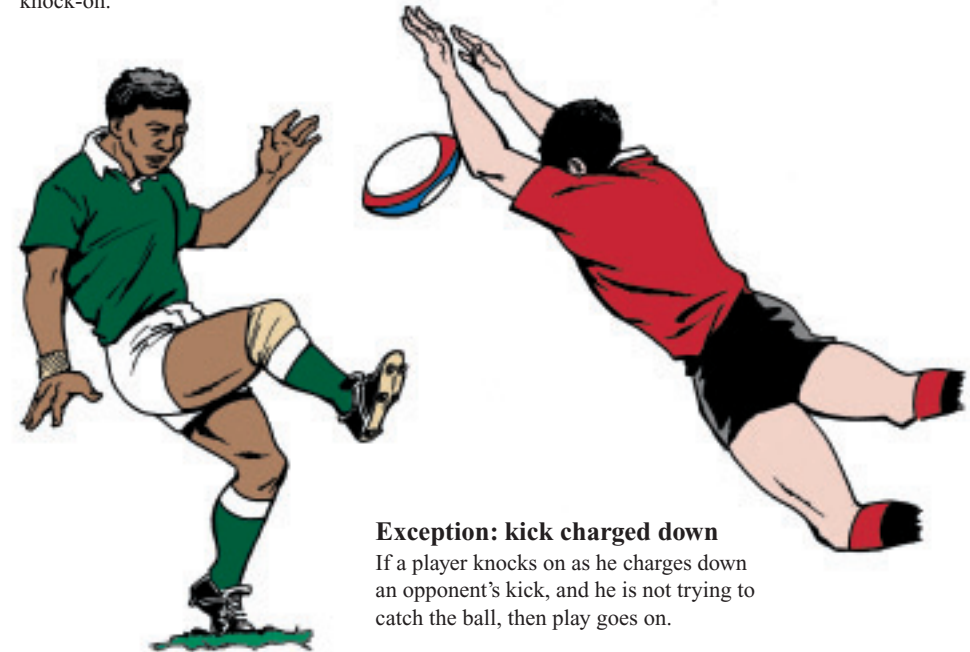
Intentional knock-on or throw forward

A player must not intentionally knock-on or throw forward, otherwise a penalty kick will be awarded against him/her.

In-goal play

The in-goal is the area including and behind the goal-line. Most of the laws apply to the in-goal. The ones that don't apply are tackle, scrum, ruck, maul and line-out. These apply only to the field of play - the area from goal-line to goal-line.

For most offences in the in-goal, the award is the same as for a similar offence in the field-of-play, except that the mark for a penalty kick or a free kick, or for a scrum, is five metres from the goal-line, opposite where the offence occurred.



Exception: kick charged down

If a player knocks on as he charges down an opponent's kick, and he is not trying to catch the ball, then play goes on.

THE SCRUM

Eight players form the scrum and all must remain bound until it is over. However, if the ball is at the feet of the hindmost player, he may unbind and pick up the ball.

Incomplete scrum

A team may have fewer than 8 players in a scrum if it can't field a complete team, or if a player goes off for injury or is sent off. However, a team must always have a minimum of five players in the scrum. Incomplete scrum formations are:

- Without one player, both teams use a 3-4 formation, i.e., no no. 8.



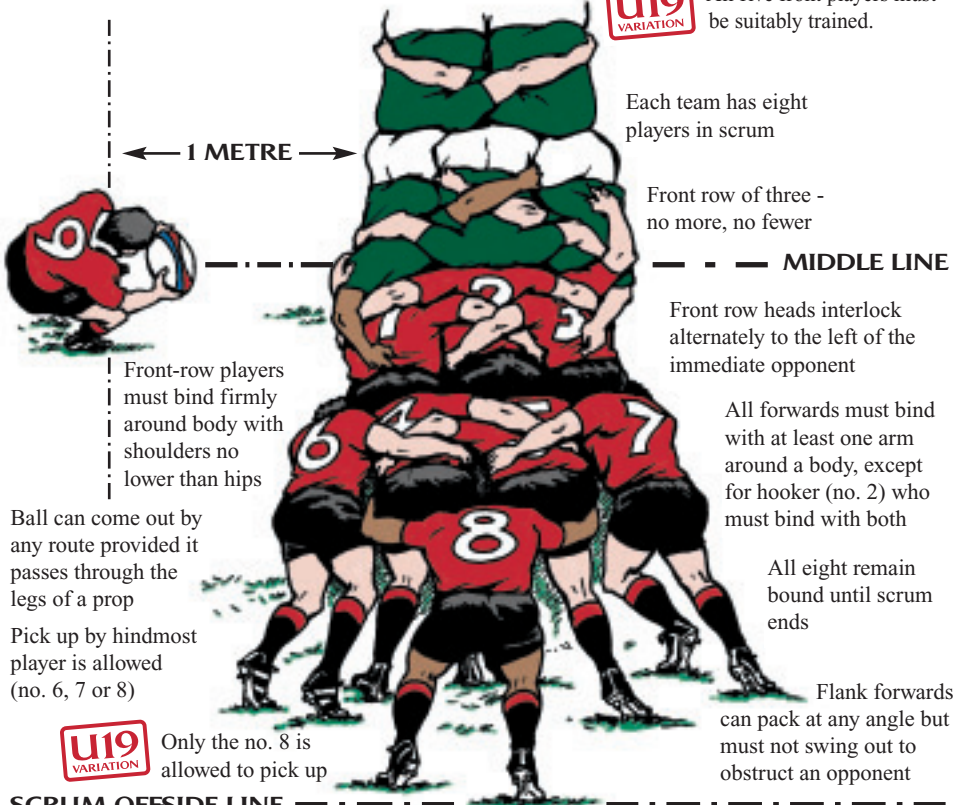
- Without two players, both teams use a 3-2-1 formation, i.e., no flankers.
- Without three players, both teams use a 3-2 formation, i.e., only front rows and locks.

Uncontested scrums

The three front-row players have been suitably trained for those positions. If a team can't field such suitably trained players - due to unavailability, injuries or dismissals - then the referee must order uncontested scrums. In an uncontested scrum, the teams do not push and do not compete. The team throwing in the ball must win it.

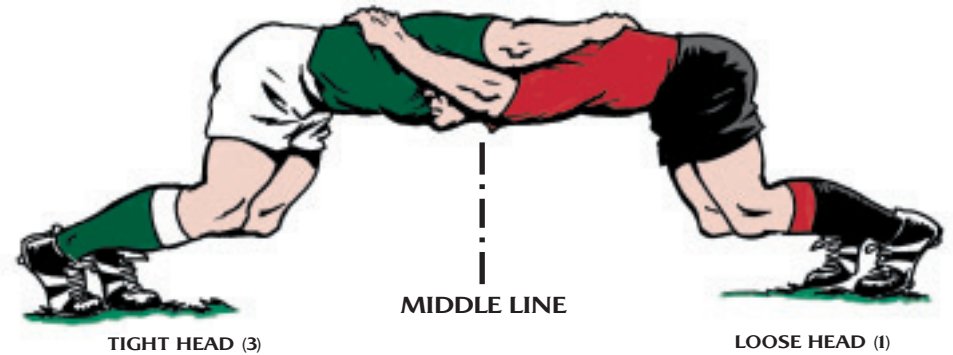


All five front players must be suitably trained.



SCRUM OFFSIDE LINE

Scrum off-side line is dictated by back foot of the hindmost player of each side. Backs must stay behind this line until the scrum is over



Binding

This is how the props are seen by the scrum-half. The tight-head prop must bind on the loose-head prop by putting his arm outside his opponent's left upper arm. He must grip the jersey of his opposing loose-head prop on the back - not the sleeve or the player's arm. The loose-head prop should bind on the tight-head prop by putting his left arm inside his opponent's right arm. He must grip on his opponent's jersey at the side or back. Neither prop should pull down with their arms. The 'middle line' is an imaginary line on the ground beneath the line where the shoulders of the front rows meet.

Any player in the scrum who is not a front-row player must bind with one arm around one of the locks. Each lock must bind on the prop in front of him. The referee will manage the engagement sequence: **Crouch & Hold, Engage**. There will be a pause between Hold and Engage.



Safety

Before the front rows meet, each prop should touch his opponent's upper arm and pause. The referee will manage the engagement sequence:

CROUCH · TOUCH · PAUSE · ENGAGE

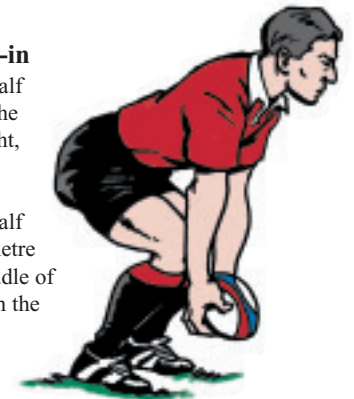
Scrum off-side lines

For all players except the scrum-halves, the off-side line is dictated by the back foot of the hindmost player in the scrum. (Thus, there are two of these off-side lines.) Any players not in the scrum must stay behind this line. For the scrum halves, the off-side line is dictated by the position of the ball in the scrum. Each scrum-half must

stay on his side of the ball, with both feet behind the ball, until it is out of the scrum. While the ball is in the scrum, the scrum-half who threw it in may move back and around to the opposite side of the scrum, but only if he stays behind the off-side line.

The throw-in

The scrum-half must throw the ball in straight, along the middle line. The scrum-half stands one metre from the middle of the scrum, on the middle line. He holds the ball with both



hands, mid-way between his knee and ankle. With a single forward movement, he throws in the ball, quickly, straight along the middle line, so that it first touches the ground just beyond the nearer prop's shoulders.

TACKLE

When a player is tackled

A player is tackled when he is held and brought to the ground, or when he is held so that the ball touches the ground. He is considered to have been brought to the ground if he is on one or both knees, or if he is sitting on the ground or on a player.

Releasing the ball

When a player makes a tackle, he must *immediately* release the tackled player and get up or move away from him and the ball. The tackled player must then release the ball. The tackler must get to his feet before he plays the ball.

When a player falls over another player who is on the ground with the ball in his possession, the player is assumed to have fallen intentionally, unless the referee is absolutely certain that the fall was unintentional. When a player has been tackled, he must try to make the ball available *immediately*, so that play can continue. That means he must *immediately* pass it or let go of it, and get up or move away.

Knocked over is not tackled

A player can be brought down without being tackled. He might be knocked over but not held by his opponent. In that case he is not obliged to release the ball - as long as he gets back to his feet or plays the ball *immediately*.

Injuries from pile-ups are often caused by a) the tackler not releasing and b) the tackled player refusing to release the ball. Releasing the ball early makes for a faster and more enjoyable game.

After a tackle

After a tackle, the next player to play the ball must be on his feet. Rugby is a game for players on their feet.

Falling on the ball within one metre of a tackle and making it unplayable should be penalised.

NO LYING ON OR NEAR THE BALL

Falling on the ball to gain possession of it is permissible, provided it is not within one metre of a tackle. Lying on the ball to stop the flow of the game is not.

Therefore, when a player falls on the ball, he must immediately act to ensure the continuous flow of the game. He can do one of three things:

1. Get to his feet with the ball.
2. Pass the ball.
3. Release the ball and move away from it.

Squeeze ball is not allowed in U18 rugby and should be stopped immediately. Should a player adopt this position, on the first occasion a scrum is awarded to the team in possession. All subsequent occasions should be penalised.

The crucial point is to act immediately. If a player lies on or near the ball such that an opponent cannot gain possession, he should be penalised.



RUCK AND MAUL

When they're alike

In both a ruck and a maul, players have closed around the ball and open play has ended. The players forming a ruck or maul must be on their feet.

When they're different

In a ruck, the ball is on the ground. In a maul, the ball is held. In a ruck, the ball must not be handled - to win possession, a player must ruck

it back using the feet. At least *two* players are needed to form a ruck - one from each team, closing over the ball. At least *three* players are needed to form a maul - one from each team, closing around the player with the ball. To join a ruck, a player must bind onto a **team-mate, using his whole arm.** To join a maul, a player must bind onto it **using his whole arm. Placing a hand on the ruck or maul is not binding.**

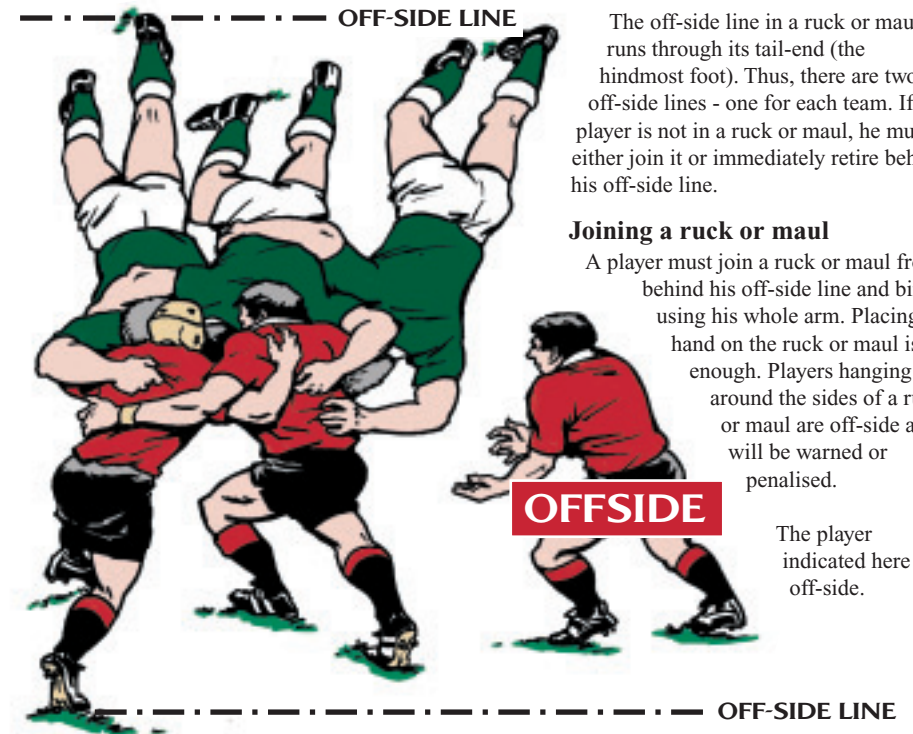
Ruck or maul off-side

The off-side line in a ruck or maul runs through its tail-end (the hindmost foot). Thus, there are two off-side lines - one for each team. If a player is not in a ruck or maul, he must either join it or immediately retire behind his off-side line.

Joining a ruck or maul

A player must join a ruck or maul from behind his off-side line and bind using his whole arm. Placing a hand on the ruck or maul is not enough. Players hanging around the sides of a ruck or maul are off-side and will be warned or penalised.

The player indicated here is off-side.



THE LINE-OUT

The line-out starts when the ball leaves the hands of the player throwing in. The line-out ends when one of four things happens: 1. The ball leaves the line-out. 2. A player carrying the ball leaves the line-out. 3. The ball is thrown more than 15 metres from the touch line. 4. A ruck or maul forms and the entire ruck or maul has moved beyond the line-of-touch.

OFF-SIDE AT A LINE-OUT

Players taking part in a line-out

Players taking part in a line-out are the players who stand in the line-out or at scrum-half, plus the player throwing-in and his opposite number (who stands in the five metre channel). For them, until the ball has touched a player or the ground, the off-side line is the line-of-touch. So, in a line-out, a player must stay on his team's side of the line-of-touch until the ball arrives. Then he must stay on his team's side of the ball until the line-out ends. A player not in the resulting maul must stay behind the hindmost player's back foot.

The line-of-touch is an imaginary line at right angles to the touch line, through the point from which the ball is to be thrown in

Single parallel lines

Team not throwing in ball must not have more players in line-out than team throwing in ball

Off-side line for backs runs parallel to line-of-touch

10 METRES
Furthest player not more than 15 metres from touch line

15 metre indicator marked on 22 metre line and other lines

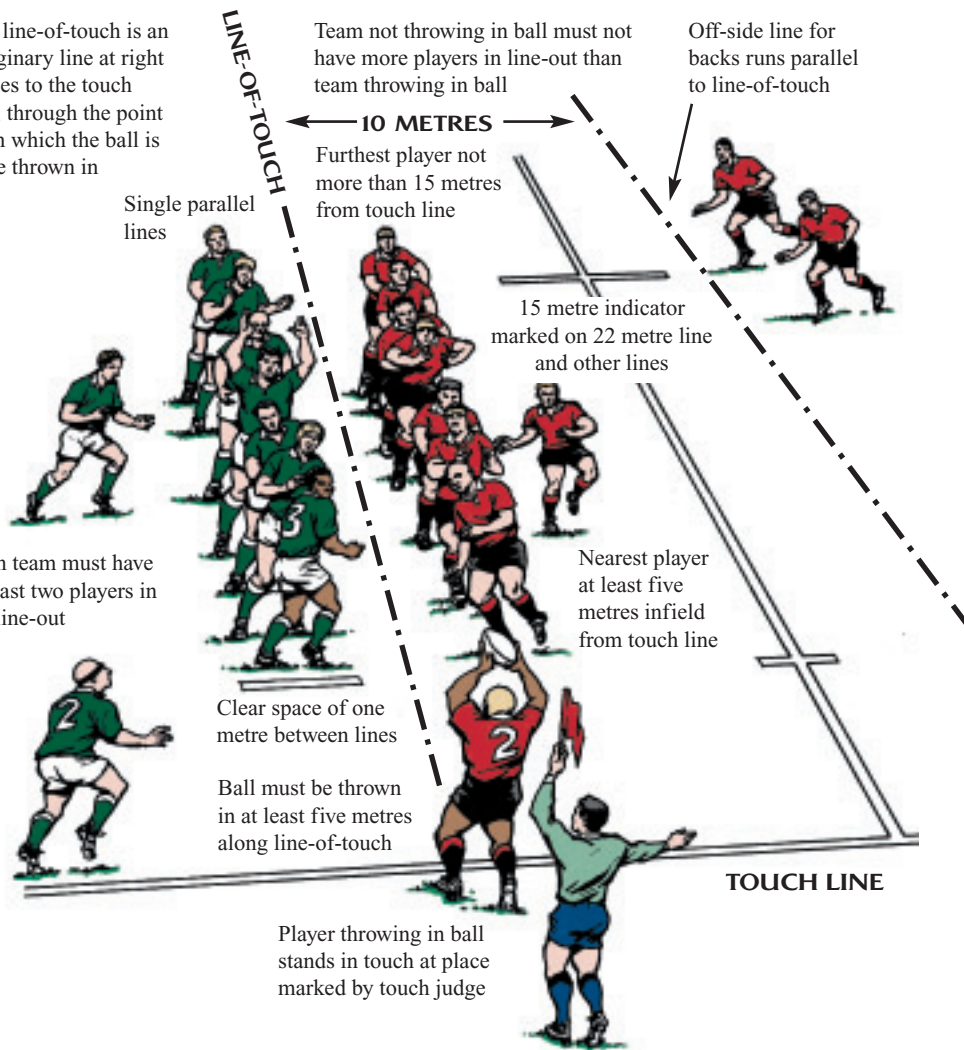
Each team must have at least two players in the line-out

Nearest player at least five metres infield from touch line

Clear space of one metre between lines

Ball must be thrown in at least five metres along line-of-touch

Player throwing in ball stands in touch at place marked by touch judge



OFF-SIDE IN GENERAL PLAY

It's different for scrums, rucks, mauls and line-outs.

In general play, you're off-side when you are in front of a team-mate who has the ball (diagram 3) or who last played it (diagram 1). Being off-side means you're out of the game until you're put on-side again. So you must not take part in the game *in any way* - and that includes moving towards your opponents who are waiting to play the ball. For instance, if a team-mate behind you kicks ahead, you must not move forward until you are put on-side as described on page 2.

In summary: Every player is bound to be in an off-side position at some time, but you should not be penalised unless you take part in the game.

THE TEN METRE LAW The ten metre law works like this: a team-mate who is behind you kicks ahead. You are off-side. An opponent is waiting to catch the ball. If you are nearer than ten metres to this opponent, and you stay there, you will be penalised. So you must retire until you are at least ten metres away from him (see diagram 2).

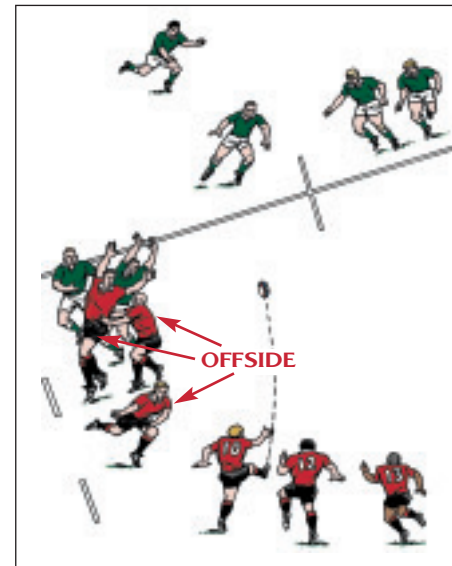


Diagram 1 From a short line-out, the ball reaches the red stand-off, no. 10, who kicks. Red scrum-half and forwards are in front of him, and therefore in an off-side position - but they will not be penalised unless they move towards their opponents.

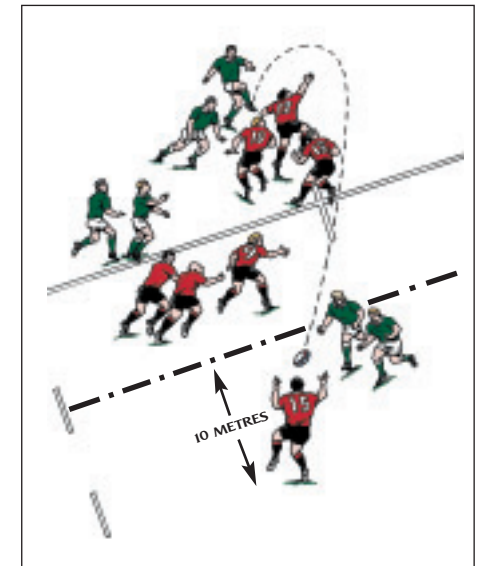


Diagram 2 Green full-back kicks. An off-side green player is less than ten metres from a red player waiting to catch the ball. He must retire from this receiver, or be penalised. Nothing an opponent does can put him on-side.

ON-SIDE IN GENERAL PLAY

On-side means you are no longer off-side; you can take part in the game.

Put on-side by a team-mate

The team-mates of an off-side player, including a player off-side under the ten metre law (who is retiring), can put him on-side in any of four ways:

1. A team-mate who kicked the ball when behind him now runs in front of him (see diagram 4).
2. Any other team-mate who was on-side when the ball was kicked now runs in front of him (see diagrams 1 & 4, player nos. 12 & 13).
3. A team-mate with the ball runs in front of him, e.g., no. 10 could have carried the ball forward in diagram 1.
4. He runs behind any of these 'on-side' team-mates. The onus is on the off-side player to retire - it is better, for example, if instance 1, 2 or 3 occurs, as a way of putting a player on-side.

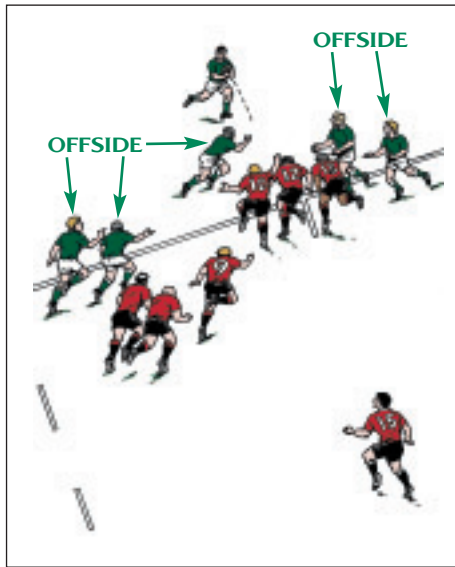


Diagram 3 Green full-back catches the ball. The green players in front of him are now in an off-side position, and must not take part in play. They should run back to support the no. 15 or anticipate a return kick which will, as the no. 15 passes them, put them on-side.

Put on-side by an opponent

A player who is off-side under the ten metre law cannot be put on-side by an opponent - he has to retire. Any other off-side player is put on-side if an opponent does any of these three things:

1. Runs five metres with the ball.
2. Kicks or passes the ball.
3. Intentionally touches the ball but doesn't hold it, i.e. fails to catch the ball.

An off-side player who is retiring to an on-side position may still be penalised if he loiters and gets in his opponent's way - even after the opponent has passed the ball.

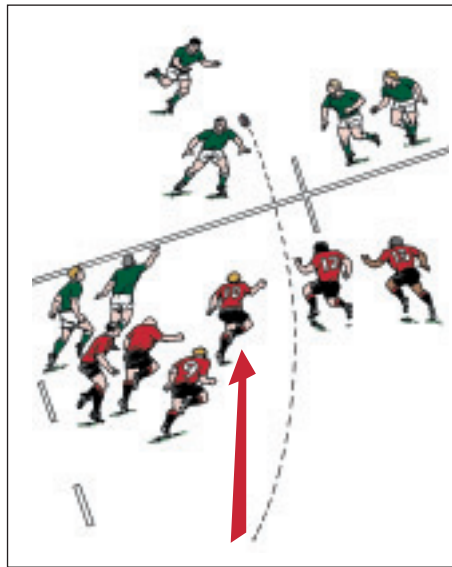


Diagram 4 Red stand-off follows up his kick. He passes his scrum-half and forwards, thus putting them on-side. They can now move forward and take part in the game again.

ADVANTAGE

Very little of the game is not covered by advantage. Advantage applies to all kinds of off-side, to knock-ons and forward passes, as well as to offences at scrums, rucks, mauls and line-outs and to in-goal play. It can even apply to some foul play, but this is unlikely.

If one team commits an offence but their opposition gains an advantage from this offence, the match continues without stoppage. The result is less whistle from the referee, and more rugby.

Two kinds of advantage

Advantage can be tactical (a good attacking opportunity) or territorial (a gain in ground).

Example 1: tactical advantage

A player gives a forward pass, but an opponent intercepts it and starts an attacking passing movement. He has taken tactical advantage, so the referee should ignore the original offence of the forward pass.

Example 2: territorial advantage

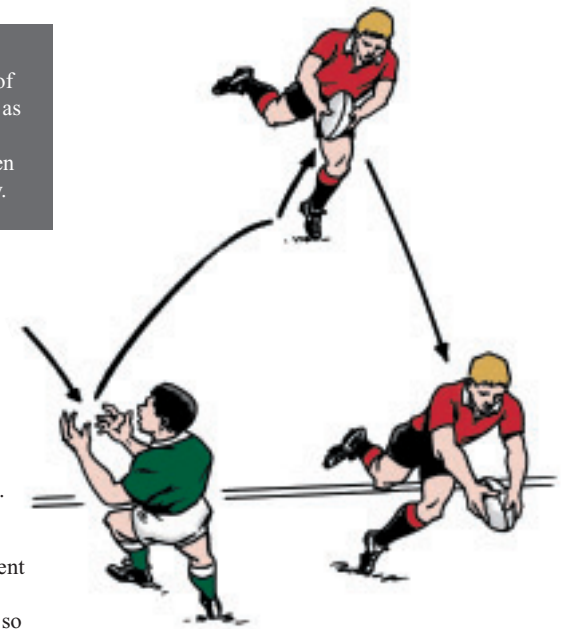
A player (shown here in the green jersey) knocks on. An opponent catches the ball, kicks ahead and follows up. He has gained a territorial advantage, so the referee should ignore the original offence of the knock-on.

Taking the advantage

The referee can play advantage, but it only works if the players take their chances. If a player attempts to gain an advantage from an offence but fails to do so, the referee should bring play back to the place of the original offence and award a scrum or kick. So it's worth a try.

Advantage when possible

Referees - don't blow the whistle unless you have to - if you can play the advantage, do.
Players - never wait for the whistle - if you see an advantage - go for it.



PLAYER SAFETY

Line-out

Any players supporting a jumper in a line-out are responsible for the safety of the jumper until such time as he has returned to the ground. At U15 level and below, players must not support jumpers in the line-out.

Scrums, rucks and mauls

The law states that when a player enters a ruck or maul, his shoulders must be no lower than his hips. Deliberately collapsing a scrum, ruck or maul is a dangerous practice.

Tackling

Players must never be tackled above shoulder height. Players jumping to catch a high ball must not be tackled in mid-air. A shoulder charge, i.e., not using the arms to grasp a player, is illegal.