

IN2TOUCH

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**TOUCH
RUGBY LEAGUES**

**ONE TOUCH
PLAYING
RULES**

2nd Edition

FOREWORD

This Rules booklet is the first edition of the laws of the game of One Touch for In2Touch. It is designed to set an internationally accepted set of laws for the game that mirrors what is being played at the elite level in South Africa.

There is no compulsion for any league or affiliate of In2Touch to follow these Rules at their local or park level competitions. To facilitate local competitions there is a component attached to many of the rules titled “Park Competition” in which situation may be applied to allow for variations from the standard rules in order to suit local conditions and playing needs of the participants.

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RULE 1 - DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Unless the contrary intention appears, the following definitions and terminology apply to the game of One Touch:

1. **Advantage** is that property or part of play, which gives one team the potential to improve its position to score relative to the other team.
2. **Attacking Team** is the team which has possession or is gaining possession of the ball.
3. **Attacking Scoreline** is the line on or over which a team has to place the ball to score a touchdown.
4. **Behind** means in a position or direction towards a team's defending scoreline.
5. **Dead Ball** means when the ball is out of play and includes the period following a touch until the ball is brought back into play via a tap ball. The period following a touchdown or penalty, until the match is recommenced, and when the ball goes to ground and/or outside the boundaries of the field of play.
6. **Deadball Line** is the line joining the sidelines extending no less than five (5) metres and not more than ten (10) metres past the scoreline.
7. **Defending Scoreline** is the line, which a team has to defend to prevent a touchdown.
8. **Defending Team** is the team without possession of the ball.
9. **Deliver** means to part with the ball.
10. **Field of Play** is the playing area bounded by the sidelines and Deadball lines both of which are out of bounds.
11. **First Pass** is the normal act of bringing the ball into play following a touch or a change of possession.
12. **Forward** means in a position or direction towards a team's own attacking scoreline.
13. **Full Time** occurs at the expiration of the normal time allowed for play.
14. **Mark** (For a Touch) is the position where the attacking player in possession of the ball is at the time of the touch.
15. **Mark** (For a Tap) is the centre of the halfway line for the commencement or recommencement of play; or the position where a tap is awarded as a result of an infringement.
16. **Offside** means in a position forward of the ball for an attacking player and in a position liable to penalty for a defending player.
17. **Onside** means in a position whereby a player may legitimately become involved with play.
18. **Penalty** is the action by the referee in awarding a tap when a player or team infringes the rules of the game.
19. **Rebound** occurs when the ball deflects from or makes contact with a player other than the player who first had possession.
20. **Ruling** is the decision made by the referee as a result of particular circumstances. It can result in a play on, a tap or a change of possession.
21. **Scorelines** are the lines separating the Touchdown Zone from the field of play.
22. **Sidelines** are the side boundaries of the field of play.
23. **Tap** is the method of commencing the match, recommencing the match after half time and after a touchdown has been scored. It is also a method of recommencing play when a penalty is awarded.

24. **Touch** is contact on any part of the body between a player in possession of the ball and a defending player. A touch includes contact on the ball, hair or clothing and may be made by a defending player or by the player in possession.
25. **Touchdown** is the result of an attacking player, except the half, placing the ball on or over the team's attacking scoreline.
26. **Touchdown Zone** is the area bounded by the sideline, scoreline and deadball Line.

RULE 2 - THE FIELD AND THE BALL

1. **Field of Play.** The Field of play is rectangular in shape and measures forty five (45) metres in length from scoreline to scoreline and forty (40) metres in width. However fields can go up to the maximum size of seventy (70) metres in length and fifty (50) metres in width.
2. **Markings.** Line Markings defining the field of play are to be at least 2.5 cm. in width. Sidelines are to be extended at least five (5) metres beyond the scorelines and joined by the deadball line.
3. **Markers.** Suitably sized markers of a distinguishing colour and made from a safe and pliable material are to be positioned at the intersections of the sidelines and scorelines: and at the intersections of the halfway line with the sidelines.
4. **Playing Surface.** The playing surface is normally grass. However, other surfaces approved by In2Touch may be used. Ground surfaces, which may cause injury, are to be avoided.
5. **The Ball.** The game is played with an oval, inflated ball of a shape, colour and size approved by In2Touch. The ball shall be inflated to the recommended air pressure. The approved ball size is 36cm long and 55 cm in circumference.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. Team captains have the right to lodge a complaint regarding field conditions and dimensions or environmental conditions (e.g. weather or state of the ground or field markings) prior to the commencement of a match.
- B. The ball must not be hidden under player attire.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. The Referee is to inspect the field of play, boundaries and markers for clarity and safety, prior to the commencement of the match.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. The size of the playing field can be varied to suit local council requirements and/or conditions. As a minimum, it is essential that scorelines, sidelines, deadball lines (if utilised) and the halfway line are correctly marked.
- B. The controlling association can approve the ball used by any team
- C. The deadball lines and distance of touchdown zone (if utilised) can be set by the controlling association to suit environmental and local council conditions.
- D. Any decision or variation to field dimensions or on the playing rules or conditions rests with the controlling association's officials.

RULE 3 - ATTIRE

1. **Uniforms.** All participating players are to be correctly attired in team uniforms approved by the local controlling Association. Uniforms consist of upper apparel, shorts and socks with footwear.
2. **Footwear.** Shoes with screw-in studs or cleats are not to be worn by any player. Light leather or synthetic boots with soft moulded soles are permitted, provided individual studs are no longer than thirteen millimetres (13 mm) in length; the measurement being taken from the sole of the boot.
3. **Jewellery and Fingernails.** Players are not to participate in any match while wearing any item of jewellery, which might prove dangerous. Long or sharp fingernails are to be trimmed or taped.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. Players may, in conditions of cold weather, wear additional clothing.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Referees are not to allow players to participate in any match unless the above dress requirements are met.
- B. Referees are to inspect team clothing and footwear prior to matches. Fingernails and jewellery of all competitors are to receive specific inspection.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. The controlling association may approve minor dress variations, including non-prescription sunglasses and the checking of same may become an administration task not a referee's role.

RULE 4 - MODE OF PLAY, DURATION AND SCORING

1. **Object.** The object of the game of One Touch is for each team to score touchdowns and to prevent the opposition from scoring.
2. **Mode of Play.** The ball may be passed, knocked or handed between onside players of the attacking team who may in turn run or otherwise move with the ball in an attempt to gain territorial advantage and score. Defending players prevent the attacking team from gaining a territorial advantage by touching the ball carrier. Either defending or attacking players may initiate a touch upon which, play stops, possession is changed over and is restarted with a First Pass, unless other rules apply.
3. **Duration.** The match is forty (40) minutes duration, consisting of two (2) twenty (20) minute halves. There is a two (2) minute halftime break. The duration may only be extended for exceptional circumstances.
4. **End of Play.** When time expires play is to continue until the ball next becomes dead. Should a penalty be awarded during this period, the penalty is to be taken.
5. **Scoring.** A touchdown is awarded when a player places the ball on the ground on or over the team's attacking scoreline and within the boundaries of the Touchdown Zone. A touchdown is worth one (1) point.

6. **The Winner.** The team who at the end of play has scored the most touchdowns is declared the winner. In the event of neither team scoring, or in the event of both teams scoring the same number of touchdowns, a draw is declared.
7. **Extra Time for Drawn Matches.** The following procedure will be utilised to establish a single winner.

SUDDEN DEATH PROCEDURE

- i. When the match is drawn at the expiration of full time, the referee will wait until the ball is dead, halt play, then signal to the tournament control area or a tournament official that the game is drawn. A one (1) minute break will occur prior to commencement of the "Sudden Death".
- ii. Sudden Death commences with a tap from the centre of the halfway line by the team who won the toss at the commencement of the game. Teams continue to play in the same direction as they finished the game. Substitution of players is permitted at any time as per the normal interchange rules.
- iii. Teams will be asked to remove a player from the field approximately every one (1) minute until there are only 3 players left on the field.
- iv. During the Drop Off, before a winner can be declared, both teams must have had possession. If a team scores before their opponents have had possession, the touchdown counts and the match commences as per normal after a touchdown is awarded. Once possession is lost the winner is then confirmed.

Notes for Players

- a) During the original match, if a player has been sent from the field of play for the remainder of the match, that player cannot participate in extra time.
 - b) A team that had a player (or players) dismissed from the field of play for the remainder of the match will commence extra time with a reduced number of players. Thus the team will commence extra time with four (4) players if one (1) player had been sent off and three (3) if two players had been sent off.
 - c) Injured players can be replaced at any time.
8. **Abandoned Matches.** If a match is abandoned due to any circumstances, the controlling association shall decide the result.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. If a player places the ball on the ground and releases it short of the scoreline, while attempting to score a touchdown, a changeover is called and a player from the other team is required to First Pass to restart play at the position of contact with the ground.
- B. In attempting to score a touchdown a player must have possession and control of the ball prior to placing it on or over the scoreline.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Referees should be aware of players who commit "professional fouls" and should take appropriate action.
- B. If in attempting to score, a player either makes contact with the corner marker or crosses the extended sideline, no touchdown is awarded and the match is recommenced by the opposition with a First Pass five (5) metres from the scoreline and five (5) metres in from the sideline.

- C. If the ball is in flight and it is grounded simultaneously by an attacking player who has placed their hand(s) on it – no touchdown will be awarded.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. The controlling association should provide official time keepers for all matches. Should time keepers not be appointed, the referee is to act as the sole time keeper and therefore is allowed to wear a watch.
- B. The controlling associations may vary the duration of matches to suit particular competition requirements. In such cases, changes in times are to be advised to all teams well in advance.
- C. Competition points may be varied to suit particular competition requirements.
- D. A touchdown may have varied value as decided by the Controlling Association to suit particular competition requirements.
- E. To separate teams on equal competition points, any of the following methods can be used:
- difference in touchdowns "for" and "against", with the higher progressing,
 - the Percentage Method. fraction consisting of "for" over "against" multiplied by 100, with the higher progressing,
 - the team who have scored most touchdowns,
 - the team(s) who have remained undefeated.
- F. Controlling Associations may decide on, and publish a special "for and against" margin, to be awarded for forfeits, and abandoned matches.

RULE 5 - TEAM COMPOSITION AND SUBSTITUTION

1. **Number of Players.** A Team consists of twelve (12) players, no more than five (5) of whom are allowed on the field at any time.
RULING - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the position of the ball at the time the offence is identified.
2. **Substitution.** Players may substitute at any time in accordance with the interchange procedure. There is no limit to the number of times a player may interchange.
3. **Interchange Procedure.** Substitute players must remain on one side of the field for the duration of the match. All interchanges must occur on that side of the field, and only after the substituted player has crossed the boundaries and left the field. Physical contact does not have to be made between interchanging players, but must cross near enough so that they could do so. Players leaving or entering the field shall not hinder or obstruct play and must enter from an onside position. Following the scoring of a touchdown, players may interchange at will without having to wait for the substituted player to leave the field.
RULING - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team five (5) metres infield from where the substituted player left the field or where the substituting player entered the field, whichever is the greater advantage.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. Although a team consists of ten (10) players, a minimum of four (4) is required for the match to continue. All players who are involved in the match both on and off the field of play are under the direct control of the referee.
- B. Attacking and defending players must interchange in accordance with Rule 5.3.
- C. Intending substitutes must not voluntarily remain off the field.

REFEREE NOTE

- A. Should the number of players on the field from one team fall below four (4), the match is finished and the non-offending team is declared the winner. This applies if players have been dismissed for the remainder of the match, but not for injuries or dismissals for a period of time.
- B. Players who arrive late may enter the field immediately, providing their team does not already have five (5) players on the field.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. The controlling association can vary the number of players in each team as well vary the number that can be on the field at the same time (e.g. seven a side / six a side). In addition they can set the minimum number of players per team for the game to continue.
- B. Local associations (because of ground space) may vary the rule regarding the Interchange Area and allow an interchange to occur from either side of the field unless other local restrictions apply.

RULE 6 - COMMENCEMENT AND RECOMMENCEMENT OF PLAY

- 1. **The Toss.** Team captains are to toss the coin in the presence of the referee with the winning captain's team receiving possession for the commencement of the first half and the choice of direction for the first half.
- 2. **Attacking Team.** The attacking team is to start the match with a First Pass anywhere on the halfway line following the indication to commence play from the referee. All players of the attacking team are to remain in an onside position until the ball has been passed.

RULING - A change of possession at the centre of the halfway line.

- 3. **Defending Team.** All players of the defending team are required to retire a distance of not less than ten (10) metres from the mark for the pass (halfway line). Defending players may move forward of their positions once the ball has been passed.
RULING - A penalty awarded to the attacking team along a line ten (10) metres directly forward of the original mark.
- 4. **Recommencement of Play.** For the recommencement of play following a half- time break, teams shall change directions and the team losing the toss is to start the match with a First Pass as described in Rule 6.2. For the recommencement of play following the scoring of a touchdown, the team against which the score was made is to recommence play as described in Rules 6.2.

5. **Kicking.** The ball cannot be kicked or played with the foot in any circumstances.
RULING - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the position where the ball made contact with the foot.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. The player making the first pass is to wait until the referee indicates for play to recommence.
- B. Players may take the ball behind the halfway line up to a maximum of ten (10) metres. Any sideways movement from the mark is allowed.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Referees are to ensure that there is minimum delay between the scoring of a touchdown and the recommencement of play.
- B. Referees should penalise players who attempt to delay play following a touchdown. If the delay is caused by the team scored against, the penalty should be awarded from the centre of the halfway line. If the team who scored is causing the delay, the penalty should be awarded at a mark ten (10) metres forward of the halfway line.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. Referees at local competitions can use any recognised and approved method to determine who has the choice of direction for the first half and commences the match.
- B. If the “Turn-Around” method of playing is being used, the team who scores will change ends and defend the scoreline over which they just scored. The other team will recommence play defending the opposite scoreline. This applies after each touchdown and generally there is no half time in this style of game.
- C. The controlling association can change the mark for the tap to be within a five metre radius of the actual point of the mark, but not forward of the mark. Alternatively it could be anywhere along an imaginary line joining the sidelines and passing through the point of the mark.
- D. Local park competitions may allow kicking in certain circumstances.

RULE 7 - POSSESSION

1. **General.** Providing other Rules do not apply, the team with the ball is entitled to one(1) touch prior to changing possession with the opposing team.
2. **Changeover Procedure.** Following the touch or the loss of possession due to any other means, players of the team losing possession are to hand, or pass the ball to the nearest opposition player, or place the ball on the ground at the mark without delay. Attacking players who request the ball are to be given the ball. Players are not to delay the changeover procedure.
RULING - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team ten (10) metres forward of the mark for the change of possession or penalty.
3. **Ball to Ground.** If the ball is dropped to the ground a change of possession results. The mark for a change of possession is where the ball comes to rest or where the attacking player dropped or passed the ball, whichever is of greater advantage to the

team gaining possession. An attacking player may stop the ball before it comes to rest and play the ball (First Pass) from the mark at which it was stopped. A defending player may not stop the ball when rolling towards their try line, they must leave the ball immediately retreat to an onside position from where the ball stops.

RULING - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team ten (10) metres forward of the mark for the change of possession or penalty.

4. **Mishandled Ball.** If a player mishandles the ball and providing the ball does not go to ground, play is to continue.
5. **Intercepts.** Intercepts by onside defending players are allowed. Following an intercept, play continues until the first touch is affected, a touchdown is scored, or a stoppage occurs as a result of other actions.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. Should a touch be affected on a player in possession while the ball may not be physically in the hands (e.g. while juggling or trying to maintain control), the touch is to count.
- B. Providing the same player retrieves the ball prior to it going to ground, any knock forward resultant from an intercept is allowed.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Referees are to be aware of players deliberately attempting to delay play during normal changeover procedures.
- B. If a ball contacts the ground while still under the control of a player (e.g. falling over) a change of possession occurs.
- C. Players may intercept behind the defending scoreline.
- D. If a player in possession is touched whilst on or behind their defending scoreline the touch DOES NOT count and play continues. A defending player may only retreat behind their defending scoreline once. If the defending team move the ball out from behind the defending scoreline and then attempt to retreat behind the line again, normal play continues and touches behind the line will count.

RULE 8 - PASSING

1. **General.** A player in possession may pass, flick, knock, throw or otherwise deliver the ball to any other onside player in the attacking team.
2. **First Pass.** A player must pass to start any mode of play after the ball has gone dead except for when a penalty is awarded. The defending team must retreat 5 (five) metres from the mark where the attacking team makes the First Pass.

RULING – A penalty is awarded to the attacking team if any member of the defending team does not retreat 5 (five) metres from the mark of the First Pass before engaging the attacking team in an attempt to affect a touch. The mark where the penalty is awarded is 5 (five) metres forward of where the defending player engaged the attacking team illegally.

3. **Forward Pass.** A player in possession is not to pass, flick, knock, throw or otherwise propel the ball in a forward direction (See Player Notes to Rule 7).

RULING - A change of possession awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the ball was passed, flicked, knocked, thrown or otherwise propelled forward.

4. **Passing into Opposition.** A player who passes the ball at or towards a defending player and thereby causes the ball to go to ground shall lose possession. However, if the defending player attempts to catch the ball or play at the ball and the ball goes to ground, the attacking team retains possession. Play is restarted at the mark where the ball goes to ground or at a position of best advantage to the non offending team.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. A player who, in attempting to control the ball, juggles or knocks the ball forward, is not to be penalised, provided the player regathers the ball. (See Player Notes to Rule 7).
- B. A player does NOT have to make a First Pass at the exact mark where a change over or restart occurs. The player may make the first Pass anywhere in line or behind the mark.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Referees are to be aware of players who make any deliberate passes at an opposing player.
- B. Forward passes: If the opposition catches a forward pass, advantage must be played. If no advantage is gained. Play must return to the mark where the infringement occurred and the defending team must retreat 5 (five) metres from the mark.
- C. If there is any doubt as to whether a defending player was attempting to play the ball when it is passed into him, then the ruling can be made on whether the ball touched the defending player's hand or not.
- D. If an attacking team decides to make a First Pass behind the mark of the change over or restart, the defending team must still retreat 5 (five) metres from the mark of the change over, and may NOT retreat only to within 5 (five) metres of the attacking team.

RULE 9 - THE TOUCH

1. **General.** See Rule 1.24 - Definitions. Players of both defending and attacking teams are to use the minimum force necessary to effect touches.
RULING - A penalty awarded to the non offending team and, as a minimum, a warning to the offending player.
2. **Ball knocked from Hands.** If the ball is knocked from the hands of a player in possession during a touch, the touch counts and the possession changes over.
3. **Actions Following Touch.** After a touch has been effected, the player in possession is required to stop, return to and place the ball on the mark where the touch occurred if the mark has been over-run, without delay.
RULING - A penalty awarded to the defending team at the mark where the touch was made.
4. **Claimed Touch.** A player must not claim or otherwise call for a touch unless a touch has actually been effected.
RULING - If an advantage is apparent, the referee will indicate "play on", otherwise a penalty is awarded to the attacking team where the touch is claimed.
5. **The Mark.** The mark for the changeover is dependent on the position of the player in possession at the time of the touch.

6. **Interference After Touch.** Following a touch, the ball is deemed to be dead and is brought into play by a First Pass. Defending players are not to interfere with the player in possession or otherwise prevent an immediate First Pass after a changeover. **RULING** - A penalty awarded to the attacking team five (5) metres forward of the mark of the First Pass.
7. **Touched While Scoring.** On the rare occasion a player places the ball on the ground on or over the scoreline at the same time a touch is affected, the touch counts and a touchdown is not awarded.
8. **Touch on Offside Defender.** Should a player in possession effect a touch on an offside defender who is making every effort to retire and remain out of play, the touch is to count. As long as the defender was not changing directions when defending.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. When effecting touches with the ball, attacking players are to ensure minimum force is used (See Rule 9.1).
- B. If a touch is affected on an attacking player on or over the attacking scoreline before the ball is grounded, no touchdown results. A changeover occurs and play recommences with a First Pass at a position five (5) metres from the scoreline.
- C. If a touch is affected on an attacking player on or over or within five (5) metres of the defending scoreline, and changeover occurs. Play **MUST** recommence at a position five (5) metres from the scoreline.
- D. If in doubt as to the location of the mark for the First Pass, the player in possession should check with the referee.
- E. Calling a touch prior to contact is subject to a penalty under Rule 10.5

REFEREE NOTES

- A. More than the minimum physical force to effect a touch should be dealt with severely.
- B. A Player should be instructed to regather the ball if it is knocked or dropped to the ground during or following a touch. However, players who attempt to delay play by such deliberate acts are to be penalised under Rule 10.3 .
- C. If defending players effect a touch after an attacking player has delivered the ball, play continues and "play on" is called.
- D. Unless the referee is sure no contact is made, the referee should acknowledge all claimed touches and call back the player in possession for a changeover. Should the referee observe a defending player claim a touch without contact and unless there is an advantage to the attacking team, a penalty and a warning are to be awarded under rule 9.4
- E. On the rare occasion that the referee is unable to distinguish between a pass before a touch and a pass after a touch and provided the ball does not go to ground, the touch counts.
- F. Mandatory penalties should not be awarded when players fail to feel slight touches. However, deliberate running on is to be penalised.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. Some local competitions penalise “two handed” touches. This is only permitted if written into the controlling association’s exceptions to the rules. Any touch with more than a minimum of forces should be penalised.

- B. Controlling associations can redefine the definition of a “Touch” to exclude touching above the shoulders etc.
- C. Controlling associations can regulate that “Phantom” touches incur a period of time in the sin bin.

RULE 10 - BALL ON OR OVER SIDELINE/SCORELINE

1. **On or Over Sideline.** The ball becomes dead when it or a player in possession touches or crosses the sideline and a change of possession results.
RULING - The team NOT responsible for the ball touching or crossing the sideline restarts play with a First Pass five (5) metres infield from where the ball or the player in possession touched or crossed the sideline, or at the position of best advantage to the attacking team.
2. **Touched over Attacking Scoreline.** If a player in possession of the ball is touched after crossing the attacking scoreline and prior to the scoring of a touchdown, the touch counts. A change of possession results and play is restarted with a First Pass on the scoreline.
3. **Ball on or behind Defending Scoreline.** If a player in possession of the ball is touched whilst on or behind their defending scoreline, the touch DOES NOT count and play continues.
4. **Actions near Attacking Scoreline.** When a change of possession occurs and the attacking side get the ball, play may not restart within five (5) metres of the attacking scoreline. The attacking team must retreat five (5) metres or more from the attacking scoreline before they can play the ball.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. Players may retreat behind their defending scoreline to avoid being touched. However, once a player moves out from behind the defending scoreline, he may not retreat again to avoid the touch. If a player does retreat after advancing from behind the line any touch affected will count.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Players who are onside at their defending scoreline may lean over the scoreline to touch an attacking player, and remain onside provided both feet remain on or behind the scoreline and contact with the ground is not made with the hands inside the field of play.

RULE 11 - BALL TOUCHED IN FLIGHT

1. **Intentional Contact by Defender.** If the ball goes to ground following a defender's attempt to gain possession, the attacking team retains the ball were the defender made contact with the ball. A defending player may NOT deliberately knock the ball to the ground.
RULING – A penalty awarded to the team NOT responsible for the knocking the ball down on the mark where the knock down occurred.

2. **Intentional Contact but not to Ground.** If a defending player touches the ball in flight and the ball is retrieved by an attacking player, play continues until the next touch. (See Referee Note B below)
3. **Intentional Contact and Touched again by Attacker.** If an attacking player attempts to gather the ball after a deflection by a defender and the ball goes to ground, the attacking team retains possession and the touch count restarts as per Rule 11.1. (See Referee Note A below).
4. **Rebound and Ball to Ground.** If the ball rebounds from a defending player, who has not made an attempt to retrieve it, and the ball goes to ground, a change of possession results. Play restarts with a First Pass where the ball rebounded from the defender.
5. **Rebounds but not to Ground.** If the ball rebounds from a defending player who has not made an attempt to retrieve the ball and the ball is regained by an attacking player, play continues until the next touch is affected.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. If an attacking player considers a deflection from a defending player is difficult to retrieve, the player may let the ball go to ground and receive possession at the mark of best advantage. Alternatively the player may attempt to retrieve the ball, and even if the ball then goes to ground receive possession at the mark of best advantage.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. In the case of Rule 11.3 above, the referee is to decide whether the deflection by the defending player was the cause of the ball to ground.
- B. If a ball deflected from a defending player travels in a forward direction and is then retrieved by a player of the attacking team, advantage is played until the next touch. If no clear advantage was gained by the attacking side before the touch is affected, the attacking team retain possession and restart with a First Pass at the mark where the defending player touched the ball.
- C. Unintentional contact by a defending player includes contact on the arms and hands providing an attempt is not made to secure possession.
- D. If the ball is passed forward and then deflected or played at by a defending player back to the attacking team or to ground, Rule 8.2 (Forward Pass) applies, with a change of possession to the defending team. Advantage similar to note B applies.

RULE 12 - OFFSIDE

1. **Attacking Team.** A player in the attacking team is offside when that player is forward of the player who has possession or who last had possession. In general play, offside attacking players who interfere with play should be penalised.
2. **Attacking Player Offside at Tap.** Attacking players are to remain onside at a tap until the ball has been tapped.

RULING - A change of possession at the mark (See Rules 6.2 and 14.4).

3. **Defending Team.** A player of the defending team is offside when the following rules are infringed:
 - a. Rule 6.4 - at the commencement and recommencement of play.
 - b. Rule 8.2 - at the First Pass.
 - c. Rule 14.5 - at the tap for a penalty.

RULING - A penalty awarded to the attacking team in accordance with the above rules.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. Attacking players who are offside are non-effective and should return to an onside position as soon as possible.
- B. Offside defending players must at all times make an effort to retire to an onside position.
- C. A defending player must have both feet on or behind the defending scoreline to be onside when a First Pass occurs within five (5) metres, or a tap from a penalty within ten (10) metres of that player's defending scoreline.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Referees should note Rule 8.2 and notes on Rule 8.
- B. Defending players who are retiring should not normally be penalised while taking no active part in the match.
- C. Refer to notes of Rule 14 for consecutive penalties.

RULE 14 - OBSTRUCTION

1. **Attacking Team.** Players of the attacking team are not to obstruct defending players from attempting to effect a touch. A player in possession must not run or otherwise move behind other players in the attacking team in an attempt to avoid a touch. Obstruction is defined as a deliberate attempt by an attacking player to gain an unfair advantage by preventing a defending player from effecting a touch.
RULING - A penalty awarded to the defending team at the mark where the infringement occurred.
2. **Defending Team.** Players in the defending team are not to obstruct or otherwise interfere with the attacking players supporting the player in possession.
RULING - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the mark of the infringement providing the stoppage is not to the disadvantage of the attacking team.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. A player supporting the player in possession is entitled to run as necessary to obtain the best supporting position. However, in moving to a supporting position, attacking players must not deliberately interfere with defending players.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Referees should note any changes in the line of support adopted by attacking players. If the player in possession notices an obstruction by a team mate, the player may stop and wait to be touched without being penalised.
- B. Accepted sub-unit skills such as wraps or run-arounds do not constitute an obstruction.
- C. If a player in possession or a defender runs into the referee or the referee runs into either player, "play on" should result if there is no advantage either way. However, if the incident has an effect on the proceedings, a First Pass in favour of the attacking team should be called.

RULE 15 - PENALTY.

1. **General.** A penalty is to be awarded for an infringement by any player in accordance with the rules contained herein.

2. **Location of the tap for a Penalty.** The mark for a penalty is normally at the location of the infringement unless otherwise detailed in specific rules. For infringements which occur on the boundaries, within five (5) metres of the defending scoreline or outside the field of play, the location of a tap from a penalty is to be five (5) metres infield (or on the five metre line) from where the infringement occurred.
3. **Method.** The player in possession of the ball for the penalty must demonstratively tap the ball with any part of his body. The ball does not have to leave the player's hands in the tap. Any player of the attacking team may take the tap.
RULING - A change of possession at the mark.
4. **Attacking Team.** Players of the attacking team are to be onside at the tap.
RULING - A change of possession at the mark.
5. **Defending Team.** Players of the defending team are to be onside ten (10) metres from the mark of the tap.
RULING - A penalty awarded to the attacking team along a line ten (10) metres directly forward of the original mark and nearest the infringement.
6. **Penalty Touchdown.** A penalty touchdown will be awarded if any action by a player or spectator deemed by the referee to be contrary to the rules or spirit of the game, prevented the attacking team from scoring a touchdown.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. The player who is to take the tap is required to wait until the referee indicates the location of the mark before the tap can be taken. However a player may take a quick tap providing the referee acknowledges such a request and providing the tap is taken at or behind the correct mark.
- B. For any tap, players may take the ball directly behind the mark up to a maximum of ten (10) metres.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. To allow the full advantage of a penalty to be realised there is to be minimum delay between awarding a penalty and the indication of the appropriate mark.
- B. A player may take the ball back behind the mark up to a maximum distance of ten (10) metres behind the mark for a tap to allow room to execute a move. In such cases the defending players must remain not closer than ten (10) metres from the mark or at the scoreline, whichever is the closest.
- C. If an attacking player effects a touch on an offside defending player (usually following a quick tap) in an attempt to gain a further penalty, the referee may call "play on" depending on the actions of the defending player, but only provided the offside player or team has been warned.
- D. If an offside defending player, (whether that player is retiring or not), attempts to obstruct or effect a touch on an attacking player following a quick tap, the referee should play the advantage and allow play to continue. Alternatively a penalty could be awarded, whichever is of greater advantage to the attacking team.
- E. For control to be maintained during a sequence of quick taps, the referee is to ensure that the location of the mark is correctly indicated.
- F. With regard to awarding a penalty touchdown, a referee is to be sure that a touchdown would have occurred had it not been for the illegal action of the player or spectator concerned.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. Local competitions can adjust the rules to allow or a greater range of penalties or alternatively a lesser range.
- B. A set of situations may be stated in local competition rules, which show the possible circumstances where a penalty touchdown can be awarded.

RULE 15 - ADVANTAGE

1. The principle of advantage to the non-offending team is to apply at all times, providing some advantage is readily obvious. Once a team is given the advantage that team does not necessarily forfeit the right to other action as described in these rules.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. Players should at all times play in accordance with the rules of Touch and allow the referee to interpret the advantage.
- B. Players who use unnecessary force or whose actions unfairly prevent any other player from gaining an advantage will be liable to penalty.

RULE 16 - DISCIPLINE AND PLAYER MISCONDUCT

1. **General.** Players who infringe the Rules of Touch are liable to penalty or other appropriate action according to the seriousness of the infringement. Penalties are to be awarded in accordance with applicable rules.
2. **Frequent Infringements.** A Player who continually breaches the playing rules is liable for dismissal. Team captains are responsible for the conduct of players in their respective teams and should be aware that undisciplined players are disruptive to the spirit of the game.
3. **Dismissals.** Any player may be dismissed as follows:
 - a. **Period of Time.** A player dismissed for repeated infringements or any offence requiring more than a penalty is to move from the field of play and remain in a position midway along the team's touchdown zone line and no closer than five (5) metres to the touchdown zone line. The dismissed player cannot be replaced.
 - b. **Remainder of Match.** A player dismissed after any previous 'Period of Time' dismissal, or for an offence such as gross misconduct or a dangerous act is to take no further part in that match and is to move to and remain not closer than ten (10) metres from the touchdown zone line.
4. **Striking Officials.** Any player who is found guilty of striking and/or assaulting an official, referee or line judge is liable to disqualification from playing the game of Touch for life.
5. **Disciplinary Reports.** Officials are required to submit dismissal reports or any other reports required in accordance with the governing regulations of the local association.
6. **Misconduct.** Players guilty of misconduct will be penalised and could be excluded from the match. Misconduct includes:
 - continual breaches of the rules;
 - swearing;
 - backchatting referees or other match officials;
 - bad sporting behaviour;

- fighting;
- using physical force in making a touch;
- attacking the head of an opponent;
- tripping;
- any other action which is not in the spirit of the game.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. A player sent from the field for a period of time is to remain at the midpoint of the touchdown zone line until recalled by the referee. Such a player is allowed to join his team mates at halftime.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. The referee is the sole judge of time in relation to dismissed players.
- B. A referee is required to advise the team captain as to the reason for a player's dismissal.
- C. Referees must submit a written report on players sent from the field for the remainder of the match.
- D. Referees may suggest to captains to replace infringing players for the remainder of the match otherwise the player may be sent off and suspended and the team reduced in playing numbers.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. Besides the constitutional authority empowered to the controlling association their rules should also provide for: -
- i. Powers for the General Committee and/or Executive Committee to make appropriate
 - ii. by-laws or regulations.
 - iii. Power to inquire into, and deal with any act.
 - iv. Powers to be given to a Judiciary.
 - v. The boundaries of their jurisdiction
 - vi. Power to alter Tournament Rules for the benefit of the Sport and/or the safety of the participants.
- B. Coaches and officials deemed guilty of misconduct will be reported to the appropriate officials and be liable to disciplinary action.
- C. Players sent from the field for the remainder of the game in any special tournament or “knock out” event will receive an automatic two (2) game suspension.

RULE 17 - THE REFEREE

1. **Manner of Appointment.** The appointment of all referees, line judges or touchdown zone officials will be made by delegated officials of the controlling association.
2. **The Referee.** The referee is the sole judge on matters of fact and is required to adjudicate on the rules of the game during play. The referee may impose any sanction necessary to control the match and in particular, award penalties for infringements against the rules.
3. **Authority of Referee.** Players, coaches and officials of both teams are under the control of the officiating referees.

4. **Area of Control.** The playing area under the control of the referee extends from the boundaries of the field of play, to an area which covers substitute players and officials involved in the particular match.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. Team captains may respectfully enquire of the referee, matters of varying interpretation or causes of penalties. Any discussion is to be brief and polite and must not delay play. Other team members should not talk to the referee.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Referees must familiarise themselves with grounds, markings and officials prior to the commencement of matches.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. Controlling associations are responsible for all matters connected with the conduct of the competition including safety aspects of the grounds, surrounding environments and playing games in adverse climatic conditions.