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Memorandum

To:	ARLRA Referees' Coaches
From:	Michael Stone
Date:	19 May 2005
Subject:	MS 009/05

NEWS FROM NRL

Something that has evolved in recent weeks was the subject of an Email from Robert Finch to Coaches. I think that he describes it well here.

"There has been a number of examples over the past weeks where the ball carrier has got to his feet, taken the ball off the ground to play the ball and in the process of playing the ball a defender has accidentally kicked the ball out of the ruck.

Referees have placed the emphasis on the ball carrier in this instance and packed a scrum. It is our view that this is a harsh decision due to the fact that the ball carrier has done nothing wrong in playing the ball.

This week the referee will in this example penalize the defender for kicking the ball out of the ruck. I must stress that if the ball carrier does not lift the ball clear of the ground to play the ball and the ball is kicked then the result will be a scrum.

If you require further clarification on the above please give me a call at your convenience."

Brian Smith of Parramatta rightly replied with this observation.

"The instances I have seen have occurred where the ball has not been on the ground so does not require lifting by the tackled player. The ball has however been placed on the ground by the tackled player before either he or the tackler have regained their feet. The tangle and struggle that then takes place has resulted in what you have described.

On one or two occasions it has crossed my mind that the ball may have been "strategically" placed to offer maximum opportunity for the ball to be contacted by the defenders feet.

This is very difficult for the referee. I would like to see more responsibility placed on the tackled player to both get to his feet before placing the ball on the ground and to place the ball clear of the tangle that is often the case of multiple bodies.”

Finchy replied as follows.

“The point Brian raises is a correct one and a point that we need to implement in this area. In other words if the player does not regain his feet and stand up to play the ball then it is the ball carrier that has created the problem not the defender. We also need to be vigilant with the ball plant as well.”

This is a very normal situation where the NRL Referees’ Coach alerts the club coaches to something which we consider a problem and we get a reasoned and rational response. No surprises either way.

In the Bulldogs v Eagles match last week, the ball was kicked in general play, rebounded twice from players who hadn’t played at it, and bounced into touch. Got it? Some questions were asked about whether the result is a scrum or handover as the ball didn’t travel directly into touch from the kick. The following ruling was published in the minutes of the review meeting.

- **“Kick into touch** – for kicks into touch on the fifth and last where the ball is not kicked directly into touch but rebounds off a defender, the result is a scrum (and not a handover). See pg 25 of rule book: Section 11. sub-section 7 (a) The Tackle and Play-the-Ball: Sixth tackle. It states that “a handover shall occur **AFTER** the fifth play-the-ball in the following circumstances: i. The team is tackled a sixth time. ii. The team in possession commits an accidental breach for which a scrum would normally be set. iii. A player is held up in the opponent’s in-goal. iv. The ball is kicked into touch on the full.” None of these incidents occurred, therefore a scrum is correct.”

From the Dragons/Panthers game.

- **“Offside players coming into play after own team member knocks on** – we have let these go in the past, however if the knock-on has travelled some distance we now need to penalize. Eg Waterhouse offside and dropping on Dragons player who regained ball. By dropping on the player, Waterhouse has taken away his opposition’s opportunity to play! Therefore a penalty is needed.”

COMMUNICATION REMINDER

At the Comms session, referees were reminded of their strategies for communicating with captains. The minutes read as follows:-

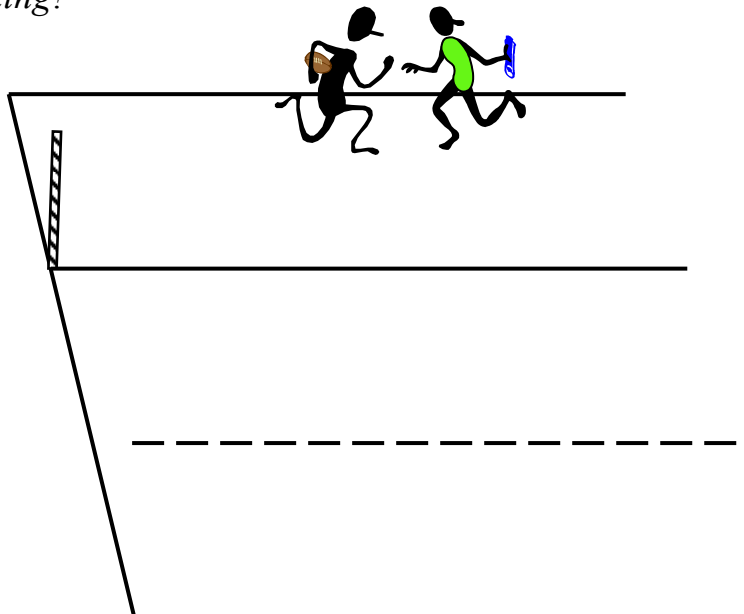
- *“With DOPES, still let captains have their say. Try not to interrupt but stay composed if the captains interject. If a captain comes to you, let him talk and then deliver your message. The end result is about you delivering your objective. Interrupting just brings about argument. Letting captain’s talk gives you time to compose yourself and think about an appropriate reply.*
- *If you are going to call out a captain, you need to deliver your objective and position the captain. If you are calling the captain out, it is most probably because you want something fixed up. Therefore positioning the captain will work much better than a fire side chat. Use “as captain you need to....” This is more powerful in positioning the captain.*
- *When closing meetings, it is very effective to turn just when you are finishing delivering your message.”*

Remember, Deliver, Objective, Position, Enforce. DOPE.

RULING OF THE WEEK

An attacking player in possession in his opponent’s in-goal run towards the posts in an attempt to improve his position before scoring a try. In doing so he collides with an opposition trainer and stumbles across the dead ball line without first grounding the ball.

What is your ruling?



The Laws

Section 6.3 *A try is scored when :- ...*

- e) *an attacking player carrying the ball comes into contact with the Referee or a Touch Judge or an encroaching spectator in the opponent's in-goal and play is thereby irregularly effected.*

Section 4. *The try is awarded ...*

where contact took place if scored as in 3 (e) above.

Thanks again to Michael Reid and Parra. We do get responses, such as this from Sno White.

"In reply to Parramatta's 'rule of the week' I offer 'my two bobs worth as follows:

if the ball only 'brushed the outstretched hand of the Referee and still managed to go over the dead ball line, I would think it difficult to assess that play has been irregularly affected. However this would / could depend also on whether the ball was deflected sufficiently away from the kick chaser, as to preclude that player from regathering the ball.

In summary, if the Referee feels that he has irregularly interfered with play, then award a scrum 10 metres out from goal line opposite where play was affected (where ball hit referee) and no closer than 20 metres from touch line.

If the referee deems that he / she has not irregularly affected play, then a 20 metre optional restart should be awarded."

GROUP 3 DVD

I received an outstanding DVD produced by Ian Andrews and Kevin Rayment from Group 3. It deals with various aspects of refereeing and touch judging skills. As part of their level 2 course it has guaranteed their qualifications. To all others who I need footage from, please get it in. Remember, positioning and urgency are the cornerstones of the proposed coaching video/dvd for this year.

RULING

From a correspondent.

"Can you just clear up a location of a penalty...when a kicker or team mate of a kicker is obstructed, and the ball is caught on the full by the opposition in their in-goal, the penalty should be awarded as near to the goal line as possible. Is that correct?"

Reply. *“No. The penalty is awarded 10 metres out opposite where the ball first crossed the line.”*

Congratulations to all those who have been appointed to Origin duties. For them in particular, remember, don't take your eye off the ball.

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