

LAW 17 – MAUL

DEFINITION

A maul occurs when a player carrying the ball is held by one or more opponents, and one or more of the ball-carrier's team-mates bind on the ball-carrier. A maul therefore consists of at least three players, all on their feet; the ball-carrier and one player from each team. All the players involved are on their feet and moving towards a goal-line. Open play has ended.

17.1 FORMING A MAUL

- (a) **Where can a maul take place.** A maul can only take place in the field of play.



Maul



Maul not formed



Maul not formed

17.2 JOINING A MAUL

- (a) Players joining a maul must have their heads and shoulders no lower than their hips.
Penalty: Free Kick
- (b) A player must be caught in or bound to the maul and not just alongside it.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (c) Placing a hand on another player in the maul does not constitute binding.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (d) **Keeping players on their feet.** Players in a maul must endeavour to stay on their feet. The ball-carrier in a maul may go to ground providing the ball is available immediately and play continues.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (e) A player must not intentionally collapse a maul. This is dangerous play.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (f) A player must not jump on top of a maul.
Penalty: Penalty Kick

17.3 OTHER MAUL OFFENCES

- (a) A player must not try to drag an opponent out of a maul.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (b) A player must not take any action to make the opposing team think that the ball is out of the maul while it is still in the maul.
Penalty: Free Kick

17.4 OFF-SIDE AT THE MAUL

- (a) **The off-side line.** There are two off-side lines parallel to the goal-lines, one for each team. Each off-side line runs through the hindmost foot of the hindmost player in the maul. If the hindmost foot of the hindmost player is on or behind the goal-line, the off-side line for the defending team is the goal-line.
- (b) A player must either join a maul, or retire behind the off-side line immediately. If a player loiters at the side of a maul, the player is off-side.
Penalty: Penalty Kick on the offending team's off-side line
- (c) **Players joining the maul.** Players joining a maul must do so from behind the foot of the hindmost team-mate in the maul. The player may join alongside this player. If the player joins the maul from the opponents' side, or in front of the hindmost team-mate, the player is off-side.
Penalty: Penalty Kick on the offending team's off-side line
- (d) **Players not joining the maul.** All players in front of the off-side line and who do not join the maul, must retire behind the off-side line at once. A player who does not do so, is off-side. If any player who is behind the off-side line oversteps it and does not join the maul, the player is off-side.
Penalty: Penalty Kick on the offending team's off-side line
- (e) **Players leaving or rejoining the maul.** Players who leave a maul must immediately retire behind the off-side line, otherwise, they are off-side. If the player rejoins the maul in front of the hindmost team-mate in the maul, they are off-side. The player may rejoin the maul alongside the hindmost team-mate.
Penalty: Penalty Kick on the offending team's off-side line.

17.5 SUCCESSFUL END TO A MAUL

A maul ends successfully when the ball or a player with the ball leaves the maul. A maul ends successfully when the ball is on the ground, or is on or over the goal-line.

17.6 UNSUCCESSFUL END TO A MAUL

- (a) A maul ends unsuccessfully if it remains stationary or has stopped moving forward for longer than 5 seconds and a scrum is ordered.
- (b) A maul ends unsuccessfully if the ball becomes unplayable or collapses (not as a result of foul play) and a scrum is ordered.
- (c) **Scrum following maul.** The ball is thrown in by the team not in possession when the maul began. If the referee cannot decide which team had possession, the team moving forward before the maul stopped throws in the ball. If neither team was moving forward, the attacking team throws in the ball.
- (d) When a maul remains stationary or has stopped moving forward for more than 5 seconds, but the ball is being moved and the referee can see it, a reasonable time is allowed for the ball to emerge. If it does not emerge within a reasonable time, a scrum is ordered.
- (e) When a maul has stopped moving forward it may start moving forward again providing it does so within 5 seconds. If the maul stops moving forward a second time and if the ball is being moved and the referee can see it, a reasonable time is allowed for the ball to emerge. If it does not emerge within a reasonable time, a scrum is ordered.
- (f) When the ball in a maul becomes unplayable, the referee does not allow prolonged wrestling for it. A scrum is ordered.
- (g) If the ball-carrier in a maul goes to ground, including being on one or both knees or sitting, the referee orders a scrum unless the ball is immediately available.
- (h) **Scrum after a maul when catcher is held.** If a player catches the ball direct from an opponent's kick, except from a kick-off or a drop-out, and the player is immediately held by an opponent, a maul may form. Then if the maul remains stationary, stops moving forward for longer than 5 seconds, or if the ball becomes unplayable, and a scrum is ordered, the team of the ball catcher throws in the ball.

'Direct from an opponent's kick' means the ball did not touch another player or the ground before the player caught it.

If a maul moves into the player's in-goal, where the ball is touched down or becomes unplayable, a 5-metre scrum is formed. The attacking team throws in the ball.