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Memorandum

To:	ARLRA Referees' Coaches
From:	Michael Stone
Date:	21 July 2005
Subject:	MS 0012/05

NEWS FROM NRL

Those of you who regard yourselves as clinical observers of the game will have noticed some NRL referees abusing a sacred cow in recent matches. Yes, stepping out of the square, some referees in *yardage* are taking the short cut from the scrum instead of following the ball in traditional fashion. It isn't because they are suffering from a lack of fitness or are just plain lazy. Indeed it is an experiment to alleviate a perceived problem that has arisen in the game of late.

Picture a scrum set 10 metres from the Blue line. They win the scrum and half back passes to the fullback who hits the ball up. He then attempts to quickly play the ball to keep going in the same direction. The Red outside backs, being the alert people that they are, are awake to the strategy and do not retire the requisite distance. The problem for the referee is that he has had to follow the ball around the scrum and run past the tackle, to the ten and set the distance for the defenders. A difficult proposition particularly if the scrum wheels or folds in on itself as sometimes happens.

Certainly, taking the short cut enables the referee to more quickly get to a position where he can effectively mark the ten metres. I can hear the yelling and gnashing of teeth already, and not without reason. Some of the referees are uncomfortable with it and there is no pressure for them to do it. Once you move to a position where there are 12 players between you and the ball, there is a very real chance of the Referee missing something. So this is the process which is followed.

The referee informs the Sideline Officials that he will be taking the "shortcut" and the near side SO adopts a position to ensure that anything happening out of the referee's line of sight is observed. Obviously, this is only possible where on field communication gear is

being used. The jury is still out but it is another case of “if it ain’t broke, break so that it will be better when you fix it”.

AN OBSERVATION FROM Frank Samyia

“I have noticed that a few of the NRL referees are making some very liberal interpretations of 10m. I’m not talking about it being too short – I am talking about it being too long!

I cite 3 examples:

1. *Steve Clark – Manly v West Tigers – Tigers penalized for inside the 10m midway through the 1st half. The PTB took place 38m out from the tigers line. Steve Clark was standing 23m out from the line when he blew the penalty – a distance of 15m.*
2. *Sean Hampstead – Sharks v Newcastle. The penalty awarded to Newcastle with two minutes to go was advanced after Kimmorley backchatted. Have a look at how far he went back when he advanced the mark– the distance is clearly 15m. Johns is now within goalkicking range and he kicks the goal which ties up the game.*
3. *Steve Clark – Manly v St. George/Illawarra – 22 minute mark, Dragons are penalised for inside the 10m midfield. Again the distance judging by the line markings is around 13 - 14m.*

So what’s the deal?

To be fair, none will ever match Eddie Ward’s 17m penalty against Manly towards the end of the 1995 Grand Final. A classic for the ages that one.”

Frank does come from the Manly Association. Oh, and by the way he asks for this ruling.

“A scrum is won by the attacking team 10m out from the line.

The halfback picks up the ball at the base of the scrum and proceeds to run over the top of the actual scrum and grounds the ball in the ingoal, claiming the try.”

Was there any obstruction? Would you allow a player to deliberately step on an opponent? What other impediments can you see to the awarding of a try? Let me know.

TIME OFF WHEN PACKING A SCRUM

From Vince Lawson.

'In the line of consistency in the first and 79th minutes, why the hell do referees call time out near the end of halves because a team races to get any 6 players to form a scrum and then when time out called, break that formation. Prime annoying point SOO2 this year - 2 minutes left first half NSW race to have scrum formed, Steve calls time out yet 95 seconds later no one cares about scrum because Qld would have feed and nothing happens"

I replied:-

The referee will call time off when one side is packed and ready to play irrespective of the stage in the game. You only notice it late in the halves when the PLAYERS show urgency.

RESPONSE FROM RICHARD JOHNSTON

PERFORMING UNDER PRESSURE

As a follow up to the Shayne Hayne article on motivation and pressure the following points may assist match officials at all levels of endeavour.

What is Pressure? Simply put, pressure is a feeling created by ourselves when we react to a particular event or situation. Such pressure is not necessarily bad as it can keep us focussed ready to rise to the challenge.

How do you control responses to Pressure?

- Pressure only exists when we are concerned about the outcome
- Train as you mean to officiate
- Develop enhanced communication and practise at training
- Focus on the right thing at the right time, ignore the peripheral issues.

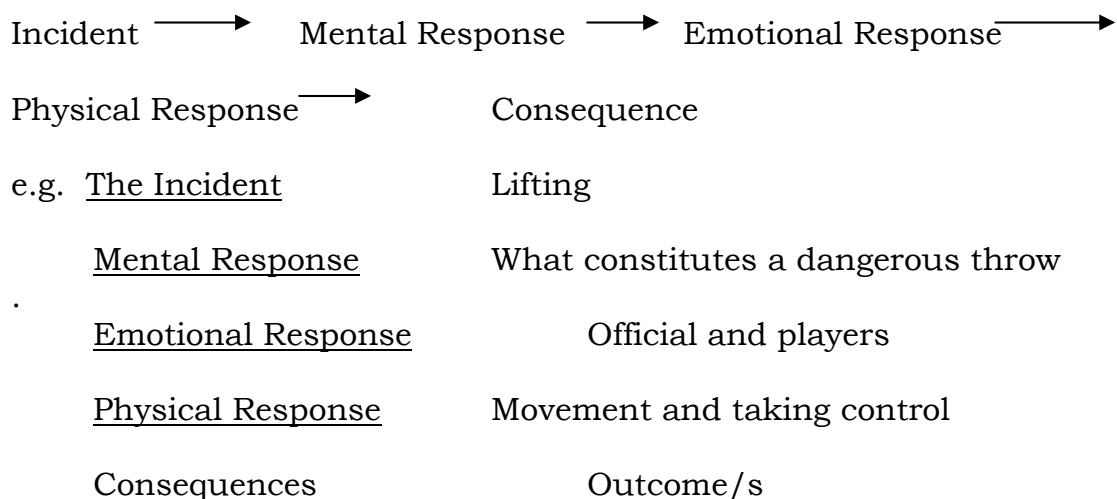
Where does Pressure come from?

- A match official's expectations about the game
- Expectations of the review panel
- Crowd influence
- Importance of the performance
- Personal preparation (physical and mental)
- Media expectations
- Implementing a new technique

(As a match official you can probably add more)

Remember it is not about your feelings, it is about your actions. Identify the action/skills that suffer most when you are in a pressure situation and at training put extra time into practising those skills so on match day you will be confident you can implement the appropriate action.

THE PRESSURE PARADIGM



How often have we been told that the “Givens’ are Law and Fitness. It is fine to have these attributes but if the pressure gets to a match official his self control, control of players and game contribution will undoubtedly suffer.

RULINGS

“Could you please assist with the correct ruling for the following situations, which occurred during games, I was officiating in on the weekend.

1. A penalty was awarded to the attacking team two metres from their opponent’s goal line. The attacking player then took the ball back to the 10-metre line and then kicked the ball into touch on the full. How is the game then restarted? Should it be a restart with a free kick or should a scrum result?
2. A player making a legal tackle on an opponent decides to strip him of the ball. Both players are facing their opponent’s goal line, and the ball is pulled downwards directly between the players. The ball hits the ground and the attacking player in an effort to regain the ball after it hits the ground then propels the ball forward (knocks on). Did the stripping constitute a knock on in the first place?”

Reply.

1 Free kick

2 If the ball is propelled toward the opponent's goal line, knock on.

ANOTHER ONE

“If a player drop kicks a ball at the in goal with the intention of getting the best hang time for his chasers but the ball goes between the posts, is then caught by an attacking player who then forces the ball and claims a try.”

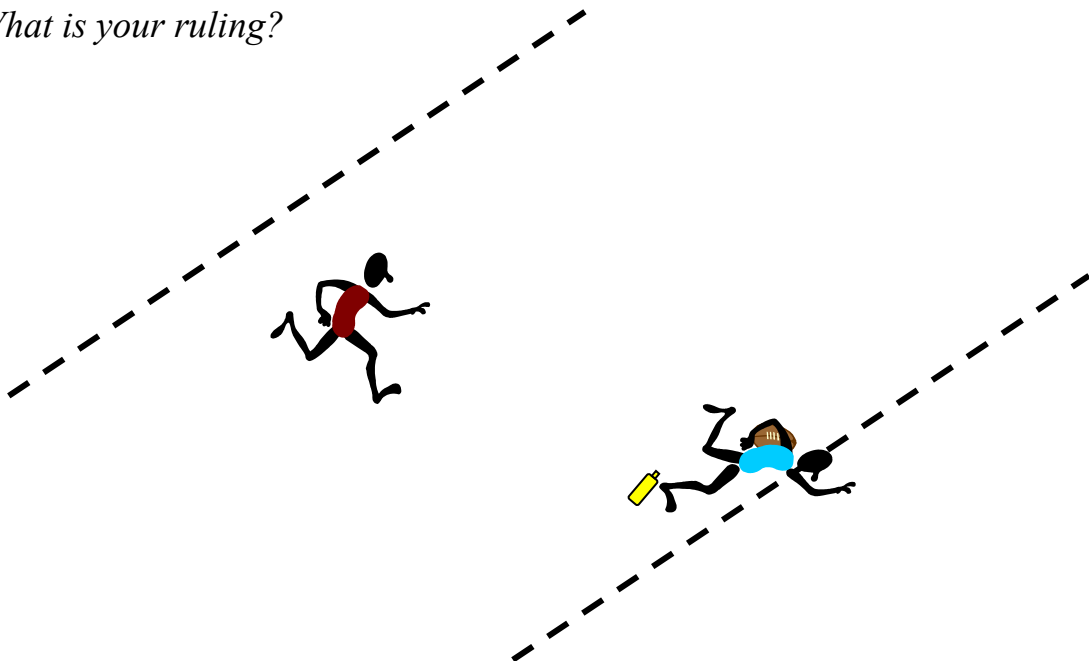
My response.

Give him 1 point.

RULING OF THE WEEK

A blue player in possession makes a break down field. Whilst running he trips over a water bottle left on the field by a trainer. He is then tackled by a maroon chaser.

What is your ruling?



The Laws

N.B. Not all of these can apply to this situation. You must first determine what has happened before making a ruling.

*Section 11.2. A player in possession is tackled:
d) when he is lying (sic) on the ground and an opponent places a hand on him.*

Section 12.1. A scrum is formed to restart play whenever play is not being restarted with a kick off, a drop out, a penalty kick or a play the ball.

Section 12.5. b) in the case of a mutual infringement, the attacking team shall have the loose head and the put in.

Don't take your eye off the ball.

MICHAEL STONE
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ARLRA PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE CONSULTANT