

**AUSTRALIAN TOUCH
ASSOCIATION**



RULES BOOK

THE RULES OF TOUCH

4th Edition

FOREWORD

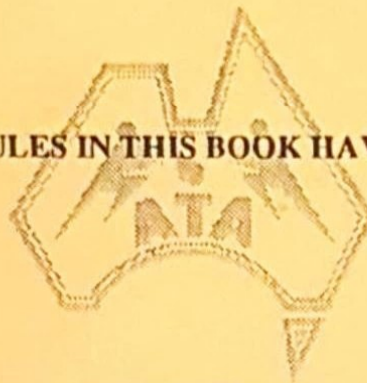
Rules are a set of guidelines designed to dictate how we behave whether it be in society in general or in a specific arena such as sport.

These Rules are the product of constant refinements made by dedicated people from all areas of the game. Contributions have been made by players, coaches, referees, administrators and other officials and the end result is that Rules allow all those participating in the sport an easy reference to how the game is played.

If we remember the Rules are designed to allow all of us to enjoy our sport in a fun as well as competitive atmosphere then we should all benefit.

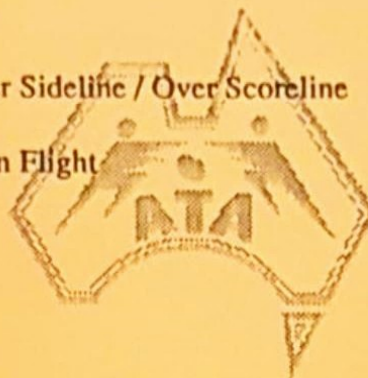
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A.T.A Coaching Director

* PLEASE NOTE THE RULES IN THIS BOOK HAVE NOT CHANGED SINCE THE LAST EDITION.



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RULE 1 — DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

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

1. **Actinghalf** is the player who takes possession of the ball behind the player who performs the rollball.
2. **Attacking Team** is the team which has possession or is gaining possession.
3. **Attacking Scoreline** is the line on or over which a team has to place the ball to score a touchdown.
4. **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.
5. **Behind** means in a position or direction towards a team's defending scoreline.
6. **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 and the period following a touchdown or penalty, until the game is recommenced.
7. **Defending Scoreline** is the line which a team has to defend to prevent a touchdown.
8. **Defending Team** is the team without the ball.
9. **Deliver** means to part with the ball.
10. **Field Of Play** is the playing area bounded by the sidelines, scorelines, but not including those lines.
11. **Forward** means in 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.
13. **Mark (For a Touch)** is the position where the attacking player is at the time of the touch.
14. **Mark (For a Tap)** is the centre of the halfway line for the commencement or recommencement of play; or the position where a tap is awarded as a result of infringement.
15. **Offside** means in a position forward of the ball for an attacking player and in a position liable to penalty for a defending player.
16. **Onside** means in a position whereby a player may legitimately become involved with play.
17. **Penalty** is the action taken by the referee in awarding a penalty tap when a player or team infringes the rules of the game.
18. **Rebound** occurs when the ball deflects from or makes contact with a player other than the player who first had possession.
19. **Rollball** is the normal act of bringing the ball into play following a touch or a change of possession.
20. **Ruling** is the decision made by the referee as a result of particular circumstances. It can result in a play on, a tap or change of possession.
21. **Scorelines** are the end boundaries of the field of play.
22. **Sidelines** are the side boundaries of the field of play.
23. **Tap** is the method of commencing the game, recommencing the game after half-time and after a touchdown has been scored. It is also a method of recommencing play when a penalty is awarded.
24. **Touch** is contact on any part of the body between a player in possession 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.
25. **Touchdown** is the result of an attacking player, except the actinghalf, placing the ball on or over the team's attacking 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 by 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 on page 6 (see Fig. 1 The Field of Play). Sidelines are to be extended at least five (5) metres beyond the scorelines.
- 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 sidelines and scorelines; and at the intersections of the halfway line with the sidelines (see Fig. 1 The Field of Play).
- 4. Playing Surface.** The playing surface is normally grass. However, other surfaces approved by the Australian Touch Association may be used. Ground surfaces which may cause injury are to be avoided.
- 5. The Ball.** The game is to be played with an oval, inflated ball of a shape colour and size approved by the Australian Touch Association. The ball should be inflated to the recommended air pressure.

PLAYER NOTES

- A.** A defending player must have both feet **ON** or behind the defending scoreline to be onside, if rollball is within five (5) metres or a tap within ten (10) metres of the scoreline.
- B.** Team captains have the right to lodge a complaint regarding field dimensions or playing conditions (e.g. weather or the state of the ground) prior to the commencement of the match.
- C.** The ball must not be hidden under player attire.

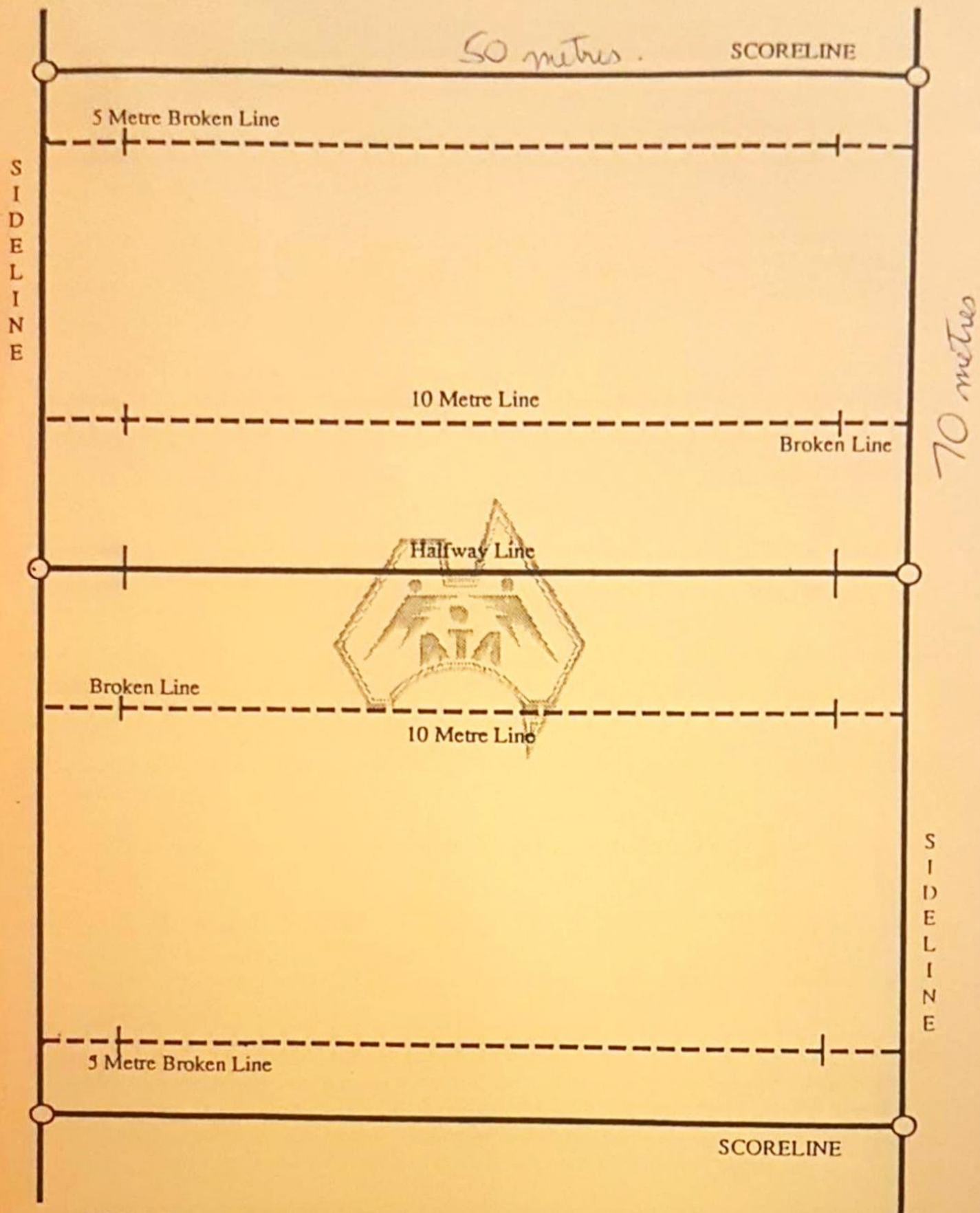
REFEREE NOTES

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

ADMINISTRATOR NOTES

- A.** Association officials should ensure that all grounds used for competition matches are marked as shown. As a minimum, it is essential that scorelines, sidelines and the halfway line are correctly marked.
- B.** Any decision on variation to dimensions or on playing conditions rests with competent association officials.
- C.** Associations should deem an area behind the scorelines as pathways if items described in Rule 11 Player Note D do not exist. An exaggerated distance is an area beyond these boundaries.

THE FIELD OF PLAY



NOTE: 5 metre cross lines marked on halfway line and all broken lines.

RULE 3 – PLAYER ATTIRE

- 1. Uniforms.** All participating players are to be correctly attired in team uniforms approved by the local controlling association. Uniforms consist of upper apparel, shorts (or briefs for female players) and socks with footwear.
- 2. Footwear.** Shoes without screw-in studs or cleats are to be worn by all players. Light leather or synthetic boots with soft moulded soles are permitted, providing individual studs are not longer than one (1) cm in length; the measurement being taken from the sole of the boot.
- 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 fingernails 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 local 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 in women's and mixed competitions 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 controlling associations.

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, knocked or handed between onside 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 or attacking players may initiate touches upon which, play stops and is restarted with a rollball, unless other rules apply.
- 3. Duration.** The game is of fifty (50) minutes duration, consisting of two (2) twenty-five (25) minute halves. There is a five (5) minute haltime break. The duration may only be extended for exceptional circumstances.

4. **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.

5. **Scoring.** A touchdown is awarded when a player other than the acting half places the ball on the ground on or over the team's attacking scoreline and within the boundaries of the extended sidelines. A touchdown is worth one (1) point.

6. **The Winner.** The team who at the end of play 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. **Progression.** When a single winner is required and the game is drawn, any of the following can apply:—

(A) SEMIS:

- (i) Extra time, each way.
- (ii) Extra time, sudden death. If the team who taps off in extra time score before their opponents have possession, the team who was scored against is allowed to tap off and retain possession until the ball is dead. If they also score a touchdown, then the team who next scores is declared the winner.
- (iii) For and against record.
- (iv) Higher placing on competition table.
- (v) The decider ('shoot-out').
- (vi) Toss of a coin—After the game.
- (vii) Drop off system to apply

(B) FINALS:

- (i) Joint Winners
- (ii) Extra time until a result is achieved.
- (ii) Any of (i) to (vii) of Semis options.

The controlling Association should make the decision on what option is to be used and should inform all teams prior to the commencement of the competition .

9. **Abandoned Games.** If a game 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 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. However a score results if an untouched player slides the ball along the ground to or beyond the scoreline. If the player does not release the ball from his hands, no touch is counted and the game continues.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Referees should be aware of players who commit "professional fouls" and should take appropriate action.
- B. 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 game is recommenced by the opposition with a rollball five metres from the scoreline and five metres in from the sideline.

ADMINISTRATOR NOTES

- A. The controlling association should endeavour to provide official time-keepers for all matches. Should time-keepers not be appointed, the referee is to act as the sole time-keeper and therefore is allowed to wear a watch.
- B. The duration of matches may be varied by controlling associations to suit particular competition requirements. In such cases, durations are to be advised to all teams well in advance.
- C. Competition points may be varied by controlling associations to suit particular competition requirements.
- D. A touchdown may have varied value as decided by the controlling association to suit particular competition requirements.
- E. To separate teams on equal competition points, the Simple Averages method is used (difference in touchdowns "for" and "against", with the higher progressing). If teams are still equal the Percentage Method is applied (fraction consisting of "for" over "against" multiplied by 100, with the higher progressing).
- F. Controlling associations may decide on and publish a points "for-and-against" margin to be awarded for forfeits and for abandoned matches.

RULE 5 — TEAM COMPOSITION AND SUBSTITUTION

1. **Number of Players.** A team consists of fourteen (14) players, no more than seven (7) of whom are allowed on the field at any time.

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the position of the ball at the time the offence is identified.

2. **Mixed Competition.** In mixed competitions the maximum number of males allowed on the field of play is four (4). The minimum male requirement on the field of play is one (1).

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the position of the ball at the time the offence is identified.

3. **Substitution.** 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.** Following the scoring of a touchdown players may interchange without making physical contact with the substituting players. All other interchanges must occur at the sideline, in an onside position and the players involved must make physical contact prior to the

substitute entering the field of play. Interchange may occur on either side of the field unless local restrictions apply. The substituting player must immediately enter the field of play.

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team five (5) metres infield from where the substituted player left the field or where the substituting player entered the field, whichever is the greater advantage.

PLAYER NOTES

A. Although a team consists of fourteen (14) players, a minimum of five (5) is required for the game to continue. All players who are involved in the game both on and off the field of play are under the direct control of the referee.

B. Female players in mixed competition may play in any team positions. Male players may interchange with female players providing Rule 5.2 applies.

C. Players must make physical contact with substituting players off the field.

D. 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 five (5), the game is finished and the non-offending team is declared the winner. This applies if players have been dismissed for the remainder of the game, but not for injuries or dismissals for periods of time.

B. If line referees are officiating, all interchanges are to be conducted under their control and in accordance with Rule 5.

C. Players who arrive late for a game may enter the field immediately, providing their team does not have seven (7) players on the field, subject to local By-laws.

D. If a team is unable to continue to meet the requirements of rule 5.2 because of injury caused during the game, the makeup of the male-female ratio may be varied at the discretion of the referee, provided both captains agree.

RULE 6 — COMMENCEMENT AND RECOMMENCEMENT OF PLAY

1. **The Toss.** Team captains are to toss a coin in the presence of the referee and the captain winning the toss has possession for the commencement of the first half and also has the choice of direction for the first half.

2. **Attacking Team.** The attacking team is to start the game 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.

3. **Method.** The tap is taken by placing the ball on the ground at or behind 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. 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.

4. **Defending Team.** All players of the defending team are required to retire a distance of 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 tap awarded to the attacking team along a line ten (10) metres directly forward of the original mark.

5. **Recommencement of Play.** For the recommencement of play following the half-time break, the team losing the toss is to start the game with a tap as described in Rules 6.2 and 6.3. 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 6.2 and 6.3.

6. **Kicking.** The ball cannot be kicked or played with the foot except when taking a tap or at the rollball. The acting half may use the foot to control the ball.

RULING

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

PLAYER NOTES

A. The player taking the tap may face any direction to take the tap and may be forward of the halfway line.

B. The player taking the tap is to wait until the referee indicates the mark prior to tapping the ball.

C. Players may take the ball behind the mark for a tap up to a maximum of ten (10) metres. No sideways movement of the mark is allowed.

REFEREE NOTES

A. Referees are to ensure that there is minimum delay between the scoring of touchdowns and the recommencement of play.

B. Referees should penalise defending players who attempt to delay play following a touchdown. If the delay is caused by the team scored against, the penalty should be awarded from the centre of the halfway line. If the team who scored is causing the delay, the penalty should also be awarded at the centre of the halfway mark with the offending player(s) dismissed for a period of time.

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. **Changeover Procedure.** Following the sixth 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 changeover procedure.

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team ten (10) metres 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 change of possession is where the ball first pitches or where the attacking player dropped or passed the ball, whichever is the greater advantage of 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 (e.g. while juggling or trying to maintain control), the touch is to count.

B. 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 changeover procedures.

B. If the ball contacts the ground while still under the control of a player (e.g. falling over) a change of possession does not result and play is to continue.

RULE 8 — PASSING

1. **General.** A player in possession may pass, flick, knock, throw or otherwise deliver the ball to any other 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 tap 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. However, if the defending player attempts to catch the ball or play at the ball and the ball goes to ground, the attacking team retains possession. Play is restarted at the mark where the ball goes to ground or at the position of best advantage for the non-offending team. The touch count is restarted.

PLAYER NOTES

A. A player who, in attempting to control the ball, juggles or knocks the ball forward, is not to be penalised, provided that the player regathers the ball. (See **Player Notes to Rule 7**).

REFEREE NOTES

A. A penalty is to result from a forward pass even if the receiver was in an onside position prior to the pass.

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

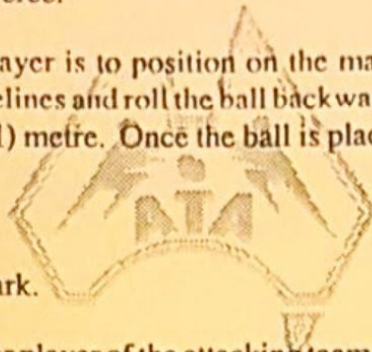
C. Forward passes are to be penalised even if the ball goes to ground or if it is the last touch.

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 touch
- (c) when possession changes due to a ball to ground
- (d) when possession changes due to an infringement by an attacking player at a tap or
- (e) when so directed by the referee.

2. **Method.** The attacking player is to position on the mark, face the opponent's (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.

3. **Attacking Team.** Any other player of the attacking team may receive the ball from the rollball and thus become the actinghalf. The actinghalf may pass or run with the ball. However, if touched, he/she loses possession. The actinghalf 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 actinghalf.

RULING

A tap 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 a distance of not less than five (5) metres from the mark. Players of the defending team are not permitted to move forward of the five (5) metre position until the actinghalf has made contact with the ball.

RULING

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

5. **Actions without Actinghalf in Position.** When the player in possession is required to rollball without an actinghalf in position, players of the defending team may move forward of the 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 game is recommenced with a rollball.

6. **Voluntary Rollball.** A player in possession is not to perform a rollball unless a touch has been effected.

RULING

A tap 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 and will not be penalised if the rollball is performed 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 a touch has been effected or until they have assumed an onside position.

D. The player performing the rollball cannot retrieve the ball.

E. Any defending player involved in a touch must immediately retire to a position along a line five (5) metres forward of the touch or to their own scoreline.

REFEREE NOTES

A. The mark for a penalty awarded under Rule 9.4 is along a line five (5) metres forward of the mark for the rollball and nearest the infringement.

B. The actinghalf 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 actinghalf has made contact with the ball.

C. A player in possession may run or stand with the ball extended towards the ground without penalty. However, Rule 9.6 applies as soon as the ball is rolled.

D. In an attempt to encourage a free-flowing game, referees should warn offside players and use the advantage rule as applicable (e.g. 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 hasn't warned the player (or team) he cannot call "play on" and must allow the touch or penalise the offending player.

E. Players who delay the rollball are to be penalised.

F. Should the actinghalf or other attacking players effect a touch on an offside defender following a quick rollball, the touch will count (the actinghalf would lose possession).

G. The actinghalf is not permitted to score touchdowns. He is unrestricted as to where he can run (except as indicated in Rule 11 PND) and may cross the scoreline to link up with support players. Should the actinghalf place the ball on the ground over the scoreline, whether the ball is released or not, a change of possession will occur five (5) metres from the scoreline opposite where the ball touched the ground.

H. There is no requirement for the ball to be picked up to commence rollball but the referee should ensure the rollball takes place at the mark.

RULE 10 — THE TOUCH

1. **General.** See Definitions, Rule 1.24. Players of both defending and attacking teams are to use the minimum force necessary to effect touches.

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team and, as a minimum, a warning 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 and the player retains possession and is required to perform the rollball (unless it is the sixth touch). The touch count continues.

3. **Actions Following Touch.** After a touch has been effected, the player in possession is required to stop, return to the mark where the touch occurred if the mark has been over-run, and perform a rollball immediately.

RULING

A tap 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 Touch.** A player must not claim or otherwise call for a touch unless a touch has actually been effected.

RULING

If an advantage is apparent, the referee will indicate "play on", otherwise a tap is to be awarded to the attacking team where the touch is claimed.

6. **The Mark.** The mark for the rollball is dependent on the position of the player in possession at the time of 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 actinghalf touches the ball or, if there is no actinghalf, when the ball leaves the hand/s. (See Rules 9.4 and 9.5). Defending players are not to interfere with the player in possession or otherwise prevent the immediate rollball after a touch is made.

RULING

A tap awarded to the attacking team at the mark.

8. **Touched while Scoring.** On the rare occasion a player places the ball on the ground on or over the scoreline at the same time a touch is effected, the touch counts and a touchdown is not awarded.

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 is to count. If the player in possession is the actinghalf a change of possession results in accordance with Rule 9.3.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. When effecting touches with the ball, attacking players are to ensure that the minimum force is used (See rule 10.1).
- B. If a touch is effected on or over the scoreline before the ball is grounded, no touchdown results. The player in possession is to move from that point to a position five (5) metres from the scoreline to rollball, provided it is not the sixth 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 cannot delay the rollball while awaiting an acting half.
- E. Calling a touch prior to contact is 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. More than the minimum physical force to effect a touch should be dealt with severely.
- 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 contact after an attacking player has delivered the ball, play continues and "play on" is to be called.
- 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 a 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.
- E. On the rare occasion that the referee is unable to distinguish between a pass before a touch and a pass after a touch and provided the ball does not go to ground, the touch counts as a "simultaneous touch". The ball is returned to the attacking player for a rollball. If the ball goes to ground on such occasions, or if it is the sixth touch, a change of possession is to result.
- F. Mandatory penalties should not be awarded when players fail to feel slight touches. However, deliberate run-ons are to be penalised.
- G. Infringements against Rule 10.4 are to be penalised, even if it is the sixth touch.

RULE 11 — BALL ON OR OVER SIDELINE/OVER SCORELINE

- 1. **On or Over Sideline.** The ball becomes dead when it or a player in possession touches or crosses the sideline and 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 restarts 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 for the attacking team.

2. **Touched Over Attacking Scoreline.** If a player in possession 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 infield from where the player in possession crossed the scoreline.

3. **Ball on or Behind Defending Scoreline.**

Rule 11.3 - "If a player in possession is touched whilst on or behind their defending scoreline, the touch counts and play is restarted with a rollball five (5) metres infield from where the player in possession was touched."

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 to the five (5) metre broken line to rollball.

5. **Actions Near Attacking Scoreline.** When a touch is effected within five (5) metres of the attacking scoreline, a player in possession may move directly behind the mark a distance of up to five (5) metres to the broken line to restart with a rollball.

PLAYER NOTES

A. When moving forward or backward from the mark in accordance with Rule 11.4 or 11.5 players should indicate to the referee that such options have been chosen and thus avoid confusion.

B. When moving forward or backward in accordance with Rule 11.4 or 11.5 the player in possession should avoid contact with defending players and should not move sideways from the mark.

C. Attacking players are not required to exercise the option in accordance with Rule 11.4 or 11.5. The actions are optional at the discretion of the players. However, referees should encourage novice players to use the rules.

D. A player in possession, once having crossed the scoreline, cannot, in an attempt to waste time, deliberately proceed further than,

a) the boundaries of another field

b) any fence, pathway, cycleway, walkway or road, behind the scoreline without losing possession.

REFEREE NOTES

A. Players who are onside at their defending scoreline may lean over the scoreline to touch any attacking player, and remain 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 hands.

RULE 12 — BALL TOUCHED IN FLIGHT

1. **Intentional Contact by Defender.** If the ball goes to ground following a defender's 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 ground. The mark where the rollball occurs is where the ball first pitches or where the defender touched the ball, whichever is the best advantage for the attacking team.

2. **Intentional Contact but not to Ground.** If a defending player touches the ball in flight and the ball is retrieved by an attacking player, play continues and the touch count restarts at the next touch.

3. **Intentional Contact and Touched Again by Attacker.** If an attacking player attempts to gather the ball after a deflection by a defender and the ball goes to ground, the attacking team retains possession and the touch count restarts for 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 best advantage to the team gaining possession.

5. **Rebounds 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 on and the touch count continue.

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 more touches from the mark of best advantage), or the player may attempt to retrieve the ball (and if the ball then goes to ground receive six more touches from the mark of best advantage).

REFEREE NOTES

A. In the case of Rule 12.3 above, the referee is to decide whether the deflection by the defending player was the cause of the ball to ground.

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 and Rule 12.2 applies.

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

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

RULE 13 — OFFSIDE

1. **Attacking Team.** A player in the attacking team is offside when that 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 Player 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 (See Rules 6.2 and 15.4).

3. **Defending team.** A player of the defending team is offside when the following rules are infringed:
- Rule 6.4 at the commencement and recommencement of play.
 - Rule 9.4 at the rollball.
 - Rule 15.5 at the tap for a penalty.
 - Rule 9 Referee Note D.

RULING

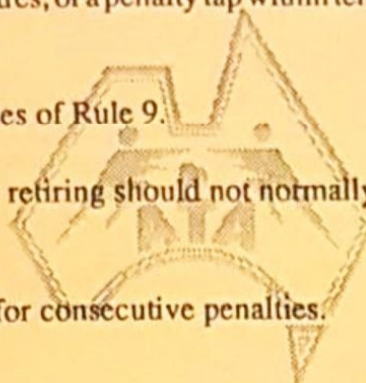
A tap awarded to the attacking team in accordance with the above Rules.

PLAYER NOTES

- Attacking players who are offside are non-effective and should return to an onside position as soon as possible.
- Offside defending players must at all times make an effort to retire to an onside position.
- 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 tap within ten (10) metres of that player's scoreline.

REFEREE NOTES

- Refer to Rule 10.9 and Notes of Rule 9.
- Defending players who are retiring should not normally be penalised while taking no active part in the game.
- Refer to Notes of Rule 15 for consecutive penalties.



RULE 14 — OBSTRUCTION

- 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 tap to the defending team at the mark where the infringement occurred.

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

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the mark of infringement providing 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 obstruction.

C. If a player in possession or a defender runs into the referee or the referee runs into either of the players, "play on" should result 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 taking a penalty is a penalty tap.

2. **Location of Tap.** Rule 15.2 - "The mark for the penalty is normally at the location of the infringement unless otherwise detailed in specific rules. For infringement which occurs 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 metres line) from where the infringement occurred."

3. **Method.** A method of taking the penalty tap is detailed in Rule 6.3. 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 Player Note C)

RULING

A change of possession at the mark.

4. **Attacking Team.** Players of the attacking team are to be onside at the tap.

RULING

A change of possession at the mark.

5. **Defending Team.** Players of the defending team are to be onside at the tap as detailed in Rule 6.4.

RULING

A tap awarded to the attacking team along a line ten (10) metres directly forward of the original mark and nearest to 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 penalty 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. For a tap within ten (10) metres of the scoreline players may take the ball directly behind the mark up to a maximum distance of ten (10) metres.
- C. If a player chooses to rollball in lieu of a tap the player who receives the ball is not the acting 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 behind the mark ^{up to a maximum distance of ten (10) metres,} for a tap 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.
- D. If an offside defending player (whether that player is retiring or not) attempts to obstruct or effect a touch on an attacking player following a quick tap, the referee should play the advantage and allow play to continue or award a penalty tap, whichever is the greater advantage to the attacking team.
- E. To ensure control is maintained during a sequence of quick taps, the referee is to ensure that the location of the mark is correctly indicated.
- F. With regards to awarding a penalty touchdown, a referee is to be sure that a touchdown would have occurred had it not been for the illegal action of the player or spectator concerned.

RULE 16 — ADVANTAGE

- 1. The principle 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 the 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.

RULE 17 — 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 Illdiscipline.** A player who continually breaches the playing rules is liable to dismissal. Team captains are responsible for the conduct of players in their respective teams and should be aware that undisciplined players are disruptive to the spirit of the game.

3. **Dismissal.** 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 midway along the team's attacking scoreline and no closer than five (5) metres to the scoreline. The dismissed player cannot be replaced.

(b) **Remainder of Game.** 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 sideline. The dismissed player cannot be replaced and that player incurs a two (2) match suspension from all matches conducted by any Touch Association.

4. **Striking Officials.** Any player who is found guilty of striking and/or assaulting an official, referee or line 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 local associations.

6. **Misconduct.** Players guilty of misconduct will be penalised and could be excluded from the game. Misconduct includes:

- continual breaches of the rules
- swearing
- backchatting referees or other game officials
- bad sportsmanship
- fighting
- using physical force in making a touch
- attacking the head of an opponent
- tripping
- any other action which is not in the spirit of the game

PLAYER NOTES

A. A player sent from the field for a period of time is to remain at the midpoint of the attacking scoreline until recalled by the referee. Such a player is allowed to join his team-mates at half time.

REFEREE NOTES

A. The referee is the sole judge of time in relation to dismissed players.

B. A 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 game.

D. Referees may suggest to captains to replace infringing players for the remainder of the game otherwise the player may be sent off and suspended and the team reduced in playing numbers.

ADMINISTRATOR NOTES

A. Controlling associations are to ensure that their constitution provides for:

1. The powers for the general committee or executive to make appropriate By-Laws or Regulations.

2. The power to enquire into and deal with any act.

3. Powers to be given to a Judiciary.

4. The boundaries of jurisdiction.

B. Coaches and officials deemed guilty of misconduct will be reported to the appropriate officials and be liable to disciplinary action.

C. Players sent from the field for the remainder of the game in a weekend tournament or Knockout will receive an automatic two (2) game suspension. (e.g. State or Regional Championships; National Teams Championships or National Championships).

RULE 18 — THE REFEREE AND LINE JUDGES

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 sanction necessary to control the game and in particular, award penalties for infringements against the rules.

2. **Authority of Referee.** Players, coaches and officials of both teams are under the control of the officiating referees.

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 game.

4. **Line Judges.** Line judges should be appointed to assist the referee 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 penalty taps, controlling substitution, matters of backplay and other advice when sought by the central referee.

PLAYER NOTES

A. Team captains may respectfully enquire of the referee, matters of varying interpretation or causes of penalties. Any discussion is to be brief and polite and must not delay play. Other team members should not talk to the referee.

B. Players should indicate to line judges when substitution is to occur.

REFEREE NOTES

A. Referees must familiarise themselves with grounds, markings and officials prior to the commencement of matches.

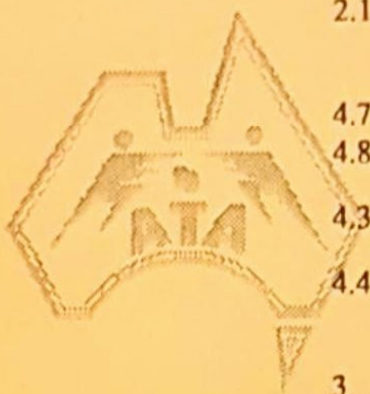
B. Referees may consult with line judges prior to making decisions.

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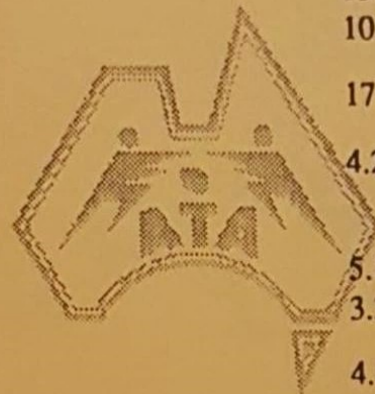
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