

AUSTRALIAN TOUCH ASSOCIATION



PLAYING RULES

1982

THE RULES OF TOUCH 1982

FOREWORD

The game of touch has developed considerably over the past few years; recent interstate competition has shown that variations in rules between affiliates do exist. The aim of this 1982 rule book is to eradicate any deviation from an authorised and national standard of touch rules.

In many isolated areas and in some of the larger states, the sport has grown without knowledge of approved rules. The very nature of the sport and its universal popularity amongst players of all ages does little to aid rule knowledge. It behoves us all to ensure that rule knowledge improves throughout the country. And it is to be remembered that the rules should be studied and learnt by players, coaches, officials and supporters alike.

Rule knowledge is a pre-requisite of enjoyment. Whether involvement is for purely social reasons or strictly on a competitive basis, all participants should ensure they possess a sound awareness of the rules.

Players involved in the sport for many years will notice changes from the 1980 rules. The sport is fast approaching the complete evolution from the all-kicking game of soccer. Through the rugby sports of part kicking and part handling the game has developed into one requiring all hand-ball skills, to say nothing of the necessary agility, speed and teamwork.

This rule book will form the basic package for international development of touch. Coaches seeking accreditation as part of the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme will be required to exhibit an above average knowledge of the contents. Future development of the sport will depend on successful implementation of these rules.

Learn the rules and enjoy your game.

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RULE 1 — DEFINITIONS

Unless the contrary intention appears, the following definitions apply throughout the Rules of Touch.

Acting-half is the player who receives the ball from the play-the-ball.

Attacking Team is the team with possession of the ball.

Advantage is that property which gives one team the potential to improve.

Behind means in a position towards a team's own (defending) score-line.

Dead Ball means when the ball is out of play.

Defending Team is the team without possession.

Delivered means parting with the ball.

Field of Play is the playing area bounded by the side-lines and score-lines.

Forward means in a position towards the opponent's (defending) score-line.

Mark (for a touch) is the position on the field of play where the player in possession is positioned at the instant the touch is effected.

Mark (for a tap) is the position on the field of play where a penalty has been awarded. The mark may be where the infringement occurred or at the position of advantage.

Marker is the player of the defending team who takes up the position at the play-the-ball in accordance with Rule 13.2.

Misconduct is any action from a player or official of either team which is deemed to be contrary to the spirit of the game.

Play-the-ball is the necessary act of bringing the ball into play following a touch or change of possession.

Side-lines are the side boundaries of the field of play.

Score-lines are the lines on or over which the ball has to be placed to score.

Touch is any legitimate contact between a defending player and the player in possession. A touch includes contact on hair, clothing or the ball and may be initiated by either the attacking player in possession or by a defending player.

Touchdown is the result of an attacking player placing the ball on or over the opponent's score-line.

RULE 2 — THE FIELD OF PLAY

1. **Dimensions.** The playing field shall be rectangular in shape and shall measure ~~seventy (70)~~ metres in length and ~~fifty (50)~~ metres in width.

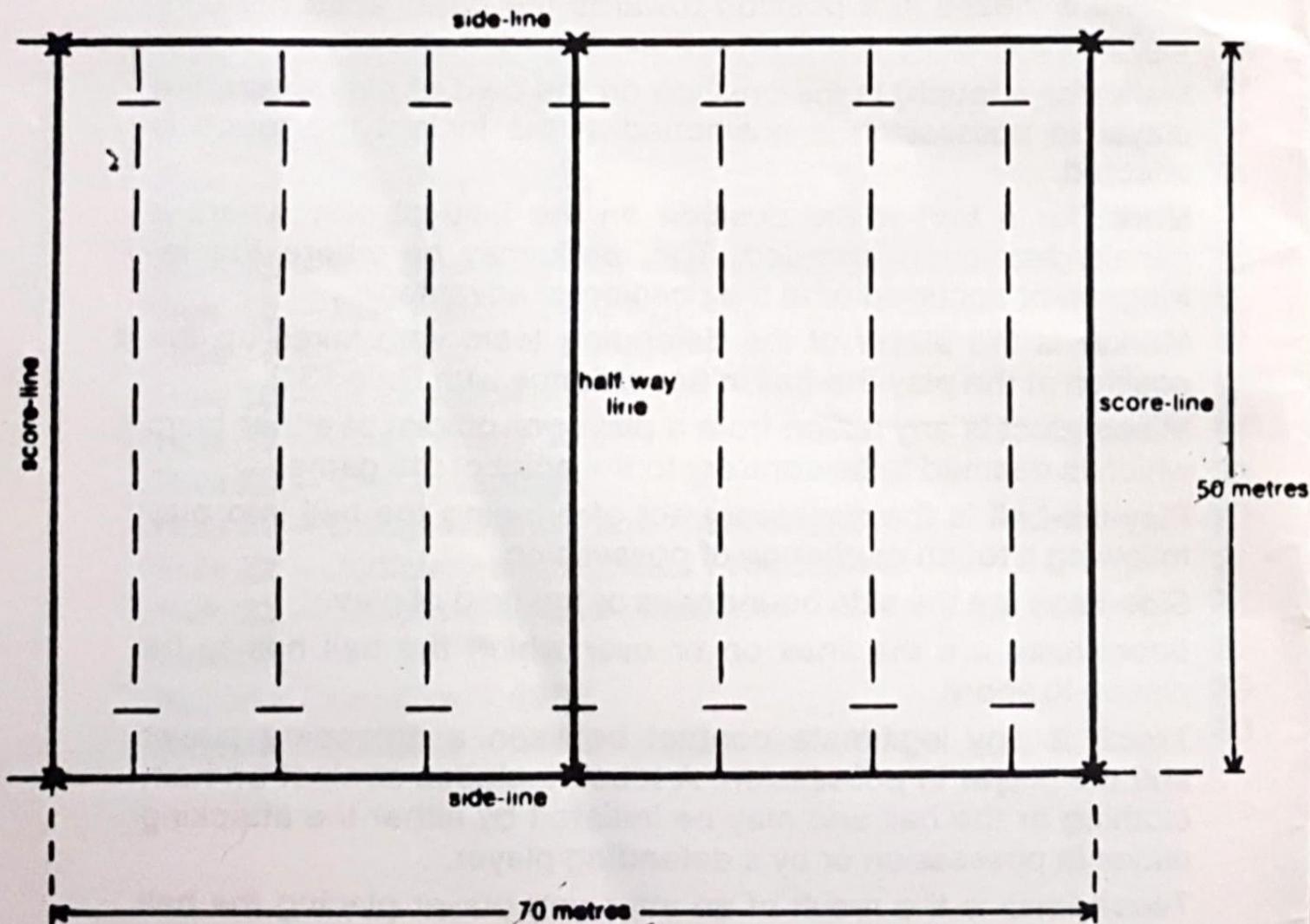
2. **Markings.** Markings defining the field of play shall not be less than 2.5 cm in width and should be laid out as shown in the diagram below. The broken lines parallel to the score-lines and the broken lines parallel to the side-lines are optional. The side-lines should be extended at least ten (10) metres, however, there is no dead-ball line.

3. **Corner Posts.** Corner posts or markers of a distinguishing colour and made from a suitable material should be positioned at the intersection of the score-lines and the side-lines and at the intersection of the half-way line and the side-lines.

4. **Playing Surface.** The playing surface should be grass. Surfaces which may cause injury to players should not be used.

Notes: A. *The side-lines and corner posts are out of play.*

B. *Touchdowns may be scored on or beyond the score-lines.*



X — corner posts and markers

RULE 3 — THE BALL

1. **Shape and Construction.** The game shall be played with an oval, air-inflated ball constructed of leather or a synthetic material approved by the Australian Touch Association.
2. **Inflation.** The ball should be inflated to the recommended air pressure applicable to the type of ball.
3. **Colour.** The ball may be of any colour, preferably white for seniors and a dark colour for juniors, or as approved by the Australian Touch Association
4. **Size and Weight.** The size and dimensions of the ball shall be as approved by the Australian Touch Association.

RULE 4 — PLAYERS DRESS AND EQUIPMENT

1. **Uniforms.** All participating players are to be correctly dressed in team uniforms of distinctive colour or design as approved by the controlling association. Uniforms consist of upper apparel (shirt or singlet), shorts or briefs (for females) with long socks and footwear.
2. **Footwear.** Shoes or boots without screw-in studs are to be worn. Light leather or synthetic boots with moulded soles and studs not longer than 1 cm are permitted
3. **Numbering.** All players are to have an identifying number, not less than 16 cm in height, clearly displayed on either the front or back of the upper garment. As an alternative, numbers may be positioned on both sleeves providing the numbers are at least 8 cm in height.
4. **Jewellery.** Players are not to participate in any match while wearing any item which could prove dangerous to other players. Hand jewellery which cannot be removed is to be taped.
5. **Protective Clothing.** Protective clothing may only be worn with the express permission of the controlling association providing medical grounds exist.
6. **Climatic Extremes.** In areas of extreme cold or heat the above dress regulations may be varied at the discretion of the controlling association.
7. **Fingernails.** Long or dangerous fingernails are to be taped or trimmed.

Note: *The referee must inspect all player's equipment, clothing and fingernails prior to the commencement of a game. Players should not be allowed to participate until dangerous items are removed or rendered safe.*

RULE 5 — TEAM COMPOSITION AND SUBSTITUTION

1. **Number of Players.** A team is to comprise of a maximum of eleven (11) players and a minimum of five (5). No more than seven (7) players are allowed on the field of play at any time.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the non-offending team five (5) metres from the side-line where the additional player entered the field of play or wherever the player in possession is positioned, whichever is the greater advantage to the non-offending team.*

Note: *Local controlling associations may vary the maximum number of participants providing the policy incorporates approval of both team captains.*

2. **Substitution.** Substitutes may interchange with players on the field of play at any time providing their team is in possession or providing the ball is dead. Substitutes may in turn, be replaced and there is no limit to the number of times a player may interchange.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the non-offending team five (5) metres from the side-line where the substitution occurred or wherever the player in possession is positioned, whichever is the greater advantage to the non-offending team.*

3. **Interchange.** The interchange of substitutes may take place on either side of the field of play provided the replaced player has left the field of play prior to the replacement player entering the playing area. Substitutions should normally take place at the side-lines and players should make physical contact during the interchange. The interchange must occur at an on-side position.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the non-offending team five (5) metres from the side-line where the infringement occurred or wherever the player in possession is positioned, whichever is the greater advantage to the non-offending team.*

Note: *The minimum number of players required to constitute a team is five (5). If for any reason during a game the number of players available to represent a team falls below five (5), then the opposing team is to be declared the winner and the resultant score is to be decided by the controlling association.*

RULE 6 — PERIOD OF PLAY

1. **Duration of the Game.** The game shall normally consist of two (2) halves, each of twenty-five (25) minutes duration, with five (5) minutes half-time. Variations to the length of the game may be authorized by the controlling association.

2. **Injuries.** There is no time added to the duration of the game for normal replacements. The duration may be extended under exceptional circumstances or for serious injury with the approval of the controlling association.

3. **Timekeeping.** The controlling association is responsible to provide timekeepers. In the absence of an official timekeeper the referee is to be the sole timekeeper.

4. **End of Play.** If time expires when the ball is dead the referee is required to indicate acknowledgement however, play is to continue until the ball becomes dead. If a penalty is awarded prior to the ball becoming dead the non-offending team is to be allowed to take the penalty.

- Notes:*
- A. *Stoppages should be reduced to a minimum and in adverse weather conditions the half-time interval may be deleted providing team captains agree.*
 - B. *Officiating timekeepers are to inform referees if controlling association policies allow for any variations in duration of games.*
 - C. *Duration of games in the final series and in any knock-out competitions are to be at the discretion of controlling associations and are to be advised to all competing teams prior to the commencement of the first game of the series or the first knock-out match.*

RULE 7 — MODE OF PLAY AND SCORING

1. **Object of the Game.** The object of the game of touch is for each team to score touchdowns and to prevent the opposing team from scoring.

2. **Method of Play.** The ball may be passed, thrown, knocked or handed between on-side players of the same team who may in turn run with the ball in an attempt to gain a territorial advantage and score touchdowns. The opposition players may take up a defensive pattern in an attempt to prevent the attacking team from gaining a territorial advantage and by effecting touches on players in possession, cause them to play-the-ball.

3. **Application of the Rules.** All actions by players and officials of both teams are to be in accordance with the Rules of Touch as contained in the Rule Book. Players and officials who breach the Rules are liable to penalty.

4. **The Winner.** The team scoring the highest number of touchdowns is declared the winner. In the event of neither team scoring, a draw is to be declared. In the event of both teams scoring the same number of touchdowns, the teams are to be declared joint winners and a draw is to be recorded. In the event of a forfeit or if the game is abandoned due to the actions of one of the teams, the non-offending team is to be declared the winner and the mar-

5. **Scoring.** A touchdown is awarded when a player places the ball on or over the opponent's (defending) score-line, providing the attacking player is neither on or over the side-line nor on or over the extended side-line beyond the score-line. The ball must be placed on the ground prior to the ball-carrier being touched. If a touch is effected simultaneously as the player places the ball on the ground, a touchdown is not awarded and the attacking player is required to play-the-ball five (5) metres in-field from where the player crossed the score-line. If that touch is the sixth touch the opposing team gains possession and re-starts play with a play-the-ball five (5) metres in-field from where the touch occurred.

RULE 8 – COMPETITION POINTS

1. **Points Awarded.** Competition points are awarded to competing teams as follows:

WIN	—	3 points
BYE	—	3 points
DRAW	—	2 points
LOSS	—	1 point
FORFEIT	—	0 points

² *Note: A forfeit includes an abandoned game.*

2. **Competition Finals.** The number of teams to contest any final series is to be advised by controlling associations prior to commencement of the first competition rounds. Policy on progression through the final series is also to be advised in advance. In the case of drawn matches in final series it is normal procedure to play an extra period of time (normally ten (10) minutes each way without an interval) and if scores are still equal, to refer to score averages throughout the competition rounds to decide the team to progress. If score averages are equal, the percentages method is used to separate the teams. In drawn grand final or championship matches the controlling association may choose to appoint teams as joint champions or decide on a replay.

Note: It is important that controlling associations advise competing teams of respective policies well in advance.

RULE 9 – THE TOSS

1. **Method.** The toss is used to decide the direction of play for each team for the first half of the game and to determine which team shall start the game with possession. The team captains shall toss a coin in the presence of the referee and the captain winning the toss is to have both the choice of ends and possession of the ball for the commencement of the first half. The team

losing the toss shall re-commence play in the second half with possession and from the same end as the winner of the toss began in the first half.

2. **Captains.** The captain of the home or host team is to toss the coin and the opposing captain is to have the choice of call. In the event of neither team being the host team the referee should decide which captain is to toss the coin.

Notes: A. The referee should provide the coin. In the event of no coin being provided an alternative method of deciding ends may be used.

B. The referee should use the opportunity at the time of the toss to instruct team captains on matters of play.

RULE 10 — COMMENCEMENT OF PLAY

1. **Attacking Team.** Following the indication by the referee to commence play, the attacking team is to start the game with a tap from the centre of the half-way line. The tap is to be taken as for a penalty tap (see Rule 19). All players of the attacking team must remain in an on-side position until the ball is in play.

PENALTY: *A change of possession awarded the non-offending team to re-commence play with a play-the-ball at the centre of the half-way line.*

2. **Defending Team.** All players of the defending team must not stand closer than ten (10) metres from the half-way line and defending players may not move forward of the 10 metre line until the ball is in play. The ball is in play when tapped with the foot.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the attacking team ten (10) metres forward of the half-way line nearest the infringement.*

3. **Re-commencement of Play.** After the scoring of a touchdown play is to re-commence as in Rule 10.1 with a tap by the team against which the touchdown was scored. The ball is to be brought into play without undue delay.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the centre of the half-way line.*

Note: The referee should ensure that there is minimum delay between the scoring of a touchdown and the re-commencement of play.

RULE 11 — GENERAL PLAY

1. **Possession.** Providing other Rules do not apply, the team in possession shall be entitled to play-the-ball six (6) times. Following the sixth touch, the player with the ball or the player who last played at the ball is to return the ball to the mark and either hand the ball to an opposition player or place the ball on the ground at the mark. A player of the team losing possession is to ensure that the ball is returned to the mark without delay.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the mark.*

2. **Ball to Ground.** If a player in possession allows the ball to touch the ground (except in scoring a touchdown), a change of possession is to result. Play is re-started with a play-the-ball at the mark where the ball went to ground.

Notes: A. *The position of the mark for the ensuing play-the-ball following a ball to ground is normally where the ball first pitches on the ground. The position of the mark when an untouched pass goes to ground is normally where the ball first pitches on the ground, however the mark is to be the position of best advantage to the team gaining possession.*

B. *If a ball rebounds from a shoe or boot without touching the ground and the action is not deemed to be a kick, play shall continue.*

3. **Ball Mis-handled.** Play shall continue if the ball is mis-handled but does not fall to ground. A player must not propel the ball forward in an attempt to gain an unfair advantage.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the infringement first occurred.*

4. **Ball Rebounds.** Play shall continue if an attacking player in an on-side position gains possession following a rebound from an opposition player. If the opposition player attempts to play at the ball and touches the ball the touch count shall re-start. However, if the opposition player does not make an attempt to play at the ball the touch count shall continue. If the ball falls to the ground after the opposition player attempts to play at the ball, the original attacking team retains possession and the touch count re-starts. If the ball falls to ground after touching an opposition player who has made no attempt to play at the ball, a change of possession is to result at the mark where the ball goes to ground.

5. **Intercepts.** Providing other Rules do not apply, intercepts by defending players are allowed. Play is to continue and the intercepting player is not required to play-the-ball until touched.

6. **Kicking.** The ball is not to be kicked or played with the foot except when playing-the-ball (see Rule 13) or when taking a tap (see Rules 10 and 19).

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the place of infringement.*

7. **Penalty Touchdown.** A penalty touchdown should be awarded if any action by a player or spectator deemed by the referee to be contrary to these Rules or the spirit of the game of touch, prevents an attacking team from scoring.

Notes: A. *The action must be the sole reason why the touchdown was not scored.*

B. *Refer to Rule 20 — Advantage.*

RULE 12 — PASSING

1. **General.** A player in possession may pass, flick, knock, throw or otherwise propel or hand the ball to any other player.

2. **Forward Pass.** A player in possession is not to pass, flick, knock, throw or otherwise propel or hand the ball to a player of the attacking team who receives the ball in an off-side position. This Rule applies in all aspects of play and is applicable even when the ball first travels in a backward direction prior to being received by a player in a position which is forward of the player who last had possession.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the ball was propelled forward.*

Notes: A. *In the event of the ball being knocked forward and received by an off-side player, Rule 12.2. applies.*

B. *Rule 12.2. applies whether or not the player receiving the ball comes from an on-side position.*

3. **Passing into Opposition.** A player who deliberately passes the ball at an opponent, and thereby causes the ball to go to ground, is to lose possession. However, if the defending player attempts to play at the ball or knocks the ball to the ground in an attempt to prevent the attacking player from passing the ball, the attacking team is to retain possession. Play is to re-start with a play-the-ball by the non-offending team at the mark where the ball went to ground. The touch count re-starts.

Note: *The referee should ascertain whether it was the action of the attacking player or the action of the defending player which caused the ball to go to ground.*

RULE 13 — THE PLAY-THE-BALL

1. **General.** A player in possession on whom a touch has been effected or at change of possession, is required to play-the-ball. The ball is deemed to be dead following a touch until the attacking player plays-the-ball (but see Rule 14).

2. **Procedure.** The attacking player is to face the opponent's (defending) score-line, standing parallel to the side-lines, and drops or places the ball on the ground directly in front of the foremost foot and then play-the-ball with the heel, toe or sole of either foot. The ball may only be rolled a maximum distance of one (1) metre. If there is a marker in position the ball is to be played backwards. If there is no marker in position, the ball may be played either backwards or forwards.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the defending team at the mark.*

3. **The Marker.** The defending team is allowed to have one marker who must stand directly in front of the player with the ball and at a distance not more than two (2) metres and not less than one (1) metre from the player in possession. The marker must not interfere with the ball or the player in possession and may not move until the acting-half has touched the ball (but see Rule 13.8.).

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the attacking team at the mark.*

4. **Physical Contact.** Neither the marker nor the player in possession is to initiate any physical contact during the play-the-ball.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the mark.*

²**Note:** *The marker must stand still during the play-the-ball.*

5. **The Defending Team.** At the play-the-ball all players of the defending team, with the exception of the marker, are to move to, and remain behind, a distance of not less than five (5) metres behind the marker. No player of the defending team may move forward of the five (5) metres until the acting-half has touched the ball (but see Rule 13.8.).

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the attacking team at a mark level with the position where the infringing player should have been.*

6. **The Acting-Half.** A player of the attacking team who is standing in a position to receive the ball from the player in possession is the acting-half. The acting-half must be allowed to pass the ball, however, if the acting-half elects to retain possession and runs or dummies and a touch is effected a change of possession will result.

7. **Action Without Marker.** If a player elects to play-the-ball forward when there is no marker in position, that player may retrieve the ball and play continues. However, the player becomes the acting-half by definition and loses possession if a touch is effected. All players of the defending team are to retire five (5) metres from the mark. Defending players within the five (5) metres who interfere with play are liable to penalty. Off-side players must not interfere with the attacking player until that player has advanced five (5) metres.

PENALTY: A tap awarded to the attacking team at a mark where the infringing player should have been (but see Rules 17, 19 and 20).

8. Actions Without an Acting-Half in Position. A player is required to play-the-ball immediately a touch is effected (see Rule 14). There are times when the player in possession is required to play-the-ball without an acting-half in position. A player who delays the playing-of-the-ball when a marker is in position is liable to penalty. A player who plays-the-ball in accordance with Rule 13.2. and without an acting-half entitles the marker and other defending on-side players to move forward of their positions as soon as the ball is played backwards. The marker or another on-side defending player may gain possession and play is to recommence with a play-the-ball at the mark where possession changed. An attacking player moving to gather the ball from a position other than that of the acting-half is deemed to be the acting-half and Rule 13.6. applies. The player-of-the-ball cannot regather the ball.

Note: There is no need for markers to dive for the ball in an attempt to gain possession. A touch effected on any attacking player who receives the ball from the play-the-ball will cause a change of possession, however Rule 13.6. normally applies.

9. Voluntary Play-the-Ball. A player in possession must not commence to play-the-ball unless a touch has been effected.

PENALTY: A tap awarded to the defending team at the mark where the player commenced to play-the-ball.

Note: For the purpose of Rule 13.9. "commence" means to bend the head or body forward while in a stationary position ready to play-the-ball; or to drop the ball to the ground.

RULE 14 — THE TOUCH

1. The Definition. (See Definitions, Rule 1). A player is to use the minimum physical force necessary to effect a touch.

PENALTY: A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the place of infringement and, as a minimum, a caution issued to the offending player.

Note: A player in possession is not to charge into the defending players.

2. Actions by Player in Possession. An attacking player in possession who is touched or who effects a touch, is required to stop, return to the mark if the mark has been over-run, and play-the-ball immediately.

PENALTY: A tap awarded to the defending team at the mark where the touch was effected.

- Notes:
- A. In open play, players of both the attacking and defending teams are liable to over-run the mark and the referee should indicate the mark to the players.
 - B. A player in possession who has been touched is not permitted to delay the playing-of-the-ball while waiting for another team member to take up the position of acting-half. Rule 14.2. applies.
 - C. Although a player who runs-on following a touch is liable to penalty, the referee should ascertain where possible whether or not the player was aware of the touch prior to awarding a penalty.

3. The Claimed Touch. A defending player must not claim a touch without a touching having been effected.

PENALTY: A tap awarded to the attacking team at the place of infringement, providing the stoppage is not to the disadvantage of the attacking team.

- Notes:
- A. The referee is to take regard of all touches unless sure a touch was not effected, in which case Rule 14.3 applies.
 - B. The referee is to dismiss any defending player who continues to call claimed touches without contact.
 - C. The referee is to apply the advantage (see Rule 20) and should call "play-on" where applicable.

4. Passing After Touch. A player in possession must not pass the ball (or otherwise deliver the ball) after a touch has been effected. The player is required to play-the-ball (see Rule 14.2) or a change of possession results (see Rule 11.1).

PENALTY: A tap awarded to the defending team at the place of infringement.

- Notes:
- A. The referee is to ascertain whether the touch was effected before, during or after the pass with the following results:
 - (1) If the ball is delivered after the touch was made a penalty is to result.
 - (2) If the ball is delivered simultaneously as the touch was effected **and the ball does not go to ground**, the touch is to count and the ball is to be recalled. As a guide, a simultaneous touch-with-pass should only occur five (5) or six (6) times a game.
 - (3) If the ball is delivered prior to the touch, play is to continue and the referee should call "play-on".

5. **Interference After Touch.** Following a touch the ball is deemed to be dead and is brought into play at the next play-the-ball. Defending players are not to interfere with the player in possession or prevent the player from playing-the-ball.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the place of infringement.*

6. **Touched in Possession.** A player who is touched while attempting to control the ball which is physically out of the hands is deemed to have been touched and a play-the-ball is to result. Refer to Rule 11.3.

7. **The Mark.** (See Definitions, Rule 1). The mark where the touch occurred is dependent on the position of the player in possession and the defending player who takes up the position of marker (see Rule 13.3) is required to retire the necessary distance in front of the player in possession. The touched player dictates the location of the mark.

Notes: A. *An attacking player may initiate the touch and the nominated marker is required to retire to the correct position.*

B. *Once a marker has taken up the position, the player in possession must not move from the designated mark.*

RULE 15 — BALL OVER SIDE-LINE AND BEYOND SCORE-LINE

1. **General.** (See Definitions Rule 1, and The Field of Play Rule 2.) The ball is out of play when it touches or crosses the side-line, or when a player in possession touches or crosses the side-line. However, if a player in possession was touched prior to crossing the side-line, the touch is to count and play continues where the touch occurred. The team not responsible for the ball touching or crossing the side-line is to re-commence play with a play-the-ball five (5) metres in-field from where the ball touched or crossed the side-line.

2. **Ball Knocked or Passed Across Side-line.** If the ball is knocked or passed across the side-line, whether on the full or as a rebound and whether in a forward or backward direction, the team not responsible for the dead ball is to re-commence play five (5) metres in-field. The position of the mark is either where the ball touches or crosses the side-line or where the ball was knocked or passed forward, whichever is to the advantage of the team gaining possession.

3. **Touched Beyond Opponent's Score-line.** If a player in possession is touched after crossing the opponent's score-line, and prior to the scoring of a touchdown, the touch is to count and the game is re-commenced with a play-the-ball five (5) metres in-field

is the sixth touch the opposing team is to re-commence play with a play-the-ball five (5) metres in-field from where the player crossed the score-line. (See Rule 7.5.)

4. Ball Passed or Carried Beyond Own Score-line. If a player of the team in possession passes or carries the ball on or over the (defending) score-line, a change of possession is to result. The game is to be re-commenced with a play-the-ball by the opposing team five (5) metres in-field from where the ball or the player in possession crossed the score-line.

Note: A team in possession should not be made to play-the-ball within five (5) metres of their own (defending) score-line. The referee should allow the player in possession to move forward to the five (5) metre mark.

5. Ball Played Forward over Score-line. A player in possession may play-the-ball forward if there is no marker in position. However, the ball cannot be played forward over the score-line. The ball must be carried to and placed on or over the score-line to score. (Refer to Rule 7.5.)

RULE 16 — BALL TOUCHED IN FLIGHT

1. Restart Touch Count. If a defending player touches the ball while it is in flight between players of the attacking team and the ball goes to ground, the attacking team is to retain possession and the touch count is to restart. Play is re-commenced with a play-the-ball at the mark where the ball goes to ground or where the defending player touched the ball, whichever is to the best advantage to the attacking team. If the ball does not go to ground, play is to continue and the next touch effected on the attacking team is deemed to be the first touch.

Note: The referee should indicate "six-more-touches" to the attacking team.

2. Unintentional Contact by Defender. If the ball touches or rebounds from a defending player who has not made any attempt to play at the ball and the ball is retrieved by an attacking player, then play is to continue and the touch count is not to restart. If the ball goes to ground a change of possession is to result and play is to re-commence with a play-the-ball at the mark where the ball went to ground. If the ball is retrieved by a defending player after unintentional contact by another defending player, then play is to continue.

3. Deflection. If an attacking player is unable to retrieve the ball after an attempted intercept or deliberate touch of the ball by a defending player, and the ball goes to ground, the attacking team is to retain possession and the touch count is to restart. This Rule is to apply even if the attacking player is the last player to touch the ball prior to the ball going to ground. The mark for the re-com-

mencement of play is where the ball goes to ground or where the defending player deflected the ball, whichever is to the advantage of the attacking team.

*Note: In applying this Rule, referees should ascertain whether or not it was the actions of the defending player who deflected the ball which **caused** the attacking player to mishandle.*

RULE 17 — OFF-SIDE

1. **Attacking Team.** A player of the attacking team is off-side when the player is forward of another player in the attacking team who last played at, touched or carried the ball. In general play, off-side players of the attacking team should not be penalized provided they remain out of play and do not interfere with players of the defending team. Off-side players of the attacking team become on-side players when either they retire behind the ball or when a player carrying the ball runs forward of the off-side player.

2. **Off-side at Tap.** All players of the attacking team are to remain in an on-side position during the taking of a tap, to commence or re-commence play and during a tap penalty.

PENALTY: *A change of possession and the non-offending team to re-commence play with a play-the-ball at the mark where the tap should have been taken. (Refer to Rules 10.1. and 19.4.)*

3. **Defending Team.** Players of the defending team are considered to be off-side when the following Rules are infringed:

- (a) Rule 10.2. at the commencement and re-commencement of play.
- (b) Rule 13.5. at the play-the-ball.
- (c) Rule 19.5. at the tap penalty.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the attacking team at a mark level with the position where the defending player should have been prior to the infringement.*

- Notes:*
- A. *There is no off-side by defending players in open play.*
 - B. *The referee should always apply Rule 20 prior to awarding a penalty for off-side play.*
 - C. *An off-side defending player may run alongside an attacking player and effect a touch when the attacking player has moved forward five (5) or ten (10) metres respectively, depending on the play.*

RULE 18 — OBSTRUCTION

1. **General.** The act of obstruction is against the spirit of the game of touch. Players from either team are liable to penalty for obstruction.

2. **Attacking Team.** Players from the attacking team must not obstruct players of the defending team from attempting to effect a touch. The player in possession must not run or move behind

other players of the attacking team in such a manner so as to prevent defending players from effecting a touch.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the defending team at the place of infringement.*

- Notes:*
- A. *A player in possession cannot be guilty of obstruction, however, the player in possession can cause other attacking players to obstruct defending players.*
 - B. *The referee should call "play-on" in the event of mutual obstruction with no advantage to either team.*
 - C. *The player in possession at the play-the-ball is not to obstruct the marker (see Rule 13.4.).*

3. Defending Team. Players from the defending team must not obstruct players of the attacking team other than the player in possession.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the attacking team at the place of infringement provided it is not to the disadvantage of the attacking team to do so.*

Note: *Obstruction includes the act of holding, tripping or any other action which prevents the attacking player from supporting the player in possession.*

RULE 19 — THE PENALTY TAP

1. General. Provided the stoppage would not be to the disadvantage of the non-offending team, a referee may award a penalty tap for any infringement in accordance with the Rules of Touch.

- Notes:*
- A. *The referee is to award the penalty without delay, taking due regard of Rule 20.*
 - B. *Once play has stopped the referee is to indicate the mark at which the tap is to be taken. The referee may then go on to briefly advise the captain or the player of the infringing team of the reason for the penalty and then execute the appropriate signal.*

2. Location of the Mark. The mark for a penalty is normally at the place of infringement unless otherwise detailed in specific Rules. For infringements which occur beyond the score-lines or outside the side-lines, the mark is normally five (5) metres infield from where the offence occurred.

Note: *The tap cannot be taken until the referee indicates the location of the mark. Referees are to ensure that slow indication of the position of the mark does not disadvantage the non-offending team.*

3. Method. The tap is taken by placing the ball on the ground on or behind the location of the mark, releasing both hands from the ball, tapping the ball with either foot a distance of not more than

one (1) metre and retrieving the ball cleanly. Any player of the attacking team may take the tap.

PENALTY: *A change of possession with the non-offending team to re-commence play with a play-the-ball at the mark.*

4. Attacking Team. The remainder of the attacking team must be in an on-side position at the time the tap is taken.

PENALTY: *A change of possession with the non-offending team to re-commence play with a play-the-ball at the mark.*

Notes: A. *The player taking the tap may be in front of the ball facing other attacking players provided the ball is on or behind the mark.*

B. *Any on-side player of the attacking team may retrieve the ball once it has been tapped.*

5. Defending Team. All players of the defending team are required to retire not less than ten (10) metres from the mark, or to their own score-line, whichever is the lesser. No player of the defending team may move forward until the ball has been tapped.

PENALTY: *A tap awarded to the attacking team at a mark level with the position where the offending player should have been.*

6. Consecutive Penalties. Following the award of a penalty and a subsequent quick tap by the attacking team, defending players who are in an off-side position are not to interfere with the attacking team until they have moved forward ten (10) metres.

PENALTY: *Normally a tap awarded to the attacking team ten (10) metres forward of the position of the former (penalty) mark. However, the referee should not award a penalty if it is to the disadvantage of the attacking team to do so.*

Notes: A. *The referee should "play the advantage" if defending players infringe within ten (10) metres of their own score-line.*

B. *After the second consecutive penalty it is normal to "play the advantage" against defending players who continue to infringe.*

7. Advice to Captains. Following the award of a penalty it is normal for the referee to advise the player involved or the team captain of the offending team of the reason for the penalty. The nominated team captain may ask the referee the reason for the penalty however, no other player should question the referee's decision. A player must not abuse, swear at or otherwise insult the referee.

RULE 20 — THE ADVANTAGE

1. **General.** Following any breach of the Rules of Touch, the advantage to the non-offending team must be readily obvious for play to proceed without penalty. The advantage is to apply at all times however, players should be aware that although the referee might allow play to proceed in an attempt to adjudicate on advantage, the referee continues to have the authority to subsequently caution, penalize or dismiss offending players.

- Notes:*
- A. *An infringement is not neutralized simply because the ball comes in contact with an opponent. What is important in playing the advantage is that the opponent must have the opportunity to firstly, gain an advantage and secondly, must at least exploit part of the advantage made available.*
 - B. *The referee is the sole judge of advantage and should make regular use of the instruction "play-on".*

RULE 21 — DISCIPLINE AND PLAYER MISCONDUCT

1. **General.** The referee has several disciplinary options available according to the seriousness of the infringement. A caution during play at the appropriate time and place will often prevent more serious action involving penalty and dismissal.

2. **Dismissal.** A player may be dismissed from the field of play as follows:

- (1) **"A Period of Time"**. A player dismissed for repeated infringements or for an offence necessitating more than a penalty, is to move from the field of play until advised by the referee that the player can return. The team captain and the player concerned should be advised of the reason for the dismissal. The dismissed player cannot be replaced. The referee is the sole judge of the period of time and the length may vary from two (2) minutes for say, questioning decisions to twenty (20) minutes or more for a more serious infringement.
- (2) **"The Remainder of the Game"**. A player may be dismissed for the remainder of the game for any serious offence such as gross misconduct or any dangerous act. A player who has been dismissed for the remainder of the game is to take no further part in the match and must remain not closer than ten (10) metres from the field of play. The reason for the dismissal should be advised to the team captain and the player concerned and the dismissal incurs an automatic two (2) week suspension from all touch matches conducted by an affiliated association.

- Notes:
- A. *Dismissal is mandatory following a previous caution for misconduct.*
 - B. *Dismissal for the remainder of the game is mandatory for a player who has previously been dismissed in the match for a period of time.*
 - C. *Following a dismissal for a period of time, no further action is necessary. Following a dismissal for the remainder of the game, the referee is to submit to the controlling authority a report on the incident within twenty-four (24) hours.*
 - D. *If the game is concluded while a player dismissed for a period of time is off the field, the dismissal is not to be interpreted as a dismissal for the remainder of the game.*

3. **Player Misconduct.** The referee may dismiss or penalize any player or substitute on the field or near the side-line for any offence considered contrary to the Rules or the spirit of the game. Examples of misconduct include obstruction, striking an opponent, disputing decisions and the use of unnecessary physical force.

RULE 22 — JUDICIARY AND APPEALS

1. **Authority.** The procedures contained in RULE 22 are to apply to all State, district and other associations unless contrary procedures are contained in authorized association Regulations or By-Laws, in which case the association procedures are to apply.
2. **Judiciary.** In the event of an association not having an appointed judiciary committee, the executive committee of that association is to act as the judiciary committee. The judiciary committee is required to meet as required to consider reports by referees, association committee members, or submissions from other sources, as necessary. The judiciary committee may take any further action deemed necessary as a result of any incident, and in particular, should assess all submitted reports by referees as a result of any player having been dismissed from the field for "the remainder of the game". Resultant action is to be forwarded to the player concerned within 7 days and forwarded to the general committee of the association within 7 days.
3. **Appeals.** A player dismissed from the field for "the remainder of the game" cannot appeal against the automatic two weeks suspension. However, if the judiciary committee decides to take further action against the player, the player must be given the right of appeal against the "further action". Such an appeal is to be heard by the general committee of the association and will only be considered following a written appeal from the player or

his club or team, which is accompanied by the sum of twenty dollars (\$20) which will be forfeited if the appeal is considered frivolous and groundless. A player who wishes to appeal against a decision by the general committee of an association may submit a further appeal to the State or national association. Any such appeal must be accompanied by the sum of twenty dollars (\$20) which will be forfeited if the appeal is considered frivolous and groundless. All correspondence regarding appeals is to be handled with urgency and confidentiality. Pending the outcome of any appeal, any suspension or penalty already imposed will continue to stand.

4. **Suspensions.** Any suspension imposed upon a player or team by any affiliated association will apply to all competitions conducted by the national association and affiliated associations.

5. **Striking Referee.** Any player who strikes or assaults a referee or a lines-man will be disqualified from playing the game of touch for life.

Notes: A. Suspensions normally commence immediately on dismissal or judiciary decision and conclude at midnight on the day of the expiration of the period of suspension.

B. Controlling associations are to communicate details of any member suspended for more than six (6) months, to their immediate superior association.

RULE 23 — THE REFEREE AND LINES-MEN

1. **General.** 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 is responsible to impose any sanction necessary to control the game and in particular, the referee is to award penalties to the non-offending team when the Rules of Touch apply.

2. **Area of Control.** All players of both teams are under the control of the officiating referee during the time in the playing area. The playing area includes the immediate surrounds of the field of play and in an enclosed ground includes the area within the enclosure.

3. **Lines-men.** Lines-men are to assist the referee as required. The particular task of lines-men relates to the side-lines and referees may consult with lines-men prior to making a decision. Lines-men may not however, initiate action on matters of fact other than that pertaining to the side-line.

Notes: A. The referee should always remember that individual personal attributes will have a bearing on the game.

The following matters are of note:

- (1) **Attitude.** The referee should apply the Rules strictly and fairly and in such a manner that all players enjoy the game.
 - (2) **Appearance.** The dress and personal appearance of the referee should be impeccable. Association referees with a distinct, conventional uniform should be the norm. Teams should not be allowed to register uniforms of similar colour to the referees.
 - (3) **Knowledge.** The referee should have an excellent knowledge of the Rules of Touch.
 - (4) **Application.** Through individual personalities, referees should adhere to the Rules and implement them with constant regard to the advantage.
 - (5) **The Whistle.** The referee should blow the whistle to indicate commencement of play, scoring, dead ball, penalties, stoppages or as required to control play. Tone and length of blast should indicate urgency.
 - (6) **Physical Fitness.** Physical fitness is a prerequisite to effective positional play and referees at all levels should strive to achieve and maintain the required high standard of fitness.
- B. Lines-men are not to move onto the field of play unless requested to do so by the referee.
- C. Prior to awarding a touchdown, the referee should check with both lines-men to acknowledge unobserved foul play.
- D. Following an accidental blowing of the whistle and the resultant stoppage of play, play is to re-commence with a play-the-ball to the team in possession nearest where the player with the ball was positioned at the time the whistle was blown.

REFEREE'S SIGNALS

1. **AWARDING A TRY**
Take up a position close to where the player has grounded the ball. Look to both touch judges and if an infringement has not occurred award the try by pointing to the mark and blowing the whistle.
2. **TRY DISALLOWED**
Wave hands, palms facing downwards across and in front of the body below the waist.
3. **TAP PENALTY**
Face the non-offending team and extend the right arm forward with the hand slightly higher than shoulder level and the palm at the hand at right angles to the ground.
4. **PENALTY TAP**
Kicker fails to bring foot into contact with the ball. Tap the foot with one hand
5. **OBSTRUCTION**
Mime the offending players action.
6. **TRIPPING**
Extend one foot forward as if to trip.
7. **STIFF ARM TOUCH**
Raise an arm in front of the body with fist clenched and as the arm is moved forward, tap the forearm with the other hand.
8. **FORWARD PASS**
Make a forward movement with two arms indicating the line of the flight of the ball.
9. **A. PLAY THE BALL**
If the ball has been dropped between the player's legs, point backwards with one arm between the legs. If the ball has been dropped to the side, point with one hand to the side.
B. Touched player does not lift the ball clear of the ground.
Make a lifting movement with the hand.
C. Touched player does not face opponents in-goal. Stand at the angle offending player adopted and then turn to face opponents in-goal.
10. **PLAYER DELIBERATELY PASSES THE BALL AFTER BEING TOUCHED**
Raise the right arm above the head and tap the forearm with the fingers of the left hand. Follow this by miming the action of passing the ball.
11. **TOUCHED PLAYER OBSTRUCTS OR INTERFERES WITH THE MARKER BEFORE PLAYING THE BALL**
Mime his action.

12. **VOLUNTARY TOUCH**
Make a lifting movement with the hands.
13. **OFFSIDE IN GENERAL PLAY**
With a backward movement of the hand indicate that the player should be further back.
14. **OFFSIDE AT PLAY THE BALL**
Indicate with 5 fingers of the hand spread.
15. **DISPUTING DECISIONS**
Place one hand on the mouth.
16. **PLAY ON**
Wave the hands chest high, palms facing away from the chest across and in front of the body and call play on.
17. **DROPPED BALL**
Hands in front and waved down.
18. **TEAM IS TOUCHED FIVE SUCCESSIVE TIMES**
Raise arm vertically above the head with fingers and thumb outstretched.
19. **TEAM IS TOUCHED SIX SUCCESSIVE TIMES**
Raise the right arm vertically above the head with fingers and thumb outstretched at the same time. Raise the left arm in air with one finger outstretched.
20. **BALL TOUCHED IN FLIGHT**
Raise one hand above head and tap the tips of the fingers with the fingers of the other hand
21. **COUNT OF TOUCHES CANCELLED AND STARTS AGAIN**
Wave clenched fist from side to side above the head.
22. **PLAYER IN POSSESSION TOUCHES REFEREE**
Point to player in possession and tap chest with one hand.
23. **DUMMY HALF CAUGHT IN POSSESSION**
Cross both arms across chest.
24. **PENALTY TRY**
The referee picks the ball up where offence occurred, carries it to try line, puts it down, points and awards try.
25. **CALLED TOUCH**
Referee considers touch misses, put hands in front and apart, indicating the distance missed by.
26. **SIGNAL FOR SHEPHERD**
Extend one arm forward and then with the other move it from one side of the extended arm to the other in an arc-like motion.
27. **RUNNING ON AFTER BEING TOUCHED**
Hands in a rolling motion, then raise arm for a penalty signal.

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