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## Memorandum

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| To:      | ARLRA Referees' Coaches |
| From:    | Michael Stone           |
| Date:    | 11 August 2005          |
| Subject: | MS 0013/05              |

### **NEWS FROM NRL**

You will no doubt have observed the frenzy over a quick kickoff by the Cowboys against the Sea Eagles last week. The situation roughly was this. Manly had scored with a few minutes remaining. Naturally with the kick required to put them in front, Chris Hicks took his time in setting up the conversion. About 2 minutes I think.

The conversion was successful and the Cowboys naturally enough ran up to the half way line to recommence play as quickly as possible. The referee checked to ensure that his officials were in position to adjudicate, and then blew his whistle to recommence play. Hicks was still dawdling back onside and not ready to take part in the ensuing play. Cowboys get the ball from the kickoff, and score 3 or 4 plays later. The question is...was Steve Clark correct in recommencing play when he did? The answer is "Yes" because all he is obligated to do is to wait until all officials are in position to adjudicate.

Now to your situation. In the above match, the officials communicated whilst the kick was being set up. Everyone knew that there was going to be a short kickoff. Therefore there was never any necessity for the touch judge on the near side to arrive at the corner post prior to the restart being ordered. In fact, Paul Kalina was just across the half way line when the kick off was taken but was stationary looking at the situation as the ball came down. Kalina had to run at least 20 metres further than Hicks and still got there well before him. In the situations at grass roots level, I would suggest caution in following such a quick restart. Play was restarted some 14 seconds after the successful conversion. Given the difference in fitness and communication levels of both officials and coaches/players between NRL and other Leagues, some caution need be shown before a quick kickoff is taken. What I mean by this, is that **the referee must ensure that his officials are definitely in position to adjudicate prior to recommencing the match.**

## **BORING THROUGH THE RUCK**

A decision in the Wests Tigers v Raiders game came under some scrutiny last week. Robbie Farah dived over the line from dummy half. In the process he was tackled by a defender and the player who had played the ball had his leg taken out.

There was some comment that the try should have been denied to the Tigers player. The question that needs to be asked is whether there was obstruction to the defence by the actions of Farah and his teammate.

The criteria that is used in this situation may be summarized as follows. A play the ball close to the goal line, dummy half dives through the legs of the ball player. Result, penalty for obstruction as no defender is able to get a shot on the dummy half. Second scenario, dummy half pushes forward so that the ball player moves forward and the dummy half grounds the ball. Result, penalty for obstruction as no defender is able to get a sufficiently good shot on the dummy half.

Next scenario is one where the dummy half dives to the side of the ball player and touches the ball player's leg or side in the process. This is the situation where some doubt will arise. **IF the dummy half dives to the side to the extent that a defender sufficiently well positioned would be able to tackle the dummy half unimpeded and the ball player is touched or knocked over by the dummy half, a try should be awarded.** I am well aware that this weekend we will probably have another variation to the theme, however this is where we are to date.

## **RULINGS**

Stuart Cummings from the Ol' Dart had a query which he shared with me. He said:-

*"It's a great time of year at the moment with a lot of coaches getting fractious with the play offs coming up and the fact that two teams are being relegated this year doesn't help either.*

*I have forwarded an e mail I received from one of our fans (a thinker of the game) who was looking at the drop out/20 metre restart scenario. I think he has made a good point in that teams wouldn't be able to just keep getting repeat sets by putting the ball into the in goal area. If the ball was in the in goal area and it was grounded by a defender or he was tackled in goal following a kick by an attacker then play would be restarted with a 20 metre optional kick. If the defender takes the ball into the in goal area and he is tackled or grounds the ball then play is restarted with a goal line drop out. What do you think?*

*Another couple of points that have cropped up over here recently! On the last tackle the attacking team passes the ball backwards and the ball hits their trainer on the head and play is irregularly affected. Play was restarted with a handover. This seems the correct decision to me but I cannot find an explanation of this in the Laws. It states in the duties of the referee section that he must blow his whistle if this happens but does not state how play should be restarted.*

*Also if the ball hits the referee and play is irregularly affected the Laws state that the referee should blow his whistle but does not state how play should be restarted.*

*I am sure the Laws used to state that the last team in possession would get head and feed in these situations unless it was last tackle but this seems to have disappeared(certainly out of ours).”*

I replied:-

*“No, I think that the proposal is a very negative one for our game. Your correspondent is a thinker and when you put this to him I'm sure that he will understand.*

*In relation to walking to the 20 if a ball is collected in goal and forced, or a defender is tackled in goal, I don't agree with your correspondent's proposal. Some years ago at a Laws Advisory Committee meeting, it was observed, by Warren Ryan I think, that we always play our game at the wrong end of the field. From the kickoff, the receiving team rucks the ball out from their own goal line and then kicks. Then the other side does the same. Then the other team and so on. He proposed a method of getting a team down the other end (rewarding skill at the same time) because when a team is hot on attack and another desperately defending, that is when the fans get to their feet. EXCITEMENT! Can you imagine, having succeeded in kicking a 40/20 (a rule that was introduced specifically for that purpose) and winning the scrum, the amazingly skillful half back dribbles the ball into the in goal only to find an unopposed winger forcing the ball rather than picking it up and trying to force his way into the field of play. Did you see that amazing try by Ty Williams of the Cowboys last weekend? No more of that.*

*Any law which would allow an easy way out would not be popular over here. The 20m restarts in Rugby Union are scoffed at for that reason. A long time ago, if a team kicked off and the ball was rolling toward the deadball line the fullback inevitably allowed it to go because play would restart from the 20. The kicking team didn't mind because it allowed their defence to be set. The defenders didn't mind as they quietly walked 30m to tap the ball. By it's nature, our game is stop/ start. We don't need to*

*give anyone excuses to slow it down. Now players must catch the ball and play continues. Similarly, if the ball goes over the touch line from a restart there is an advantage to the kicking side. Therefore the defenders play at the ball.*

*In relation to your other problem, I think that Section 12 Law 5(b) will tell you that in the case of a mutual infringement, a scrum will be packed with the loose head and feed to the attacking team. A mutual infringement is one whereby play is stopped and no fault can be attributed to either side.*

*By the way, even after the last play the ball, if a mutual infringement occurs, a scrum will still be packed as you cannot order a handover. See Section 11, Law 7. So therefore, your man was incorrect in his ruling.”*

Stuart's response?

*“I think a couple of things arise from this! Firstly we need to define “mutual infringement” into the glossary. I think your explanation is first class! Secondly, I think we need to look at adding “when a mutual infringement occurs after the last tackle” into Section 11, Law 7. I can see the scenario of teams getting into the opposition half and chasing the referee to kick the ball against him (extreme) or kicking the ball towards the referee in order to get another set of six!”*

Hard to disagree.

## **RULES OF THE WEEK**

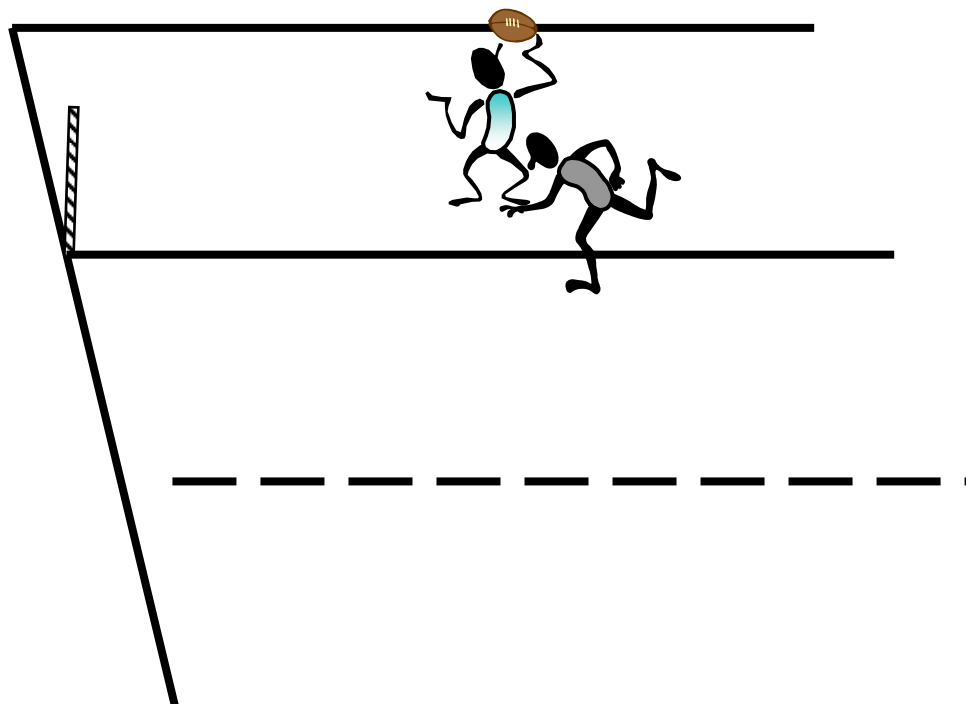
I was admonished by Richie Johnston for not giving my answer to the rules of the week in previous memos. Sorry. So here goes.

- 007/05 No try Touch judge is the sole judge of touch.
- 008/05 Opinion only. No irregular interference, 20m restart.
- 009/05 Try where contact is made.
- 010/05 20m restart.
- 011/05 Play on. **However, we all know that a knock on would be ruled don't we, even though the shoulder is neither the hand or arm!**
- 012/05 I think you would let him play the ball wouldn't you? Any variations?

Now for this week's rule.

A player from the defending team jumps from his own in-goal to catch a kick in general play. Whilst he is still mid air he is tackled by a player from the attacking team.

*What is your ruling?*



## **The Laws**

*Does this law apply if the breach is committed in-goal?*

Section 11. 1(b) *Mid Air Tackle*

*It is illegal to tackle an opposing player attempting to field a kick whilst the player is in mid-air. The catcher must have returned to the ground before being tackled. (See section 15.). Applies only when a player on the non-kicking team catches a ball on the full.*

Michael Reid believes that the “greater advantage” may be a 20m optional restart. Don’t believe him. The penalty is a safety issue for the player. Award the penalty.

Sorry to spoil the fun!

## **DRIBBLE OF THE MONTH**

Les Matthews got this beauty from someone in Murwillumbah. Very rarely to I neglect to try and explain but in this case I’ll make an exception.

*“I am mystified by a certain interpretation of the touch rule from kicks. I have seen, not uncommonly, the following scenario; one team kicks off. The ball travels towards a player on the receiving team, waiting near his touch-in-goal line.*

*The ball is obviously going to land very close to the line so the player deliberately puts his foot out over the line, takes the ball on the full, rendering the kick illegal and winning his team a penalty on the halfway mark. The same has happened on the touch line from kick-offs and drop-outs.*

*I cannot understand how a referee can rule a player who deliberately puts themselves out of the field of play, can then use that move to their team’s advantage. Surely a player who is out of the field of play cannot have any influence on the play and in fact should be penalised for trying to do so. The fact they have done so deliberately makes it even more obvious that this is a corruption of the intent of the touch rule. I cannot see anything in the rules addressing this issue directly so we are talking rule interpretation. And it seems grossly unfair to me that a player can deliberately twist the rules to avert the intent of the rule which is if the kick LANDS out of the field of play the result is a penalty. The current INTERPRETATION seems grossly unfair to the kicking team and I strongly advise you to have a look at it for the good of the game.”*

See what I mean? And if you don’t, don’t tell me!

## **MENTORING**

Mentoring is nothing new as many a sports person has turned to an experienced friend for advice. However, in recent years, the ARLRA has set in place a more structured method to assist match officials when going through a challenging learning process.

Quality mentoring can bring life to a theoretical concept, demonstrate practical officiating skills, be a sounding board for problems, help to identify areas of concern or just be a source of motivation.

Overall, mentoring should be about helping other people regardless of their stage of development to change their officiating practice for the better.

### **What are the benefits for the official?**

- Increases confidence and motivation
- Provide constructive feedback on performance
- Provides opportunity to put theory into practice

### **What are the benefits for the mentor?**

- Creates opportunities for mentors to share their knowledge and skills
- Provides new opportunities for mentors to learn
- Recognises expertise of mentors

### **What are the benefits to the Association?**

- Identified expertise and experience within the Association
- Provides an avenue for senior match officials
- Re-energises experienced match officials.

### **When can mentoring occur?**

At training: Here observation of either the match official or the mentor can be used as the model

On Field Performance: Here a review of on field performance with a follow up session after the match.

Video Analysis: Need to be aware in what context the video analysis is being used. Such a session should be a catalyst for further discussions e.g. communication techniques.

Finally, mentoring is a process rather than an event. Mentors should be seen as managers of a process rather than merely passing on knowledge.

*Richard Johnston*  
*ARLRA Referees' consultant*

### **INITIATIVES FROM OUR LEVEL 2 COACHES**

I mentioned in previous correspondence about the work that Brian Waiting and Kevin Rayment have done in their areas. Well, what about Peter Clifford from Group 10. He has produced a DVD and questionnaire which he has used in a coaching program in the group. There has been an enormous amount of work put into the project and it makes me immensely proud of the fact that in some small way I contributed to Peter's enthusiasm. It also gives me confidence that at our regular Seminar Planning and wine tasting at the Riolo's in November/December, I will be at last able to recommend that selected Level 2 Coaches be recruited to front certain sessions. And there were people who doubted that we could do it Kevin. Anyone else who has produced a DVD/Video or like coaching aid, please let me know and send me a copy as I keep them all in my brag book. By the way, Peter's business plan included a strategy to include senior referees in future training programs and encouraging senior referees to become involved in ... coaching. This type of initiative will go a long way towards achieving those goals.

## **FURTHER FROM NRL**

We are now working the referees with decisions under fatigue conditions. They work on the rower or grinder, come off knackered and confront a number of decisions presented to them on a computer which they need to make in a given time frame. Back on the rower, more decisions. We learn a bit about making decisions under stress.

Also, our Athletic Performance Manager (what a moniker!) has instituted a satellite tracking system on our referees to monitor their movements during matches to assist with planning later training programs. I don't pretend to understand, I just report the developments! No problem for Video refs.

In the meantime, don't take your eye off the ball.

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