



# The Playing Rules *of* Touch

*8th Edition*



# THE PLAYING RULES OF TOUCH

## FOREWORD

*The rules contained herein have been designed and compiled specifically to promote the Sport of Touch and develop the skills of players and officials under the umbrella of Touch New Zealand Inc.*

*The 8th Edition of the Playing Rules includes changes which are designed to make the game of Touch an even greater spectacle, as well as providing greater challenges for the participants. Minor amendments to rules contained herein are in accordance with current International trends, which in turn will assist toward making the game of Touch truly competitive in the International arena.*

*The new rules reflect the change to six aside format. There is flexibility however for social and Junior Touch competitions to continue with the seven aside format to provide greater participation and a less physically demanding game.*

*TNZ General Manager*

Printing by Clarity Press, Christchurch  
Design & Production by Simon van der Sluijs, Metafor Creative Collective, Christchurch  
© Copyright Touch New Zealand Inc, Federation of International Touch Inc.  
This publication and the Rules of Touch are copyrighted under the Copyright Act 1962.

# Contents:

	Page:
Rule 1: Definitions and Terminology	1
Rule 2: The Field and the Ball	4
Rule 3: Player attire	7
Rule 4: Mode of Play, Duration and Scoring	9
Rule 5: Team Competition and Substitution	12
Rule 6: Commencement and Recommencement of Play	14
Rule 7: Possession	17
Rule 8: Passing	19
Rule 9: The Rollball	20
Rule 10: The Touch	23
Rule 11: Ball on or over Sideline/ over Scoreline and Actions near Scoreline	27
Rule 12: Ball Touched in Flight	30
Rule 13: Offside	31
Rule 14: Obstruction	33
Rule 15: The Penalty	34
Rule 16: Advantage	36
Rule 17: Injuries/Bleeding/Blood Bin	37
Rule 18: Discipline and Player Misconduct	38
Rule 19: The Control Referee and Support Referee	41
Referee Signals	43
Signals in General Play	44
Penalty Signals	47
Rollball Signals	53
Specific Signals	55
Support Signals	57

# RULE 1

## DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Unless the contrary intention appears the following definitions and terminology apply to the game of Touch:

- 1 **ADVANTAGE** is that property or part of play, which gives one team the potential to improve its position to score relative to the other team.
- 2 **ATTACKING SCORELINE** is the line on or over which a team has to place/ground the ball to score a touchdown.
- 3 **ATTACKING TEAM** is the team which has possession or is gaining possession of the ball.
- 4 **BEHIND** means in a position or direction towards a team's defending scoreline.
- 5 **DEAD BALL** means when the ball is out of play, and includes the period following a touch until the ball is brought back into play at the rollball, the period following a touchdown or penalty until the match is recommenced, and when the ball goes to ground and /or outside the boundaries of the field of play.
- 6 **DEFENDING SCORELINE** is the line which a team has to defend to prevent a touchdown.
- 7 **DEFENDING TEAM** is the team without possession of the ball.
- 8 **DELIVERED** means to part with the ball.
- 9 **DUMMY HALF** is the player who takes possession of the ball behind the player who performs the rollball.

- 10 **FIELD OF PLAY** is the playing area bounded by the sidelines and the touchdown zone lines, both of which are out of bounds.
- 11 **FORWARD** means a position or direction towards a team's own attacking scoreline.
- 12 **FULL TIME** occurs at the expiration of the normal time allowed for play.
- 14 **MARK (FOR A TAP)** is the centre of the halfway line for the commencement or recommencement of the match, or the position where a penalty tap is awarded as a result of an infringement.
- 15 **MARK (FOR A TOUCH)** is the position where the attacking player in possession of the ball is at the time of the touch.
- 16 **OFFSIDE** means in a position forward of the ball for an attacking player and in a position liable to penalty for a defending player.
- 17 **ONSIDE** means in a position whereby a player may legitimately become involved with play.
- 18 **PENALTY** is the action taken by the Referee in awarding a penalty tap when a player or team infringes particular rules of the game.
- 19 **REBOUND** occurs when the ball deflects from or makes contact with a player other than the player who first had possession.
- 20 **ROLLBALL** is the normal act of bringing the ball into play following a touch or a change of possession.
- 21 **RULING** is the decision made by the Referee as a result of particular circumstances. It can result in a play on, a tap or a change of possession.

- 22 **SCORELINES** are the lines separating the Touchdown Zone from the field of play.
- 23 **SIDELINES** are the side boundaries of the field of play.
- 24 **SUBSTITUTION BOX** is a rectangle measuring twenty (20) metres long by no more than five (5) metres wide, marked on both sides of the field, extending ten (10) metres either side of the halfway line and being one (1) metre from the sideline.
- 25 **TAP** is the method of commencing the match, recommencing the match after halftime and after a touchdown has been scored. It is also a method of recommencing play when a penalty is awarded.
- 26 **TOUCH** is contact on any part of the body between a player in possession of the ball and a defending player. A touch includes contact on the ball, hair or clothing and may be made by a defending player or by the player in possession.
- 27 **TOUCHDOWN** is the result of an attacking player, except the dummy half, placing/grounding the ball on or over the teams attacking scoreline.
- 28 **TOUCHDOWN ZONE** is the area bounded by the sidelines, scoreline and touchdown zone line.
- 29 **TOUCHDOWN ZONE LINE** is the line joining the sidelines which extend no less than five (5) metres and not more than ten (10) metres past the scoreline.

# RULE 2

## THE FIELD AND THE BALL

- 1 **FIELD OF PLAY** The field of play is rectangular in shape and measures seventy (70) metres in length from scoreline to scoreline and fifty (50) metres in width.
- 2 **MARKINGS** Line markings defining the field of play are to be at least 2.5cm in width and are to be laid out as shown in the diagram. See Figure 1 - The Field of Play. Sidelines are to be extended at least five (5) but no more than ten (10) metres beyond the scorelines and are joined by the touchdown zone lines.

Substitutions boxes measuring twenty (20) metres in length by no more than five (5) metres in width shall be marked on both sides of the field of play, extending ten (10) metres either side of the half way line and one (1) metre from the sideline.

- 3 **MARKERS** Suitably sized markers of a distinguishing colour and made from a safe and pliable material are to be positioned at the intersections of the sidelines and scorelines; and at the intersections of the halfway line and the sidelines (See Figure 1 - The Field of Play).
- 4 **PLAYING SURFACE** The playing surface is normally grass. However, other surfaces approved by Touch New Zealand may be used. Ground surfaces which may cause injury are to be avoided.
- 5 **THE BALL** The match is to be played with an oval, inflated ball of a shape and size approved by Touch New Zealand. The ball shall be inflated to the recommended air pressure.  
The approved ball size is 36 cm long x 55 cm circumference.

## PLAYER NOTES

- A *Team captains have the right to lodge a complaint regarding field dimensions or playing conditions (eg. weather, state of the ground or field markings) prior to the commencement of the match.*
- B *The ball must not be hidden under player attire.*

## REFEREE NOTES

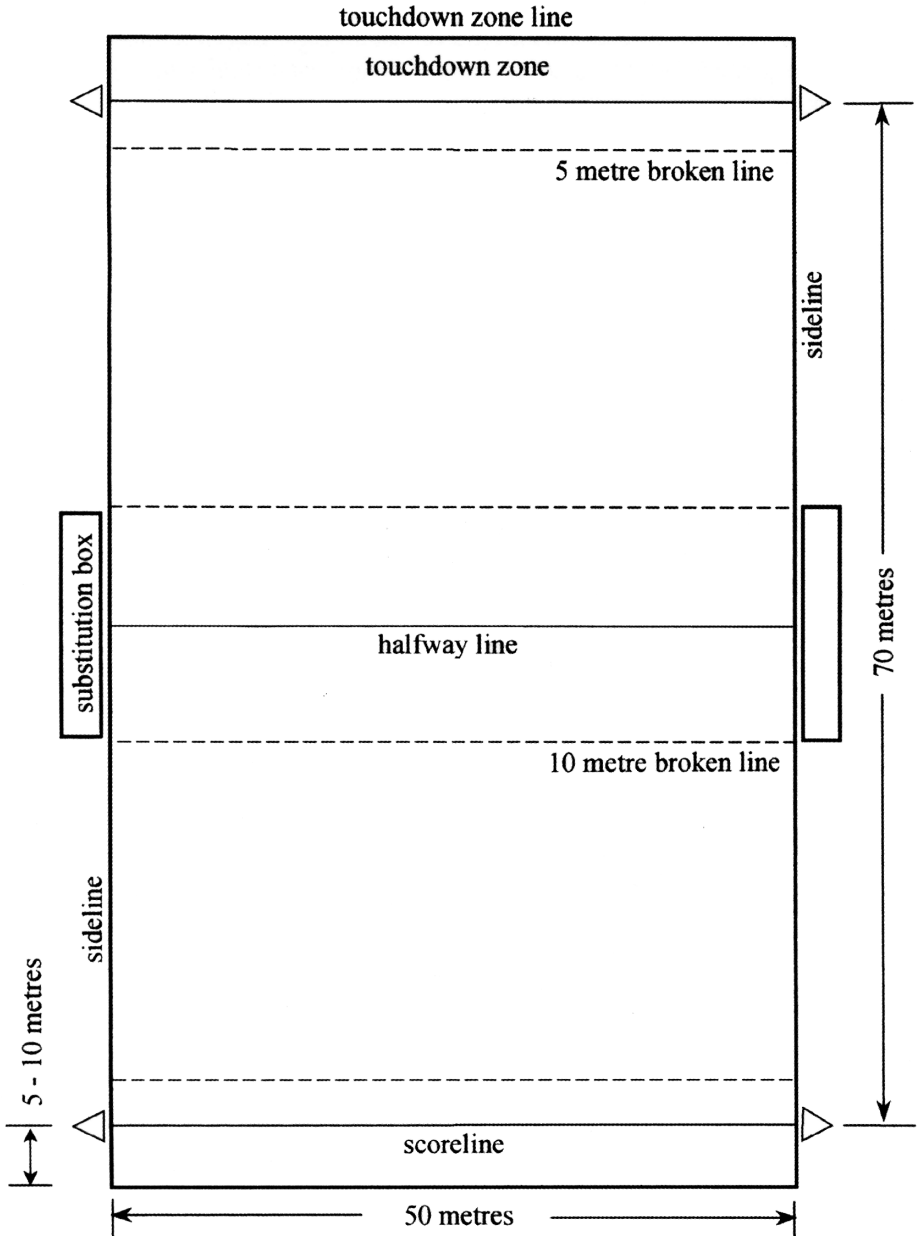
- A *The Referee is to inspect the boundaries and markers for clarity and safety, prior to the commencement of the match.*

## ADMINISTRATOR NOTES

- A *Association officials should ensure that all grounds used for competition matches are marked as shown in Figure 1 - The Field of Play. As a minimum, it is essential that scorelines, sidelines, touchdown zone lines and the halfway line are correctly marked.*
- B *Any decision on variations to dimensions or on playing conditions rests with controlling Association officials.*
- C *Corner markers are to be positioned with the base along the outer edge of the sideline and the centre of the marker in line with the scoreline.*



**FIGURE I - THE FIELD OF PLAY**



# RULE

# 3

## PLAYER ATTIRE

- 1 **UNIFORMS** All participating players are to be correctly attired in team uniforms approved by the controlling Association. Uniforms consist of upper apparel, shorts (or briefs for female players) and socks with footwear.
- 2 **FOOTWEAR** Shoes without screw in or metal studs, or cleats are to be worn by all players. Light leather or synthetic boots or shoes with soft moulded soles are permitted. Bare feet are not permitted.
- 3 **IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS** All players are to wear an identifying number, not less than sixteen (16) cm in height, clearly displayed on the front or rear of the upper garment. Numbers may be positioned on both sleeves as an alternative providing the numbers are not less than eight (8) cm in height . No two players of the same team may wear the same number.
- 4 **JEWELLERY AND FINGERNAILS** Players are not to participate in any match while wearing any item of jewellery which might prove dangerous. Long or sharp finger nails are to be trimmed or taped.

## PLAYER NOTES

- A Players may, in conditions of cold weather, wear additional clothing providing colours and numbers are displayed, subject to controlling Association procedures.*

## REFEREE NOTES

- A Referees are not to allow players to participate in any match unless the above dress requirements are met.*
- B Referees are to inspect team clothing and footwear prior to matches. Fingernails and jewellery of all competitors are to receive specific inspection.*

## ADMINISTRATOR NOTES

- A Identification numbers of participating players should be in numerical order, however this is not mandatory.*
- B Minor dress variations may be approved by the controlling Association.*

# RULE

# 4

## MODE OF PLAY, DURATION AND SCORING

- 1 **OBJECT** The object of the game of touch is for each team to score touchdowns and to prevent the opposition from scoring.
- 2 **MODE OF PLAY** The ball may be passed, flicked, thrown, knocked or handed between outside players of the attacking team who may in turn run or otherwise move with the ball in an attempt to gain territorial advantage and score. Defending players prevent the attacking team from gaining a territorial advantage by touching the ball carrier. Either defending players or attacking players may initiate touches at which play stops and is restarted with a rollball unless other rules apply.
- 3 **DURATION** The match is forty (40) minutes duration consisting of two (2) twenty (20) minute halves. There is a three (3) minute halftime break. The duration may be shortened or extended by controlling Associations to suit particular circumstances.
- 4 **SCORING** A touchdown is awarded when a player (prior to being touched and other than the dummy half) places (or grounds) the ball on or over the teams attacking scoreline and within the boundaries of the touchdown zone. A touchdown is worth one (1) point.
- 5 **END OF PLAY** When time expires, play is to continue until the ball next becomes dead. Should a penalty be awarded during this period the penalty is to be taken.
- 6 **THE WINNER** At the end of play the team that has scored the most touchdowns is declared the winner. In the event of neither team scoring, or in the event of both teams scoring the same number of touchdowns, a draw is declared.

7 **COMPETITION POINTS** Points are awarded in competition matches as follows:

Win	3 points
Bye	3 points
Draw	2 points
Loss	1 point
Forfeit	0 points

8 **EXTRA TIME FOR DRAWN MATCHES.** The following procedure will be utilised to establish a single winner:

#### **THE DROP OFF PROCEDURE**

- a When the match is drawn at full time the Referee will stop play.
- b At full time each team will reduce their playing numbers by one (1).
- c The match shall recommence **without delay** at the centre of halfway.
- d The team that won the toss (at the start of the match) shall **take the tap** to recommence play, and will maintain the same substitution box and direction.
- e Players are permitted to interchange as per the normal procedure used throughout the match.
- f Before a result can be declared in Extra Time both teams **must have had possession.**
- g Following the conclusion of each two (2) minutes of extra time and when the ball next becomes dead the Referee will stop play.
- h Each team will drop off a player and the match will recommence from where play was stopped.

- i Once teams have reduced to three (3) players no further drop off will occur and the match will continue until a touchdown is scored.
  - j Both teams must have had possession.
  - k In mixed competition, teams will comply with the Mixed Competition Rule 5.2 and must maintain a mixed composition (ratio) throughout extra time.
  - l If during either the match or extra time a team has a player (or players) dismissed from the field of play for the remainder of the match the team will play extra time with that reduced number of players.  
Should a player be sent from the field of play for the remainder of the match when teams have reduced to three (3) players, the offending team will forfeit and lose the match.
- 9 **ABANDONED MATCHES** If a match is abandoned due to any circumstances the controlling Association shall decide the result.

## PLAYER NOTES

- A *If a player places the ball on the ground and releases it short of the scoreline, while attempting to score a touchdown, a touch is counted and the player is required to rollball to restart play at the position of contact with the ground. If a player does not release the ball from their hands, no touch is counted and the match continues. However a touchdown results if an untouched player (other than the dummy half) slides the ball along the ground to or beyond the scoreline.*
- B *During the original match, if a player has been sent from the field of play for the remainder of the match, that player cannot participate in extra time.*
- C *Injured players can be substituted at any time by players from the team that participated in the actual match.*

## REFEREE NOTES

- A *If in attempting to score, a player either makes contact with the corner marker or crosses the extended sideline, no touchdown is awarded and the match is recommenced by the opposition with a rollball five (5) metres forward of the scoreline and five (5) metres in from the sideline..*
- B *Extra time shall begin at the expiration of normal time allowed for play (full time).*
- C *The clock does not stop at the two (2) minute intervals as there is no time out while a drop off occurs.*
- D *In the absence of official timekeepers the Referee is required to keep time for the two (2) minute intervals during the extra time.*

## RULE 5

# TEAM COMPOSITION AND SUBSTITUTION

- 1 **NUMBER OF PLAYERS** A team consists of fourteen (14) players, no more than six (6) of whom are allowed on the field at any time.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the position of the ball at the time the offence is first identified.

- 2 **MIXED COMPETITION** In mixed competitions, the maximum number of males allowed on the field is three (3). The minimum male requirement on the field is one (1).

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the position of the ball at the time the offence is first identified.

- 3 **SUSTITUTION** Players may substitute at any time in accordance with the interchange procedure. There is no limit to the number of times a player may interchange.
- 4 **INTERCHANGE PROCEDURE** All interchanges must occur at or within the team's substitution box, and only after the substituted player has crossed the boundaries and entered the substitution box. All interchanges must be made on one side of the field and without delay. Substitute players must remain in their substitution box for the duration of the match.

Physical contact does not have to be made between interchanging players. Players leaving or entering the field shall not hinder or obstruct play and must enter play from an onside position. Following the scoring of a touchdown, players may interchange at will without having to wait for the substituted player to enter the substitution box.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the non offending team at the position of the ball at the time the offence is first identified, or directly forward from this position at halfway whichever is the greatest advantage to the non offending team.

## PLAYER NOTES

- A *Although a team consists of fourteen (14) players a minimum of four (4) are required for the match to continue.*
- B *Female players in mixed competition may play in any team position. Male players may interchange with female players providing Rule 5.2 applies.*
- C *Attacking and defending players must interchange in accordance with Rule 5.4. Intending substitutes must not voluntarily remain off the field.*



## REFEREE NOTES

- A *Should the number of players on the field from one team fall below four (4) the match is ended and the non-offending team declared the winner. This applies if players have been dismissed for the remainder of the match, but not for injuries or dismissals for periods of time.*
- B *Players who arrive late may enter the field immediately providing their team does not have six (6) players on the field.*

# RULE 6

## COMMENCEMENT AND RECOMMENCEMENT OF PLAY

- 1 **THE TOSS** Team Captains are to toss a coin in the presence of the Referee with the winning captains team receiving possession for the commencement of the first half, the choice of direction for the first half and the choice of substitution box for the first half.
- 2 **DEFAULT** A team will be considered to be in default should they not field a team within the first ten (10) minute period of any match. For every two (2) minutes that a team is late one (1) touchdown will be awarded against that team to a maximum of five (5) touchdowns. The score will be recorded as a 5-0 match result and the offending team awarded forfeit (nil) competition points.
- 3 **ATTACKING TEAM** The attacking team is to start the match with a tap at the centre of the halfway line following the indication to commence play from the Referee. All players of the attacking team are to remain in an onside position until the ball has been tapped.

**RULING** - A change of possession at the centre of the halfway line and play will recommence with a rollball.

- 4 **METHOD** The tap is taken by placing the ball on the ground at the mark, releasing both hands from the ball, tapping the ball with either foot in any direction a distance of not more than one (1) metre and retrieving the ball cleanly. Any player of the attacking team may take the tap. Any onside player of the attacking team may retrieve the ball once the tap has been taken.

**RULING** - A change of possession at the mark for the tap and play shall recommence with a rollball.

- 5 **DEFENDING TEAM** All players of the defending team are required to retire along a line which is not less than ten (10) metres from the mark for the tap. Defending players may move forward of their positions once the ball has been tapped with the foot.

**RULING** - A penalty tap awarded to the attacking team along a line ten (10) metres directly forward of the original mark

- 6 **RECOMMENCEMENT OF PLAY** For the recommencement of play following the halftime break teams will change direction and substitution box and the team losing the toss is to recommence the match with a tap as described in Rules 6.3 and 6.4. For the recommencement of play following the scoring of a touchdown the team against which the score was made is to recommence play as described in Rules 6.3 and 6.4.

- 7 **KICKING** The ball can not be kicked or played with the foot except when taking a tap or at the rollball. The dummy half may use the foot to control the ball.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the position where the ball made contact with the foot.

## PLAYER NOTES

- A** *Once a team arriving late has entered the field of play the ten (10) minute period shall cease providing Rule 5 Player Note A applies. A team arriving late shall not delay entering the field of play. Play shall commence in the normal manner as described in Rule 6.1, 6.3 and 6.4.*
- B** *The player taking the tap may face any direction to take the tap and may be forward of the halfway line.*

## REFEREE NOTES

- A** *If any team is late for a match the Referee shall indicate the commencement of play at the normal time set down for the match. Should a team be late the Referee shall be the sole judge of the time during the ten (10) minute period and shall record one (1) touchdown against a team for every two (2) minutes they are late. The duration of the match shall be reduced by the amount of time the team is late.*
- B** *Referees are to ensure that there is a minimum delay between the scoring of a touchdown and the recommencement of play. However the Referee must ensure that prior to giving the indication for play to recommence that the team restarting does not have an unfair advantage through player interchange practices.*
- C** *Referees should penalise players who attempt to delay play following a touchdown. If the delay is caused by the team scored against, the penalty should be awarded to the non-offending team at the centre of the halfway line. If the team who scored causes the delay, the penalty should be awarded to the non-offending team at a mark, ten (10) metres directly forward of the centre of the halfway line.*

# RULE **7**

## POSSESSION

- 1 **GENERAL.** Providing other Rules do not apply, the team with the ball is entitled to six (6) touches prior to changing possession with the opposing team.
- 2 **CHANGE OVER PROCEDURE** Following the sixth (6th) touch or the loss of possession due to any other means, players of the team losing possession are to hand or pass the ball to the nearest opposition player, or place the ball on the ground at the mark without delay. Attacking players who request the ball are to be given the ball. Players are not to delay the change over procedure.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team ten (10) metres directly forward of the mark for the change of possession or penalty.

- 3 **BALL TO GROUND** If the ball is dropped to the ground a change of possession results. The mark for the change of possession is where the ball first pitches or where the attacking player dropped or passed the ball, whichever is the greatest advantage to the team gaining possession.
- 4 **MISHANDLED BALL** If a player mishandles the ball and providing the ball does not go to ground, play is to continue.
- 5 **INTERCEPTS** Intercepts by onside defending players are allowed . Following an intercept play continues until the first touch is effected, a touchdown is scored, or a stoppage occurs as a result of other actions.

## PLAYER NOTES

- A Should a touch be effected on a player in possession while the ball may not be physically in the hands (eg while juggling or trying to maintain control) the touch is to count.*
- B If a player is touched as they receive the ball and the ball can not be controlled and goes to ground, then a change of possession will result.*
- C Providing the same player retrieves the ball prior to it going to ground, any knock forward resultant from an intercept is allowed.*

## REFEREE NOTES

- A Referees are to be aware of players deliberately attempting to delay play during normal change over procedures.*
- B If the ball contacts the ground while still under control of a player, a change of possession does not result and play is to continue.*
- C Players may intercept the ball behind their defending scoreline. If a player in possession is touched or effects a touch whilst on or behind their defending scoreline the touch counts and play is restarted with a rollball five (5) metres forward of the scoreline from where the player was touched.*

# RULE 8

## PASSING

- 1 **GENERAL** A player in possession may pass, flick, knock, throw or otherwise deliver the ball to any onside player in the attacking team.
- 2 **FORWARD PASS** A player in possession is not to pass, flick, knock, throw or otherwise propel the ball in a forward direction. See Player Notes to Rule 7.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the ball was passed, flicked, knocked, thrown or otherwise propelled forward.

- 3 **PASSING INTO OPPOSITION..** A player who passes the ball at or towards a defending player and thereby causes the ball to go to ground, shall lose possession. Play is restarted at the mark where the ball goes to ground or at the position of greatest advantage to the team gaining possession.

### PLAYER NOTES

*A A player who, in attempting to control the ball, juggles or knocks the ball forward, is not to lose possession provided the same player regathers the ball. See Player Notes in Rule 7.*

### REFEREE NOTES

*A A penalty is to result from a forward pass even if:*

- i the receiver was in an onside position prior to the pass*
- ii the ball goes to ground*
- iii it occurs after the sixth (6th) touch.*

*B Referees are to be aware of players who make deliberate passes at an opposing player especially after the fifth (5th) touch.*

# RULE 9

## THE ROLLBALL

1 **WHEN REQUIRED** A player is to perform a rollball under the following circumstances:

- a) when a touch has been effected
- b) when possession changes due to the sixth (6th) touch
- c) when possession changes due to the ball going to ground
- d) when possession changes due to an infringement by an attacking player at a penalty or a tap
- e) when possession changes due to the dummy half being touched (or effecting a touch) whilst in possession, or when the dummy half places/grounds the ball on or over the attacking scoreline.
- f) when possession changes due to a player in possession of the ball crossing the boundaries of the field of play.
- g) when possession changes due to an infringement by an attacking player performing a rollball or:
- h) when so directed by the Referee.

2 **METHOD** The attacking player is to position on the mark, face the opponents (defending) scoreline, stand parallel to the sidelines and roll the ball backwards along the ground, between the feet a distance of not more than one (1) metre. Once the ball is placed on the mark the attacking player may step forward over the ball.

**RULING** - A change of possession at the mark and play shall recommence with a rollball.

3 **ATTACKING TEAM** Any other player of the attacking team may receive the ball from the rollball and thus becomes the dummy half. The dummy half may run with or pass the ball but is not permitted to score touchdowns. However, if a touch is affected on or by the dummy half, a

change of possession will result and play shall restart with a rollball at the mark for the touch.

The dummy half is not to delay picking up or gathering the ball. The player who performs the rollball is not permitted to obstruct or otherwise prevent the defending team from gaining possession or effecting a touch on the dummy half.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the infringement occurred.

- 4 DEFENDING TEAM** All players of the defending team are to retire along a line which is not less than five (5) metres from the mark. Players of the defending team are not permitted to move forward of their five (5) metre positions until the dummy half has made contact with the ball.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the attacking team along a line five (5) metres forward of the mark for the rollball and nearest the infringement.

- 5 ACTIONS WITHOUT DUMMY HALF IN POSITION** When the player in possession is required to rollball without a dummy half in position, players of the defending team may move forward of their five (5) metre positions as soon as the ball leaves the hand/s of the player in possession. Should a defending player gain possession, the match is recommenced with a rollball at the same mark.
- 6 VOLUNTARY ROLLBALL** A player in possession is not to perform a rollball unless a touch has been effected.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the rollball occurred.



## PLAYER NOTES

- A The ball must touch the ground in a rollball, but does not necessarily have to be rolled. The foot may be used to control the ball.*
- B The player performing the rollball must be stationary. The player performing the rollball shall be permitted to rollball while balancing on one foot providing the ball passes on the inside of the supporting foot.*
- C Defending players who are offside at the rollball are liable to penalty and should remain out of play until the touch has been effected or until they have assumed an onside position.*
- D The player performing the rollball can not retrieve the ball.*
- E Any defending player involved in a touch must retire without delay to a position along a line five (5) metres behind the mark for the touch or to their defending scoreline.*
- F The dummy half must pick up the ball without delay and must retrieve the ball cleanly. The dummy half is unrestricted as to where they can run and may enter the touchdown zone to link up with support players.*

## REFEREE NOTES

- A The dummy half is permitted to use the foot to control the ball however, play must not be delayed. Defending players may move forward as soon as the dummy half has made contact with the ball.*
- B In anticipation of a touch being affected a player may run our stand with the ball extended towards the ground without penalty. However Rule 9.6 (Voluntary Rollball) applies as soon as the ball is released.*
- C Players who delay the rollball will be penalised at the mark.*
- D There is no requirement for the ball to be picked up to commence the rollball but the Referee should ensure the rollball takes place on the mark.*

*E After a touch has been effected any defender who interferes with any aspects of the rollball will be penalised in accordance with Rule 10.7.*

*F Should the dummy half be touched or place or ground the ball within the boundaries of the touchdown zone, whether the ball is released or not a change of possession will occur and play will restart five (5) metres from the scoreline (and no closer than five (5) metres to the sideline) opposite where the dummy half was touched or where the ball was placed or grounded.*

*G In an attempt to encourage a free-flowing match, Referees should warn offside players and apply the advantage rule as applicable (eg if a warned offside player moves to make a touch, the Referee may call “play on” rather than stop play and penalise the offender). However if the Referee has not warned the player or team s/he can not call “play on” and must either allow the touch or penalise the offending team.*

*H To ensure control is maintained during a sequence of quick rollballs the Referee is to ensure that the location of the mark is indicated.*

*I Should the dummy half or other attacking player effect a touch on an offside defender following a quick rollball, the touch will count (the dummy half would lose possession).*

## **RULE 10**

### **THE TOUCH**

- 1 **GENERAL** Players of both defending and attacking teams are to use the minimum force necessary to effect touches.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the mark and, as a minimum a warning is given to the offending player.

- 2 **BALL KNOCKED FROM HANDS** If the ball is knocked from the hands of a player in possession during a touch, the touch counts (provided minimum force was used to effect the touch) and the player retains possession and is required to perform a rollball. The touch count continues, unless it is the sixth (6th) touch.

- 3 **ACTIONS FOLLOWING TOUCH** After a touch has been effected, the player in possession is to stop, return to the mark where the touch occurred if the mark has been over run, and perform a rollball without delay.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the defending team at the mark.

- 4 **PASSING AFTER TOUCH** A player is not to pass or otherwise deliver the ball after a touch has been effected.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the defending team at the mark where the touch occurred.

- 5 **CLAIMED/DISCLAIMED TOUCH** A player must not claim or otherwise call for a touch unless a touch has actually been effected. Similarly a player must not disclaim a touch when a touch has actually been effected.

**RULING** - If an advantage is apparent the Referee should indicate “play on” otherwise a penalty is awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the touch was either claimed or disclaimed.

- 6 **THE MARK** The mark for the rollball is the position where the attacking player in possession of the ball is at the time of the touch.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the defending team at the mark for the touch.

- 7 **INTERFERENCE AFTER TOUCH** Following a touch the ball is deemed to be dead and is brought into play at the rollball when the dummy half touches the ball or, if there is no dummy half in position, when the ball leaves the hand/s of the attacking player performing the rollball. See Rules 9.4 and 9.5. Defending players are not to interfere with the player in possession or otherwise prevent an immediate rollball after a touch is made.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the attacking team five (5) metres forward of the mark for the rollball.

- 8 **TOUCHED WHILE SCORING** On an occasion when a player places/ grounds the ball on or over the scoreline at the same time a touch is effected, the touch counts and no touchdown is awarded. The player in possession shall move directly behind the mark a distance of five (5) metres from the scoreline to the five (5) metre broken line and perform a rollball (unless it is the 6th touch).
- 9 **TOUCH ON OFFSIDE DEFENDER** Should a player in possession effect a touch on an offside defender, who is making every effort to retire and remain out of play, the touch shall count. If the player in possession is the dummy half, then a change of possession shall result and play shall restart with a rollball at the mark where the touch occurred.

## PLAYER NOTES

- A *When effecting touches with the ball attacking players are to ensure that the minimum force is used.*
- B *If a touch is effected on or over the scoreline before the ball is placed or grounded, no touchdown results. The player in possession is to move from that point to a position five (5) metres from the scoreline to the five (5) metre broken line and perform a rollball (unless it is the 6th touch).*
- C *If in doubt as to the location of the mark for the rollball the player in possession should check with the Referee.*
- D *Attacking players can not delay the rollball while waiting for the dummy half to be in position.*
- E *Calling a touch prior to a touch being effected or similarly, disclaiming a touch that is effected are both subject to penalty under Rule 10.5.*
- F *A player who is touched while in the act of passing should attempt to refrain from releasing the ball.*

## REFEREE NOTES

- A Using more than the minimum physical force to effect a touch must be dealt with severely.  
Following an initial penalty and warning, subsequent offenders are to be dismissed .*
- B A player should be instructed to regather the ball if it is knocked or dropped to the ground during or following a touch. However, players who attempt to delay play by such deliberate acts are to be penalised under Rule 10.3.*
- C If defending players effect a touch after an attacking player has delivered the ball, play continues and the Referee shall call “play on”.*
- D Unless the Referee is sure no contact was made the Referee should acknowledge all claimed touches and call back the player in possession for the rollball. Should the Referee observe a defending player claim a touch without contact, and unless there is an advantage to the attacking team, a penalty and warning are to be awarded under Rule 10.5. Similarly, should the Referee observe a defending player disclaiming a touch that has been effected then unless there is an advantage to the attacking team, a penalty and warning are to be awarded under Rule 10.5.*
- E Mandatory penalties should not be awarded when players fail to feel slight touches however, deliberate run-ons are to be penalised.*
- F A penalty is to result from a touch and pass even if:*
- i the ball goes to ground*
  - ii it occurs after a touch is effected either on or by the dummy half*
  - iii it occurs after the sixth (6th) touch*

# **RULE 11**

## **BALL ON OR OVER SIDELINE/OVER SCORELINE AND ACTIONS NEAR SCORELINES**

- 1 ON OR OVER SIDELINE** The ball becomes dead when it or a player in possession touches or crosses the sideline. A change of possession results. However, if a player in possession is touched prior to crossing the sideline then the touch counts and play continues with a rollball at the mark where the touch occurred.

**RULING** - The team not responsible for the ball touching or crossing the sideline shall recommence play with a rollball five (5) metres infield from where the ball or the player in possession touched or crossed the sideline, or at the position of best advantage to the attacking team.

- 2 TOUCHED OVER ATTACKING SCORELINE** If a player in possession of the ball is touched after crossing the attacking scoreline and prior to the scoring of a touchdown, the touch counts. Play is restarted with a rollball five (5) metres from the scoreline on the five (5) metre broken line, from where the player in possession was touched.
- 3 ACTIONS NEAR ATTACKING SCORELINE** When a touch is effected within five (5) metres of the attacking scoreline, the player in possession may move directly behind the mark a distance of up to five (5) metres to the five (5) metre broken line and restart play with a rollball.
- 4 ACTIONS NEAR DEFENDING SCORELINE** An attacking team is not required to rollball within five (5) metres of the defending scoreline. After each touch the player in possession may move forward in line with the mark up to the five (5) metre broken line to restart play with a rollball.

- 5 **BALL ON OR BEHIND DEFENDING SCORELINE** If an attacking player in possession of the ball is touched while on or behind their defending scoreline the touch counts and play is restarted with a rollball five (5) metres forward of the scoreline from where the player in possession was touched. The mark for the rollball shall not be closer to the sideline than five (5) metres.
- 6 **ACTIONS FURTHER THAN FIVE (5) METRES FROM THE DEFENDING SCORELINE** When defending players are required to defend further than five (5) metres from their defending scoreline, they must move forward and continue to move forward beyond the five (5) metre broken line in an attempt to effect a touch. Defenders may not back out of a Touch in an attempt to get the attacking player to perform a voluntary rollball. **Realignment by defending players is permitted only** when a Touch is about to occur.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the attacking team at the position of the ball at the time the offence is first identified.

## PLAYER NOTES

- A When moving backwards or forwards from the mark in accordance with Rule 11.3 or 11.4 players should indicate to the Referee that such options have been chosen thus avoiding any confusion. When attacking players are carrying out options, in accordance with Rule 11.4 defending players must retire five (5) metres from the rollball.*
- B When moving backwards or forwards in accordance with Rule 11.3 or 11.4 the player in possession should avoid contact with defending players and should not move sideways from the mark.*
- C When the player in possession is further than five (5) metres from the scoreline and the defending team is defending on or within five (5) metres of their defending scoreline, the defending team must move forward in an attempt to effect a touch. This means the whole team must move forward (and continue to move forward beyond the five (5) metre broken line) and may not retire toward the five (5)*

*metre broken line or toward their defending scoreline until a touch is about to occur or the player in possession has reached or crossed the five (5) metre broken line.*

*D When the player in possession is on or within five (5) metres of the attacking scoreline the defending players are permitted to remain on and defend their scoreline.*

## REFEREE NOTES

*A Referees should be aware of players who deliberately run out or pass the ball over the sideline on the (6th) touch in an attempt to delay play and should penalise such players in accordance with Rule 7.2*

*B Defending players are onside provided both feet remain on or behind the scoreline and contact with the ground is not made inside the field of play with the hand/s, prior to the ball being brought into play at the rollball or tap\**

*C Before a penalty is awarded in accordance with Rule 11.6 the Referee must warn the defending team that they must move forward (and continue to move forward beyond the five (5) metre broken line). If the defending team does not move forward in accordance with the Referees direction a penalty will result.*

*D If the same situation arises again after the tap has been taken at the penalty and the defending team still refuses to move forward, another penalty is awarded to the attacking team. In addition to the penalty the Referee will instruct the captain of the defending team to remove one (1) player from the field.*

*The player removed from the field of play is to take up a position outside the field of play (or in their substitution box) and cannot re enter the field or be replaced in the field until the defending team has gained possession.*



## **RULE 12**

### **BALL TOUCHED IN FLIGHT**

- 1 INTENTIONAL CONTACT BY DEFENDING PLAYER** If the ball goes to ground following a defenders attempt to gain possession, the attacking team retains the ball and the touch count restarts. This also applies if the defending player deliberately knocks the ball to the ground. The mark where the rollball occurs is where the ball first pitches or where the defender touched the ball, whichever is the greatest advantage to the attacking team.
- 2 INTENTIONAL CONTACT BUT NOT TO GROUND** If a defending player touches the ball in flight and it is retrieved by an attacking player, play continues and the touch count restarts at the next touch.
- 3 INTENTIONAL CONTACT AND TOUCHED AGAIN BY AN ATTACKING PLAYER** If an attacking player attempts to gather the ball after a deflection by a defending player and the ball goes to ground, the attacking team retains possession and the touch count restarts as per Rule 12.1 above. See Referee Note A below.
- 4 REBOUND AND BALL TO GROUND** If the ball rebounds from a defending player who has not made an attempt to retrieve the ball and the ball goes to ground, a change of possession results and play restarts with a rollball where the ball first pitches or where the ball rebounded from the defender, whichever is the greatest advantage to the team gaining possession.
- 5 REBOUND BUT NOT TO GROUND** If the ball rebounds from a defending player who has not made an attempt to retrieve the ball, and the ball is regained by an attacking player, play continues and the touch count continues.

## PLAYER NOTES

*A If an attacking player, considers a deflection from a defending player is difficult to retrieve the player may either let the ball go to ground (and receive six (6) more touches from the mark of greatest advantage.) or the player may attempt to retrieve the ball (and if the ball then goes to ground receive six (6) more touches from the mark or greatest advantage).*

## REFEREE NOTES

*A In the case of Rule of 12.3 above the Referee is to decide whether the deflection by the defending player was the cause of the ball to ground. Should the deflection be such that it could reasonably be caught by the attacking player, then a change of possession results.*

*B If a ball deflected from a defending player travels in a forward direction and is then retrieved by a player of the attacking team play should continue in accordance with Rule 12.2.*

*C Unintentional contact by a defending player includes contact on the arms and hand/s providing an attempt is not made to secure possession.*

*D If the ball is passed forward and is then deflected or played at by a defending player back to the attacking team or the ball goes to the ground Rule 8.2 applies and the defending team shall recommence play with a penalty.*

# RULE 13

## OFFSIDE

- 1 ATTACKING TEAM** A player in the attacking team is offside when the player is forward of the player who has possession or who last had possession. In general play, offside attacking players who interfere with play should be penalised.

**2 ATTACKING PLAYERS OFFSIDE AT TAP** Attacking players are to remain onside at a tap until the ball has been tapped.

**RULING** - A change of possession at the mark and play shall recommence with a rollball. See Rule 6.3 and 15.4.

**3 DEFENDING TEAM.** A player in the defending team is offside when the following Rules are infringed:

- a Rule 6.4 and 6.5 the commencement and recommencement of play.
- b Rule 9.4 at the rollball.
- c Rule 15.5 at the tap for the penalty.
- d Rule 9 Referee Note D

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the attacking team in accordance with the above Rules.

## PLAYER NOTES

- A Attacking players who are offside are non-effective and should return to an onside position without delay.*
- B Offside defending players must at all times make an effort to return to an onside position.*
- C A defending player must have both feet on or behind the defending scoreline to be onside when a rollball occurs within five (5) metres, or a penalty is awarded within ten (10) metres of the scoreline.*

## REFEREE NOTES

- A Refer to Rule 10.9 and notes of Rule 9.*
- B Defending players who are retiring should not normally be penalised while taking no active part in the match.*
- C Refer to notes of Rule 15 for consecutive penalties.*

# RULE 14

## OBSTRUCTION

- 1 **ATTACKING TEAM.** Players of the attacking team are not to obstruct defending players from attempting to effect a touch. A player in possession must not run or otherwise move behind the Referee or other players in the attacking team in an attempt to avoid a touch.

Obstruction here is defined as a deliberate attempt by an attacking player to gain an unfair advantage by preventing a defending player from effecting a touch.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the defending team at the mark where the infringement occurred.

- 2 **DEFENDING TEAM.** Players in the defending team are not to obstruct or otherwise interfere with attacking players supporting the player in possession.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the infringement incurred provided the stoppage is not to the disadvantage of the attacking team.

### PLAYER NOTES

*A A player supporting the player in possession is entitled to run as necessary to obtain the best supporting position. However, in moving to a supporting position, attacking players must not deliberately interfere with defending players.*

### REFEREE NOTES

*A Referees should note any change in the line of support adopted by attacking players. If the player in possession notices an obstruction by a team mate, the player may stop and wait to be touched without being penalised.*

*B Accepted sub-unit skills such as wraps or run-arounds do not constitute an obstruction.*

*C If a player in possession runs into the Referee or the Referee runs into the player in possession, “play on” should be called if there is no advantage either way. However, if the incident has an effect on the proceedings, a rollball should be called with no effect on the touch count.*

## **RULE 15**

### **THE PENALTY**

- 1 GENERAL** A penalty is to be awarded for an infringement by any player in accordance with the rules contained herein. The method of recommencing play at the penalty is with a tap.
- 2 LOCATION OF THE TAP FOR A PENALTY** The mark for a penalty is normally at the location of the infringement unless otherwise detailed in specific rules. For infringements which occur on the boundaries, within five (5) metres of the defending scoreline or outside the field of play, the location of the penalty tap is to be five (5) metres infield (or on the five (5) metre broken line) from where the infringement occurred.
- 3 METHOD** A method of taking the penalty tap is detailed in Rule 6.4. The ball does not have to be lifted from the ground for a tap. However, the ball must be at or behind the correct mark prior to the tap being taken. See Rule 6 Player Note C.

**RULING** - A change of possession at the mark and play shall recommence with a rollball .

- 4 ATTACKING TEAM** Players of the attacking team are to be onside at the tap as detailed in Rule 6.3.

**RULING** - A change of possession at the mark and play shall recommence with a rollball

- 5 **DEFENDING TEAM** Players of the defending team are to be onside at the tap as detailed in Rule 6.4.

**RULING** - A penalty awarded to the attacking team along a line ten (10) metres forward of the original mark and nearest the infringement.

- 6 **PENALTY TOUCHDOWN** A penalty touchdown will be awarded if any action by a player or spectator deemed by the Referee to be contrary to the rules or spirit of the game, prevented the attacking team from scoring a touchdown.

## PLAYER NOTES

*A The player who is to take the tap is required to wait until the Referee indicates the location of the mark before the tap can be taken. However a player may take a quick tap providing the Referee acknowledges such a request and providing the tap is taken at or behind the correct mark .*

*B Players may take the ball directly behind the mark for a penalty tap up to a maximum distance of ten (10) metres.*

*C Any onside player may pick up the ball following a penalty tap and may effect a touch or be touched.*

*Should a rollball be performed in lieu of a tap following the awarding of a penalty, the person who receives the ball will not be deemed to be a dummy half.*

## REFEREE NOTES

- A To allow the full advantage of a penalty to be realised there is to be minimum delay between awarding a penalty and the indication of the appropriate mark.*
- B A player may take the ball back directly behind the mark for a penalty up to a maximum distance of ten (10) metres to allow room to execute a move. In such cases the defending players must remain not closer than ten (10) metres from the mark or at the scoreline, whichever is the closest.*
- C If an attacking player effects a touch on an offside defending player (usually following a quick tap) in an attempt to gain a further penalty, the Referee may call “play on” depending on the actions of the defending player, but only provided the offside player or team has been warned first.*
- D If an offside defending player (whether that player is retiring or not) attempts to obstruct or effect a touch on a attacking player following a quick tap the Referee should apply the advantage rule and allow play to continue or award a penalty whichever is the greatest advantage to the attacking team.*
- E To ensure control is maintained during a sequence of quick penalty taps, the Referee is to ensure the location of the mark is correctly indicated.*
- F With regards to awarding a penalty touchdown the Referee is to be sure that a touchdown would have occurred had it not been for the illegal action of the players or spectators concerned.*

## RULE 16

### ADVANTAGE

- GENERAL** The principal of advantage to the non-offending team is to apply at all times, providing some advantage is readily obvious. Once a team is given the advantage that team does not necessarily forfeit the right to other action as described in these rules.

## PLAYER NOTES

- A Players should at all times play in accordance with Rules of Touch and allow the Referee to interpret advantage.*
- B Players who use unnecessary force or whose actions unfairly prevent any other player from gaining an advantage will be liable to penalty.*

## REFEREE NOTES

- A An apparent infringement may lead to a distinct advantage and timely delay in adjudication should enable full advantage to be obtained eg. the Referee should delay the blowing of the whistle momentarily (and consequently delay applying the infringement rule) to see if an advantage occurs.*
- B If an advantage is apparent the Referee is to allow play to continue and must give appropriate rulings (verbal and hand signal) to enable a “play on” situation for the attacking team. Advice of “play on” or advantage being played does not negate further action by the Referee on the original infringement.*

## RULE 17

### INJURIES/ BLEEDING/ BLOOD BIN

- 1 INJURY** Should a stoppage in play occur as the result of injury, time is to continue and the duration of the match will not be extended.
- 2 BLEEDING AND THE BLOOD BIN** No person may take part in any match if they reveal any evidence of bleeding. If any person within the field of play shows any evidence of bleeding, or exposure of an open wound, that is likely to bleed, weep or otherwise discharge body fluid they must leave the field of play without delay. Following adequate cleansing and covering of the wound, the person may return to the field of play. Cleansing shall include any clothing or equipment.



Any player temporarily off the field of play due to any of the above conditions shall be deemed to be attending the “blood bin”. The Referee may request that a player attend the “blood bin”. Injured players attending the “blood bin” may be substituted.

## PLAYER NOTES

- A Injured players returning to the field must comply with all aspects of the interchange procedure. See Rule 5.4.*
- B Team captains may bring to the attention of the Referee any injury that requires a stoppage in play necessary for an injured player to be treated or removed from the field off play .*

## REFEREE NOTES

- A The Referee should not necessarily stop play due to an injury. However play should be stopped when there is clear evidence that a player has sustained an injury that may require immediate attention or where the continuance of play may be detrimental to the well being of the player concerned .*

*Sufficient time should be allowed to either treat the injury or remove the injured player from the field of play.*
- B The duration of the match shall not be extended due to any time lost through injury unless the controlling Association has rules to the contrary.*

# **RULE 18**

## **DISCIPLINE AND PLAYER MISCONDUCT**

- 1 GENERAL** Players who infringe the Rules of Touch are liable to penalty or other appropriate action according to the seriousness of the infringement. Penalties are to be awarded in accordance with applicable rules.

2 **FREQUENT UNDISCIPLINED BEHAVIOUR** A player who continually breaches the playing rules is liable to dismissal. Teams captains are responsible for the conduct of players in their respective teams and should be aware that ill disciplined players are disruptive to the sprit of the game.

3 **DISMISSALS** Any player may be dismissed as follows:

a) **PERIOD OF TIME**

A player dismissed for repeated infringements or any offence requiring more than a penalty is to move from the field of play and remain in a position mid way along the teams attacking touchdown zone line and no closer than five (5) metres to the line. The dismissed player can not be replaced .

The position taken up by the player dismissed for a period of time shall be referred to as the “Sin Bin” .

b) **REMAINDER OF THE MATCH**

A player dismissed after any previous dismissal or for an offence such as gross misconduct or a dangerous act is to take no further part in the match and is to move to and remain not closer than ten (10) metres from the field of play . The dismissed player can not be replaced and that player incurs a two (2) week suspension from all matches conducted by the controlling Touch Association. The controlling Association may amend the suspension period when appropriate.

4 **STRIKING OFFICIALS** Any player who is found guilty of striking and/ or assaulting an official or Referee is liable to disqualification from playing the game of Touch for life.

5 **DISCIPLINARY REPORTS** Officials are required to submit dismissal reports or any other reports required in accordance with the governing regulations of controlling Associations.

- 6 **DISPUTE** No player or team official may dispute or make any protest of a Referee's decision.
- 7 **MISCONDUCT** Players guilty of misconduct will be penalised and could be excluded from the match. Misconduct includes:

Continual breaches of the rules

Swearing

Back chatting Referees or other match officials

Bad sporting behaviour

Fighting

Using unnecessary physical force in making a touch eg. heavy two handed touch, pushing, barging or shoulder charges

Attacking the head of an opponent

Tripping or deliberately making a player go to ground

Any other action which is not in the spirit of the game

## PLAYER NOTES

- A A player sent from the field of play for a period of time is to remain five (5) metres beyond the mid point of their attacking touchdown zone line (sin bin) until recalled by the Referee. Such a player is allowed to join his/her team mates at half time.*
- B Team captains may respectfully inquire of the Referee matters of varying interpretations or causes of penalties. Any discussion is to be brief and polite and must not delay play.*

## REFEREE NOTES

- A The Referee is the sole judge of time in relation to dismissed players (sin bin). However, if the Referee has cause to dismiss a player for a second period of time the player concerned is to be dismissed for the remainder of the match.*
- B The Referee is required to advise the team captain as to the reason for a player's dismissal.*

*C Referees must submit a written report on players sent from the field for the remainder of the match.*

*D Referees should not restart the match until the dismissed player has left the field. After recall, play should not be delayed to allow the dismissed player to re enter the field.*

## ADMINISTRATOR NOTES

*Controlling Associations are to ensure that their constitution provides for:*

*A The powers of the general committee or executive to make appropriate by-laws or regulations.*

*B The power to inquire into and deal with any act.*

*C Powers to be given to a Judiciary.*

*D The boundaries of jurisdiction.*

# RULE 19

## THE CONTROL REFEREE AND SUPPORT REFEREE

- 1 THE REFEREE** The Referee is the sole judge on matters of fact and is required to adjudicate on the rules of the game during play. The Referee may impose any sanctions necessary to control the match and in particular, award penalties for infringements against the rules.
- 2 AUTHORITY OF THE REFEREE** Players, coaches and officials of both teams are under the control of the officiating Referee/s.
- 3 AREA OF CONTROL** The playing area under control of the Referee extends from within the boundaries of the field of play, to an area which covers substitute players and officials involved in the particular match.

- 4 **SUPPORT REFEREE/S** Support Referee/s should be appointed to assist the Referee to control the match and with tasks associated with sidelines and other matters at the discretion of the Referee. Their normal duties include indicating the ten (10) metre distance for defending players at the penalty, controlling substitution, matters of back play and other advice (opinion) when sought by the controlling Referee.
- 5 **SAFETY** At their sole discretion the Referee may impose any ruling necessary to ensure the health and safety of the participants during a match.

### REFEREE NOTES

*A Referee must familiarise themselves with grounds, markings and controlling Association procedures prior to the commencement of matches.*

*B Referees may consult with Support Referees prior to making decisions.*

# REFEREE SIGNALS

## INTRODUCTION

Signals are a necessary part of Referee's coaching. A Referee must learn and implement the signals of the game of Touch as one of his/her early priorities.

What is required, is that the signals be given in an unhurried manner where possible. A good demonstration of an appropriate signal will serve well to advise players, coaches and spectators of the Referee rulings. "Unhurried" does not mean that a Referee achieves perfect signals to the detriment of a flowing match, as sometimes quick facets of play could necessitate a very brief signal. Signals should be given authoritatively and decisively for all to see, but not for the purpose of showmanship. The essence of a signal is its clarity – not its dramatic expression – although the latter also has its place.

It is unreasonable to expect a new Referee to take the field and immediately implement all signals. The best method is for a Referee to commence with the commonly used signals and become comfortable in using them, then slowly add other signals over a period of time. Practice – on and off field – is required to make signals crisp and clear, yet enable them to flow without any unnecessary delay to the match.

Beware of signals that are too stiff and mechanical. Whilst they may be easy to understand, they take up too much time to perform. Signals that are clear, unhurried and precise will be easily understood and convey the Referee's decisions.

# SIGNALS IN GENERAL PLAY

The first group of signals commences with the start of the match and progresses through the areas commonly experienced in general play. These areas include the indication of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> touch and the “Play-On” signal where the Referee is applying the advantage rule.

Other common signals include the indication of the dummy half caught in possession, ball to ground and ball touched in flight. In general, these signals should be given whilst the Referee is on the move to the next desirable position.

## 1 COMMENCEMENT OF THE MATCH

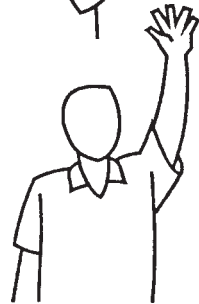
One arm is raised vertically in the air with the fingers extended, and the palm of the hand facing inwards. A long blast of the whistle is given at the same time the arm is lowered.



## 2 5<sup>TH</sup> TOUCH

One arm is raised vertically in the air with the palm facing the front, and the fingers and thumb outstretched.

*The call “Fifth Touch” is announced and the arm is then lowered.*



## 3 6<sup>TH</sup> TOUCH

One arm is raised vertically in the air, as in the Fifth Touch Signal. At the same time, the other arm is raised vertically with one finger outstretched.

This action is preceded by a short blast of the whistle. *The call “6<sup>th</sup> Touch, Handover” or similar wording is announced.*



#### 4 DUMMY HALF TOUCHED WHILST IN POSSESSION

With fists clenched, cross arms across the chest, but not out in front of the body. It is not always necessary to blow the whistle.

*The call "Dummy Half Touched" or similar wording is announced*

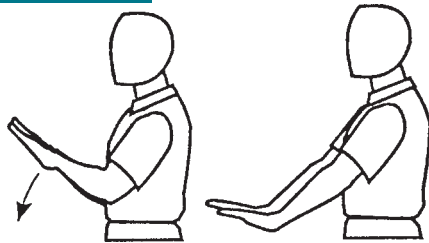


#### 5 BALL TO GROUND

Both hands are raised in front of the chest, elbows bent and palms down, then two pushing motions are made in an oblique downwards direction.

Usually, there is no need for a whistle blast.

*The call "Ball Down" or "Ball To Ground" is announced.*



#### 6 TOUCH COUNT CANCELLED AND STARTS AGAIN

Raise one arm vertically above the head. With fist clenched wave the arm from side to side.

*The call "Six More Touches" or similar wording is announced.*





## 7 AWARDING A TOUCHDOWN

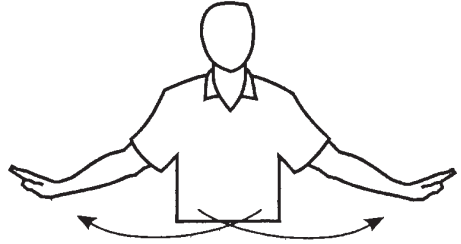
Take up a position in the Touchdown Zone, behind the point where the Touchdown was scored and face the field of play. Step backward 1-2 paces, seek acknowledgement from the support Referees on the sideline. Award the Touchdown by pointing to the point of Touchdown at a 45-degree angle while blowing the whistle simultaneously.



## 8 DISALLOWING A TOUCHDOWN

Do not blow the whistle. With hands, palms facing downwards crossed and in front of the body below the waist, wave them out to the sides. Repeat.

To avoid confusion all the other general play signals should be completed prior to crossing the scoreline and entering the Touchdown Zone.



## 9 PLAY ON

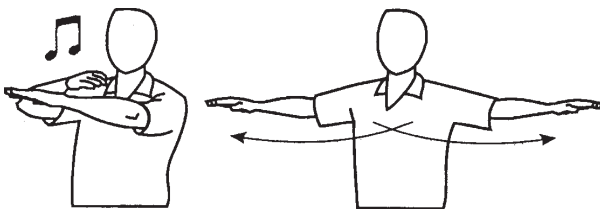
With palms facing away from the chest, wave the hands at chest height across the body and out to the sides.

*Support this signal verbally by calling "Play On"*



## 10 END OF THE MATCH

A long fluctuating blast of the whistle is performed, then both arms are raised outstretched in front of the body at shoulder height, with palms facing downwards, crossed at the wrists and brought out to the sides in a slow deliberate motion.



## PENALTY SIGNALS

There are many penalty situations outlined in the Touch New Zealand Playing Rules. Each infringement must be indicated by means of a particular signal. The awarding of a penalty is a very serious aspect of any match and, as such, it is imperative that players, coaches and spectators are aware of the reason for the penalty being given.

### ORDER OF SEQUENCE FOR SIGNALS AT A PENALTY

- 1 Whistle
  - 2 Direction
  - 3 Infringement Signal
  - 4 Location of the Mark
  - 5 Offending Team Back 10 Metres
- } Performed at the same time

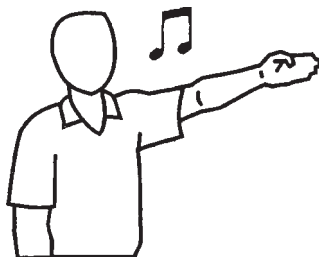
The sequence may vary, depending on the circumstances with the mark being indicated before the infringement signal, so the Referee is not the cause of play being delayed.

Please note: infringement signals should be performed in the direction of the offending team, so it is clear to the offending players the reason for the Referee's rulings.

## 1 PENALTY

As the whistle is blown, one arm is stretched out in the direction of the non-offending team. The arm must be slightly higher than shoulder height with the hand vertical to the ground, fingers outstretched with the thumb tucked down.

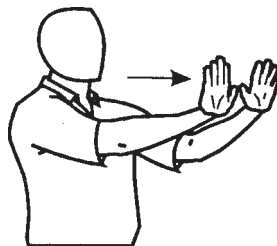
This signal may be given facing the non-offending team or, when moving quickly to the mark, with the body facing the sideline.



## 2 CONTROLLING THE TEN METRES

Following the Penalty signal and indication of the mark, indicate to the defending team that they must retire ten (10) metres by holding arms in front of the body, elbows slightly bent and with finger outstretched.

*The call "Ten Metres" or similar wording is announced.*

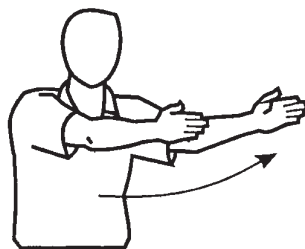


## 3 FORWARD PASS

Blow the whistle and award the penalty

With both arms outstretched in front of the body, make a forward movement indicating the direction in which the ball travelled.

*The call "Forward Pass" is announced.*



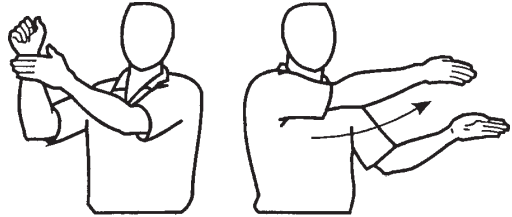
## 4 TOUCH AND PASS

Blow the whistle and award the penalty

One arm is raised in front of the body at shoulder height with the forearm held vertically.

The other hand then indicates a tapping of that forearm, then follows on across the body with a backward passing movement with both arms.

*The call "Touch and Pass" or similar wording is announced.*

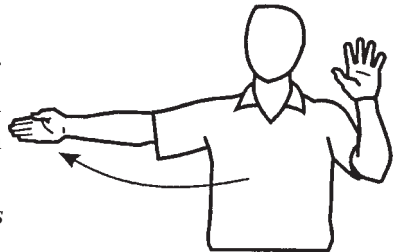


## 5 OFFSIDE AT FIVE METRES

Blow the whistle and award the penalty

One hand is raised towards the offending player with the fingers and thumb outstretched. A waving movement is then made with either arm indicating a backward direction.

*The call "Five Metres, Please" or similar wording is announced*

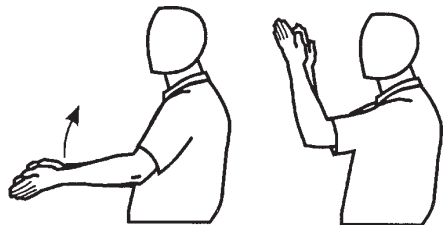


## 6 VOLUNTARY ROLLBALL

Blow the whistle and award the penalty

With fingers outstretched and palms facing upwards, a lifting movement is indicated with both arms raised to head height, bending the elbows as it is performed.

*The call "Voluntary Rollball" or similar wording is announced*

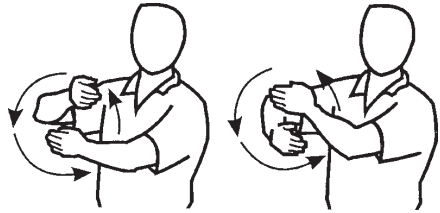


## 7 RUNNING ON AFTER BEING TOUCHED

Blow the whistle and award the penalty

Use the hands in a rolling motion out in front of the body.

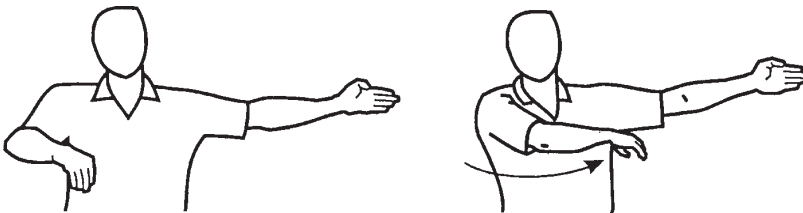
*The call "Running On" or similar wording is announced*



## 8 OBSTRUCTION

Blow the whistle and award the penalty

Whilst indicating the direction of the penalty with one arm, the other arm moves in an arc-like motion



around the body on no more than two occasions.

*The call "Obstruction" is announced*

## 9 DISPUTING DECISION OR BACKCHAT

Blow the whistle and award the penalty

One hand is raised to the mouth with the fingers outstretched.

*The call "Backchat" may be announced*



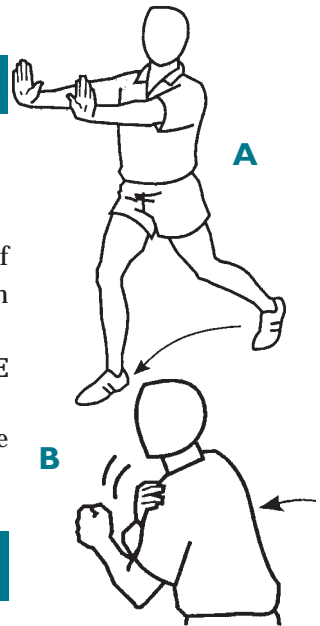
## 10 OVER PHYSICAL PLAY

### (A) PUSHING OR TWO-HANDED HEAVY TOUCHES.

Blow the whistle and award the penalty  
With both hands raised upward and out in front of the body, step forward emphasising a pushing action with arms fully outstretched.

### (B) BODY BLOCKING OR SHOULDER CHARGE

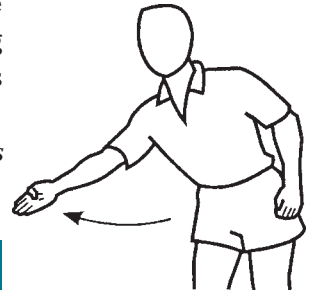
Blow the whistle and award the penalty  
Mime the offending players' action emphasising the shoulder action.



## 11 THROWING/KICKING THE BALL AWAY

Blow the whistle and award the penalty.  
The relevant action is demonstrated by a single underarm movement with one arm, or a kicking movement with one leg. (The mark for the penalty is ten metres forward of the former mark).

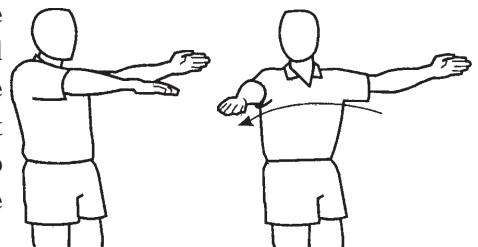
*The call "Throwing the ball away" or similar wording is announced.*



## 12 ROLLBALL OFF THE MARK

Blow the whistle and award the penalty.  
Whilst indicating the direction of the penalty with one arm, the other hand indicates the location of where the rollball was performed, then the correct mark is indicated with the same hand to illustrate the differing locations of the two marks.

*The call "Rollball off the mark" or similar wording is announced*



### 13 DELAYING THE ROLLBALL

Blow the whistle and award the penalty.  
The correct action of performing the rollball is made by the Referee bending forward and indicating the rolling of the ball between the legs.

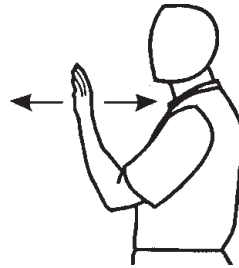
*The call "Delaying the rollball" or similar wording is announced.*



### 14 NOT DEFENDING FURTHER THAN FIVE METRES FROM THE DEFENDING SCORELINE

Blow the whistle and award the penalty.  
Then with arm raised, hand at shoulder height, palm facing forward and fingers outstretched, move the arm in a forward-backward motion. Repeat.

*The call "Not moving forward" or similar wording is announced.*



### 15 HOLDING A PLAYER OR CLOTHING

Blow the whistle and award the penalty.  
Mime the action of holding the player or pulling of the clothing.

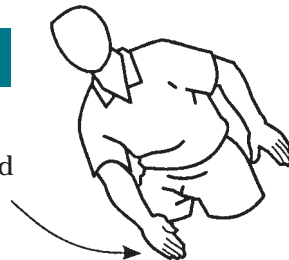
*The call "Holding the player" or similar wording is announced.*



### 16 ANKLETAP

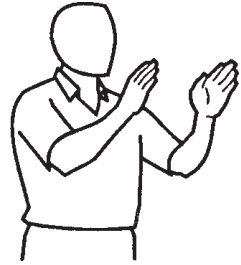
Blow the whistle and award the penalty.  
Mime the action of the Ankle Tap with the hand emphasising the intent of the swinging arm.

*The call "Ankle Tap" is announced.*



## 17 FALSELY CLAIMED TOUCH (PHANTOM)

Blow the whistle and award the penalty  
Both hands are raised in front of the body at eye level, with palms facing each other, and held in the direction of the offending player to indicate the distance by which the claimed touch was missed.  
*The call “Falsely Claimed Touch” or similar wording is announced.*



## ROLLBALL SIGNALS

If a rollball is not performed correctly, a change of possession results.

It is not acceptable to award a penalty against a penalty. So if a Penalty Tap is not performed correctly a change of possessions results.

In each circumstance, a short blast of the whistle should be given to attract the attention of the offending player. This is then followed by the appropriate signal to demonstrate the ruling by the Referee. Verbal communication is necessary to assist in conveying the Referee's ruling to the offending player and nearby players.



## 1 INCORRECT ROLLBALL

- (a) **The ball has been dropped to the side.**

Blow the whistle.

While in a stationary position with one hand pointing downwards, swing the arm in a backward motion on the side of the body.

- (b) **The ball does not touch the ground.**

Blow the whistle.

While in a stationary position mime the action of throwing the ball backward between the legs.

- (c) **The touched player does not face the opponent's scoreline.**

Blow the whistle.

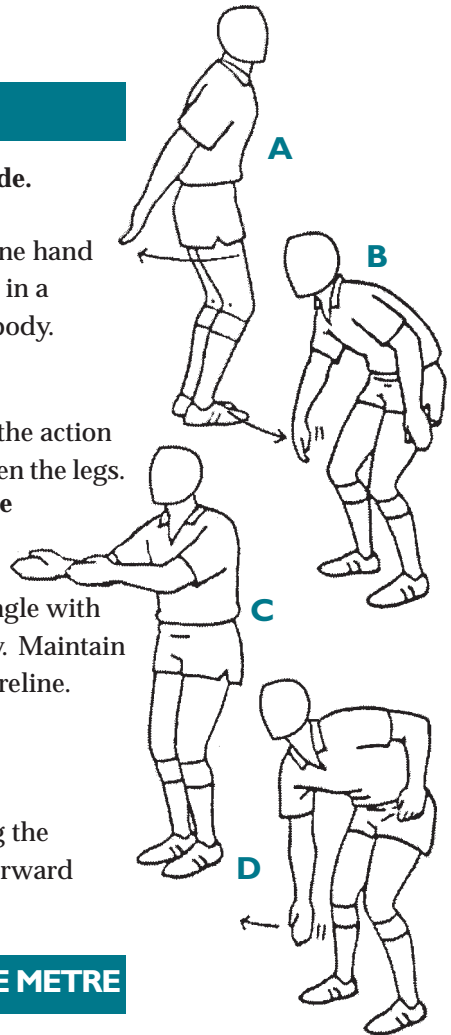
Mime the action by standing at an angle with arms outstretched in front of the body. Maintain arm position and turn to face the scoreline.

Emphasise arm direction.

- (d) **Ball rolled forward**

Blow the whistle.

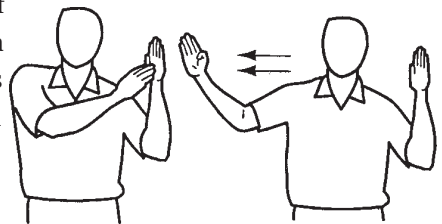
Mime the rollball action emphasising the rollball with the hand moving in a forward direction.



## 2 ROLLBALL MORE THAN ONE METRE

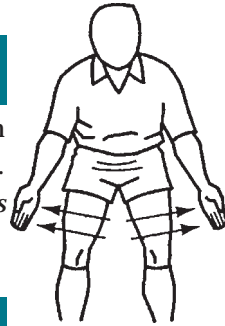
One hand is held forward to one side of the face with the fingers outstretched in a vertical fashion. The other hand comes in contact with the first hand and is then moved away, on no more than two occasions to indicate the distance the ball was rolled.

*The call "Rolled more than one metre" or similar wording is announced*



### 3 PENALTY TAP – BALL NOT RELEASED

Both hands are held down in front of the body, with the hands open are drawn apart in two quick actions. The call “Ball not released” or similar wording is announced.



### 4 PENALTY TAP – CONTACT NOT MADE WITH FOOT

One foot is raised in front of the body and tapped with the opposite hand. The call “No contact made with foot” or similar wording is announced.



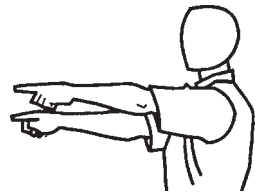
## SPECIFIC SIGNALS

Rare, but important situations require specific signals in order to illustrate the Referee’s rulings. The following signals are vital as the Referee’s actions at these times may well have an affect on the outcome of the match.

These are all areas where the signals should not be rushed, but performed in a calm and deliberate manner. Verbal communication is essential to support the rulings being made.

### 1 DROP OFF

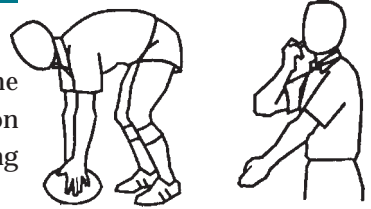
Blow the whistle and indicate the two-minute interval has expired. Indicate that two players are to leave the field by using outstretched arms at shoulder height by pointing towards the substitution boxes. Blow the whistle to restart play.



## 2 PENALTY TOUCHDOWN

Blow the whistle.

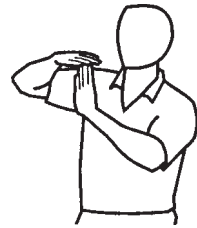
The Referee picks up the ball, carries it over the scoreline into the touchdown zone and places it on the ground. Then the normal procedure of awarding a Touchdown is followed.



## 3 DISMISSAL – PERIOD OF TIME

Blow the whistle and award the penalty.

Both hands are brought in front of the body at shoulder height and form the letter “T”. The Referee then points to an area at the end of the field, five metres behind the middle of the opposition’s defending Touchdown Zone line. The player’s captain should be advised of the reason for this action.



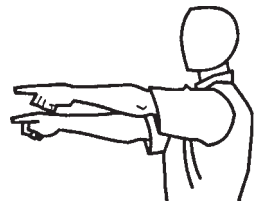
## 4 DISMISSAL – REMAINDER OF THE MATCH

Blow the whistle.

Indicate the offending player. Followed by a pointing action with both hands in the direction of the sideline in the vicinity of the halfway line. Play does not recommence until the player is at least ten metres past the sideline.

The player’s captain should be advised of the reason for this action.

Blow the whistle and award the penalty.



# SUPPORT SIGNALS

## DUAL OF TRIPLE REFEREEING SYSTEMS

### 1 SUPPORT REFEREE – AGREES WITH TOUCHDOWN

Energy and time are saved in instances of a runaway touchdown, by the Support Referee not having to run all the way to the scoreline. The Support Referee, if in agreement with the touchdown being awarded, merely becomes stationary on the sideline and faces the controlling Referee and once acknowledged, raises one hand to eye level and moves it out to the side, with the palm facing outwards.



### 2 SUPPORT REFEREE – OBSERVES INFRINGEMENT

The Support Referee discreetly places one arm across the opposite chest/shoulder.



### 3 SUPPORT REFEREE – OBSERVES PLAYER IN POSSESSION ON OR OVER BOUNDARY

The Support Referee raises one arm vertically in the air, fingers outstretched and together with thumb tucked down.



## **NOTES:**

**For further information contact:**



Touch New Zealand  
PO Box 33-044  
Petone, Lower Hutt 5046  
New Zealand  
Ph: 64-4-560 0370, Fax: 64-4-560 0400  
Email: [enquiries@touchnz.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@touchnz.co.nz)  
[www.touchnz.co.nz](http://www.touchnz.co.nz)

