



National Rugby League Limited
Fox Studios Development
Lang Road, Moore Park NSW 1363
Postal Address:
GPO Box 3498 Sydney NSW 2001
ABN 23 082 088 962
Internet: www.nrl.com
Telephone: (02) 9339 8500
Facsimile: (02) 9339 8508

Memorandum

To:	ARLRA Referees' Coaches
From:	Michael Stone
Date:	3 July 2003
Subject:	MS 009/03

NEWS FROM NRL

A try was awarded recently to Wests Tigers that threatened to have widespread implications for the game. The dummy half pushed the player who had played the ball into defenders on the goal line and dived over for a try. Whilst one could probably justify awarding the try in the circumstances, it became obvious that the tactic was not in the spirit of the game and a ruling was required to crystalize our thinking. Below is the text of a NRL Club Circular clarifying our new interpretation.

"There has been widespread debate following the last Round of NRL matches with regard to the International Laws of the Game and how they apply in the case of any attempt by a player to bore through the play-the-ball (ruck area) to score a try.

Unfortunately, the rules are not specific in dealing with this scenario so the matter has been discussed by the NRL Referees Coach and the referees themselves in an attempt to clarify how the practice will be interpreted in the Telstra Premiership.

Effective immediately, the following interpretation policy will apply:

- 1) Scoring a try by diving through or into the legs of the player who has played the ball is not in the spirit of the game. This act allows for no opportunity to the defending team to effect a tackle on that player.*
- 2) Once the ball is played it becomes general play. If the player who has played the ball obstructs the defending side he will be guilty of an offence.*

Could you please ensure this information is disseminated to your football and coaching staff prior to the commencement of Round 16 matches."

For once, I wholeheartedly commend this ruling to you all. I will recommend it to Geoff Carr for national implementation.

Also, following a request from the Judiciary Commissioner, the following has been sent to clubs. It will certainly be of interest to you all.

“...there has been an increasing incidence of players pushing down on the head or neck of opponents with the forearm or hand in the course of the tackle or after a tackle has been completed. This action clearly falls into the category of misconduct under the laws of the game and referees have been directed to penalise the offence when detected.

If there are continual breaches in this area ‘sin binning’ may also be considered.”

RULINGS

This one from Mick Quailey from North Sydney.

“Query 1

As a player is being tackled, the full time bell sounds. The referee deems the tackle to be completed and calls out "held". After he has called held but before he blows his whistle, a defender strips the ball away.

My young referee felt, that because he had called held, the tackle had been completed (Section 7 Law 3) and therefore the match was completed and he blew the full-time whistle. I was not at the ground but on hearing of the situation, I support his decision. At our rulings session following tonight's training session, the majority of our referees supported the decision but there were a few who felt that a penalty should have been awarded. Needless to say the coach of the losing team (it was a two point ball game) also felt that it should have been a penalty.

Needless to say, if the defender had committed an act of foul play, then the referee would be entitled to award a penalty.

Query 2

Team A (in possession) makes a long break down the field, leaving the defence in disarray. The player is tackled about 5m out from the opponents goal line. The referee ensures a quick play the ball and at this time there are only about 4 defending players on side. The acting half spins the ball out wide to a support who looks like he will score when a defending player coming back and never onside tackles him just short (about 2m) of the goal line. After this the referee felt that any advantage the attacking team had been lost as by now most of the

defending team were back. The referee penalised the defending player and put him in the Sin Bin for a Professional Foul.

Again, I did not witness the incident but support the decision Sin Bin the player. However, I then asked the referee if he considered awarding a Penalty Try. He said no. I then asked if, in his opinion, were any of the defending players who were onside in a position to effect a tackle that would have prevented him from scoring. He said that he doubted that any of them would have been able to do that. My final question was did he think that the player would have scored if not for the offside player tackling him. He said yes.

Query is: should a Penalty Try have been awarded? I believe it should have.”

Re query 1, I cannot add to what Mick has said. Time expires, tackle completed, full time.

Re query 2, the Law states “...*the Referee may award a penalty try if, in his opinion, a try would have been scored but for the unfair play of the defending team.*”

There are two elements to this law. 1 Was there unfair play? 2 But for that unfair play, would a try have been scored?

Re the unfair play, it isn't enough in my opinion, to simply say that an offside player made a tackle that prevented a try. If that were the case, we would have penalty tries every other day. But I think that in the referee's judgment, the player deliberately breached the Law in order to prevent the try from being scored, such as the case in the above scenario, then there is definitely a case for a penalty try being awarded.

In the second element, it is the opinion of the referee which counts. If he believes that a try would have been scored but for the unfair play, he certainly may award a penalty try. Should he also sin bin the player? I think that would be akin to double jeopardy.

So, I agree with Michael AGAIN! How boring.

NSW COUNTRY SOUTH MEETING – GOULBURN

The draft minutes are attached. The video day at Telstra Stadium commences at 9am Saturday 12 July. All attendees need to supply me with your car rego number for Security. Please do this ASAP.

The first Coaching video for 2003 was unveiled at the meeting and full credit should be given to the CRL boys who contributed to its quality. As well as being distributed nationally, copies will be sent to NZ, GB and France.

All registered coaches will receive a copy, so Queenslanders hassle Richard, CRLers hassle your DO, and Sydneysiders will receive theirs on Tuesday 15 July at the Level 2 coaches meeting. Emerging states, we will get around to posting them to you.

KIDS TO KANGAROOS

Part of a Media Release issued by the ARL this week said this:-

“Among the new initiatives in the Kids to Kangaroos(National Development Plan) are:

- *League Net - a national on line network bringing clubs from around the country together to exchange information*
- *A national Code of Conduct scheme that will be introduced for junior clubs and to govern behaviour both among players and spectators.*
- *A boost to the game’s existing education resources to provide software packages that will assist volunteer and professional administrators and school teachers in:*
 - *Club administration*
 - *Coaching*
 - *School Physical Education programmes*
- *Along with the Australian Sports Commission Kids to Kangaroos will shortly unveil the Smaller Steps programme to give all kids a taste of the game.*

Kids to Kangaroos also coordinates existing measures including:

- *The Australian Institute of Sport Rugby League Programme*
- *The ARL Foundation’s school and community programmes which reach some 120,00 students a year*
- *The National Accreditation Programme for coaches, referees and first aid officers*
 - *League Tag competitions for girls and boys*
- *Elite athlete pathways that continue to produce the best footballing talent in the country*
- *Foundation Shield events and Gala Days*
- *The Arrive Alive Cup incorporating over 400 high schools”*

You should be aware of what is happening at all levels of the code.

In the meantime, good luck, clear rucks and good ten in the future.

MICHAEL STONE
NRL REFEREES’ CO-ORDINATOR
ARLRA PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE CONSULTANT