

THE BREAKDOWN

A. THE TACKLE

- 1. Tacklers have to release the tackled player immediately, and move/roll away or get to their feet. **PK**
- 2. Tackled player must exercise their options immediately. PK
- Players that slow down ball availability illegally, should be penalized immediately. PK
- 4. Referees should allow the contest and may instruct the players, i.e. "release the ball", "roll away", etc., as long as these players have not already slowed down ball availability. Referees should be aware that players in national competitions know their rights and it is not necessary for the referee to communicate verbally at the tackle.
- 5. Verbal communication should be used if there is a possibility that it could accommodate a team scoring from the advantage gained.

Referees are to approach a low tolerance level at the breakdown and should penalize early in the match to establish compliance.

HIGH SCHOOL

- Tackled players may not use the "squeeze ball" technique (when the player positions their body over the ball and pushes the ball back between their legs) to recycle possession. PK
- 2. If a player falls in a position where they could be potentially injured the referee should stop play immediately and award a scrum to the team in possession.

Squeeze Ball





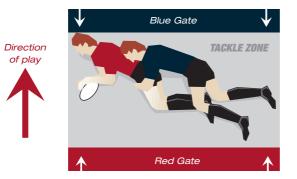
B. TACKLER ASSIST

 Defending players that remain on their feet, but assist in bringing the ball carrier to the ground (Tackler Assist), must release the tackled player and the ball, and may only then play the ball from their side and through the gate. These players, even if they remain on their feet, must clearly release the tackled player before they may attempt to play the ball.



C. THE GATE

1. All arriving players must enter the tackle zone through their gate. No part of a player's body (including the arms), may enter the tackle through any other area. **PK**



Overhead view, Blue tackled Red. Players are only allowed entry through their gate.

D. ARRIVING PLAYERS

- 1. Players who enter the tackle area or zone must stay on their feet. PK
- 2. At a tackle, arriving players are allowed to play the ball with their hands after an opposition player binds onto them, if they:
 - a. Arrive at the tackle legally;
 - b. Remain on their feet, and;
 - c. Have possession of the ball prior to the contact occurring (i.e. was grasping/ holding the ball - this should be a positive action to gain possession of the ball, not merely putting one's hands/arms on/over the ball).

NOTE: Thus, a ruck has not yet formed.

- At a tackle, arriving players that put themselves over the ball with their weight supported by their hands, and then sweep their arms back to play the ball, should be penalized for going to ground. PK
- Players may grasp or hold onto their tackled player who is on the ground, as long as they have their weight firmly on their feet and are not using the player on the ground to support their weight. PK
- 5. If the player grasps onto their teammate, the tackled player is still required to place the ball away from their body to ensure its availability. **PK**
- Players that have grasped/are holding onto their player on the ground may not lower their shoulders below their hips or lean with their weight on their player that is on the ground to prevent the contest when an opponent makes contact with them. They may continue to hold onto their player on the ground after contact. PK





Red tackled Blue, Blue player arrived at the tackle on their feet, through the gate, and is grasping/ holding onto their tackled player on the ground to maintain possession.

The Blue player may not seal prior/ upon contact to prevent the opposition from contesting for the ball.

7. Players who are SEALING, secure the ball without their weight fully on their feet (i.e. leaning on the tackler/ tackled player on the ground) OR who go to ground head first, OR dive over players on the ground, OR dive over players on the ground with the ball between them should not be tolerated and penalized as they are preventing a contest. **PK**



Blue tackled Red, Red player has secured possession by SEALING.



Being too far ahead of the ball, 'flooding', and taking away space in front of the ball.

 Players may position themselves at the tackle to prepare for contact with opposition players, however they have to be near/over the ball. They may not be too far ahead of the ball, i.e. "flooding" and taking away space in front of the ball. PK



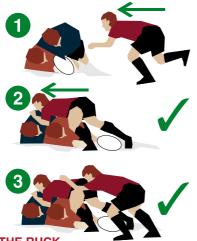
Red tackled Blue, Blue player arrived at the tackle on their feet, through the gate, is NOT binding on players on the ground, remaining on their feet and preparing for contact at the tackle area.



Red tackled Blue, both players that arrived at the tackle are on their feet, arrived through the gate, and are contesting for possession. A ruck has formed.



- 9. If players enter the tackle in conformance with the required criteria and subsequently go to ground during the process of removing a tackler or because the opposition was unable to retain its position at contact, these players should not be penalized because they did not willfully go to ground. The ball should be available to be played. However, if these players then obstruct the ball from being available to be played, they should be penalized. **PK**
- 10. If players enter the tackle in conformance with the required criteria and make contact with the tackler or tackled player and subsequently go to ground during the process AND HAS MADE THE BALL AVAILABLE TO BE IMMEDIATELY PLAYED it will be allowed. Arriving players of the team who have secured the ball may either play the ball or bind onto their players, even if their players are on the ground, to maintain possession.



[1] Blue tackled Red. The RED player arrives, makes contact with the Blue tackler, and;

[2] subsequently goes to ground, AND HAS MADE THE BALL AVAILABLE TO BE PLAYED. Red players who arrive thereafter may;

[3] bind onto their players (that are on the ground) to maintain possession already secured.

E. THE RUCK

- 1. The referee may use the term "Ruck" to indicate a ruck has formed. If a ruck has formed and players are still contesting for possession, the referee may also use the term "No Hands, Ruck" to indicate to players that they should no longer use their hands. NOTE: Referees should allow the contest to develop at the breakdown, and should be aware not to call "Ruck" until a ruck has clearly been formed. If the ball is immediately won and a ruck is formed, the referee need not communicate "Ruck".
- 2. Players are not allowed to dangerously charge into the ruck by not binding correctly upon contact. **PK**

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3. Once a ruck is formed, it continues even if all defenders leave or fall to ground, as long as the ball is still contained within the ruck.

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- 4. Referees are to strictly apply the offside law to the fringes and the backlines.
- 5. Unsuccessful end to a ruck: Once the ball is clearly won and available to be played, the referee will call "use it", once, after which the ball must be played within five seconds. If not, it is a turnover – scrum to the other team.

REFEREE NOTES

Get to the tackle as quickly as possible. Know where the ball is at all times - create a presence at the breakdown. The approach to the game should be to facilitate contest for possession. Set your standard from the outset, and maintain consistency to enable quick ball availability. It is important to maintain a high work rate throughout the match. There is a place for unplayables to be used as a management tool to communicate and re-establish your expectations to the players. To play penalty advantage for an infringement at the tackle, the ball should be quickly available OR a score probable.

SCRUM

A. ENGAGEMENT

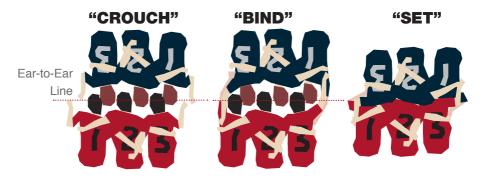
- 1. The scrum has to be formed within 30 seconds. FK
- 2. Engagement process is three separate instructions, "Crouch, Bind, Set", and they require three separate actions from players. **FK**
- 3. The referee may be in front of the scrumhalves, but would preferably be either behind the scrumhalves or on the opposite side to the scrum.
- 4. Players may crouch when they are ready or they may be in a position ready to crouch. The referee will then call "Crouch".
- Ensure that all players are square (with feet facing forward) and all shoulders are in a straight line (loosehead's shoulder not tucked under their hooker).
 Both front rows should have shoulders no lower than their hips. Ensure that they are interlocked (ear to ear) and there is no head to head contact. FK
- 6. The referee will then call "Bind". The props should bind with the hand of their outside arm on the opposing prop's body (not on the arm, not on the shorts).
- 7. When the referee is satisfied that the front rows appear ready to engage, ARE STABLE AND SQUARE, the referee says "Set". The front rows may then come together. This is not a command. It is permission to engage. The front rows must "set and hold", and not "hit and chase", so that the scrum is stationary. FK
- Early engagement, failure to engage, and standing up should not be tolerated and be penalized, by Free Kick, or a Penalty Kick if the referee deems it to be deliberate, dangerous and/or a repeated infringement. FK / PK
- 9. Props are allowed to change the bind on their opponents after engagement as long as it remains legal. **PK**



10. All backrow players are to bind on the locks' body with at least one arm up to the shoulder prior to engagement - this is to prevent the "slingshot".

NOTE 1: The engagement process has been implemented to maintain safety. If at any point, the process is not followed by players the referee should blow the whistle, and restart the engagement from the beginning OR penalize players if they repeatedly do not comply.

NOTE 2: FK's: On the second occasion that a team repeats the same infringement, the referee should escalate the FK to a PK, and on the third occasions a PK and Yellow Card, if appropriate. If there has been a significant period between the infringements the referee may choose not to escalate.



REFEREE NOTES

Set your standard early at the scrum. Minimize resets. Free kick early engagement immediately. Safety is paramount and an immediate whistle at a collapsed or popped scrum is essential. Differentiate between a popped scrum on the mark and deliberately standing up in a retreating scrum. Players standing up are to be penalized for not binding correctly. Manage one player at a time - a collective reprimand has less effect. If you notice an issue at the scrum, but it has no immediate material affect, ensure to address it at the following scrum. If you are unsure as to the responsible party that is creating problems, slow down the engagement - inform players of this action before implementing. Do not allow an early shove, nor early wheel - the scrum should be stationary and square until the put in. Ensure the back rows remain bound. Flankers cannot unbind and move away to receive the ball before the ball is out of the scrum. In all circumstances safety is your number one priority.

B. SET AND PUT-IN

- 1. Scrum is to remain square and stationary. FK
- 2. When the referee is happy that the scrum is square and stationary, they will apply the non-verbal instruction for the scrumhalf to put the ball into the scrum. These include a tap on the shoulder/back, or if the referee is on the opposite side of the scrum then the instruction will be pointing and nodding at the scrumhalf.
- 3. Scrum put-in must be straight and credible along the center line of the front rows. FK

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C. WHEEL

- 1. A scrum has only wheeled through 90° if the line between the front rows has gone through 90°. If it has and is reset, the original team throws in again.
- 2. Whip-wheel (when the scrum turns/spins on its axis) or walking the scrum around are not allowed. Before a scrum can be wheeled legally there must be a clear forward movement by the combined front row of the team that is driving their opponents backwards. **PK**
- 3. HS: If the scrum wheels through 45°, reset with the original team put in.

D. SCRUMHALVES

- 1. Scrumhalves are not to touch/push one another. PK
- Defending scrumhalves are not to position themselves in the 'pocket' area between the flanker and #8. Manage first before penalizing. PK
- 3. Defending scrumhalves who decide to take up a defensive position on the last line of feet of their side of the scrum have to start next to their opponent at the put-in, and then move to the last line of feet once the scrum has commenced. Once behind the last foot, they may move laterally across the field and do not have to remain close to the scrum. If they choose not to be next to their opponent at the put-in, their offside line is the same as for players not participating in the scrum which is 5m behind the last line of feet of their scrum. PK
- 4. The scrumhalf whose team has possession of the ball after the scrum has commenced, must also remain onside. They may have one foot in front of the ball but not both. If they deliberately remain in front of the ball to obstruct the opposing scrumhalf, often to allow their #8 to play the ball, they should be penalized. **PK**
- 5. The offside line for the defending scrumhalf that follows the ball is on their side of the ball. **PK**

E. GENERAL

- If the scrum becomes stationary (fro 3-5 seconds), and the ball is at the hindmost player's feet. The referee should instruct the team to "USE IT". They should play the ball immediately, otherwise award a turnover scrum.
- 2. Safety is paramount and an immediate whistle is required in any situation that could be dangerous. By Law the referee can say "USE IT" if the scrum has collapsed, however, SAFETY is always the best option.
- 3. Dangerous play, i.e. collapse, pop, bore in, etc. should not be tolerated. **PK and admonishment**
- 4. HS: A player must not intentionally keep the ball in the scrum once the player's team has heeled the ball and controls it at the base of the scrum.. FK
- 5. HS: Teams may not push the other team back more than 1.5m. FK
- 6. HS: If the referee deems that the scrum is potentially dangerous/unsafe due to lack of players' skills, ability, size or injury, the referee will continue with uncontested scrums for the remainder of the game.



LINEOUT

A. FORMATION

- The defending team must have a player in the 5m area if they do not, the referee will instruct them to do so before continuing - this player may not support a jumper in the lineout, and must be 2m from the line-of-touch and 2m from the five-meter line until the lineout commences. FK
- 2. If a team elects to have a player in the receiver (scrumhalf) position, the receiver must be 2m from the lineout at the moment of the throw. If this player decides to move into the lineout prior to the throw they have to be replaced by another player from the lineout before the ball is thrown in. FK
- The team that is to throw the ball into the lineout determines the maximum number of players in the lineout. Referees should manage this rather than penalize, unless it continues to be an issue. FK

NOTE: Many aspects of lineout infringements, i.e. formation, closing the gap, ball not traveling 5m, early jump, etc. can be managed by referees by resetting rather than penalizing, unless the infringement substantially benefits the offending team, or is continually repeated. **FK**

B. QUICK THROW-IN

- 1. Referees are to be more aware of quick throw-ins, within law, and that the throw does not have to be straight, but may not be forward, and has to travel 5m. The quick throw-in can be taken between the line-of-touch and the player's goal line.
 - a. Ball not thrown 5m = opponents' option scrum or lineout.
 - b. Ball prevented from traveling 5m or played before going 5m. FK
- Players who hold onto the ball, or throw the ball away, when in touch, to prevent a quick throw-in should be penalized, on the line of touch, 15m line. This should not be tolerated. PK

C. LINEOUT START & END

- 1. Once the lineout has started, referees may raise one arm to indicate that the lineout is still in progress, and players who are not part of the lineout need to remain 10m from the line of touch.
- 2. Players that are in the lineout have to remain between the line-of-touch and the 10m backline offside line, and between the 5m and 15m lines until the lineout is over. Players that cross the 15m line prior to the lineout being over, attackers to receive the ball or defenders, should be penalized. If it is not material the referee should manage it rather than penalizing. PK

INEOUT

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D. SUPPORT & OBSTRUCTION

1. The immediate players supporting the jumper may NOT position themselves in front of the jumper, obstructing the opposition. **PK**

E. NO MAUL / MAUL

- If defenders decide not to engage to form a maul at the lineout, referees should communicate to the team in possession to get the ball out, rather than penalize for obstruction unless they do not comply. Defenders' offside line is a line through the ball until the lineout ends. PK
- 2. If a maul forms those players who opt not to join the maul must retire to the maul offside line (last line of feet) and remain there. They are allowed to move laterally in the space between 5m and 15m from touch, however, they are not allowed to drop back away from the offside line. Referees are encouraged to manage this rather than just penalize. PK

F. SACKING

- 1. If the ball carrier in the lineout has both feet on the ground, an opposition player may pull the ball carrier to the ground.
- 2. If they attempt this after a maul is formed it should be judged as collapsing the maul and be penalized. **PK**

G. KNOCK-ON OR THROW FORWARD THAT GOES INTO TOUCH

 If the ball is knocked-on or thrown forward into touch, the non-offending team may choose the lineout (where it crossed the touch line) or a scrum (where the throw-forward/knock-on occurred). If they take a quick throw-in, they have made their choice. NOTE This change is not applicable to a knock-on or throw-forward that goes into touch-in-goal (or across the dead ball line).

H. PENALTY KICK OR FREE KICK AWARDED AT A LINEOUT

1. If a team is awarded a penalty/free kick at a lineout, they may choose to have a lineout instead of the kick. They may also choose a scrum.

I. GENERAL

 Playing the opponent in the air, obstructing, barging, or interfering with the jumper's support players is dangerous. PK
HS: It should be immediately penalized for SAFETY reasons and to avoid further transgressions.

PK and admonishment





REFEREE NOTES

Always be aware of a quick throw-in - know your law. Communicate and manage early what is expected at the lineout - start at the front: numbers, gap, non-throwing hooker in position, backlines 10m, no early jumping, receiver 2m from the lineout, immediate formation with no delay, no dummy throw - keep the player that is throwing ball in, in your vision. There is no need to continuously talk to prevent disorder at the lineout as it can become white noise - players want to play rugby, not listen to the referee talk all day. Keep the backlines and players in the lineout onside for the duration of the lineout.

MAUL

A. PULLING THE MAUL DOWN / COLLAPSED MAUL

 Pulling down the maul and/or collapsing the maul is NOT allowed. Referees should increase their work-rate and communication at driving mauls to prevent players from collapsing the maul. PK

B. FORMING/JOINING/LEAVING / ENDING THE MAUL

- 1. When forming the maul players may not be in front of a player of their team that is in possession of the ball. This is obstruction. **PK**
- A maul is not over when all the defenders leave the maul voluntarily. Defenders who then join the maul, should do so from the last line of feet.
- 3. If defenders leave the maul involuntarily or are unable to remain bound, and there are no more defenders attached to the maul, the maul is over and the team in possession should not continue to move forward with their players bound around the ball, as this may constitute obstruction. Referees are to communicate that the maul is over.

NOTE 1: If the team in possession does not comply with the referee's request that the maul is over they should be penalized. **PK**

NOTE 2: If a maul is moving towards the goal line, and the defenders drop off the maul, prior to the maul reaching the goal line, and the maul then immediately enters the in-goal area due to the momentum gained from the drive and the attacking team grounds the ball, award the try.

- 4. If a maul becomes stationary OR is moving parallel to the goal lines OR is moving backwards, referees will instruct players to "USE IT ONCE", and give that team ample opportunity to comply within Law. If the maul again becomes stationary, the referee will instruct the team in possession to "USE IT".
- 5. If the defenders collapse a static maul to force the turnover scrum decision they should be penalized. **PK**
- 6. Players are not allowed to dangerously charge into the maul by not binding correctly upon contact. **PK and admonishment**



 The ball in a maul may be moved backwards hand-to-hand. A player is not allowed to move/slide to the back of the maul when that player is in possession of the ball. PK

REFEREE NOTES

Work both sides of the maul to prevent players joining from the side and collapsing the maul.

ADVANTAGE

A. COMMUNICATION & SIGNALS

- 1. Referees should only play advantage when there is the possibility that advantage may accrue.
- When an infringement occurs, referees will indicate that they have seen it, and verbalize, i.e. "Knock-on + team color". Then they will either blow the whistle for the infringement, or play advantage, signal and verbalize: "Scrum Advantage + team color"; OR "Penalty Advantage + team color" The team mentioned is the team you are playing advantage for. It is not required to indicate a secondary signal or a Penalty Kick signal.
- 3. When advantage is gained, the referee will call "Advantage Over" there is no signal for advantage over. Advantage over can only be called during play and not after the ball is dead.

B. NO ADVANTAGE

- 1. If players are lifted off their feet, an immediate whistle is required to prevent injury, whether for penalty or reset.
- 2. If a player deliberately kills the ball on the ground, no advantage should be applied, unless a clear scoring opportunity or an obvious advantage is likely.
- 3. HS: If a scrum collapses the referee should immediately blow the whistle to prevent further pushing or injury.

REFEREE NOTES

When you have blown for an infringement, always indicate the primary signal first, then secondary.

GENERAL PLAY

A. OFFSIDE AT KICKS

 Players in front of the kicker from their team are to remain stationary until they are put onside, or must retreat toward their goal line if they are within ten meters between where the ball lands and their goal line. Referees are responsible to create space and should place little value to the materiality of offside at kicks and demand higher compliance. PK or SCRUM OPTION





- No attempt to retreat must be penalized. Offside players advancing at a kick ahead should be instructed "STOP + COLOR (+ NUMBER, if possible)". Players who continue to move forward must be penalized. PK or SCRUM OPTION
- 3. Players that are offside but not within 10m of where the ball lands may move laterally across the field.
- 4. Players that are offside when a kick goes into touch continue to be offside and must not advance if a quick throw-in is an option UNLESS they are put onside by players of their own team. Manage rather than over-reacting.

PK or SCRUM OPTION

FOUL PLAY

FOUL PLAY IS NOT WITHIN THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME AND HAS NO PLACE IN RUGBY. IT SHOULD NOT BE TOLERATED.

A. TACKLING

The following are not acceptable practices:

1. Leading with the shoulder (making deliberate contact with the shoulder first), and then wrapping with the arm(s) or swinging the arm(s) into contact.

PK and admonishment and/or suspension

- 2. Aiming a shoulder first, no-wrap tackle at the knees (e.g. football style). **PK** and suspension
- 3. Failing to wrap while tackling. PK and admonishment and/or suspension
- 4. Spear tackle or tip tackle. Lifting a player from the ground, turning the body horizontal or beyond, and either driving the player into the ground or dropping the player without regard for the player's safety. **PK and Red Card.**
 - When a player is lifted, there is an obligation on the tackler to get the player to the ground safely.
 - If the tackler lowers the player such that the lower body contacts the ground first there is no offense.
 - If the tackler attempts to lower the player safely, but is unsuccessful. **PK and admonishment and/or suspension**
- 5. High tackle (including a chest high tackle where the arm eventually makes contact above the shoulders). **PK and admonishment and/or suspension**



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- 6. Tackling a player in the air, should be dealt with severely. Merely having your "eyes on the ball" is not sufficient.
 - If a player's timing is sufficient to have a clear opportunity to contest for the ball, play on.
 - If a player's timing is not sufficient to have a clear opportunity to contest for the ball and makes contact with a player in the air, it is illegal.
 - If a player takes deliberate action that interferes with a player in the air, it is illegal.

If the player's feet make contact with the ground first: PK If the player lands on their lower back area or side: PK and suspension

If the player lands on their upper back/head/neck PK and Red Card

7. At a tackle, if a player is on their feet with their hands on the ball, an opposition player (if they enter through the gate) may legally bind onto them and roll the player to expose the ball and/or tackle the player. They may not lift the player off the ground and they may not grab the player above the shoulders and/or around the neck.

PK and admonishment and/or suspension



- 8. HS: Tackling above the armpits. PK and admonishment and/or suspension
- 9. HS: Fending off or pushing a player in the face. PK and admonishment and/or suspension

B. FEET ON BODIES

Players may not stamp, trample, or kick opponents.
PK and admonishment and/or suspension/RED CARD

C. GENERAL

1. Deliberate offenses should result in a suspension. This can be a first offense without prior warning, a player that re-offends or a team that re-offends.

PK and suspension



2. Repeated offenses can be team and/or individual, and should be addressed sooner rather than later. Repeat infringement patterns, i.e. offenses close to the goal line, AND repeated infringements by an individual player are both without time limit. Repeat team infringements in particular aspects (e.g. tackle), may warrant another admonishment rather than moving up to a suspension if sufficient time has passed without infringement.

PK and admonishment and/or suspension

- 3. 'Cheap shots'/off the ball offenses are unacceptable and should result in a suspension. **PK and suspension**
- 4. Holding/obstructing players off the ball.

PK and admonishment and/or suspension

5. Perpetrators and retaliators are responsible and are to be dealt with - the last offence penalized will be the restart of play.

PK and admonishment and/or suspension

 Players disputing the referees decision should not be tolerated. Awarding a PK or advancing an already awarded PK/FK 10m is appropriate.

PK and admonishment

 Players that deliberately prevent a quick tap penalty/free kick from being taken, especially close to their goal line, should be considered deliberate and penalized. PK and admonishment and/or suspension

RESTARTS & OPEN PLAY

- Players are expected to remain behind the ball at all kick-offs and drop-outs (except quick drop-outs as the Law allows). Referees are to manage this phase, however, players are aware that they need to comply.
- 2. Players who obstruct the opposition from getting to the ball carrier or the receiver should be penalized. **PK**
- Players who bind onto their own player (that has possession of the ball), and so position themselves between their player and the opposition, are obstructing and should be penalized. PK

REFEREE NOTES

At all restarts, signal with your arm, and communicate verbally to players to remain behind the ball. Be reasonable, and manage these phases.

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BALL OUT

A. RUCK

- 1. The ball is out when it is totally exposed and clear of bodies (of players in the ruck).
- 2. While the competition for the ball in a ruck is ongoing, hands by players in the ruck, are NOT allowed. **PK**
- 3. Once the ball has been clearly won, pushing the ball back by using the hand, by a player of the team that have won possession of the ball is permissible,
- 4. Digging for the ball, by the player of the team who has won possession of the ball, who is in the scrumhalf position and not part of the ruck, is permissible and the BALL IS NOT OUT.
- 5. If a player in the scrum half position is not retrieving (digging for) the ball, but holding the ball, with one or two hands, the BALL IS NOT OUT, picking up the ball is OUT.
- 6. Players in the ruck may under no circumstance slap the ball out of the scrumhalf's hands or interfere with the scrumhalf. **PK**

B. MAUL

1. Players in the maul may under no circumstance slap the ball out of the scrumhalf's hands or interfere with the scrumhalf. **PK**

C. SCRUM

- 1. The ball is out when it is totally exposed and clear of bodies (of players in the scrum).
- 2. If the hindmost player detaches from the scrum (both shoulders) with the ball at the feet, and attempts to pick up the ball, the BALL IS OUT.

REFEREE NOTES

When in doubt if the ball is out, then it is not out.

PENALTY TRY

- 1. A penalty try should be accompanied by either a severe admonishment, a yellow card or a red card to the offender. A penalty try should only be awarded if foul play by a defender prevents a try from being scored or prevents a try from being scored in a better position.
- 2. If the offense that prevented the try is a deliberate offense, a yellow card should be issued to the offender.