

AUSTRALIAN TOUCH ASSOCIATION



EXPLANATIONS and INTERPRETATIONS

**of the
Playing Rules**

Explanations and Interpretations of the ATA Playing Rules of Touch

As various situations occur during a game of Touch, the referee sometimes "appears" to make decisions which others may consider difficult to understand or interpret. Therefore, this publication contains a series of Situations and Decisions based on a particular rule. These Situations and Decisions are referred to as Explanatory Notes and Interpretations.

These Explanations are not just an attempt to clarify or interpret an existing rule; they are supplementary to the current Rules or what the past Rule Books contained at the time.

The various situations mentioned in these Explanations are the ones most commonly asked by officials, players and referees. It is hoped, it will be easier for all Touch people to refer to and understand what interpretation is being applied on various situations and why.

The information contained here is not new. It is merely the Explanatory Notes issued by the Australian Touch Association, in one document. As more interpretations are issued, they will be added to the Explanation section pertaining to the relevant rule.

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RULE 1 - DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Explanations and Interpretations

SITUATION 1:1

When is a defending player put onside?

DECISION

A defending player is onside when the player takes up a position whereby they may legitimately become involved in play and not liable to a penalty: i.e. five (5) metres from the mark for a Rollball and ten (10) metres from the mark for a tap or both feet on or beyond the scoreline.

RULE 2 - THE FIELD AND THE BALL

Explanations and Interpretations

SITUATION 2:1

A player has both his heels on the scoreline while defending. Are they onside?

DECISION

Yes, as both feet, (heels being part of the feet), are on or beyond the scoreline.

RULE 3 - PLAYER ELIGIBILITY AND ATTIRE

Explanations and Interpretations

SITUATION 3:1

The rules only define jewellery, long fingernails or long studs as matters that need attending to prior to a game commencing. What about items such as sunglasses, knee braces, tongue studs, belly rings and other body piercing etc., can players wear these ?

DECISION

At all level of Touch, the competition organisers have a duty of care to all the participants. This includes the player themselves, their team mates and opponents, as well as spectators who at park level are always close to the action.

Any item – even if a doctor’s certificate has been provided – which is considered by the competition organisers as dangerous, has to be removed, otherwise the player cannot participate.

RULE 4 - MODE OF PLAY, DURATION AND SCORING

Explanations and Interpretations

SITUATION 4:1

What is the definition of possession with specific reference to a team having possession in the drop off.

DECISION

Possession is where a team has control of the ball to the extent they are in a position to score a touchdown if no defending players were on the field.

SITUATION 4:2

A player in possession while attempting to score a touchdown places the ball on the ground (and releases it) short of the scoreline.

DECISION

The player retains possession and a touch is counted. Ball to be brought back into play with a Rollball. The player would lose possession only if it was the sixth touch or the player was half. - Rule 4; Player Note A.

SITUATION 4:3

Referee Note A uses the term 'appropriate action'. How is this defined?

DECISION

- (a) Caution on the run;
- (b) Penalty;
- (c) Dismissal for a period of time;
- (d) Dismissal for the remainder of the game;
- (e) Suggest to the Captain to remove constant offender. - Rule 17; Referee Note D).

SITUATION 4:4

In Sudden Death Extra Time, when both teams must have possession before a result can be declared, what happens (what is the procedure?) when only one team has had possession and scores a touchdown?

DECISION

The referee awards the touchdown and play recommences with a tap at the half way mark by the team who was scored against. They have possession for six touches or until they lose possession. If they do not score before they lose possession the other team is declared the winner. - Rule 4.8 (ii).

SITUATION 4:5

In Sudden Death Extra Time, when both teams must have possession before a result can be declared, what happens when a team received "six again" and scores a touchdown before their opponents have possession.

DECISION

The referee awards the touchdown and play recommences with a tap at the half way mark by the team who was scored against. A team is allowed possession until the ball is dead, i.e. lose possession, as in general play. - Rule 4.8 (ii).

SITUATION 4:6

In Sudden Death Extra Time, when both teams must have possession before a result can be declared, the team tapping off scores within its first set of touches. The team scored against taps off and an opponent tries to intercept a pass but drops the ball. Is the ball therefore declared "dead" and the game ended?

DECISION

Yes as the team had possession and subsequently lost it

SITUATION 4:7

A team taps off in extra time and scores a touchdown. The other team then taps off and whilst attempting to score has the ball knocked to the ground (either deliberate knocked down or an attempt to intercept). Does this constitute as possession to the defending team and therefore a loss of possession to the attacking team thus ending the game.

DECISION

Yes as the team had possession and subsequently lost it

SITUATION 4:8

In Sudden Death Extra Time, when both teams must have possession before a result can be declared, the team tapping off has a pass intercepted. The player in possession when making a pass has it in turn intercepted resulting in a touchdown being claimed. What happens next ?

DECISION

The Touchdown is awarded and the game concludes as both have had possession. - Rule 4.8 (ii).

SITUATION 4:9

In Sudden Death Extra Time, when both teams must have possession before a result can be declared, what happens when both teams score with their first set of six touches and the team that recommences after the scores are level scores from the tap off.

DECISION

The game is concluded and the team that last scored is declared the winner.

SITUATION 4:10

A team taps off in extra time and whilst attempting to score has a defender infringe the rules thus allowing a penalty to be awarded to the attacking team. Does this action negate possession to the defending team for the purpose of declaring a winner if the attacking team with its next set of six touches scores a touchdown.

DECISION

No. The defending team was never in possession therefore they are allowed to tap off.

SITUATION 4:11

In the Drop Off when team numbers comes down to three (3) players only, what happens if the referee sends off a player from one of the teams for the remainder of the game ?

DECISION

The game is abandoned and the non-offending team is declared the winner. - See Rule 5 RN A applies. Three in the Drop Off is the minimum number allowed.

SITUATION 4:12

A team with only five players sustains an injury to one of their players and finishes the game with only four players. At the commencement of the Drop Off only four players from that team take the field, the injured player cannot recover. What happens after the first two minute segment has elapsed, does the team with four players have to drop off a player?

DECISION

The team with four players were “deemed” to have commenced the drop off with five players for the first two minutes; therefore after the two-minute segment they may retain the same number of players as their opponents.

SITUATION 4:13

A team with only five players sustains an injury to one of their players and finishes the game with only four players. At the commencement of the Drop Off only four players from that team take the field. If the fifth player sufficiently recovers, can they take the field before the first of the two-minute segments elapses?

DECISION

The injured player may take the field at any time provided the maximum number allowed for that team is not exceeded. In this case the player may take the field as no player from that team was dismissed for the remainder of the game and therefore both team can have equal numbers.

SITUATION 4:14

A team plays the whole game with only five players and at the conclusion of the game the score is drawn. A Drop Off is required to determine a winner. In what order does the team with only five players drop off a player? Do they wait until both teams have five players or do they have to go down to three before both teams have equal numbers?

DECISION

During the Drop Off the team with six players will drop a player off after the first period of time, while the team with five players will not drop off a player until the second period of time has elapsed.

SITUATION 4:15

A team with only five players for the whole game commences the Drop Off to determine the winner. The Rule states the referee will ...”*then signal to each team to reduce their playing strength by one player to five (5) onfield players...*” Does that means the team already with only five players has to reduce their number by one (1).

DECISION

See Situation 4:13 – the same principle must apply. The team does not have to reduce its playing numbers to commence the Drop Off. You can also see from the Rule itself that playing number at the commencement of the Drop Off (with all other things being equal) is five onfield players.

SITUATION 4:16

A team has only five players and has a player sent off for the remainder of the game. The scores are level at full time and a drop off is employed to decide the winner. How is the team affected that are now down to only four players?

DECISION

The team with only five players will play the drop off with one less player than their opponents, that is, four v five then three v four. At the completion of four minutes extra time the team with three players cannot reduce its number to two. So that the non-offending team is not penalised for the indiscretion of its opponents, the game will continue at three v four until a result is reached.

SITUATION 4:17

A team has only five players and has a player sent off for the remainder of the game. The scores are level at full time and a drop off is employed to decide the winner. How is the team affected that are now down to only four players?

DECISION

The team with only four players will play the drop off with two less players than their opponents, that is, three v five. At the completion of two minutes extra time the team with three players cannot reduce its number to two but their opponents must drop off a player so the situation is three on four. There will be no further drop off of player at this point. So that the non-offending team is not penalised for the indiscretion of its opponents, the game will continue at three v four until a result is reached.

SITUATION 4:18

In the wet a player in possession dives for the scoreline and lands about a metre short but his momentum carries him across the scoreline. Would a touchdown be awarded?

DECISION

Provided the player retained possession of the ball, a touchdown would be awarded. - See Rule 4 PN B.

RULE 5 - TEAM COMPOSITION AND SUBSTITUTION

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 5:1

A team has a player sent off for a period of time. The player moves to a position beyond his team's attacking scoreline. After a period of time, the referee signals to the dismissed player that he can return to the game. Instead, another player joins the team (irrespective of field position). Is such a substitution allowable?

DECISION

Yes. The dismissed player is not in the field of play and may be replaced at any time after being recalled to the game by the referee. Usual interchange procedures do not apply except with respect to replacing from an onside position.

SITUATION 5:2

A player in possession running downfield is touched with no team mate close by. The player effects a Rollball and is substituted as per the interchange rule. The substitute player takes the field and moves directly into the half position. Is such an interchange allowed and can the new player take on the role of half.

DECISION

Provided the interchange procedure is in accordance with the rules, the player taking the field can assume any position they like, including the half role. Although the substituting player is replacing the player who performed the Rollball (and the person performing the Rollball cannot pick up the ball), they are not the same person so the new player is entitled to go into half.

SITUATION 5:3

In a drop off when there are only three players per team, can a player in possession after being touched (with no team mate close by) effect a quick Rollball and immediately be substituted ? Can the substitute player take the field and move directly into the half position?

DECISION

The fact that this action happens in the Drop Off has no differing effect to the decision in 5:2. Provided the interchange procedure is in accordance with the rules, the player taking the field can assume any position they like, including the half.

SITUATION 5:4

In mixed team what is the minimum team composition for a game to commence ?

DECISION

There are several combinations:-

- One (1) male and three (3) females
- Two (2) males and two (2) females
- Three (3) males and one (1) female

SITUATION 5:5

In mixed team what are the possible team compositions for the six players on the field?

DECISION

There are several combinations:-

- One (1) male and five (5) females
- Two (2) males and four (4) females
- Three (3) males and three (3) females

SITUATION 5:6

In mixed team what are the possible team compositions for the twelve players in the team?

DECISION

There are many combinations, remembering always that only three (3) males are allowed on the field at any one time, and that a minimum of four (4) players must be on the field: - One (1) male and eleven (11) females and in any combination downwards to Eleven (11) males and one (1) female.

SITUATION 5:7

In a mixed game, a male player gets sent off for a period of time, thus leaving 3 females and two males. On the next interchange the coach replaces a female with a male player leaving two females and 3 males. When the referee calls the player back onto the field the coach then replaces that player with a female. Is this allowed?

DECISION

Yes, A coach can vary the composition of his mixed team in any combination provide the maximum number of males and minimum number of females is not breached.

SITUATION 5:8

In a mixed game, a male player gets sent off for the remainder of the game, thus leaving 3 females and two males. On the next interchange the coach replaces a female with a male player leaving two females and 3 males. Is this allowed?

DECISION

Yes, A coach can vary the composition of his mixed team in any combination provide the maximum number of males and minimum number of females is not breached

SITUATION 5:9

A winger on the sideline is being guarded heavily, (man on man with blocked out style defence), by two defenders near the attacking scoreline. The winger steps out of the field of play, and runs around the witches hat back into the touchdown zone, and the player in possession passes the ball to the winger, who scores. Is this allowable

DECISION

Yes the referee would award a touchdown considering all other facts. The general rule from the past about players standing outside of the field then joining the play related to deliberate act of melding in with the substitute players walking up and down the sideline. With the interchange box this has somewhat been eliminated (except for the interchange box area) but the action in this situation is not deliberate in remaining outside the filed of play.

RULE 6 - COMMENCEMENT AND RECOMMENCEMENT OF PLAY

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 6:1

A team is awarded a penalty and decides to take the ball back ten (10) metres from the mark. How close to where the tap is being taken, can the defending team move?

DECISION

The defending team cannot move within ten metres of the MARK indicated by the referee, until the ball has been tapped (Rule 6.4). The fact the attacking team can move the ball up to ten metres behind the mark (Rule 6 Player Note C), does not allow the defence to move any closer than ten metres from the MARK as indicated by the referee.

RULE 7 - POSSESSION

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 7:1

A player in possession while attempting to score a touchdown touches the ground with the ball (but does not release it) short of the scoreline.

DECISION

No touch count: Play on. - Rule 7; Referee Note B.

SITUATION 7:2

After a player scores a touchdown should they have to pick up the ball and give it to the opposition?

DECISION

It is not compulsory for the scorer to pick up the ball and hand it to the opposition. If directed to do so by the referee the player must comply BUT this direction should only be given if the opposition players have not chased and are near halfway waiting for the restart.

SITUATION 7:3

A 'dead-heat' for say a defender attempting an intercept and an attacking player trying to catch the ball. Who gets possession ?

DECISION

Unless the defender clearly has their hands on the ball first then the attacking team is deemed not to have lost possession.

RULE 8 - PASSING

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 8:1

Player in possession juggles the ball forward. It goes from the original player to a team mate who was onside. Is this allowed?

DECISION

Forward pass. - Rule 8.2

SITUATION 8:2

A player overruns a pass made to him by a team mate. The pass was in a backward direction but the player who is now forward of his team mate has to stretch back to retrieve the ball.

DECISION

Player receiving the pass is not offside. Rules 8.1 and 13.1 do not apply.

SITUATION 8:3

A player in possession fumbles the ball forward. It hits a defending player and rebounds back to the possession of another attacking player.

DECISION

Possession goes to the defending team. Rule 8; Player Note A.

RULE 9 - THE ROLLBALL

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 9:1

A player in possession runs up to effect a touch on a defender (or alternatively expects to be touched by a defender) and at the moment of the expected touch the defender backs away causing the player in possession to voluntary Rollball.

DECISION

Penalty awarded to the defending team. Rule 9.6.

SITUATION 9:2

At a change of possession, the attacking player places the ball on the ground and walks over it.

DECISION

Play on. The attacking player has brought the ball into play. The same would apply if a defending player placed the ball on the mark.

SITUATION 9:3

A defending player trying to retire has an attacking player running at him. The defender effects a touch not knowing if he/she has retired the required distance.

DECISION

- (a) The touch counts if the defender has retired the correct distance.
- (b) A penalty is awarded if the defender failed to retire the correct distance.

NOTE: The referee WOULD NOT call "Play on" as he failed to WARN the defender they were still offside. If warned, the referee may call "Play on".

SITUATION 9:4

An attacking player performs a Rollball. The half traps the ball with his foot BUT another onside attacking player picks the ball up. When can the defence move forward and what happens if a player other than the half picks up the ball?

DECISION

- (a) As soon as the half touches the ball the defence can move forward.
- (b) The half once having touched the ball must pick it up immediately otherwise a penalty will be awarded against them (Rule 9.3).
- (c) Once the half has touched the ball, no other player can pick it up from the Rollball.

SITUATION 9:5

The ball hits the foot of the half before it is picked up. When can the defence move forward?

DECISION

Defence can move forward as soon as the ball touches the foot of the half.
Rule 9.4 and Referee Note B.

SITUATION 9:6

The half deliberately uses a foot to trap the ball prior to picking it up.

DECISION

Play on, defence can move forward. - Rule 9.4 and Referee Note B.

SITUATION 9:7

Half in attempting to trap the ball causes it to go more than one (1) metre.

DECISION

Change of possession at the mark. - Rule 9.2.

SITUATION 9:8

After a touch, the player in possession places the ball on the ground and uses his foot to Rollball. There is no half in position. When can the defence move forward?

DECISION

As soon as the ball has left the hands of the "touched" attacking player. - Rule 9.5.

SITUATION 9:9

The half in attempting to gather the ball rolls it towards himself along the ground.

DECISION

Play on. - Rule 7; Referee Note B.

SITUATION 9:10

The ball is placed on the mark at a change of possession. An attacking player takes up a position in front of the ball and steps over it backwards so as to be quickly in position to support the half.

DECISION

Such actions would constitute a Rollball in a forward direction and would result in a change of possession. Rule 9.2; Rule 9; Player Note D and Referee Note G. Refer also Situation 9:14

SITUATION 9:11

At a change of possession, the team losing possession places the ball on the mark. An attacking player steps over the ball and there is no half in position. When can the defence move forward?

DECISION

When the attacking player's foot or body passes over the ball.

SITUATION 9:12

At a change of possession, the team losing possession places the ball on the mark. An attacking player uses his foot to bring the ball into play. There is no half in position. When can the defence move forward?

DECISION

When the attacking player places a foot on the ball. - Rule 9; Player Note A and Referee Note G.

SITUATION 9:13

Player in possession deliberately touches the ground with the ball, does not release it and does not get touched, he then proceeds to play on hoping his ploy will confuse the opposition.

DECISION

Play on. - Rule 7; Referee Note B.

SITUATION 9:14

A penalty is awarded and offending team places the ball on the mark. Attacking player chooses to bring the ball into play by using the Rollball method. The attacking player however steps backwards over the ball to bring it into play.

DECISION

Change of possession at the mark. Stepping backwards over the ball constitutes a Rollball in a forward direction. Rule 9.2; Rule - 9 Player Notes D and G. - Refer also to Situation 9:10

SITUATION 9:15

The half who is over the scoreline passes to a team mate. The ball is deflected by the defender, (either by an unintentional attempt to prevent the pass or a deliberate attempt to intercept the pass), back to the hands of the half who places in on the ground and claims a touchdown.

DECISION

A touchdown would be awarded as the action of releasing the ball no longer designates the player as the half.

SITUATION 9:16

The half who is over the scoreline releases the ball either in an attempt to throw a pass or otherwise, but before the ball comes into contact with another player or the ground, he regathers it and places it on the ground claiming a touchdown.

DECISION

The fact that the player has released the ball does not automatically mean he is no longer the half. Because the ball did not come in contact with another player the pass (in effect to himself), does not relinquish his role as the half and the touchdown would be disallowed.

SITUATION 9:17

An attacking player drops the ball from waist height and traps it with his foot for a Rollball. Is such action allowable ?

DECISION

Yes! 'Dunking' is allowed therefore using the foot to 'dunk' the ball is also allowed (provided all other Rule re Rollball are adhered to). No Rule says the ball has to be placed on the ground (mark) with the hand. See 9 PN A and PN B.

SITUATION 9:18

An attacking player drops the ball from say upper thigh height to Rollball without using the foot. Is such action allowable ?

DECISION

No! Such action would constitute an incorrect Rollball. Rule 9.2

SITUATION 9:19

An attacking player in an attempt to execute a quick "dump" deflects the ball off the ground the knee or leg (or any other part of his body) thus causing the ball to project either sideways or forward without control. Should the player be asked to collect the ball and Rollball correctly?

DECISION

No! It was the attacking players decision to effect a quick Rollball and if they have "mucked" it up, they loose possession. Hand over to opponents.

Note here, that if the ball is dislodged by a defender or dropped accidentally then the ball is regarded as dead and the attacking player retains possession, unless it is the sixth touch.

SITUATION 9:20

A player who has been awarded a change of possession incorrectly taps the ball assuming that a penalty was awarded. Is this a penalty or change of possession to the non offending team ?

DECISION

The referee would award a change of possession.

SITUATION 9:21

A player in possession attempts to make a touch and places the ball on the ground in anticipation of the touch (the ball is not released). However contact is not made with the original defender so the player reaches to touch another defender. Is such action allowed?

DECISION

Yes. The placing of the ball on the ground, whilst attempting to effect a Rollball, (provided the ball is not released), does not constitute a Rollball. The fact a touch has not been effected is irrelevant as the ball must leave the hands of the attacking player for the action to constitute a Rollball. The attacking player would not be penalised for a voluntary Rollball.

SITUATION 9:22

The ball is rolled and there a half is in position. When can the defence move forward?

DECISION

Provided they were onside at the Rollball the defending players can move forward as soon as the ball has made contact with the half. - Rule 9.4

SITUATION 9:23

The ball is rolled and there is no half in position. When can the defence move forward?

DECISION

Provided they were onside at the Rollball the defending players can move forward as soon as the ball has left the hands of the player effecting the Rollball. - Rule 9.5

SITUATION 9:24

The ball is rolled and there is no half in position. A defending player moves to the ball and walks over it claiming he has taken possession and bought the ball into play. Is such action legal?

DECISION

Provided the player was onside at the Rollball, possession must be claimed by the defending player. Merely walking over the ball is not deemed to be sufficient. The ball must be claimed (that is touched) by the defender either with the hand or foot. The referee would instruct the player to touch the ball and that once they touch the ball they must perform a Rollball to bring it into play .See Rule 9.5

SITUATION 9:25

The half crosses the scoreline untouched and runs around trying to link up with a team mate. Before the ball can be passed the half is touched. Where is the mark for the subsequent Rollball ?

DECISION

Change of possession and Rollball to the defending team is five metres from the scoreline opposite where the touch was effected:- See Rule 9.3

SITUATION 9:26

A player performs a Rollball and notices there is no half in position so they turn around and pick up the ball. What action can the Referee take? Would the action be different if the player after picking the ball up passed it to a team mate ?

DECISION

According to Rule 9 Player note D. The player performing the Rollball cannot retrieve the ball. Should this happen the Referee would order a change of possession. If however the player passes the ball, the referee would penalise the player in accordance with an incorrect changeover procedures, that is, a penalty ten metres forward of the mark for the changeover. - Rule 7.2

RULE 10 - THE TOUCH

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 10:1

A defending player effects a touch on an attacking player. The defender retires directly towards the five (5) metre line with his/hers arms slightly apart or fully extended. The half runs towards the defender who is still offside and pushes him aside and runs on.

DECISION

The half effected a touch thus causing a change of possession - Rule 10.9. (Seealso13:2)

SITUATION 10:2

An attacking player effects a touch and quickly performs a Rollball. The defender attempts to retire but the half has scooped up the ball and passes it to another attacking player who touches the defender still retiring and still offside.

DECISION

Touch counts. Rollball unless sixth (6th) touch. - Rule 10.9.

SITUATION 10:3

What or where is the mark for the tap as a result of an infringement for interference after a touch?

DECISION

The tap is awarded to the attacking team along a line five (5) metres forward of the mark for the Rollball and nearest the infringement.

SITUATION 10:4

Player in possession is touched and whilst attempting to Rollball, drops the ball. What happens ?

DECISION

The referee would ask the player to Rollball, touch count continues (unless sixth). See Rule 10.7, RN B.

SITUATION 10:5

A defender in attempting to effect a touch dislodged the ball from the hand of the player in possession. What can the referee do ?

DECISION

Generally Rule 1.24 will apply, the touch will count and the attacking team will Rollball with NO change to the touch count. However the referee must consider Rule 10.1 to ensure minimum force was used in making the touch. (See also Rule 10 PN A and RN B).

SITUATION 10:6

In general play an attacking player becomes injured. Whilst play continues up field the injured player lies on the ground and is not replaced. A defender takes an intercept and heads towards the scoreline. The injured player jumps up and effects a touch on the player in possession. Would the touch be allowable ?

DECISION

Provided the now defending team has no more than six players on the field, the player can legitimately effect a touch.

SITUATION 10:7

In general play an attacking player becomes injured. Whilst play continues up field the injured player lies on the ground and is not replaced. A defender takes an intercept and heads towards the scoreline. The injured player lashes out with his foot and effects a touch on the player in possession. Would the touch be allowable?

DECISION

The touch conforms with the definition in the Rules Book, that is, contact being made between an attacking and defending player, however other Rules would apply where the touch with the foot may cause a penalty to result, the player being dismissed for a period of time or the whole game and/or a penalty touchdown. - See Rules 1, 10

SITUATION 10:8

Near the scoreline the referee calls a defender offside. In an attempt to retire to the scoreline the defender falls over. The player in possession jumps the defender and places the ball over the scoreline claiming a touchdown. However as he places the ball on the ground the player stands on the hand of the defender lying on the ground. Is the touchdown awarded?

DECISION

When a player places the ball on the ground on or over the scoreline at the same time a touch is effected, (and the player in possession effected a touch), the touch counts and no touchdown is awarded (Rule 10.8). However, the referee had “warned” the offside player so the touch would not count and a touchdown would be awarded.

SITUATION 10:9

When the player in possession is effecting a rollball near the scoreline and is in the process of placing the ball on the ground, a touch is effected by the defender on the ball, pushing it out and in between the legs of the player in possession - the ball is quickly passed out to a supporting player who scores. Is there any allowance for an advantage here if the referee thinks that the push out of the ball, by the defender, was over-vigorous?

DECISION

There is no allowance for advantage to be played. A touch on the ball constitutes a touch and with that the ball must be played correctly. If the ball has been knocked down by the defender (purposely) a penalty should result. There can be no "play on" or advantage from this as the touch is made.

The referee however has the option of considering the action of the defender a “professional foul” near the scoreline and decide on a subsequent course of action against the defending player, including a penalty touchdown.

RULE 11 - BALL ON OR OVER SIDELINE/SCORELINE

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 11:1

A player in possession performs a Rollball near the scoreline. An onside defending player leans over and touches the half before the ball is cleared.

DECISION

Half caught in possession. - Rules 9.3 and 11.5.

SITUATION 11:2

A player in possession puts a foot on the sideline whilst running downfield.

DECISION

Player is in touch. Change of possession five (5) metres infield from where their foot touched the sideline. - Rule 11.1

SITUATION 11:3

A defender with one foot on the sideline effects a touch on an attacking player.

DECISION

Touch Counts. No change of possession for the attacking player coming into contact with someone outside the field of play. - Rule 11.1.

SITUATION 11:4

In Rule 11 PN A it states " when moving forward or backwards from the mark in accordance with Rules 11.4 or 11.5 players should indicate to the referee that such options have been chosen " Does the referee penalise the player if he is not notified?

DECISION

No. The Player Note says that the player SHOULD indicate to the referee, there is no compulsion that he does this. So in fact, the referee cannot take any action, it is expected the referee knows the player is allowed to take this step.

SITUATION 11:5

A defender intercepts a pass, thrown by the half, behind their own scoreline and is touched before they can run it back into the field of play. Where is the mark for the Rollball ?

DECISION

The mark is on the five metre line from the scoreline, directly opposite where the touch was effected.

SITUATION 11:6

If a Rollball occurs more than 10 metres from the scoreline, and the defensive line is set more than 5 metres from the scoreline (say six metres), are the defenders are entitled to use freeze defence at this point in the game.

DECISION

Yes the defenders are entitled to use freeze defence at this point in the game provided no defensive players has held a defensive position on the five metre line or between the five metre line and scoreline.

SITUATION 11:7

If Rollball occurs on the 10 metres or within 10 metres of the scoreline, and the defensive line is set on the 5 metres (or anywhere between the scoreline and the 5 metres broken line), must the whole team must move forward and attempt to effect a touch.

DECISION

Yes the WHOLE team must move forward and attempt to effect a touch as the Rule comes into effect when any defender holds a position on the five metre line or between the five metre line and scoreline.

SITUATION 11:8

The Rollball occurs more than 10 metres from the scoreline, however a defender holds a position on the 5 metre broken line (or enters the area between the 5 metre line and the scoreline), is the whole team is deemed to be involved in the Mexican Standoff.

DECISION

Yes the **WHOLE** team must then move forward in an attempt to effect a touch as any **ONE** defender can initiate the “no freeze” defence pattern.

SITUATION 11:9

If a penalty is awarded to the attacking team which forces the defensive line to be set on or within the 5 metres line and scoreline, and the attacking team moves the mark up to 10 metres directly behind the original mark does the defending team still have to move forward in an attempt to effect touch after the ball is tapped, even though the ball is bought into play more than 10 metres from the scoreline.

DECISION

Yes the fact that the new mark is further than 10 metres from the scoreline is irrelevant as the original mark has set the point where the defending team must remain until the ball is bought into play.

SITUATION 11:10

When can a team employ “freeze defence” tactics and do not have to come out to attempt to effect a touch.

DECISION

The defending team can freeze their defence on the scoreline **ANY** time the player in possession is within the area between, (not on), the 5 metres broken line, and the scoreline.

SITUATION 11:11

What happens when a defender, engaged in moving forward in an attempt to effect a touch, jumps backwards to “milk” a penalty when the attacking player dumps thus effecting a voluntary Rollball.

DECISION

A defending player, once engaged in the “no freeze” situation, will be penalised if they back away from a touch whilst trying to “milk a penalty for a voluntary Rollball.

SITUATION 11:12

At what speed must a defender move forward once the Mexican Standoff Rule comes into effect, and can the referee penalise a player for not moving forward fast enough, or direct a player to move out faster.

DECISION

Speed is defined as moving forward (even at snails pace) and **ONLY** when the defender is standing stationary, and has been warned, can the referee award a penalty. Referees cannot determine a player is moving out too slow and direct them to move faster.

RULE 12 - BALL TOUCHED IN FLIGHT

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 12:1

An attacking player juggles the ball. The ball touches a defender whilst the ball is out of the hands of the attacking player. The same attacking player subsequently catches the ball. Has a touch been effected?

DECISION

A touch has not been effected as the defender was not playing at the ball - Rule 12.5. However had the defender been playing at the ball then a touch would have been effected

SITUATION 12:2

The half crosses the attacking scoreline and passes the ball backwards to a team mate. The ball is deflected by a defender and rebounds to the half who places the ball on the ground claiming a touchdown.

DECISION

Touchdown is awarded. Once having passed the ball, the half becomes just another attacking player. - Rule 12.2. – See Situation 9:15 and 9:16

RULE 13 - OFFSIDE

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 13:1

A support player overruns the player in possession and crosses the scoreline. The player with the ball rolls it quickly and the half crosses the scoreline and delivers a correct pass to the attacking player who originally overran the ball but had failed to return to an onside position (either by virtue of the speed of the game or otherwise). This player grounds the ball claiming a touchdown.

DECISION

Touchdown would be awarded as the half placed the offside player onside.

SITUATION 13:2

A defending player who is retiring extends his arms either by stretching them outwards or upwards. Is such action against the Rules?

DECISION

The action constitutes passive obstruction and would be subject to warning or penalty, but **ONLY** if an attacking player were impeded before the defender reaches an onside position.

SITUATION 13:3

Defending players on the scoreline all have their arms out extended. Is such action against the Rules?

DECISION

If a player not in possession of the ball is impeded by the extended arms etc. then there is a possibility the support players is being obstructed and the referee will take appropriate action.

RULE 14 - OBSTRUCTION

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 14:1

An attacking player runs behind one of their team mates and impedes a defender. He/She realises the error and immediately stops to allow a defender to effect a touch on him/her.

DECISION

Touch counts. No obstruction no team has gained an unfair advantage.

SITUATION 14:2

A defending player after effecting a touch, attempts to retire, but has the player in possession run at him along the same retiring path, hoping to solicit a penalty for offside, or gain an advantage by having the referee call “play on”. Is the defender entitled to retire in any direction from the Rollball area ?

DECISION

A defender can retire in any direction after effecting a touch, but once they change their line of direction, whether they interfere passively or not, they are still subject to a penalty if they are within the area between the Rollball and the five metre line.

SITUATION 14:3

A defending player, attempting to retire, without interfering in the play, has the player in possession running at him and is penalised for not retiring quickly enough. Is such a decision correct ?

DECISION

Each such circumstance is different depending on the perception of the referee as to the defender’s intentions and actions. A defender should not be penalised for not retiring at a fast speed, however they must retire immediately, not change their line of direction until they have reached the five metre mark, and passive or any other interference is subject to a penalty.

SITUATION 14:4

A player takes a quick tap following the awarding of the penalty and the indication by the referee of the mark. An offside defending player, with their back to the player in possession, obstructs an onside defender from getting to the ball carrier to effect a touch. The defender appeals to the referee that the attacking player used the offside defender as an obstruction.

DECISION

According to paragraph one of Rule 14.1 the attacking player can only be penalised for obstruction if another team mate from the attacking team aids in preventing the player in possession from being touched. Paragraph two of Rule 14.1 must only be read in conjunction with paragraph one, which specifically refers to attacking team players.

Offside defenders should never be penalised if they have their backs turned to the team in possession, provided they are physically retiring. As to the onside defender who claimed the obstruction, the referee would simply call “play on”.

SITUATION 14:5

The player in possession uses an offside retiring defender as a “shield” preventing him from being touched by another defending player. Is such action deemed to be an obstruction ?

DECISION

The referee cannot interpret this action as an obstruction, as only an attacking player can obstruct the player in possession.

N.B. If such actions were allowed, the defending team would constantly claim obstruction and consequently receive possession as the result of the deliberate action by one of their offside players.

RULE 15 - PENALTY.

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 15:1

An attacking player in attempting a cut out pass causes the ball to go to ground in a forward direction. A defending player quickly taps the ball where it landed and plays on.

DECISION

- (a) The referee would award the penalty, indicate the mark and recall the player in possession to tap the ball on the correct mark. (i.e. from where the ball was thrown).
- (b) If the referee had awarded the penalty and indicated the mark, there would be a change of possession for the tap being taken on the incorrect mark. Rule 8.2. Rule 15.2; Player Note A.

SITUATION 15:2

A player in possession passes the ball after being touched and it goes to ground behind another attacking player. An opponent quickly gathers the ball and taps from the mark where the ball landed.

DECISION

(a) The referee would award a penalty, indicate the mark and recall the player in possession to tap the ball on the correct mark.

(b) If the referee had awarded the penalty and indicated the mark, there would be a change of possession for the tap being taken on the incorrect mark. Rule 10.4. Rule 15.2; Player Note A.

SITUATION 15:3

A player taking a penalty tap rolls the ball as for a Rollball and touches it with their foot. The receiver of the ball runs and is touched.

DECISION

Touch counts. The receiver is not the half, even if the ball was not played with the foot

SITUATION 15:4

Attacking player taking a tap balks (i.e. goes to take the tap but hesitates) in an attempt to induce defending players to move forward before he actually taps the ball. What should the referee do ?

DECISION

Such action is not against the 'spirit of the game' and is allowed. The referee however, would instruct the player to tap the ball and refusal after the instruction may result in a change of possession.

SITUATION 15:5

An attacking player receives a penalty two metres from their attacking scoreline. Can the player with the ball take a quick tap at the mark or does the ball have to be returned to the five metre line ?

DECISION

Once the referee indicates the mark, the ball may be tapped. It doesn't have to be taken out to the five metre line. However, if the referee indicates the mark is on the scoreline (where it should be if the penalty is for offside) the mark is then on the boundaries of the field, and the ball is required to be taken back to the five metre line. - See Rule 15.2 and Rule 11 PN C

SITUATION 15:6

A penalty is awarded to the attacking team half a metre from the teams attacking scoreline, (a defender effected a touch with more than a minimum of force). The player taking the penalty, taps the ball forward and when the ball reaches the scoreline the players hand is placed on the ball and a touchdown is claimed. Provided the player was not touched is the touchdown legal ?

DECISION

Firstly, the mark for the penalty is dependent on the position of the player in possession at the time of the hard touch, i.e. half a metre from the attacking scoreline. There are no other Rules that requires the mark to be moved back to the five metre line in these circumstances, so the tap was taken on the correct mark. - See Rule 15.2

Secondly, the tap may be taken in any direction and provided it does not travel more than one (1) metre, in this instance only half a metre, the taking of the tap does not infringe any Rules. - See Rule 6.3

Thirdly, the ball only needs to be placed on the ground ON or over the scoreline for a touchdown to be awarded. The ball does not have to be carried to, or over, the scoreline. - See Rule 4.5. Such an action would constitute a fair touchdown.

SITUATION 15:7

A penalty is awarded to the defending team half a metre from their attacking scoreline, (a player throws a forward pass only half a metre from their scoreline). The attacking player taking the penalty, taps the ball forward and when the ball reaches the scoreline the players hand is placed on the ball and a touchdown is claimed. Between tapping the ball and placing the hand on it when it reaches the scoreline the player is touch. Would a touchdown be awarded.

DECISION

The player taking the penalty is technically in possession once the ball is tapped and as such a touch would have been effected on the player prior to placing the hand on the ball on the scoreline. Thus a touchdown would not be allowed.

SITUATION 15:8

An offside defending player, near the scoreline, is called out of play by the referee. The line is wide open and the defender noticing this knocks the ball out of the attackers hands whilst still in an offside position. What action should the referee take?

DECISION

The referee could penalise the defending player and/or send them off, but since the player was warned they were offside and the scoreline was wide open the better option would be to award a penalty touchdown and then consider further action against the offending player - See Rule 15.6

SITUATION 15:9

What happens when a team takes a quick tap before the referee indicates the mark ?

DECISION

A good referee will consider only two options: - Did the tap occur on or behind the mark?
If - YES - Play on; if - NO - Change of possession.

N.B. Pedantic insistence by referees to wait until they are ready is a blight on the game and should be outlawed by Referees Directors. The same can be said for decision to being it back and restart the tap on the “next blade of grass”. Such actions are not in accordance with the rules as an incorrect tap - not on the mark - is a change of possession. See Rule 15.3

RULE 16 - ADVANTAGE

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 16:1

A referee awards a touchdown. Lines-person reports a player from the team who was just scored against. The referee exercises discretion re disciplinary matters and sends the reported player off for a period of time. How is the match restarted?

DECISION

Because the touchdown was awarded (and the player sent off) the game is recommenced with a tap to the team who was scored against at the centre of the halfway mark.

SITUATION 16:2

If the referee warns the defending team they are offside, what guide can be used to determine if advantage is gained?

DECISION

It can be generally accepted that the advantage has been gained once the attacking team has passed the five (5) metres defensive line (for the Rollball) or the ten (10) metres line for the tap.

SITUATION 16:3

If the advantage is lost (say dropped ball, forward pass) after the attacking team has crossed the relevant advantage line can the referee go back and penalise the offending player?

DECISION

No! Once the advantage line has been reached the referee must allow play to continue.

RULE 17 - DISCIPLINE AND PLAYER MISCONDUCT

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 17:1

In Rule 17.3 (b), what is the definition of a two (2) match suspension from all matches conducted by any Touch Association?

DECISION

Two (2) matches refers to the period of time it takes for two matches to be completed by the team in the division from which the player was suspended. A bye does not count as a match completed.

The balance of the statement refers to the player being ineligible to play in ANY competition in ANY Affiliate or competition under the auspices of the Australian Touch Association.

SITUATION 17:2

A player plays men's open on Monday night, mixed open on Tuesday night and over 30's on Wednesday night. He is sent from the field of play for the remainder of the game on Monday night and incurs a two match suspension. His men's team has a bye next week. When he can resume playing?

DECISION

He is suspended from the other games in week 1, ALL the games in weeks 2 and 3 and the men's open game only in week 4. Two weeks is the period of time it usually takes for the team the player was suspended from, to play two games. If a team fails to qualify for the semi-finals and the player is suspended during the last game of the competition, that player is eligible to play after the second game (i.e., the final or grand final) as if that team had won both the semi and the following game.

SITUATION 17:3

Can a player appeal against an automatic two match suspension?

DECISION

Yes. Unless an Association's constitution specifically denies it, a player may appeal to the Executive of an Association against an automatic two match suspension.

SITUATION 17:4

An interceptor proceeds downfield, remains in the field of play one metre from the scoreline, turns around to face the defenders, waits for a defender to come near then places the ball on or over the scoreline. Is this misconduct?

DECISION

No - Allow Touchdown.

SITUATION 17:5

A defending player calls for the ball and the attacking player instinctively passes to the player. What action can the referee take ?

DECISION

Such a situation is not gamesmanship but misconduct (against the spirit of the game) and subject to penalty or other action. See Rule 17.6.

SITUATION 17:6

The attacking team throws a big pass which 'accidentally on purpose goes well out over the sideline after the fifth touch has been made, as a ploy to slow down the changeover procedure. What can the referee do ?

DECISION

Until the sixth touch is made or the ball goes to ground, there is no change over procedure that can come into effect, therefore the rules governing it cannot apply. If the referee sees this trend in the game he could warn the offending team that it is considered misconduct and therefore subject to penalty or other action .- See Rule 17.6

SITUATION 17:7

A player is sent from the field for a period of time. Whilst standing behind the teams attacking scoreline the player is yelling encouragement and/or coaching hints to his players. Is such action allowed ?

DECISION

Provided there is no interference with the opposition team, the player is allowed to encourage / coach his team mates from his position. The fact he is suspended from the field and is not allowed to be involved in the game, (as opposed to being dismissed for the whole game), is sufficient penalty. - See Rule 17 PN A

RULE 18 - THE REFEREE, LINE JUDGES AND TOUCHDOWN ZONE OFFICIALS

Explanation and Interpretations

SITUATION 18:1

A penalty is awarded and the coach (and/or player or other team official on the sideline) shouts abuse and/or other profanities at the referee. What options does the referee have.

DECISION

The referee would award another penalty ten (10) metres forward of the original mark and may:-

- a) halt the game and warn the offender
- b) halt the game and send the offender outside the boundary of the playing area
- c) dismiss a player from the field in lieu of the offender for a period of time or for the whole game.
- d) Any or all combinations of the above.
- e) Report the offending player/official to the organising committee.

SITUATION 18:2

The referee awards a touchdown or penalty and realises they have made an error. Can the referee reverse his decision and disallow the touchdown or penalty ?

DECISION

The referee can change their minds if they realise they have ruled incorrectly and in fact, in the interest of fair play to both teams, they should reverse an incorrect decision. The Rules Book has no exclusions preventing the referee from changing their minds. See Rules 18.1. It is noted that once full time has been signalled by the referee any reversal of decisions is an Administration matter for the controlling Association.

SITUATION 18:3

There is an injured player on the field and the referee notices this but the play moves away from the area where the injured player is lying so play is allowed to continue. The game has only several minutes to go with one team leading 3-2. On a change of possession the leading team deliberately runs the ball into the area where the injured player is lying on the ground. It is critical for the losing side to score as a draw will allow them into the finals. What should the referee do ?

DECISION

The prime responsibility of the referee is the safety of the players and if the play could not be moved forward of the injured player the referee would have to stop the game. Any protests from the losing team is a matter for the Association's Administration not the referee.

SITUATION 18:4

The referee sends a player off with only two minutes remaining in a game. When the siren sounds the referee blows full time without recalling the player to the field of play. Next week the same teams meet in the Semi Finals and one team refuses to take the field in protest that the player that was sent off, should not be playing as he should be automatically suspended for two weeks.

DECISION

At all times the referee is the sole judge of matters of fact. In any situation where the action of the referee has prejudiced a player, the intent of the referee at the time of making the decision must always be taken into consideration. In this case if the referee intended the player be dismissed for a period of time, then the player is allowed to participate in the semi final. If the intent at the time of the dismissal was to remove the player for the remainder of the game, then the player incurs a two weeks automatic suspension. See Rule 18.1 and 18.2

SITUATION 18:5

The referee awards a touchdown and is not advised by his line referees of any infringement. The game continues and at half time the team scored against protests that the touchdown was scored by the half. This is confirmed by the line referees who did not (for whatever reason) bring this to the centre referee's attention at the time.

In line with decision at 18:2 can the referee change his mind.

DECISION

No – once the game has been restarted the option for the referee to change his mind is no longer available. This would also apply if half or full time was signalled just after the event and before the game could be restarted

