



**IRFU**

***ASSOCIATE REFEREE***

***WORKBOOK***

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Course Introduction

***Welcome to refereeing and to the Associate Referee Workbook.***

***The Workshop is provided for people who find themselves in the referee role due to unavailability of Branch referees.***

***The primary purposes of the Course is to give new referees a good understanding of the main priority areas of refereeing with the emphasis on safety.***

***It is designed to explain and simplify the Laws of the Game and to focus on their practical application and safety aspects.***

***We hope that you enjoy this workshop and that you benefit from it.***

## ASSOCIATE REFEREES

### IRFU

#### Domestic Rugby

1. It is IRFU policy (since 2005) that all rugby played within the Laws of the Game (incl. U19 Variations) is refereed by:
  - Members of the Branch Referee Associations/Society
  - or*
  - Associate Referees of the Branch
  
2. **Associate Referees:**

These are defined as Adult persons (18 years +) who:

  - 2.1 are qualified and appointed, by a school or club, (to referee a match, or training session) to which they are affiliated.
  - 2.2 are qualified and appointed by their school or club (or requested by the Branch) to a 'blitz' or similar tournament in which their school or club is participating.
  - 2.3 ***are not*** available for appointment to matches by the Branch or Branch Referee Associations/Society.

[Associate Referees may also apply, if they wish, for full membership of their Provincial Referee Associations/Society.]
  
3. **Qualification Requirements:**

Associate Referees qualify by:

  - 3.1 attendance at IRFU Associate Referee Workshop
  - 3.2 database registration
  - 3.3 qualification is valid for 4 Seasons (inclusive of initial season of validation.)
  - 3.4 qualification must be renewed during 4<sup>th</sup> Season (i.e: Workshop re-attendance)
  
4. **Benefits:**
  - 4.1 Accreditation 'card' (email) with re-validation (expiry) season
  - 4.2 registered on IRFU/Provincial database as Associate Referees
  - 4.3 Access via the IRFU website ([www.irishrugby.ie](http://www.irishrugby.ie)) on all Law changes and rulings
  - 4.4 IRFU 3<sup>rd</sup> party liability insurance
  
5. **Overall Rationale:**
  - 5.1 improve the game and refereeing standards
  - 5.2 address safety issues
  - 5.3 formalise the status of these referees

#### 6. Responsibilities

The Associate Referee must:

- Keep up to date on all Law Changes & Rulings.
  - These are updated regularly on both [www.irishrugby.ie](http://www.irishrugby.ie) and [www.irb.com](http://www.irb.com)
  
- Ensure their re-accreditation in the appropriate season
  - Through their Branch, details on [www.irishrugby.ie](http://www.irishrugby.ie)

# **I.R.B. PLAYING CHARTER**

## **INTRODUCTION**

A game which started out as a simple pastime has been transformed into a global network around which vast stadia have been built, an intricate administrative structure created and complex strategies devised. Rugby Football, in common with any activity which attracts the interest and enthusiasm of all kinds of people, has many sides and faces.

Apart from the playing of the game and its ancillary support, Rugby embraces a number of social and emotional concepts such as courage, loyalty, sportsmanship, discipline and teamwork. What this Charter does is to give the game a checklist against which the mode of play and behaviour can be assessed. The objective is to ensure that Rugby maintains its unique character both on and off the field.

The Charter covers the basic principles of Rugby as they relate to playing and coaching, and to the creation and application of the Laws. It is hoped that the Charter, which is an important complement to the Laws of the Game, will set the standards for all those who are involved in Rugby, at whatever level.



## **I.R.B. PLAYING CHARTER**

### **Contents**

Introduction

Principles of the Game

Principles of the Laws

Conclusion

### **INTRODUCTION**

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Apart from the playing of the game and its ancillary support, Rugby embraces a number of social and emotional concepts such as courage, loyalty, sportsmanship, discipline and teamwork. What this Charter does is to give the game a checklist against which the mode of play and behaviour can be assessed. The objective is to ensure that Rugby maintains its unique character both on and off the field.

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# Principles of the Game

## Conduct

The legend of William Webb Ellis, who is credited with first picking up the football and running with it, has doggedly survived the countless revisionist theories since that day at Rugby School in 1823. That the game should have its origins in an act of spirited defiance is somehow appropriate.

At first glance it is difficult to find the guiding principles behind a game which, to the casual observer, appears to be a mass of contradictions. It is perfectly acceptable, for example, to be seen to be exerting extreme physical pressure on an opponent in an attempt to gain possession of the ball, but not wilfully or maliciously to inflict injury.

These are the boundaries within which players and referees must operate and it is the capacity to make this fine distinction, combined with control and discipline, both individual and collective, upon which the code of conduct depends.

## Spirit

Rugby owes much of its appeal to the fact that it is played both to the letter and within the spirit of the Laws. The responsibility for ensuring that this happens lies not with one individual – it involves coaches, captains, players and referees.

It is through discipline, control and mutual respect that the spirit of the game flourishes and, in the context of a game as physically challenging as Rugby, these are the qualities which forge the fellowship and sense of fair play so essential to the game's ongoing success and survival.

Old fashioned traditions and virtues they may be, but they have stood the test of time and, at all levels at which the game is played, they remain as important to Rugby's future as they have been throughout its long and distinguished past. The principles of Rugby are the fundamental elements upon which the game is based and they enable participants to immediately identify the game's character and what makes it distinctive as a sport.

## Object

The Object of the Game is that two teams, each of fifteen players, observing fair play, according to the Laws and in a sporting spirit should, by carrying, passing, kicking and grounding the ball, score as many points as possible.

Rugby is played by men and women and by boys and girls worldwide. More than three million people aged from 6-60 regularly participate in the playing of the game.

The wide variation of skills and physical requirements needed for the game mean that there is an opportunity for individuals of every shape, size and ability to participate at all levels.

## **Contest and Continuity**

The contest for possession of the ball is one of Rugby's key features. These contests occur throughout the game and in a number of different forms:

- . in contact
- . in general play
- . when play is re-started at scrums, line-outs and kick offs.

The contests are balanced in such a way as to reward superior skill displayed in the preceding action. For example, a team forced to kick for touch because of its inability to maintain the play, is denied the throw-in to the line-out. Similarly, the team knocking the ball on or passing the ball forward is denied the throw-in at the subsequent scrum. The advantage then must always lie with the team throwing the ball in, although, here again, it is important that these areas of play can be fairly contested.

It is the aim of the team in possession to maintain continuity by denying the opposition the ball and, by skilful means, to advance and score points. Failure to do this will mean the surrendering of possession to the opposition either as a result of shortcomings on the part of the team in possession or because of the quality of the opposition defence. Contest and continuity, profit and loss.

As one team attempts to maintain continuity of possession, the opposing team strives to contest for possession. This provides the essential balance between continuity of play and continuity of possession. This balance of contestability and continuity applies to both set piece and general play.

## **Principles of the Laws**

The principles upon which the Laws of the Game are based are:

### **A Sport For All**

The Laws provide players of different physiques, skills, genders and ages with the opportunity to participate at their levels of ability in a controlled, competitive and enjoyable environment. It is incumbent upon all who play Rugby to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Laws of the Game.

### **Maintaining the Identity**

The Laws ensure that Rugby's distinctive features are maintained through scrums, line-outs, mauls, rucks, kick-offs and re-starts. Also the key features relating to contest and continuity - the backward pass, the offensive tackle.

### **Enjoyment and Entertainment**

The Laws provide the framework for a game that is both enjoyable to play and entertaining to watch. If, on occasions, these objectives appear to be incompatible, enjoyment and entertainment are enhanced by enabling the players to give full rein to their skills. To achieve the correct balance, the Laws are constantly under review.

## **Application**

There is an over-riding obligation on the players to observe the Laws and to respect the principles of fair play.

The Laws must be applied in such a way as to ensure that the game is played according to the Principles of Rugby. The referee and his touch judges can achieve this through fairness, consistency, sensitivity and, at the highest levels, management. In return, it is the responsibility of coaches, captains and players to respect the authority of the match officials.

## **Conclusion**

Rugby is valued as a sport for men and women, boys and girls. It builds teamwork, understanding, co-operation and respect for fellow athletes. Its cornerstones are, as they always have been, the pleasure of participating; the courage and skill which the game demands; the love of a team sport that enriches the lives of all involved; and the lifelong friendships forged through a shared interest in the game.

It is because of, not despite, Rugby's intensely physical and athletic characteristics that such great camaraderie exists before and after matches. The long standing tradition of players from competing teams enjoying each others company away from the pitch and in a social context, remains at the very core of the game.

Rugby has fully embraced the professional era, but has retained the ethos and traditions of the recreational game. In an age in which many traditional sporting qualities are being diluted or even challenged, Rugby is rightly proud of its ability to retain high standards of sportsmanship, ethical behaviour and fair play. It is hoped that this Charter will help reinforce those cherished values.

## **Refereeing Principles**

The first principles of refereeing are:

SAFETY  
CONSISTENCY  
LAWS  
STANDARDS

***Irrespective of the level of match these will remain the priorities.***

### **SAFETY**

***The safety of players is paramount and the referees must stop the game if a situation appears dangerous. Safety takes precedence over any other aspect of the game.***

### **CONSISTENCY**

***Player must be aware that the referee is consistent and fair in his approach to both teams throughout the game, both in law application and in attitude.***

### **LAWS**

***The referee must have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Laws of the Game. Using this knowledge he will manage the game best by effective communication of his decisions.***

### **STANDARDS**

***The referee should set his standards early in all areas of the game and establish his control. He will maintain his standards by effective management of the set pieces and ensuring that the players are aware of his requirements.***

***For example it is important to establish:***

- ***Line out spacing***
- ***Correct scrum management***
- ***That players stay on their feet and release the ball and move away quickly in tackle situations.***
- ***Players remain on-side***

***[It is easier to get these right at the start of the Game, than to try and correct them later on.]***



## **Match Approach**

***It is important for the referee to prepare properly. Good preparation and attitude will ensure that both the referee and the players enjoy the game.***

**Before the game it is important to:**

- ***Check kit thoroughly***
- ***Arrive at ground early***
- ***Check pitch markings and goal post padding***
- ***Organise the studs check and toss early***
- ***Make sure touch judges are available***

**Following the game the referee should:**

- ***Thank the captains and touch judges***
- ***Meet with players and officials***
- ***Discuss the match***

***In all of these the referee should be friendly and approachable, but polite and firm in avoiding arguments.***

### ***Kit And Equipment***

***The referee will project an image of confidence and ability if he is correctly and neatly attired.***

- ***He should ensure that his outfit is not of similar colour to either team.***
- ***Jersey, shorts and socks must be clean and well presented.***
- ***Boots should be polished***

***The referee will need:***

- ***Two whistles***
- ***Two watches***
- ***Coin for toss***
- ***Pencil and score card***

## Communication

**Communication is a vital element of refereeing and an important skill to develop.**

**There are three ways in which the referee communicates:**



**Each referee's personality will contribute to his skill in this area and therefore there will naturally be variance in approach from referee to referee.**

**Nevertheless there are some key points of principle which should be common to all:**

### VOICE

- **Clear and calm verbal communication**
- **Authoritative but not officious**
- **Understanding and sympathetic.**
- **Firm but not aggressive**

**Good voice communication starts as soon as the referee arrives at the ground.**

### WHISTLE

**The whistle should be blown sensibly and the tone should vary, indicating the reason for its use:**

**Light blow**

**Medium**

**Loud**

**Very loud**

**Ball in touch**

**Scrummage award or a technical offence (e.g. outside arm used in line-out)**

**Penalty/Award of score/to stop play quickly (as at collapsed scrum)**

**Foul play**

### **\*\*NO CARDS\*\***

**Cards are NOT to be used by Associate Referees. You may still order a player from the playing enclosure without showing a card.**

## **SIGNALS**

- **The signals given in the appendix should be studied and understood.**
- **Signals must be given clearly and decisively. They must be understood, but should not be over-repetitive.**
- **A whistle and signal should be accompanied by a clear, concise, verbal explanation for the stoppage in play, and the subsequent decisions.**

## **Advantage [Law 8]**

**The Advantage Law is simple, creative and very valuable:**

- **It allows the opportunity for the referee not to blow his whistle for an infringement and to seek continuity of play.**
- **An opportunity to gain advantage is not sufficient**
- **If an opportunity does not materialise into a tactical or territorial advantage, the referee will return to the original infringement.**
- **The referee will learn with experience the length of time it is advisable to play advantage.**
- **It is not advisable to play advantage following an offence under Law 10 - Foul Play.**
- **During the early stages of a game the referee may not wish to apply advantage to penalty offences such as offside or killing the ball. This allows the referee to set his standards in these areas.**
- **The referee should signal that he is playing advantage, with horizontal arm pointing towards goal-line of the team in possession and communicate this to the players "Playing advantage". You should only signal for 5 seconds.**

**There are several occasions when advantage should not be played:**

- **The ball or a player carrying it touches the referee**
- **The ball emerges from either end of the tunnel without first being played.**
- **Foul play has occurred**
- **A player has been (seriously) injured.**

## **Kick Off & Re-Starts [Law 13]**

- ***A team kicks off with a drop-kick which must be taken at or behind the centre of the half-way line.***

- ***If the ball is kicked off by the wrong type of kick, or from the incorrect place, the opposing team has two choices:***

***To have the ball kicked off again, or***

***To have a scrum at the centre of the half-way line and they throw-in the ball.***

- ***Kick-offs and re-starts must travel 10 metres UNLESS the opposition play the ball first. In this case the referee will play on.***

- ***If the ball reaches the 10 metres line at a kick-off and it is blown backwards the referee will play on.***

- ***If the ball goes directly into touch, the opposition may choose one of three options:***

- ***have another drop-out***
- ***have a scrum at the centre of the 22 metre line, with their put in.***
- ***accept the kick.***

- ***If the ball is kicked into the opposition in-goal area (without touching a player) the opposition team may either:***

- ***make the ball dead IMMEDIATELY and have a scrum formed at the half-way line, their put-in OR have the ball kicked off again.***
- ***play on***

- ***At kick offs the kicker's team must be behind the ball when it is kicked.***

## **Drop-Out [Law 13]**

***A drop-out is taken by the defending team.***

- ***It may be taken at any point along (or behind) the 22 metre line.***
- ***If the ball is kicked with the wrong type of kick, or from the wrong place, the opposing team has two choices:***

***To have another drop-out, or***

***To have a scrum at the centre of the 22-metre line and they throw-in the ball.***

- ***The ball must cross the 22 metre line. If it fails to cross the line, the opposition have two choices:***
  - ***have the drop out taken again***
  - ***have a scrum at the centre of the 22 metre line, their put in.***

***(If the ball crosses the 22 metre line and is blown back, the referee will continue play)***

- ***When the ball fails to cross the 22 metre line, the referee should be aware of the possibility of advantage to the opponents. He should only blow when it is clear that no advantage will occur.***

## **Tackle [Law 15]**

**As in all breakdown situations it is vital for the referee to arrive quickly at the action. Otherwise he will not be in a position to see what happens and what the players do next.**

**A player in possession of the ball is held by an opponent and is brought to the ground, is TACKLED. (Brought to ground means at least one knee is on the ground)**

**The priorities for the referee are to ensure that:**

- **The tackled player plays the ball IMMEDIATELY, by choosing one of these options:**
  - a) **Pass the ball**
  - b) **Place the ball**
  - c) **Push the ball**
  
- **After a tackle any player who attempts to play the ball or tackle must come from the direction of their own goal line, and from behind the player involved in the tackle who is nearest to their own goal line.**
  
- **A player who has gained possession at the tackle ( or in close proximity) must not be tackled until he has made a step while in possession.**
  
- **The tackled player must then move away from the ball and must be on his feet before he can take any further part in the game.**
  
- **The tackler does not prevent the tackled player from playing the ball. The tackler must move away from the tackle immediately the tackle is completed.**
  
- **The next player to play the ball must remain on his feet. Other arriving players must also stay on their feet.**
  
- **If the ball is clearly unplayable after a tackle the referee should not delay in blowing his whistle and awarding a scrum.**
  
- **A player who is not tackled but who is on the ground with the ball must IMMEDIATELY choose one of these options:**
  - a) **Get up with the ball**
  - b) **Pass/place/push the ball**
  - c) **Release the ball.**

- **Referees who arrive quickly at the tackle will be in a position to encourage compliance with Law by a quick shout of 'Release'.**
- **It is not a tackle when:**
  - **a player is knocked to the ground (e.g. hand trip) but not held.**
  - **a player is held but still on his feet.**
- **Squeeze ball is illegal at under age rugby. This is where a player goes to ground on his hands and knees and pushes the ball through his legs.**

## **THE SCRUM [Law 20]**

**Effective scrum management is an essential element of refereeing - the referee must be in control of the management of the scrum.**

**The front row requires particular attention and these players must be aware of the referee's requirements. Player actions in this area must be carefully controlled.**

### **FORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

**When awarding a scrummage the referee will blow the whistle and:**

- **Explain the reason for stoppage of play**
- **Take up a position on the side of the putting-in team and signal to that side with horizontal arm.**
- **Indicate and mark the position of the scrum**
- **Ensure both front rows bind correctly and form up equidistant from the mark.**
- **Ensure that second rows are in position.**
- **Ensure scrum half is ready to put in ball**
- **All players in the scrum must be correctly bound prior to engagement. (including No 8)**
- **Establish and talk the front rows through the CROUCH, TOUCH, PAUSE, ENGAGE sequence. The front rows must only engage after the referee says "Engage". They must not be allowed to charge at each other.**

**The referee must reset the front rows if the scrum has not engaged correctly. It is critical to establish the correct distance between the front rows before engagement and then repeat the "crouch, touch, pause, engage" sequence.**

## **AFTER ENGAGEMENT**

- ***The referee will take up a position behind and slightly to one side of the scrum-half.***
- ***The scrum-half must put the ball in without delay down the middle line of the scrummage.***
- ***Props and hookers must bind correctly and must be square on with their opponents.***
- ***Tight-head props must not "bore in" on opposition hookers.***
- ***Heads and shoulders must not be below hips.***
- ***There must be no downward pressure exerted by hands or arms.***
- ***The scrum cannot be wheeled past 90 degrees***
- ***The referee must blow IMMEDIATELY if the scrum collapses, or players are pushed upwards off their feet.***
- ***If the scrum has not engaged properly, the referee should re-set the front-rows. He should not wait for a collapse to occur.***
- ***Where one pack are demonstrably stronger, the referee should ask that pack to reduce the power and speed of their push so that the opposing front row can stay on their feet.***
- ***Ensure all players stay bound until the scrum is over.***

### **\*\*SCRUM AWARD AFTER ENGAGEMENT\*\***

- ***The team in possession must use the ball before the scrum is wheeled through 90 degrees. If not the scrum will be re-set, with opposition put-in.***

***\*\*Team must use it or lose\*\****

- ***This does not apply to the Under 19 variation where the scrum can only turn 45 degrees. The team that put it in, receives the scrum again, i.e. Under 19 laws take precedence.***

## Uncontestable Scrums

**If a team is unable to replace injured or sent-off front row players with suitably trained players the referee must order uncontestable scrums. i.e.**

- i) **There is no contest for the ball**
- ii) **The team putting in the ball must win it**
- iii) **Neither team is allowed to push or wheel the scrum.**

### **UNDER 19 VARIATIONS**

- a) **The scrum cannot be pushed beyond 1.5 metres.**
- b) **The scrum cannot be wheeled deliberately - a free kick should be awarded**
- c) **The referee must re-set a scrum which wheels beyond 45 degrees.**
- d) **Teams must adopt a 3-4-1 formation.**
- e) **The No.8 must pack between the two locks and is the only player allowed to pick up the ball.**
- f) **Both teams must have the same numbers in the scrums at all times.**

### **WHOSE PUT IN?**

#### **REDS V BLUES**

##### **"Reds in possession of ball"**

		<u><b>Whose scrum?</b></u>
<b>Tackle:</b>	<b>Team going forward</b>	<b>Reds</b>
<b>Driven back in</b>		
<b>Tackle</b>	<b>Team going forward</b>	<b>Blues</b>
<b>Ruck:</b>	<b>Team going forward</b>	<b>Reds</b>
<b>Maul:</b>	<b>Team not in possession</b>	<b>Blues</b>
<b>Collapsed</b>		
<b>Maul</b>	<b>Team not in Possession</b>	<b>Blues</b>
<b>Maul (From a kick)</b>	<b>Team in Possession</b>	<b>Red</b>
<b>Over Goal line</b>		
<b>(Held Up)</b>	<b>Attacking scrum</b>	<b>Red</b>

## **Ruck & Maul [Law 16 & 17]**

### **RUCK**

**A ruck is formed when at least one player from each team, who are on their feet, have bound over the ball on the ground. Therefore (a minimum of) 2 players constitute a ruck.**

**If the ball in the ruck becomes unplayable the subsequent scrummage award will be given to the team moving forward prior to the stoppage.**

**The refereeing priorities at the ruck are:**

- **Arrive quickly at ruck formation**
- **Early sight of ball**
- **Players must not handle the ball in the ruck**
- **Ensure players join ruck from on-side position and do not join in front of the hindmost foot.**
- **Awareness of off-side lines of players not the ruck - these players must stay behind the hindmost foot.**
- **Ensure players do not stamp or otherwise use their boots on opponents.**
- **Quick whistle when the ball becomes unplayable.**

## MAUL

**A maul is formed by at least one player from each team are on their feet bound around a player who is in possession of the ball. Therefore (a minimum of) three players constitute a maul**

**If the ball in a maul becomes unplayable the resultant scrum is awarded to the side NOT in possession at the commencement of the maul, UNLESS a player, having caught the ball directly from an opponents kick is immediately held by the opposition and a maul forms - if the ball then becomes unplayable the resultant scrum is awarded to the team of the player who caught the ball. (This exception does not apply to kick-offs or drop-outs)**

**The refereeing priorities at the maul are:**

- **Arrive quickly at formation**
- **Early sight of ball**
- **A player with the ball may go to ground and make the ball available.**
- **Ensure players join from on-side position and do not join in front of hindmost foot.**
- **Monitor off-side lines of players not in the maul - they must remain behind the hindmost foot.**

**A maul which goes to ground and the ball does not emerge should be treated as a collapsed maul - it is not a ruck. The referee should immediately award a scrum to the team NOT in possession at commencement of maul.**

**A maul which is formed STATIC (i.e. following a line-out) may start to move.**

**When a maul has stopped moving forward it may start moving forward again providing it does so within 5 seconds. If the maul stops moving forward a second time and if the ball is being moved and the referee can see it, a reasonable time is allowed for the ball to emerge. If it does not emerge within a reasonable time, a scrum is awarded. The scrum is awarded to the team NOT in possession at commencement of maul.**

**\*\*The maul cannot be pulled down at any level\*\***

## The Line Out [Law 19]

**After the ball is kicked or carried into touch the referee will blow his whistle and:**

### **BEFORE THE BALL IS THROWN IN:**

- **Remain alert to the possibility of a quick throw-in.**
- **A quick throw in DOES NOT have to be straight.**
- **Although ensure that a quick throw-in complies with Law:**
  - a) **it must be the same ball**
  - b) **it must only be handled by the thrower or the player who took the ball into touch.**
  - c) **it must be thrown in straight and go 5-metres**
  - d) **it must be taken from any point along the touchline between where the ball goes into touch and the goal-line of the thrower.**
- **Establish and maintain full one metre gap between teams at a formed line-out. A formed line-out must have a minimum of two players from each team.**
- **Both Receiver and Non throwing-in hooker MUST stand two metres from the line-out.**
- **Ensure that the thrower-in stands on the line of touch, mid-way between the two teams.**
- **Pre-gripping is permitted before the line-out has begun.**
- **The attack team dictate the numbers in the lineout. The defending team may have the same numbers or less but not more.**

### **AFTER THE BALL IS THROWN IN:**

- **Ensure throw-in is straight (Formed Lineout).**
- **Be alert to direction of throw i.e. where the ball is alighting**
- **Ensure jumpers are allowed to compete fairly**
- **Check for use of outside arm by jumpers**
- **Check actions and positions of players not competing for the ball. These players must**
  - a) **stay on-side**
  - b) **not barge or obstruct**
- **Ensure that non-participants remain on their off-side line (i.e. 10 metres back) until the line out is over.**
- **Be aware of when the line-out is over. The line-out is over when one of the following occurs:**
  - a) **a ruck or maul is formed and it moves beyond the line of touch**
  - b) **a player carrying the ball leaves the line-out**
  - c) **the ball is passed, knocked or kicked from the line-out**

- d) **the ball is thrown beyond the 15m line**
- e) **When a ruck or maul goes beyond the 15m line.**
- f) **When a ruck or maul goes inside the 5m line.**
- g) **the ball becomes unplayable.**

**A player who passes back to a team mate and kicks to touch will make no gain in ground unless the ball bounces before it goes into touch. If a tackle ruck or maul occurs in the 22 metre line after a pass back then a kicker may kick directly into touch and get the gain in ground.**

## **Off-Side [Law 11]**

### **IN GENERAL PLAY – 11 (1)**

**A player is off-side if he is in front of a team-mate who has kicked (or touched) the ball, or is carrying the ball.**

**A player so off-side should not be penalised unless he:**

- **Plays the ball**
- **Does not move immediately 10 metres behind an imaginary line across the field, away from an opponent waiting to play the ball, or where the ball may land.**
- **Moves towards an opponent waiting to play the ball**
- **Obstructs an opponent**
- **Off-side players may be put ON-SIDE by several player actions:**
- **Actions by own team:**
  - **The off-side player runs behind his team-mate who has kicked, or is carrying, the ball.**
  - **A team-mate carrying the ball runs past the off-side player**
  - **The kicker (or a team-mate who was level or behind the kicker) runs past the off-side player.**
- **The off-side player is put on-side when an opponent:**
  - **Carrying the ball runs 5-metres**
  - **Kicks or passes the ball**
  - **Intentionally touches the ball, but fails to catch it.**

**It is important to note that the 10-METRE LAW supersedes the above:**

**An off-side player within 10 metres of an opponent waiting to play the ball and does not retire CANNOT be put ON-SIDE by the action of ANY player.**

#### **OFF-SIDE AT LINE-OUT [LAW 19]**

**There are two off-side lines at the line-out. The first is relevant from those players PARTICIPATING in the line-out. The second covers those players NOT PARTICIPATING.**

**Participating players are:**

- **Players in the line-out**
- **The player throwing in the ball and his immediate opponent.**
- **The players of both teams in the scrum half position.**

**For these players the off-side line is along the line of touch.**

**All other players are NOT PARTICIPATING in the line-out.**

**The off-side line covering these players is a line parallel to the goal-line, and 10 metres behind the line of touch. These players must remain at this off-side line until the line-out is over. (See line-out). They may (exceptionally) advance towards the line of touch in anticipation of a long throw-in.**

#### **OFF-SIDE AT SCRUM [LAW 20]**

- **The offside options for the scrum half are as follows:**
  - **He must keep both feet behind the ball. He must start beside the other scrum half at the put in.**
  - **He can start 5 metres back with the other non-participants.**
  - **He can start beside the other scrum half and after the ball has been thrown in, he can take up a position anywhere along the hindmost foot of his team.**
- **All other players must stand five metres back from the hindmost foot of their own players in the scrum.**

#### **OFF-SIDE AT RUCK AND MAUL [LAW 17 & 18]**

- **The off-side line for players not joined to the ruck or maul is hindmost of their own players.**
- **Players leaving a ruck or maul must immediately retire behind the hindmost foot.**
- **Players must join a ruck or maul from an on-side position.**
- **Players may only join alongside or behind their hindmost team mate in a ruck or maul.**

## **Foul Play [Law 10]**

***In the event of Foul Play the referee will need several of his skills, particularly that of communication.***

***The referee's management of a foul play situation will largely determine the spirit in which the match continues.***

***Following foul play the referee should immediately blow his whistle loudly and:***

- ***Ensure that both teams are separated***
- ***Identify and speak with offender  
(It is important NOT to touch the player)***
- ***Award appropriate penalty***
- ***If the offence merits a formal caution or sending-off it will probably be necessary for the referee to speak to both captains and ask them to ensure that the match continues in the proper spirit of the game.***

***Apart from obvious acts of Foul Play such as punching or dangerous use of the boot, the referee must be conscious of other possible flashpoints.***

***These, if not dealt with decisively, can quickly alter the spirit in which the game is played. Therefore the referee should deal firmly and immediately with such actions as:***

- ***High tackles***
- ***Late or early tackles***
- ***Player tackled while in the air***
- ***Front row charging at scrum engagement***
- ***Abusive behaviour by player to opponents or to referee***

***In the event of any of these occurring it is NOT sufficient simply to award a penalty. The referee must speak to the offending player - even if a reprimand or "ticking off" is sufficient.***

## **Touch Judging**

**From tie to time Associate Referees are required to act as Assistants. They are not allowed to flag for foul play and must only adjudicate on the laws of touch, touch in goal and kicks at goal.**

**The referee and touch judges must work together as "the team of three", so that the match benefits from their combined input.**

**Before the match the referee and touch judges should discuss their responsibilities for the day. In general these will be:**

### **BASIC DUTIES**

- **The Assistant Referee is responsible for touch and touch in-goal. He will operate from dead ball line to dead ball line.**
- **He will signal clearly when the ball or a player carrying it is in touch. He should be aware that the ball having crossed the touch line in the air may be blown back into the field of play. No signal should be given until the touch judge is certain that the ball is in touch.**
- **When the ball is in touch the Assistant Referee should immediately raise his flag directly above his head, mark the line of touch and indicate with his other arm pointing towards the team who will throw the ball in.**

### **QUICK THROW-INS**

- **The Assistant Referee must be very alert when a quick throw-in occurs. He must ensure that it complies with Law:**
  - **it must be the same ball**
  - **it must only be handled by the thrower or the player who took the ball into touch.**
  - **it must be thrown-in by the right team**
  - **the thrower must be behind the touch-line.**
- **If any of the above are infringed the Assistant Referee should keep his flag raised.**
- **The referee will generally decide if the quick throw-in has been taken from the correct place, or if a formed line-out is in place. He may however ask the Assistant Referee for help in these areas.**

### **CORNER FLAG/TOUCH IN GOAL**

- **The Assistant Referee may assist the referee in making touch-down decisions which are close to the corner flag or to in-goal. The corner posts are no longer considered to be in touch-in-goal except when the**

**ball is grounded against the post. This role is secondary and the main responsibility remains with the Referee. The primary role for the Assistant Referee is TOUCH.**

- **He will be alert and well positioned in these instances. The referee will expect eye contact with the touch judge and an indication as whether or not the ball has been grounded correctly.**
- **The Assistant Referee should remain close to the corner flag until the referee has given his decision.**

#### **KICKS AT GOAL**

- **When judging kicks at goal one Assistant Referee should stand close to the posts; the other about 3/4 metres behind the posts.**
- **Both should move into the line of flight of the ball, and "talk-in" the attempted kick. In this way both will agree the decision. This is essential when kicks are close to a post or dropping near the cross-bar.**

### **Positioning**

**The referee's positioning is critical for good correct decision making. In general the referee should be up with play, and be alert and ready to move as play develops.**

**The referee must arrive quickly at tackle / breakdown situations so that he is in position to observe player actions.**

**Positioning is an essential skill which will develop with experience. The following are guidelines to assist the new referee.**

#### **AT SCRUM**

- **Be on the same side as put-in**
- **Stand behind and slightly to one side of the scrum-half putting in the ball.**
- **When the ball is hooked, move further away from the scrum and to the side of the team winning the ball. Turn towards their opponents to observe off-side lines.**
- **Move with play when the ball emerges.**
- **If there are problems with binding on the far side from the put-in, the referee may take up a position on that side. He should delay the put-in until he is positioned.**

### **AT LINE-OUT**

- **The referee should vary his position at the line-outs and be ready to move as the ball is thrown.**
- **In the early stages of the match the referee should position himself at the front of the line-out.**
- **Generally stand on the side of the team throwing-in the ball.**
- **At the front of the line-out stand to the side of the thrower and be in the 5-metre area.**
- **At the back of the line-out stand to the side of the back marker but not more than 213 metres away.**
- **For line-outs inside the '22' the referee should position himself on the defending side - irrespective of which team is throwing-in.**
- **The referee should concentrate his vision on the area of the line-out where the ball alights, focusing on the actions of the players contesting the ball.**

### **AT RUCK | MAUL**

- **Be mobile and maintain sight of the ball**
- **Generally move to the side of the team winning the ball, turning towards their opponents.**
- **Scan off-side lines close to ruck and maul ('fringers') and also at mid-field**
- **Move with play as ball emerges**

### **IN GENERAL PLAY**

- **Be up with play**
- **Be alert and ready to move quickly**
- **Always run towards play**
- **When the ball is kicked maintain a position to view obstruction or late tackles. Watch for players within 10 metres of player waiting to play the ball.**

- ***At kick-offs and restarts RUN WITH the flight of the ball, observing player actions as the ball is contested.***

## **Irish Rugby Football Union Code of Behaviour for Referees and Officiating Persons**

**Any referee and/or officiating person should ensure that he/she:**

1. Respects the rights, dignity and worth of every child and treat everybody equally, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion or age.
2. Where a referee is concerned that he/she must be a member of the relevant Branch Referees Association.
3. Acts as a role model and promotes the positive aspects of rugby and maintains the highest standards of personal conduct.
4. Is responsible for monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with the players.
5. Avoids being alone with underage players.
6. Never deals with injuries unless qualified to do so.
7. Encourages coaches and parents to act responsibly for the behaviour and performance of the players.
8. Recognises safety as a paramount concern at all times during games.
9. Follows the agreed protocols regarding shower arrangements after matches.
10. Agrees appropriate times for entry to changing rooms to deal with match preparation and ensures each member of the team management are present.
11. Is punctual, prepared and well presented.
12. Applies the laws of the game consistently and that all players and officials comply with the laws of the game.
13. Takes care never to criticise individual players, coaches or parents.
14. Adheres to all rules and procedures as agreed by the Branch Referee's Association.

### **Protocols regarding Age Grade rugby**

1. There should be two adults present at all times when the referee checks players' boots.
2. The coin toss should be carried out in the presence of a player, preferably the captain, from each team along with an adult representative from each team.

3. If there are no separate shower facilities for referees then the referee should shower first.

### **Match Situations**

1. All comments made to the players throughout the game should be in accordance with common practice of communication to players about the game and its laws.
2. Inappropriate comments or conversation is to be avoided at all times.
3. Consistent with all matches, referees are advised not to come into physical contact with players.
4. All injured players are to be assisted by qualified team personnel only.
5. Players changing areas should not be entered without good and sufficient reason.
6. Referees should shower quickly and in accordance with any pre-match agreement in place.
7. Referees are to remain dressed (toweled) at all times within changing facilities.
8. While after match communication is to be discouraged, this should not take place until the referee has showered and changed. This discussion should be held in a civil and non-confrontational fashion. If that is not practicable, the referee should abandon the conversation.
9. When the changing room door is closed, the referee should knock and wait for clearance before entering the room.
10. Referees are to officiate over matches in the same manner as in the men's game and apply the laws similarly and consistently.
11. Overall, a common sense approach should ensure that no problems arise.
  - The "changing facilities" are the changing rooms, showers and corridors
  - The "changing area" is the changing rooms where the players tog out

## REFEREE DEVELOPMENT

The IRFU have a dedicated Referee Department headed up by former international referee, Owen Doyle.

There are referee associations in each of the Provinces – Connacht, Leinster, Munster and the Ulster Society.

Referee Recruitment Officers are in place as follows:

Connacht:	Dave O'Brien	+353 87 6418340
Leinster:	David Keane	+353 1 6473820
Ulster:	David Wilkinson	+44 7799062813
North Munster:	John Cole	+353 86 8441870
South Munster:	David McHugh	+353 86 3806638
IRFU	Julie Ashmore	+353 1 6473804

The Referee Committee is chaired by Ian McIlrath and its members are Tom Aplin, Owen Doyle, Bertie Smith and Denis Templeton and Brian Stirling.

### Referee Panels

The IRFU Referee Committee is responsible for putting in place Referee Panels which officiate in the All Ireland AIB League, Celtic League and European competitions. These Panels are merit based, and offer a clear pathway for progression, right up to International level.

International Referees are selected by the IRB Referee Selection Committee; Ireland currently have 4 referees – Alan Lewis, Alain Rolland, George Clancy and Peter Fitzgibbon on the Referee Panel; and Simon McDowell on the Touch Judge Panel.

### Interested in Refereeing?

The IRFU offer a range of courses and coaching workshops, commencing at “starter” level and up through the grades. Find out more, by contacting the Recruitment Officer in your area, or, contact the IRFU directly:

Carol Goti (Referee Administrator)

email: [carol.goti@irfu.ie](mailto:carol.goti@irfu.ie)

Ph: +353 1 647 3861

Julie Ashmore (Referee Secretary)

email: [Julie.ashmore@irfu.ie](mailto:Julie.ashmore@irfu.ie)

Ph: +353 1 6473804

David Keane (Referee Development Officer)

email: [david.keane@irfu.ie](mailto:david.keane@irfu.ie)

Ph: +353 1 647 3820

David McHugh (Referee Coaching and Development Officer)

email: [david.mchugh@irfu.ie](mailto:david.mchugh@irfu.ie)

Ph: +353 86 3806638

David Wilkinson (Referee Development Officer)

email: [davidw@ulsterrugby.com](mailto:davidw@ulsterrugby.com)

Ph: +44 7799062813

Dave O'Brien (Rugby Development Officer)

email: [dave@cbirfu.com](mailto:dave@cbirfu.com) Ph: +353 87 6418340

