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## Memorandum

To:	ARLRA Referees Coaches
From:	Michael Stone
Date:	18 March 2004
Subject:	MS004/04

### **ROUND 1**

A couple of interesting items appeared out of the first round last weekend. Steve Toms wrote:-

*“Just an observation from the (Knights v Panthers) game. At 1/08.55 Gower kicks the ball down field, the ball strikes a Newcastle player and is regathered by Priddis.*

*The question I wish to pose is was Priddis inside the 10m radius when the ball struck the Newcastle player as he was obviously in front of the kicker.*

*Unfortunately the camera cut from a wide shot to a close shot so it was not clear whom the ball struck but when the coverage went back to a wide shot there seemed to be any number of players from the kicking side within 10m of the Newcastle players.*

*Maybe from the angles you have at your disposal would clearly show but from what I was able to see (and I may be mistaken of course) for all apparent reasons it appears a player in an offside position has come into play and as a result his side gained an advantage.”*

Right again Tomsy. Tim missed this one and put his hand up straight away on Monday.

Daniel Anderson asked the (very reasonable) question about whether Sean Hampstead correctly ruled his player Wairangi Koopu offside when Stacey Jones knocked the ball on. Koopu was in front of Jones and hovered near the ball not touching it. Casey McGuire dived over the ball and was immediately set upon by Koopu. The answer is “yes, Koopu, being inside the 10 metres, was offside and gaining an advantage.” Refer to Law 2, Section 14.

*“An offside player shall not take any part in the game or attempt in any way to influence the course of the game. He shall not encroach within ten metres of an opponent who is waiting for the ball and shall immediately retire ten metres from any opponent who first secures possession of the ball.”*

There is a mistaken belief in the game that this law relates only to a kick. Not so, Sean was correct.

Then on to Video Ref Stone. I was presented with a very curly decision where a kick from the Sharks was dropped by a Tigers player. Another Tigers player knocked the ball back and was lunging toward the ball when he was grabbed by another Sharks player. The Sharks forced the ball and the decision went up. I was left with the decision of whether I should rule on the impact of the interference (which I deemed to be relatively minor) or rule solely on the breach (being the interference). In the end I thought that the try would have been scored irrespective of the minor interference and allowed the try. Not without some very real misgivings I can tell you. Robert told me that feelings amongst the press corps were roughly evenly divided, a fact that didn't impress me much because they didn't have to come up with the decision.

So discussion on Monday centred around whether we should rule simply on the breach, or whether the impact of the illegality should be taken into account. Whilst there is no black and white result, the policy henceforth will be that we will rule on the breach in similar circumstances.

## **NRL REFEREES' MEETING ROUND 1**

Some interesting observations came from the Round 1 debrief.

- *“Attention to detail is the major objective in 2004. Debriefs will be focusing on official's attention to the Key Indicators and not deviating from this objective.*

*‘Do the little thing right and the big issues look after themselves’*

*Defence structures close to the line are pushing the boundaries of the 10m. Sideline Officials need to be focused on:*

- *Defenders pushing up out wide from an offside position and forcing the ball back inside. Any disadvantage to the attacking side warrants a penalty.*

*If a player is injured or feigning injury (referee's discretion) then the referee can move the scrum and let play continue. Be very conscious that you do not take on the role of a doctor, care must be taken.*

- *Be aware of the strategy to slow down the ptb – ‘Bear Hugging’ the ball carrier on the ground. Movement is immediate.*
- *Be aware of the ‘pulling down’ of the ball carrier when HELD is called. Assistance from the Sideline Official may be warranted.*
- *Be conscious that the ball carrier has a responsibility to control the ball in a tackle.*

*It was agreed that the positioning for Kick Offs and GLDO’s are as follows:*

- *Kick Off – Positioned on the 20m line opposite to where the kick off is to be made.*
- *Goal Line Drop Out – Positioned on the 20m line and 1metre into the field of play and opposite to where the kick is to be made.*
- *A KEY INDICATOR to a penalty from a GLDO is as follows:*

*‘If the players front foot is on the ground in the field of play (1 full stride) BEFORE the kick is taken he will be interpreted as offside and will be penalised.’*

- *There is to be NO leniency in this area from kick offs. If a player is in front of the kicker he is offside. Common sense in this area is required.*

*A discussion on Professional Fouls has highlighted the following indicators when interpreting whether to Sin Bin.*

- *Field Position*
- *Defensive Structure*
- *Action of the perpetrator (are there 2 actions to slow ptb)*
- *Was it a deliberate breach to gain advantage?*
- *Was there a loss of opportunity?*

*It is now accepted that referees will get to the 10m on turnovers and this should also be the acceptable standard for players. Common sense needs to be put into play in this area.”*

*This is for your information to understand the depth of the NRL refereeing debrief system. I am not for one moment suggesting that all directions from the desk of Robert Finch be implemented everywhere. However, if it works at the elite level..... Watch next weekend and see if we do it right.*

**MICHAEL STONE**  
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**NRL REFEREES’ CO-ORDINATOR**

