



# **INTERNATIONAL TAG FEDERATION**

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Presented by the  
International Tag Federation (ITF)  
Rules and Referees  
Committee

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## SECTION 1

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**ADVANTAGE** - is to allow play to proceed if it is to the advantage of the team which has not committed an offence or infringement. The referee will determine if advantage has been taken. If not taken, then revert to original infringement.

**ARM** - (re. Knock on) is defined where the arm joins the shoulder at the armpit.

**ATTACKER** - is a member of the attacking team.

**ATTACKING TEAM** - is the team who has possession of the ball.

**BALL CARRIER** - is a member of the attacking team who has possession of the ball.

**BALL PLAYER** - is the member of the attacking team who is imparting motion to the ball at the play-the-ball area with their foot.

**BAULK** – occurs when the dummy half pretends to pick up the ball.

**BONUS BOX** – is the area placed in the middle of the try line measuring 5m wide & 3m deep.

**CHANGEOVER (C/O)** - is the surrendering of the ball to the opposing side.

**CLOSING THE GAP** - when two or more defenders come together and close the gap the ball carrier was committed to running through causing contact.

**CONTACT** - a collision of bodies whether deliberate or accidental.

**CROSS BODY TAG** – when a defender reaches across the attacker's body to remove the attacker's tag.

**DEAD BALL LINE** – is a line a minimum of 6 metres from the try line and provides the area within which a player can score a try. The dead ball line will be used as a safety measure where required. The dead ball line must be marked across the width of the field (see Section 13).

**DEAD TIME** - when the ball is out of play.

**DEFENDER** - is a member of the defending team.

**DEFENDING TEAM** - is the team without possession of the ball.

**DEFENSIVE LINE** - is a line of defending players.

**DIPPING** – lowering the body to lower the position of the tags to prevent from being tagged.

**DIVE** – a dynamic movement head-first through the air where both feet leave the ground.

**DROP KICK** - the ball is released from the hands and is kicked as it rebounds off the ground.

**DUMMY- HALF** - is the attacking player who takes up position immediately behind the ball player during the play-the-ball.

**FENDING** – using the hand, arm, ball, or body (bending forward) to prevent being tagged.

**FIELD-OF-PLAY** - the area within the touchline and try line.

**FIFTY/TEN KICK (50 /10)** - when a player kicks the ball from inside their own half & the ball bounces then crosses the touch line within 10 metres of the opponents try line.

**FORWARD PASS** - passing the ball out of the hands in a forward direction. If the ball is passed out of the hands backwards and is blown forward or bounces forward, there is no infringement and play should continue.

**GROUNDING THE BALL** - placing the ball with downward pressure on or over the opponents try line with hand, hands, wrist, or forearm.

**GOLDEN TRY** – This could occur in ITF Tournaments / sanctioned events to determine a winner in knockout stages of competition but will be communicated by the Tournament Director at the event.

**IN POSSESSION** - a player has control of the ball with their hands or arm.

**JUMP** – to spring off the ground in a vertical direction with both feet off the ground and land on one or both feet. Usually done to avoid being tagged.

**KICK** - deliberately striking at the ball with the leg from under the knee to the toe. This action does not include blocking or trapping the ball with the foot or leg.

**KICKING TEAM** - is the team which kicks the ball.

**KICK-OFF POINT** - is the position at the centre of the halfway where the ball is kicked off.

**KICK TO WASTE TIME** - is a kick that is deliberately kicked out over the touch line or try line to waste time.

**KNOCK-ON** - propel the ball forward with hand or arm towards opponents try line and does not regather it before it lands on the ground or touches another player.

**KNOCK-BACK** - propel the ball towards own try line with hand or arm.

**MARKER** - is the defending player who stands immediately and directly opposite the ball player during the play-the-ball (no further back than 1m).

**MISLEADING AND DECEPTIVE CONDUCT** - when a defending player calls for the ball as a deliberate means to deceive the attacker into passing them the ball.

**NEGATIVE PLAY** - Is when a player receives the ball & stops or retreats and tries to entice the opposition forward. The opposition holds their line. (A standoff results)

**NOT IN THE TRUE SPIRIT OF THE GAME** - any action by a player or team the referee deems unacceptable.

**OBSTRUCTION** - is the act of preventing an opponent from tagging the attacking player in possession.

**OFF-SIDE** – occurs when a defending player does not retreat the required distance or an attacking player in front of the player in possession.

**PASS** - is to throw the ball in a backwards direction from one player to another.

**PLAY-ON** - continue play.

**PENALISE** - is to award a penalty against an offending player.

**PENALTY TRY** - a try awarded by the referee when in their opinion a try may have been scored subject to an infringement or foul play by an opponent.

**PLACE KICK** - is to kick the ball after it has been placed on the ground.

**PLAYING AT THE BALL** - any deliberate attempt to gain possession or touch the ball.

**PLAY-THE-BALL (PTB)** - when the ball player uses their foot to propel the ball behind them no more than 2 metres.

**PLAYING AREA** - includes the field of play and the area restricted to spectators by any means such as a fence, rope, line (Section 13).

**SLEDGING** - a verbal insult directed at a player, official or spectator, includes any unacceptable comments.

**SUBSTITUTES BOXES** – are two demarcated areas on the same side of the field from which all substitutions will take place. At half time teams will swap substitution areas. The substitution box will be 3 metres wide and run from 3 metres from the halfway line to the 50/10 marker. Only players, coaches and managers involved in that game are allowed in this area.

**SURRENDER RULE** - is when the ball carrier deliberately gives up and does not attempt to attack (must try to beat the defender) during the play with the intention of being tagged to allow for a fast play-the-ball. For example. Stands & Swivels.

**TAG** - the removal of the tag from the ball carrier's shorts / tights.

**TAGGING DISTANCE** - when a defender is deemed to be close enough to an attacker to be able to remove their tag.

**TAP KICK** - a deliberate touch of the ball with the foot. Both hands must be on the ball when touched with the foot if ball held in the hands. If placing the ball on the ground, it must be touched with the foot.

**TRIPPING** – using the foot or leg to trip a player. If deliberate it's an automatic send off.

**TRY** – the grounding of the ball on or over the try line with downward pressure with hand, hands or whilst cradled in ball carriers' arm. NOTE: The ball does not have to be regathered when scoring a try from a kick. Bringing the hands or arm/s down on top of the ball and guiding it to the ground with downward pressure is a try.

**VOLUNTARY TAG** - is when an attacking player either plays the ball with both tags attached or deliberately removes one or both of their own tags.

## **SECTION 2**

### **PLAYING THE GAME**

- 2.1 The objective of the game is to score tries.
- 2.2 The player in possession of the ball may run, kick, or pass the ball attempting to get further downfield and score a try. It is the objective of the team without the ball to prevent this by removing a "tag" from the ball carrier.
- 2.3 The attacking team has six (6) "plays" or "tags" to place the ball over the defending team's try line. After six (6) "tags" a changeover occurs, and the defending team then becomes the attacking team.
- 2.4 The captains of the two teams shall toss for choice of ends. The captain winning the toss has the choice of which direction to run and who will kick off. This will be reversed for the second half. See Rule 7.1.
- 2.5 The game will commence with a place kick from the centre of the halfway line without the assistance of a kicking tee or being held by any player.
- 2.6 Tag is a non-tackling game. Accidental contact will occur, but contact should be avoided. Accidental contact may still be penalised.

## SECTION 3

### PLAYER'S AND PLAYING EQUIPMENT

- 3.1 A maximum of 8 players per team on the field at any one time. At representative level the number of team members may be capped. Interchange at all levels is unlimited.
- 3.2 A minimum of 5 players on each team to start the game. If a player is sin binned or sent off reducing the number below 5, play will continue.
- 3.3 In a mixed game, a maximum of 4 male players can be on the field at any one time but you can have any number of female players between 1 and 8.
- 3.4 Only registered players are allowed to participate in a game.
- 3.5 Players shall not wear anything exposed that might prove dangerous to other players (jewellery, watches, fit bits etc and any other object on the wrist or arm). Wrist bands may be worn to cover medical devices.
- 3.6 The compulsory equipment of a player includes
  - 3.6.1 Shirt or singlet of distinctive colours and/or patterns (must be numbered).
  - 3.6.2 Only authorised ITF shorts / tights to be worn.
  - 3.6.3 The shorts must have a waist cord and tightened appropriately.
  - 3.6.4 Shorts must be correct fitting & kept at waist level. (not to large for the player)
  - 3.6.5 Only one pair of shorts to be worn.  
Call a tag for any breach of 3.6.3/4/5 above.
  - 3.6.6 Footwear (plastic studded boots or runners) **NO METAL STUDS / SPRIGS.**
  - 3.6.7 Two ITF approved Tags. A team shall receive a maximum of 16 tags. All tags must be attached directly to the shorts and hang straight down and cannot be folded, twisted, or misaligned to cause an unfair advantage.



- 3.7 All players must have their shirts tucked in, so it does not obstruct their tags. If an attacking player receives the ball with their shirt out the referee will call a tag.

### **Other Equipment**

Non dangerous equipment including hats (soft peaks), headgear, facemasks, knee and arm protectors made of soft lightweight padded material are permitted.

**Mouth guards are highly recommended.**

### **Non-Conforming Equipment**

The referee should inspect all player's equipment prior to the commencement of the game and if necessary, the referee can prevent a player from participating in the game if they consider a player's equipment to be dangerous. Hard peak caps can be worn but turned backwards.

## **SECTION 4**

### **SCORING**

- 4.1 The game shall be won by the team scoring the most points.
- 4.2 A try is awarded to the attacking team when they ground the ball on or over the try line. Also see Penalty Try in Section 1 (page 5).
- 4.3 One point is awarded for a try. In mixed games a female try is two points (This is not a discriminatory or equality issue, it simply enhances the game). In ITF sanctioned events there will be bonus box whereby an additional point is awarded when ball is placed on or within the bonus box lines. A player may enter the bonus box from any direction.
- 4.4 If the score is equal or if both teams fail to score, then the game shall be drawn.
- 4.5 Competition rules may require a result. In this case extra time will be played with the golden try, right of reply rule in place. The ITF Tournament Director will communicate if this rule is being played at ITF events / Sanctioned events.
- 4.6 The ball carrier cannot pass the ball back after crossing the try line to score. Decision - penalty 10 metres out, directly in line with the infringement.
- 4.7 If the ball carrier crosses the try line to score but runs back into the field of play a tag will be counted immediately. If it's the 6<sup>th</sup> tag, a c/o 10 metres out from the point where they ran back into the field of play will be taken.
- 4.8 A try can be scored from a kick in general play if it is grounded before the ball touches the ground beyond the try line. Local venues may vary this rule considering safety of players.
- 4.9 If the ball crosses the try line, then travels outside an imaginary touch in goal line or over the dead ball line, the ball is dead.
- 4.10 A player can dive in the air from the field of play whilst running with the ball or chasing a kick to score a try. Should the dive initiate contact or deemed dangerous by the referee a penalty will be awarded. An attacker cannot deliberately dive over or under a player to score a try.
- 4.11 If any part of the players body touches the ground before the try line and a defender is within tagging distance, a tag will be counted.

- 4.12 The ball carrier may drop to the ground after the try line to score the try even when defenders are within tagging distance.

## **SECTION 5**

### **DEFENCE RULES**

- 5.1 The aim of the defender is to remove one or both tags of the ball carrier.
- 5.2 If both tags are removed by one or more defenders, then the point where the first tag was removed will be where the ball is played.
- 5.3 When a tag is removed the defender should drop the tag at the point where the tag was made, assume a marker position, or return to the defensive line. The ball carrier must return to the point where the tag was made, play-the-ball and then replace their tag. The point of the tag is where the tag was made, not in front of the defender.
- 5.4 The defensive line must be at least 7 metres back from the play-the-ball.
- 5.5 One defender may act as a marker.
- 5.6 The marker must stand directly and immediately in front of the play-the-ball (approximately 1 metre).
- 5.7 The marker and the defensive line can only move forward when the ball is touched by the dummy half. If the dummy half baulks, the referee should play on e.g., call "play on" or in some cases penalise (persistent offender).
- 5.8 If the attacking side fails to score before the sixth tag has been made, a changeover will be awarded to the defending team at the point where the sixth tag was made.
- 5.9 A player may defend with one or no tags on.

## **DEFENDING TEAM INFRINGEMENTS**

**NOTE: The referee should consider advantage play prior to penalising.**

**Penalties may be awarded at the point of the infringement in the following circumstances: -**

- 5.10 If a defender deliberately moves into the ball carriers' path, without gaining position first and contact is made, the defender will be judged as initiating the contact.
- 5.11 When a defending player, in the referee's opinion, is not attempting to remove a tag but is impeding the progress of the ball carrier or any attacking player with their body.
- 5.12 When a defender holds onto an attacking player, or their uniform and no advantage is gained by the attacking team.
- 5.13 When a defender calls "tag" or "yes" without physically removing the tag, it will be deemed a "phantom tag".
- 5.14 When a defending player calls for the ball as a deliberate means to deceive the attacker into passing them the ball.
- 5.15 When a defender tags an attacking player and throws the tag more than one (1) metre away from the mark where the tag occurred.
- 5.16 When the marker fails to stand directly and immediately in front of the ball player when the ball is being played (approximately 1 metre).
- 5.17 When the marker interferes with the ball player at the play-the-ball or moves too early.
- 5.18 The marker cannot strike for the ball whilst the ball is being played.
- 5.19 The marker can under no circumstance run around or dive to retrieve the ball from the dummy half position. This will result in a penalty (safety issue).
- 5.20 When a defending player is offside, a penalty may be awarded at the point where the offside player(s) should have been standing in the defensive line (consider advantage play).

- 5.21 A defender cannot dive on a loose ball passed, knocked back or knocked on by the attacking side. They can pick it up or kick it but diving on the ball increases the risk of serious contact (safety rule).
- 5.22 If a defender removes an attacker's tag simultaneously as they pass or kick the ball the referee will call play on. The attacker must replace the tag before being able to progress the ball further downfield (simultaneous tag/off load).
- 5.23 If the attacking player kicks the ball and is simultaneously tagged, they can retrieve the ball and a tag will be counted. They cannot kick the ball a second time to gain a further advantage. To do so will result in a changeover.
- 5.24. If the attacker has passed the ball and is late tagged the referee should call "Late Tag, play on" and allow the late tagged player to remain in the play. If or when play is stopped by a tag the referee will call zero tag and continue play. If a player receiving the pass after a late tag call, kicks the ball, the late tag mark for the zero tag will be where he kicked the ball.
- 5.25 If the attacker has kicked the ball and is late tagged the referee should call "Late Tag, play on" and allow the attacking team the opportunity to regather the ball. If an attacking player regathers the ball, the referee will play on and call "zero tag". If the attacking team does not regather the ball, the referee will penalise the defending team where they recover the ball or the ball stops, crosses the touch line or try line.
- 5.26 If a defender removes a support player's tag, the referee will call "Pre-tag" and allow the advantage play.
- 5.27 If no advantage is gained, the referee should penalise the defender and the mark will be where the play breaks down. The referee should also consider the use of the sin bin.
- 5.28 A player 'pre or late tagged' with only one tag still on can only be stopped by removal of the remaining tag.
- 5.29 If no tags are on the player, they will be deemed tagged when a defender comes within tagging distance.
- 5.30 If a defender attempts a cross body tag and restricts the attacker's progress. (Executing this type of tag must be immediate without contact restricting progress).

## SECTION 6

### ATTACKING RULES

- 6.1 A player in possession of the ball, can run, kick, or pass the ball to their teammates. The ball carrier can only progress the ball with two tags on unless advantage is being played due to a late tag / pre tag.
- 6.2 The attacking team shall be allowed six successive tags then a changeover will occur. On the sixth tag the ball carrier should place the ball on the mark of the sixth tag for the changeover.
- 6.3 If a tag is removed by a defending player, the ball carrier must return to the point where the tag was removed and play-the-ball without delay.
- 6.4 Another attacking team player will take up a position directly behind the ball player and assume the dummy half position.
- 6.5 The play-the-ball is initiated when the ball player places the ball under one foot and heels it backwards to the dummy-half. No more than 2 metres.
- 6.6 The dummy half can run, pass, or kick the ball. The dummy half can pass or kick the ball with only one or no tags on as long as they only take one step. If they take more than one step, they will be called back, and the next tag will be counted.
- 6.7 If there is no marker the tagged player may replace their tag, place the ball on the ground, release the hands from the ball and tap it with the foot and continue play. If the player is missing a tag they may only pass or kick the ball taking no more than one step.
- 6.8 If the ball carrier falls to the ground, places a knee or hand on the ground and a defender is within tagging distance, a tag will be counted. If this occurs on the last tag, a changeover will be awarded to the defending team. **NOTE:** The ball carrier can drop to the ground after they have crossed the try line to score a try even with defenders within tagging distance.
- 6.9 An attacking player may receive a pass behind their try line or may run behind their try line when in possession of the ball. If an attacking player is tagged behind their try line, they shall restart play with a drop kick from the centre of the try line.

- 6.10 Simultaneous tag/ball off load situations will result in a “play-on” call from the referee and since Tag is predominantly an attacking game, the benefit of the doubt will be given to the attacking team. If the ball off-load is deemed to have been executed after the “tag”, the tagged player must return to the mark and play-the-ball where the tag occurred.
- 6.11 If the ball carrier off-loads the ball as their tag(s) are removed and the referee calls “play-on”, they must replace their tag(s) before being able to continue in the play. If this player fails to replace the tags and receives the ball back, play is stopped, and a tag counted.
- 6.12 If the ball carrier comes into contact with the referee whilst trying to evade a “tag”, a tag will be counted.
- 6.13 If an attacking player receives the ball with their shirt out the referee can call a tag.
- 6.14 A player cannot touch their own tag whilst in possession of the ball. If they do the referee will call a tag.
- 6.15 If the ball player goes over the try line and then crosses the plane of the imaginary side-line they will be deemed out. Play will restart with a tap kick ten metres out centre field.
- 6.16 If an attacking player knocks on over the try line whilst scoring a try, play will restart with a tap kick ten metres out centre field.
- 6.17 If a player knocks on or throws a forward pass (not deliberate) within 10 metres of the try line, a changeover will occur in line with the knock on, 10 metres out from the try line and no nearer than 10 metres to the touch line.
- 6.18 If a ball bounces forward off the body or head, (not deliberately) it will not be a knock on. The referee will call play on.

### **ATTACKING TEAM CHANGEOVERS (C/O)**

- 6.19 When a knock on or forward pass occurs. Note: the referee should consider advantage play before ordering a changeover.
- 6.20 If the ball comes into contact with the referee after being kicked or passed and play is irregularly affected.

- 6.21 If the ball carrier is tagged over the try line prior to placing the ball down for a try on the sixth tag. C/O 10 metres out from the try line, in line with the tag.
- 6.22 When the ball carrier crosses the touch line before their tag is removed. C/O 10 metres in.
- 6.23 When the ball carrier steps over the touch line whilst playing the ball. C/O 10 metres in.
- 6.24 If the ball carrier, whilst in the action of playing the ball, loses control of the ball and drops the ball on the ground. NOTE: If the ball carrier accidentally touches the ball with the foot and it rolls a little forward but stays in the ruck and the player then correctly heels it back the referee should play on.
- 6.25 THREE SECOND RULE. If the ball carrier delays the play the ball or there is no dummy half the referee can start a 3 second count. If he reaches 3 then a C/O will be awarded (Referee will determine when he starts the count). At no time can the marker move during the 3 seconds to pick up the ball. This rule is used in time wasting situations.

## **ATTACKING INFRINGEMENTS**

**The referee may award a penalty where the infringement occurred in the following circumstances when the ball carrier:**

- 6.26 Bumps or fends off a defender. The ball carrier can in no way protect their tag with their hands, arms, or the ball.
- 6.27 Jumps or dips to avoid being tagged, however they may spin / swivel to avoid being tagged if they do not initiate contact.
- 6.28 Bends their body forward to prevent being tagged.
- 6.29 Steps into the path of a defender endeavouring to make a tag. **Onus rests on ball carrier to avoid contact.**
- 6.30 By running behind his teammate/s causing an obstruction.
- 6.31 Executes a voluntary tag by deliberately giving up on the play or playing the ball with both tags intact. Standing and swivelling will be deemed as a surrender.



- 6.32 Deliberately removes their own tag.
- 6.33 Interferes with the marker at the play-the-ball.
- 6.34 Deliberately passes the ball forward to an offside player.
- 6.35 When the dummy half baulks in picking up the ball in the dummy half position. This is deceptive behaviour and not in the true spirit of the game. The referee may call play on or can penalise (also refer to Rule 5.7).
- 6.36 When an attacking player is in front of the play the ball, they cannot get involved in the next play unless they retreat past the mark of the play the ball. If they do, the penalty is awarded where they became involved. They are deemed 'Out of Play'.
- 6.37 If the attacking team infringe within 10m of their opponent's try line, the mark for the penalty will be 10m out from the try line in line with the infringement and at least 10m in from the touch line.
- 6.38 If a player initiates NEGATIVE PLAY, then the referee will call upon them to "play now" and commence a 3 second count. If the player does not attack within the 3 seconds a tag will be counted. If a player or team continually initiates NEGATIVE PLAY then the referee should issue a player or team warning then penalize after that.

## SECTION 7

### KICKING RULES

Kicking the ball is allowed in general play.

Conditions apply:

- i) No higher than the referee's shoulders off the boot. It can bounce higher.
- ii) No drop kicks. The ball must come off the boot before it touches the ground. (Where the ball simultaneously hits the ground and boot it is deemed a drop kick).

**NO KICKING TEAM PLAYER CAN DIVE ON THE BALL FROM ANY KICK. Safety issue. Exception: Diving to ground the ball for a try.**

**Local rules may include other conditions.**

### KICK-OFF RULES

- 7.1 The captain winning the toss will choose both the direction to run and who will kick-off. This is reversed for the second half.
- 7.2 The kick-off is a place kick from the centre of the halfway line. No kicking tee or holding the ball for the kicker is allowed.
- 7.3 When a try is scored the scoring team shall kick-off to restart play. If they waste time, the referee should penalise them in the centre of the halfway.
- 7.4 The ball must travel ten metres before any player from the kicking team can touch it. The receiving team can play at the ball before it goes ten metres. Once played at or if the ball bounces off a receiver, the ball is live. The kicking team cannot shepherd the ball or intimidate the receiver.
- 7.5 The ball must bounce within the field of play before going over the touch or try line. If the ball is kicked out on the full a penalty will be awarded at the centre of the halfway line.
- 7.6 The players on the kicking team must be behind the ball when kicked off.
- 7.7 The team receiving the ball can be no closer than ten metres from the halfway line at the time of the kick-off but can move forward once it's kicked and touch the ball before it travels ten metres.

- 7.8 If the ball bounces over the touch line, a changeover will be awarded to the receiving team, 10 metres in from the touch line where the ball crossed the line.
- 7.9 If the ball bounces and crosses over the try line whether touched or not, play will restart with a dropout from the centre of the try line. In this scenario the try line is deemed dead in goal. You can't run the ball out from behind the line if it bounced over the line.
- 7.10 If the ball is caught on the full over the try line the referee will call "play on". This scenario is different to rule 7.9 (above), because the ball has crossed the line on the full and caught. It makes it easier on the referee not having to decide whether the ball crossed the line when caught on or near the line.

**All kick-off infringements will result in a penalty being awarded at the centre of the halfway line.**

## **DROPOUT KICKING RULES**

- 7.11 A dropout is a drop kick taken from the centre of the try line.
- 7.12 The ball must bounce within the field of play before going over the touch line or opposition try line.
- 7.13 The ball must travel ten metres from the try line before any kicking team players can touch the ball.
- 7.14 The players on the kicking team must not cross the try line until the ball is kicked.
- 7.15 The team receiving the ball can be no closer than ten metres to the try line at the time of the dropout but can move forward once the ball is kicked and touch the ball before it travels ten metres. Kicking team rules as in Rule 7.4.
- 7.16 If the ball from the dropout bounces over the touch line, a changeover will be awarded to the receiving team, 10 metres in from the touch line where the ball crossed the line.
- 7.17 If the ball from the dropout bounces over the receivers' try line whether touched or not, a dropout from the try line will be taken. However, if the ball is caught on the full over the try line, the referee will call "play on".

**All dropout infringements will result in a penalty ten metres out from the try line centre field.**

## **GENERAL PLAY KICKING RULES**

- 7.18 If a player kicks the ball and is simultaneously tagged and the referee calls “play on” the kicker cannot promote the ball with another kick. If the kicker kicks it a second time, a changeover is awarded where they kicked it. Team members who were onside can kick the ball the second time. Only the kicker who is simultaneously tagged can't promote the ball with a second kick.
- 7.19 Only attacking team players behind the kicker when the ball is kicked are onside.
- 7.20 If an attacking player is in front of the kicker when the ball is kicked, this player is offside and cannot play until either the ball receiver has run ten metres in any direction, or the kicker runs past the offside player and puts them on side. If the player was in front of the play the ball, then they are 'out of play' until they retreat back past the PTB.
- 7.21 An off-side player cannot be placed onside by the kicker if they are already within ten metres of the receiver. The offside player should retreat from the receiver. If they get involved in the play a penalty should be awarded at that point (Referee may allow advantage play).
- 7.22 If the ball is kicked and crosses the plane of the non-kicking teams try line it's dead and they will receive a tap kick 10 metres out in the centre of the field. It will be a seven tag set with the first tag counted as a zero tag. Subject to Rule 7.28.
- 7.23 If the ball is kicked and played at by the non-kicking team and crosses the try line a dropout will restart play.
- 7.24 If the ball is not played at but touches a player then crosses the try line a tap kick is awarded in the centre of the field ten metres out from the try line.
- 7.25 The kicker or a kicking team player cannot impede the progress of a defending player who is attempting to take possession of the ball.
- 7.26 A kicking team player can never dive, slip, or fall on the ball. This applies to all kicks whether in general play or restarts of play. A non-kicking player playing at the ball does not nullify this diving rule (Safety issue).

- 7.27 There is an exception to Rule 7.26, diving to score a try from a kick, see Rule 7.28.
- 7.28 If an attacker kicks in general play and the ball lands in the field of play then crosses the try line and is grounded by an attacking player before the ball lands on the ground or is touched or touches a defender a try will be awarded. If a try is not scored, then we revert to Rule 7.22.
- 7.29 If a player kicks the ball from within their own half and the ball bounces in the field of play then goes into touch within 10 metres of the try line, the attacking team will receive a tap kick 10 metres in from the touch line and 10m out from the try line. This action is called a 50/10. Note: a 50/10 can be made from a kick off or drop out.
- 7.30 A player cannot kick the ball with only one or no tags on unless they have been pre or late tagged. The exception is the dummy half or a player taking a penalty tap kick. They may kick the ball as long as they only take one step.

### **GENERAL PLAY KICKING CHANGEOVERS**

- 7.31 If the ball travels higher than the referees shoulder a changeover will be awarded to the defending team at the origin of the kick. The referee may consider advantage rule and play on.
- 7.32 If the ball is kicked and it goes out of the field of play on the full, the non-kicking team will receive a changeover at the point where the kick was taken.
- 7.33 If the ball is kicked and it lands in the field of play then rolls out over the touchline, the non-kicking team will receive a changeover 10 metres in from where the ball crossed the touch line.
- 7.34 If the ball is kicked and played at by any member from the non-kicking team and the ball rolls over the touch line, the kicking team shall play the ball 10 metres in from where the ball crossed the touch line, and the tag count will be restarted.
- 7.35 If an attacking player is in front of the kicker when the ball is kicked, and the ball accidentally strikes the offside player a changeover will be awarded at the point of contact. The referee may allow play to continue if there is an advantage to the defending team.

- 7.36 If any kick touches the referee and play is irregularly affected a changeover will be awarded at the point of contact.
- 7.37 **(Kick to waste time)** If a kick in general play or kick off is deemed by the referee to have been deliberately kicked over the touch line or try line to waste time, a 5-minute sin bin will be given to the player responsible. A penalty awarded to the non-offending side 10 metres out from the kickers try line centre field. The team will be allowed to complete the set of 6 regardless of half-time or full-time.

## SECTION 8

### KNOCK-ON AND KNOCK-BACK

- 8.1 If a player propels the ball in a forward direction with their hand or arm and the ball touches the ground, an opponent or the referee, a knock-on will be ruled. If an attacking team player propels the ball in a backward direction play will continue.
- 8.2 If the offending team grounds the ball after the knock on the play is dead. A changeover will be awarded at the point of the knock on.
- 8.3 If the opposition take possession after a knock-on play should continue allowing advantage play. It will be a zero tag.
- 8.4 If the opposition kicks the ball from a knock on and retrieves the ball - play on, zero tag, regardless of field position.
- 8.5 If the opposition fails to regather the ball, no advantage has been gained so the referee will return to the original knock on and award a change over.
- 8.6 The ball carrier cannot deliberately throw the ball forward.
- 8.7 The ball carrier cannot deliberately tap the ball forward past a defender.
- 8.8 A defending player cannot dive on a loose ball, whether a knock on, knock-back or miss thrown (Safety issue).

## SECTION 9

### PENALTIES

- 9.1 Penalties are taken by a tap kick after the referee has verbally and physically indicated the mark.
- 9.2 A tap kick is taken by tapping the ball on the foot whilst the ball is being held in two hands.  
**Note:** If a player chooses to use the play the ball action instead of taking the tap kick it is still deemed as a tap kick not a play the ball for general play kicking purposes. Two hands must be on the ball for a tap kick.
- 9.3 A penalty shall be awarded against any player who is guilty of misconduct provided that this is not to the disadvantage of the non-offending team. Unless otherwise stated, all penalties are given where the infringement occurs.
- 9.4 If a penalty kick is not taken on the mark designated by the referee, the referee will stop play and ask the team to take the tap kick again.
- 9.5 Offending team must retire 10 metres from the penalty mark or to their try line.
- 9.6 Further misconduct by the offending team shall allow the referee to advance the mark, once only, by 10 metres or as near to the try line as possible.
- 9.7 All infringements on a kick play, interference, late tag etc. will result in a penalty where the ball is stopped or crosses the touch or try line 10 metres in from touch or 10 metres out from try line.
- 9.8 If misconduct occurs on any player as they are chasing a kick and the ball rolls over or lands over the try line on the full, the penalty will be awarded to the non-offending team, either 10 metres from the try line in the field of play and opposite to where the ball crossed the try line or at the point where the player was impeded, whichever is the greatest advantage to the non-offending team.
- 9.9 If play breaks down after a player has been late, or pre-tagged, the penalty will be awarded where the play breaks down.

## **SECTION 10**

### **MISCONDUCT, SIN BIN (YELLOW CARD) & SEND OFF (RED CARD)**

- 10.1 A player is guilty of misconduct and will be penalised if they:
- 10.1.1 Trip, kick, or strike another player. Automatic send off if deemed deliberate by the referee.
  - 10.1.2 While making or attempting to make a tag makes contact with any part of an opponent's body intentionally, recklessly or carelessly.
  - 10.1.3 Deliberately breaks the rules of the game.
  - 10.1.4 Uses offensive or obscene language.
  - 10.1.5 Disputes the decision of the referee.
  - 10.1.6 Re-enters the field-of-play without the permission of the referee after being sin binned or sent off.
  - 10.1.7 Behaves in any way contrary to the true spirit of the game.
  - 10.1.8 Obstructs / impedes an opponent who is not in possession of the ball.
- 10.2 All players are under the control of the referee from the time they enter the playing area to the time they leave. In the event of misconduct by a player, the referee shall, at his discretion, caution, sinbin or dismiss the player.
- 10.3 A caution may be administered to a team as a whole or to an individual player. If a caution is given to a team, each team player is considered to have received an individual caution. If a final caution is given to a player, the nature of the offence must be recorded by the referee and must be quoted if the player is subsequently dismissed.
- 10.4 The power to sinbin (temporarily suspend) is at the discretion of the referee and shall be a standard five (5) minutes duration. A sinbinned player can take no further part in the match and cannot be replaced for the duration of the suspension and shall re-enter the playing field only when permitted to do so by the referee.
- 10.5 The sinbinned player shall take up a position behind the opposition's try line for the duration of the suspension in ITF events / sanctioned events.



- 10.6 The sinbin or send off may be used for the following incidents:
- 10.6.1 Blatant disregard for the rules.
  - 10.6.2 Continued rule infringements.
  - 10.6.3 Back chatting, dissent or sledging of referee, players, officials, and spectators.
  - 10.6.4 Repeated contact infringements.
  - 10.6.5 Fighting.
  - 10.6.6 Professional foul.
  - 10.6.7 Any behaviour not in the true spirit of the game.
- 10.7 The referee may dismiss a player for the remainder of the game if the referee deems the offence to be serious enough. The referee does not have the power to enforce a player replacement.
- 10.8 If a player is dismissed from the field they automatically receive a two-week suspension. This may be extended or reduced by the competition manager after reviewing the circumstances of the incident. In tournaments a mandatory minimum one (1) match suspension will apply which may be increased by the tournament organisers. Players have a right to appeal.
- 10.9 A player sent off shall take no further participation in the game nor shall they be permitted to take up a position within the playing area where their presence is likely to provoke further incidents.
- 10.10 If a referee is assaulted or unduly harassed by any person as a result of a match under their control, the referee shall submit a report of the incident to the appropriate authority (an assault on a referee should receive a life penalty and reported to police).

## **SECTION 11**

### **DUTIES OF A REFEREE**

- 11.1 The referee is responsible for ensuring the rules of the game are adhered to. The referee is the sole judge of fact.
- 11.2 To ensure the playing area is checked and in a condition for safe play.
- 11.3 The referee shall record the score, and all tries scored during the match. They shall be the sole timekeeper except where this duty has been delegated to another person.
- 11.4 The referee at their discretion, can temporarily suspend or prematurely terminate a match because of adverse weather, undue interference from spectators, misbehaviour of players, or any other cause as they see fit that interferes with their control of the game.
- 11.5 The referee must carry a whistle and use it in the following circumstances:
- 11.5.1 To start and stop play.
  - 11.5.2 When a try is scored.
  - 11.5.3 When the ball is out of play.
  - 11.5.4 When the rules of the game have been infringed.
  - 11.5.5 When play is irregularly affected e.g., ball comes in contact with the referee or any other person not participating in the game.
  - 11.5.6 To enforce the rules for any other reason.
  - 11.5.7 The referee should always consider advantage play first.
  - 11.5.8 Stop play for a serious injury.
  - 11.5.9 Record all injuries on ref card.

### **ITF REFEREE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Always remember the game is for players, their safety and fair play.

Study and learn the rules of the game and understand the 'spirit' of the rules.  
Help fellow referees do the same.

Encourage and enforce 'Good Sportsmanship'.

Respect other referee's decisions and do not publicly criticise another official.

Wear the proper uniform and keep it in good condition.

Maintain good physical condition so you can keep up with play.

Stay calm when confronted with emotional reactions from players, coaches, and parents.

Honour & accept all game assignments. In an emergency, find a replacement.

Support good sportsmanship with kind words to players, coaches and parents of both teams when deserved.

Always be fair and impartial.

Preserve & protect your integrity.

Avoid conflicts of interest.

## SECTION 12

### REFEREE HAND SIGNALS



Kick off –  
commence game



Forward pass –  
Stage 1



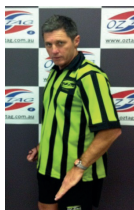
Forward pass –  
Stage 2



Knock on



Fend –  
Stage 1



Fend –  
Stage 2



Fend –  
Stage 3



Change over



Late Tag –  
Stage 1



Late Tag –  
Stage 2



Stop play –  
Stage 1



Stop play –  
Stage 2



Penalty



Off Side –  
Stage 1



Off Side –  
Stage 2



Off Side –  
Stage 3



Contact



6 again –  
Stage 1



6 again –  
Stage 2



5th & last



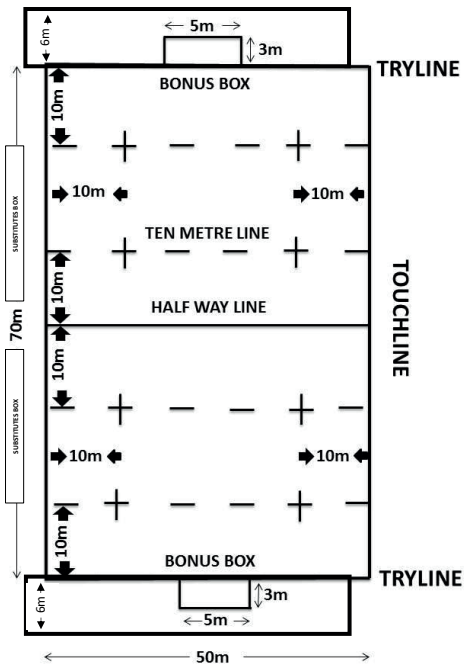
End of game –  
Stage 1



End of game –  
Stage 2

# SECTION 13

## TAG PLAYING FIELD



## **Acknowledgements**

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