

LAW 10 – FOUL PLAY

DEFINITION

Foul play is anything a person does within the playing enclosure that is against the letter and spirit of the Laws of the Game. It includes obstruction, unfair play, repeated infringements, dangerous play and misconduct.

10.1 OBSTRUCTION

- (a) **Charging or pushing.** When a player and an opponent are running for the ball, either player must not charge or push the other except shoulder-to-shoulder.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (b) **Running in front of a ball-carrier.** A player must not intentionally move or stand in front of a team-mate carrying the ball thereby preventing opponents from tackling the current ball-carrier or the opportunity to tackle potential ball-carriers when they gain possession.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (c) **Blocking the tackler.** A player must not intentionally move or stand in a position that prevents an opponent from tackling a ball-carrier.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (d) **Blocking the ball.** A player must not intentionally move or stand in a position that prevents an opponent from playing the ball.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (e) **Ball-carrier running into team-mate at a set-piece.** A player carrying the ball after it has left a scrum, ruck, maul or line-out must not run into team-mates in front of the player.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (f) **Flanker obstructing opposing scrum-half.** A flanker in a scrum must not prevent an opposing scrum-half from advancing around the scrum.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (g) A player carrying the ball cannot be penalised for obstruction under any circumstances.

10.2 UNFAIR PLAY

- (a) **Intentionally Offending.** A player must not intentionally infringe any Law of the Game, or play unfairly.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

A penalty try must be awarded if the offence prevents a try that would probably otherwise have been scored. The player who intentionally offends must be either admonished, or cautioned that a send off will result if the offence or a similar offence is committed, or sent-off. After a caution a player is temporarily suspended from the match for a period of ten minutes playing time. After a caution, if the player commits the same or similar offence, the player must be sent-off.

- (b) **Time-wasting.** A player must not intentionally waste time.

Penalty: Free Kick

- (c) **Throwing into touch.** A player must not intentionally throw or knock the ball with his arm or hand into touch, touch-in-goal, or over the dead ball line.

Penalty: Penalty Kick on the 15-metre line if the offence is between the 15-metre line and the touch-line, or, at the place of infringement if the offence occurred elsewhere in the field of play, or, 5 metres from the goal-line and at least 15 metres from the touch-line if the infringement occurred in in-goal.

A penalty try must be awarded if the offence prevents a try that would probably otherwise have been scored.

10.3 REPEATED INFRINGEMENTS

- (a) **Repeatedly offending.** A player must not repeatedly infringe any Law. Repeated infringement is a matter of fact. The question of whether or not the player intended to infringe is irrelevant.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

If necessary, the player is cautioned. If the player repeats the offence, the player must be sent-off.

- (b) **Repeated Infringements.** The problem of repeated infringements usually arises with the scrum, line-out, off-side, ruck, maul or tackle Laws. A player penalised for several infringements of any Law is cautioned and temporarily suspended from the match for a period of 10 minutes playing time. If the player repeats the offence, the player is sent-off.

- (c) **Repeated infringements by the team.** When different players of the same team repeatedly commit the same offence, the referee must decide whether or not this amounts to repeated infringement. If it does, the referee gives a general warning to the team and if they then repeat the offence, the referee cautions and temporarily suspends the guilty player(s) for a period of 10 minutes playing time. If a player of that same team then repeats the offence the referee sends off the guilty player(s).
Penalty: Penalty Kick

A penalty try must be awarded if the offence prevents a try that would probably otherwise have been scored.

- (d) **Repeated infringements: standard applied by referee.** When the referee decides how many offences constitute repeated infringement, the referee must always apply a strict standard in representative and senior matches. When a player offends three times the referee must caution that player.

The referee may relax this standard in junior or minor matches, where infringements may be the result of poor knowledge of the Laws or lack of skill.

10.4 DANGEROUS PLAY AND MISCONDUCT

- (a) **Punching or striking.** A player must not strike an opponent with the fist or arm, including the elbow, shoulder, head or knee(s).
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (b) **Stamping or trampling.** A player must not stamp or trample on an opponent.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (c) **Kicking.** A player must not kick an opponent
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (d) **Tripping.** A player must not trip an opponent with the leg or foot.
Penalty: Penalty Kick

- (e) **Dangerous tackling.** A player must not tackle an opponent early, late or dangerously.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

A player must not tackle (or try to tackle) an opponent above the line of the shoulders. A tackle around the opponent's neck or head is dangerous play.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

A 'stiff-arm tackle' is dangerous play. A player makes a stiff-arm tackle when using a stiff-arm to strike an opponent.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

Playing a player without the ball is dangerous play.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

The referee decides whether or not a tackle is dangerous. The referee takes into account the circumstances, such as the apparent intentions of the tackler, or the nature of the tackle, or the defenceless position of the player being tackled or knocked over. Any of these may result in serious injury.

All forms of dangerous tackling must be punished severely. A player who commits this type of foul must be sent-off. Advantage may be played, but if the offence prevents a probable try, a penalty try must be awarded.

A player must not tackle an opponent whose feet are off the ground.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

- (f) **Playing an opponent without the ball.** Except in a scrum, ruck or maul, a player must not hold, or push, or charge into, or obstruct an opponent not carrying the ball.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

- (g) **Dangerous charging.** A player must not charge or knock down an opponent carrying the ball without trying to grasp that player.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

- (h) **Tackling the jumper in the air.** A player must not tackle nor tap, push or pull the foot or feet of an opponent jumping for the ball in a line-out or in open play.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

- (i) **Dangerous play in a scrum, ruck or maul.** The front row of a scrum must not rush against its opponents.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

Front row players must not intentionally lift opponents off their feet or force them upwards out of the scrum.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

Players must not charge into a ruck or maul without binding onto a player in the ruck or maul.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

Players must not intentionally collapse a scrum, ruck or maul.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

- (j) **Retaliation.** A player must not retaliate. Even if an opponent is infringing the Laws, a player must not do anything that is dangerous to the opponent.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

- (k) **Acts contrary to good sportsmanship.** A player must not do anything that is against the spirit of good sportsmanship in the playing enclosure.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

The player who commits an act of dangerous play or misconduct must either be admonished, or cautioned that a send off will result if the offence or a similar offence is committed, or sent-off. After a caution a player is temporarily suspended from the match for a period of ten minutes playing time. After a caution if the player commits the same or similar offence, the player must be sent-off.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

- (l) **Misconduct while the ball is out of play.** A player, must not, while the ball is out of play, commit any misconduct, or obstruct or in any way interfere with an opponent.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

The penalty is the same as for sections 10.4 (a)-(k) except that the penalty kick is awarded at the place where play would restart. If that place is on the touch-line or within 15 metres of it, the mark for the penalty kick is on the 15-metre line, in line with that place.

If play would restart at a 5-metre scrum, the mark for the penalty kick is at that place at least 15 metres from the touch-line.

If play would restart with a drop-out, the non-offending team may choose to take the penalty kick anywhere on the 22-metre line.

If a penalty kick is awarded but the offending team is guilty of further misconduct before the kick is taken, the referee cautions or orders off the guilty player and advances the mark for the penalty kick 10 metres. This covers both the original offence and the misconduct.

If a penalty kick is awarded to a team but a player of that team is guilty of further misconduct before the kick is taken, the referee will caution or send-off the guilty player, declare the kick disallowed, and award a penalty kick to the opposing team.

If an offence is committed outside the playing area while the ball is still in play, and if that offence is not covered by any other part of this Law, the penalty kick is awarded on the 15-metre line, in line with where the offence happened.

For an offence reported by a touch judge a penalty kick may be awarded where the offence happened, or advantage may be played.

- (m) **Late-charging the kicker.** A player must not intentionally charge or obstruct an opponent who has just kicked the ball.

Penalty: The non-offending team may choose to take the penalty kick either at the place of infringement, where the ball lands, or where it was next played.

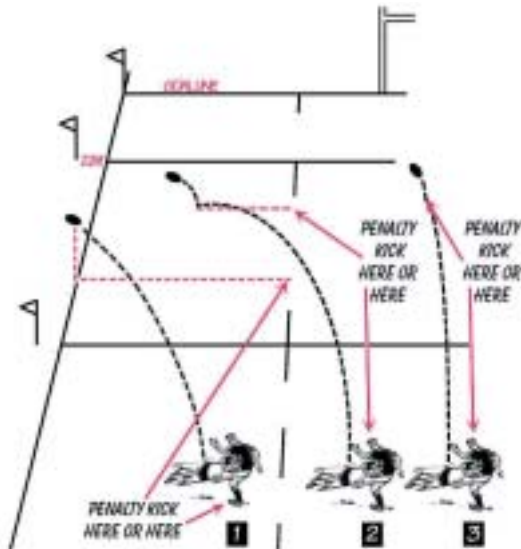
Place of infringement. If the infringement takes place in the kicker's in-goal, the penalty kick is taken 5 metres from the goal-line in line with the place of infringement but at least 15 metres from the touch-line.

The non-offending team may also choose to take the penalty kick where the ball lands or is next played and at least 15 metres from the touch-line.

Where the ball lands. If the ball lands in touch, the mark for the optional penalty kick is on the 15-metre line, in line with where it went into touch. If the ball lands within 15 metres of the touch-line, the mark is on the 15-metre line opposite where it landed.

If the ball lands in the in-goal, in touch-in-goal, or on or over the dead ball line, the mark for the optional penalty kick is 5 metres from the goal-line, in line with the place where the ball crossed the goal-line and at least 15 metres from the touch-line.

If the ball hits a goal post or crossbar, the optional penalty kick is awarded where the ball lands on the ground.



LATE CHARGING THE KICKER

- (n) **Flying Wedge and Cavalry Charge.** A team must not use the 'Flying Wedge' or the 'Cavalry Charge'.
Penalty: Penalty Kick at the place of the original infringement.

'Flying Wedge' The type of attack known as a 'Flying Wedge' usually happens near the goal-line, when the attacking team is awarded a penalty kick or free kick.

The kicker tap-kicks the ball and starts the attack, either by driving towards the goal-line or by passing to a team-mate who drives forward. Immediately, team-mates bind on each side of the ball-carrier in a wedge formation. Often one or more of these team-mates is in front of the ball-carrier. A 'Flying Wedge' is illegal.

Penalty: Penalty Kick at the place of the original infringement.

‘Cavalry Charge’. The type of attack known as a ‘Cavalry Charge’ usually happens near the goal-line, when the attacking team is awarded a penalty kick or free kick. Attacking players form a line across the field some distance behind the kicker.

These attacking players are usually a metre or two apart. At a signal from the kicker they charge forward. When they get near, the kicker tap-kicks the ball and passes it to one of them.

Until the ball is kicked, the defending team must stay at least 10 metres from the mark or behind their goal-line, if that is nearer. A ‘Cavalry Charge’ is illegal.

Penalty: Penalty Kick at the place of the original infringement.

10.5 SANCTIONS

- (a) Any player who infringes any part of the Foul Play Law must be admonished, or cautioned and temporarily suspended, or sent-off.
- (b) A player who has been cautioned and temporarily suspended who then commits a second cautionable offence within the Foul Play Law must be sent-off.

10.6 YELLOW AND RED CARDS

- (a) When a player has been cautioned and temporarily suspended in an International match the referee will show that player a yellow card.
- (b) When a player has been sent off in an International match, the referee will show that player a red card.
- (c) For other matches the Match Organiser or Union having jurisdiction over the match may decide upon the use of yellow and red cards.

10.7 PLAYER SENT OFF

A player who is sent-off takes no further part in the match.