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## Memorandum

To:	ARLRA Referees' Coaches
From:	Michael Stone
Date:	10 June 2004
Subject:	MS 010/04

### **RULINGS**

From Barrie Keenahan:-

*“(In the Brisbane/ Dragons game)...there was an up and under by Brisbane, the St George fullback and winger allowed the ball to bounce and it bounced well above head height with the Brisbane chasers approaching the St George fullback at a rate of knots. With that in mind the St George fullback, Hornby, left the ground, took the ball and was tackled before he came back down. A penalty was awarded to St George.*

*I was of the opinion once the ball had hit the ground then it does away with the ruling of protecting the person going up for the bouncing ball. I will say that the Brisbane player WAS NOT contesting the ball, he went in for the tackle in mid air. ..”*

Correct, Baz. A poor ruling error from Tim Mander. Thankfully rarely seen. See note 1(b) on page 23, Section 11.

One other referee committed the ultimate sin of making a ruling error last weekend. Shayne Hayne penalized a player who was in front of a teammate who knocked the ball on, **but was in his own in goal**. He ran into the field of play and retrieved the ball. Shayne penalized him for being offside.

Now, “(a) player is offside **except when he is in his own in-goal** if the ball ...is touched...by one of his own team behind him.” The fact that the player who is in front but in the in-goal when the ball was touched runs into the field of play to retrieve the ball, does not automatically put him offside. In fact, to the contrary. He was never in an offside position because he was in his own in-goal and can only become offside pursuant to Law 1 of Section 14 of the Laws of the Game.

Hence, a player standing 10 centimetres from the dead ball line spots one of his own players 10 centimetres from the goal line inside the in goal area. He kicks the ball to him, the player misses it but runs into the field of play, picks up the ball and runs 100 metres to score a try. Answer, try.

Same player throws the ball to his teammate who catches it still inside the in-goal area. He runs upfield. Answer, penalty against the defending team for a deliberate throw forward. Simple isn't it.

### **PLAYER LEAVES THE FIELD FOR A BLUE**

The scenario is this. A Player is heckled by the crowd. He leaves the field, removes his jersey, jumps the fence and belts his antagonist. He then comes back over the fence and attempts to rejoin the game, after having put his jersey back on.

This apparently happened in Group 7 recently. The question is whether the player, having left the playing area was no longer under the control of the match officials.

Law 7, Section 16 says "The players are under the control of the Referee from the time they enter the playing area until they leave it." Also, at Section 15 1. (i), it says "A player is guilty of misconduct if he...behaves in any way contrary to the true spirit of the game." I have no doubt that the player in question fits squarely into that category, whatever decision the Group 7 RL arrive at.

### **GLOVES**

From Paul Mossman:-

*"We had an incident on the weekend where a player wore soccer-goalie type gloves on the field. The referee checked the gloves and enquired as to why they were being worn. The player advised that it was due to a number of open blisters on his hands (which the referee observed).*

*There is an opinion that gloves of any sort are not allowed on the field as specific equipment that may be worn is referred to in the International Laws. Can you advise:*

- 1. Is it permissible to wear gloves when a player has a medical condition that involves the hands (such as blisters etc.)?; and*
- 2. Is it permissible to wear gloves when there is no requirement due to a medical condition?"*

The ARL has ruled that gloves may NOT be worn during a game. Full stop.

## **GRAPPLE TACKLE**

The NRL issued a circular warning against the increasing incidence of this dangerous practice. You will no doubt see it in your local competitions due to the massive exposure of NRL matches. Here is some of what Graham Annesley had to say:-

***“Whilst minor incidental and accidental contact with the head or neck will still occur from time to time and may not breach the rules of the game (sic), any unnecessary contact with the head or neck will risk penalty by the referee on the field, and in more serious cases may result in a misconduct charge...”***

***The indicators that may be used in determining an illegal action in a tackle will include:***

- ***Defenders merely grasping the head or neck of an opponent in a tackle where more than one tackler is involved***
- ***Defenders making a legitimate upper body tackle, but then sliding up to grasp the head or neck in completing the tackle***
- ***Any pulling or jerking of the head or neck in an attempt to roll the ball carrier over in completing the tackle***
- ***Restraining the ball carrier on the ground by his head or neck to slow the play-the-ball***
- ***Any other unnecessary contact with the head or neck in effecting the tackle.***

***This advice is much more than simply a case of attempting to eliminate a tactical ploy. Forceful and unnecessary contact with the head or neck is a player safety issue and the (NRL) has a responsibility to ensure players are not placed at risk in this way.”***

**Referees also have a Duty of Care.**

## **REBOUND VERSUS PLAYED AT**

This happened in a match last week. We need to be attuned to the correct interpretation of the Law in order to get these very quirky decisions correct.

Team A on fifth and last tackle, kicks the ball. It hits an opponent on the full and rebounds into touch backwards on the full. The touch judge put his flag up.

The referee ruled that the ball had entered touch on the full and ordered a handover. Of course this is incorrect as it hit a defender before entering touch therefore meaning that the ball has entered

touch **otherwise** than on the full. The correct ruling should have been scrum, loose head and feed to Team B as they had not played at the ball.

## **LAWS OF THE GAME CD**

It appears that the Foundation through Peter Corcoran's NRAS Committee is to work on the production of a Laws of the Game CD. The ARLRA had previously secured initial approval of funding for an identical project to be run through its Laws Committee. Peter's valid point is that the project is clearly an "**education**" one and should be run through the Foundation. It is superfluous and wasteful of scarce financial resources to be mounting identical projects so go for it Peter. I look forward to what will be a valuable addition to a growing assortment of teaching aids available for referees. Anyone with questions that they think should be included refer them to Richard Johnston on [rugbyleague@qrl.com.au](mailto:rugbyleague@qrl.com.au).

## **NEW VIDEOS**

Production is underway for the new "**Referees' Communication – The Meeting**" video at Fox Studios. It is hoped that the production will be complete in the next couple of weeks. I will then need to convince the Board to pay for a production run and distribute the video together with supporting documents.

A further video with the working title "**Quality decision making for referees**" is well underway with explanatory footage taken recently. The *modus operandi* is this. The film will be pitched at young or inexperienced referees. There are a number of clips to watch. On each clip, the watcher will be asked for a decision, the reasoning behind the decision, and an explanation for the reasoning. The Level 2 coaches who devised the video believe that it will increase the confidence of young referees and help with the consistency of their decision making.

There will be supporting documents which have already been prepared in part. These include a "Reasoning" sheet and an answer sheet which is designed to be completed as the video is played. It is very exciting to be part of this great educational initiative for our newest referees because, along with the rest of the group, I believe that it will more fully equip our young referees to fulfil their duties and perhaps play a vital role in arresting the falling retention rate of referees.

## **RATIO BEHIND THE LAW**

Colin White asks:-

*"Can you please advise why the rule regarding 'mid air tackles' does not extend to protect the kicking team?"*

*Of course this would be the minority of cases, but it seems crazy that we would protect one player jumping to catch the ball but not another.*

*I have seen quite a bit lately where a team will put a bomb up and it virtually goes nowhere except mid field. All the players stand around waiting for someone from the kicking team to go for it and then they simply tackle him. What 's to stop a player from the non kicking team affecting a mid air tackle on the kicking team's player who does decide to jump for the ball? Even Section 15 - dangerous throws does not technically cover this aspect, as it is not a throw or a 'lifting' exercise.*

*I believe that the intention should be to protect all players from 'mid air tackles, who 'jump' for the ball."*

This is in response to the draft sent out last week which mentioned the mid air tackle above. See MS003/03 where I said:-

*"The last sentence (in the Law) was added in 2001 because coaches pointed to the fact that an attacking player who caught the ball in his opponent's in goal area must, under the previous law, be allowed to land prior to anyone tackling him. This, they said, would result in "uncontested tries" or, in the event of a mid air tackle being made, perhaps even a penalty try. This was against every principle in the game.*

*As the law was originally implemented as a safety issue for players, a change was always going to be difficult. However it was felt that a player from the kicker's team had a great advantage in the run onto the ball and nothing like the same risk was evident compared to the fullback/winger scenario which prompted the original change."*

This was also included in the Know the Game segment of the NRL website. Still, it does bear repeating. In fact, I decided to amalgamate all indices (plural of index, Kevin) and give you all a fair chance to review any prior decisions in the future. You will find it attached.

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NRL REFEREES' DEVELOPMENT MANAGER