

AUSTRALIAN TOUCH ASSOCIATION

PLAYING RULES

7th Edition

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FOREWORD

This Rules booklet is the seventh edition of the Laws of Touch for the Australian Touch Association (ATA). It is designed to bring the rules in line with the Internationally accepted set of Laws for the game that mirror what is being played at the elite level in this country.

There is no compulsion for any affiliate of the ATA to follow these Rules at their local or park level competitions. In fact the ATA encourages Affiliates to set varying features in the rules of their competition so that the player can experience a wide variety of enjoyment from the game.

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.

It is only when teams meet on a representative level that the ATA rules need to be applied. This in no way restricts any affiliates from having different competitions playing these or any variation of these rules. For other publications regarding Juniors and rules adapted especially for them, and the rules for Beach Touch etc. contact the ATA.

In this short space of time, television has now become interested in the sport and changes have been made to the number of players on the field at any one time. This was designed to make the game a more "TV friendlier" spectacle and has proven to be quite successful.

Hopefully now, these changes will begin to give our sport some credibility in the domestic and international sporting arenas.

Many nations have already adopted these Rules and several Countries who are not members of the Federation of International Touch are also playing Touch competitions under these Rules.

I wish to thank the many technical persons who have contributed to the development of these Rules over a number of years.

Cary Thompson
Chairman ATA
Rules Committee
29th February 2000

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RULE 1 - DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

The ATA refers to the Australian Touch Association and unless the contrary intention appears, the following definitions and terminology apply to the game of 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 at a Rollball. 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 **Defending Scoreline** is the line, which a team has to defend to prevent a touchdown.
- 7 **Defending Team** is the team without possession of the ball.
- 8 **Deliver** means to part with the ball.
- 9 The **Half** is the player who takes possession of the ball behind the player who performs the Rollball.
- 10 **Field of Play** is the playing area bounded by the sidelines and Touchdown Zone lines both of which are out of bounds.
- 11 **Forward** means in a position or direction towards a team's own attacking scoreline.
- 12 **Full Time** occurs at the expiration of the normal time allowed for play.
- 13 **Interchange Area** is a rectangle measuring twenty (20) metres long by no more than five (5) metres wide, marked on both sides of the field, extending ten (10) metres either side of the half way line and being one (1) metre from the sideline.
- 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 center 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 **Rollball** is the normal act of bringing the ball into play following a touch or a change of possession.
- 21 **The Ruck.** The ruck is the area between the person performing the Rollball and the half.
- 22 **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.
- 23 **Scorelines** are the lines separating the Touchdown Zone from the field of play.
- 24 **Sidelines** are the side boundaries of the field of play.
- 25 **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.
- 26 **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.
- 27 **Touchdown** is the result of an attacking player, except the half, placing the ball on or over the team's attacking scoreline.
- 28 **Touchdown Zone** is the area bounded by the sideline, scoreline and Touchdown Zone Line.
- 29 **Touchdown Zone Line** is the line joining the sidelines extending no less than five (5) metres and not more than ten (10) metres past the scoreline.

RULE 2 - THE FIELD AND THE BALL

1 **Field of Play.** The Field of play is rectangular in shape and measures seventy (70) metres in length from scoreline to scoreline 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 that are to be laid out as shown in the diagram. (See Figure 1 - The Field of Play). Sidelines are to be extended at least five (5) metres beyond the scorelines and joined by the Touchdown Zone line.

Interchange Areas measuring twenty (20) metres in length by no more than five (5) metres in width shall be marked on both sides of the field of play, extending ten (10) metres either side of the halfway line and one (1) metre from the sideline.

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 (See Figure 1 - the Field of Play).

4 Playing Surface. The playing surface is normally grass. However, other surfaces approved by the Australian Touch Association 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 the Australian Touch Association. The ball shall be inflated to the recommended air pressure and if applicable it will be the officially sanctioned ball endorsed by the ATA as at that time. 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.

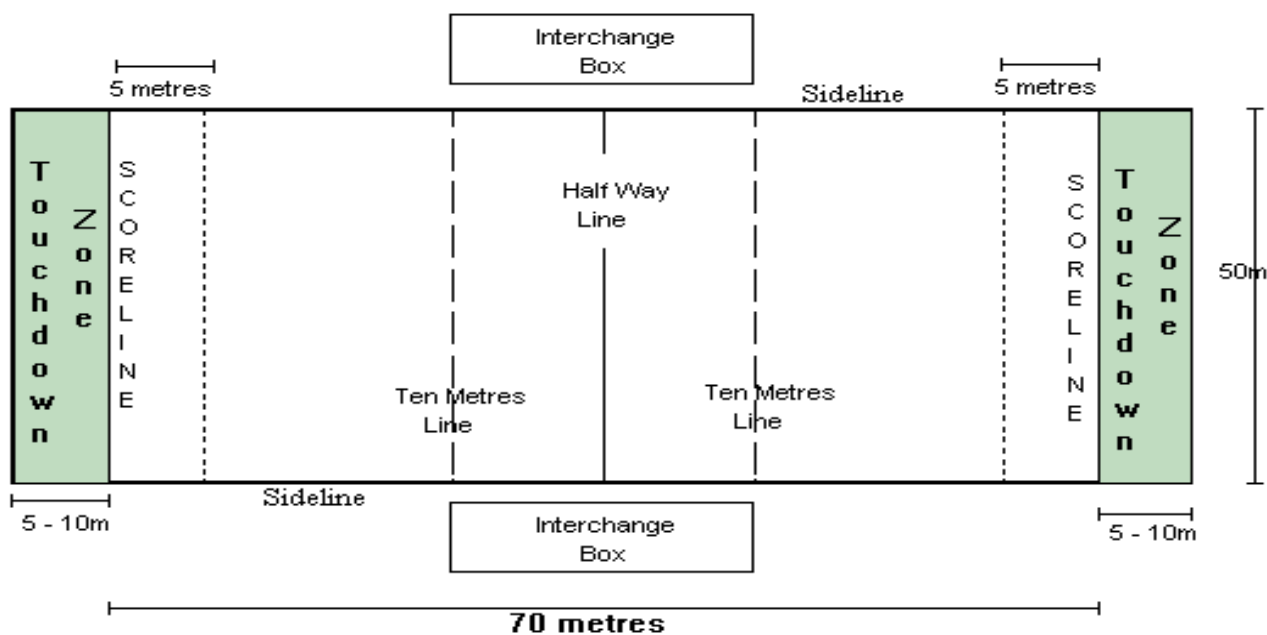
REFEREE NOTES

- 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, touchdown zone lines (if utilised) and the halfway line are correctly marked
- B. The controlling association can approve the ball used by any team
- C. Interchange areas can be dispensed with, if local conditions and ground area do not allow for them, and/or they can be placed on the same side of the field and varied in length and width.
- D. The touchdown zone lines and distance of touchdown zone (if utilised) can be set by the controlling association to suit environmental and local council conditions.
- E. Any decision or variation to field dimensions or on the playing rules or conditions rests with the controlling association's officials.

FIGURE 1. - Field of Play



RULE 3 - PLAYER ELIGIBILITY AND ATTIRE

- 1 Eligibility. All participating players are to be registered with the association they represent and are authorised to play with. Teams playing unregistered or unauthorised players will forfeit such matches.
- 2 Uniforms. All participating players are to be correctly attired in team uniforms approved by the local controlling Association. Uniforms consist of upper apparel, shorts (or briefs for female players) and socks with footwear.
- 3 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.
- 4 Identification Numbers. All Players are to wear an identifying number, not less than sixteen centimetres (16 cm) in height, clearly displayed on the front OR rear of the upper garment. Numbers may be positioned on both sleeves as an alternative providing the numbers are not less than eight (8) centimetres in height. No two players of the same team may wear the same number.
- 5 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 providing colours and numbers are displayed, subject to approval of the controlling association.

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. Identification numbers of participating players should be in numerical order. However, this is not mandatory.
- B. 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 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 touches upon which, play stops and is restated with a Rollball, unless other rules apply.
- 3 Duration. The match is forty five (45) minutes duration, consisting of two (2) twenty (20) minute halves. There is a five (5) 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 (without being touched and other than the half) 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 Competition Points. Points are awarded in competition matches as follows:

WIN	- 3 POINTS
BYE	- 3 POINTS
DRAW	- 2 POINTS
LOSS	- 1 POINT
FORFEIT	- 0 POINTS
- 8 Extra Time for Drawn Matches. The following procedure will be utilised to establish a single winner.

THE DROP OFF 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 "Drop-off". Each team will reduce their playing strength by one on-field player.
- ii) The Drop-off 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) At the conclusion of two minutes of extra time, a signal is sounded and the referee will stop play at the next touch or dead ball. Each team will then reduce their on field strength by one (1) player.
- iv) Play will recommence immediately after the players have left the field at the same point in the play where it was halted; (i.e. the team retaining possession at the designated number of touches, or a change of possession due to some infringement or it being the sixth touch).
- v) The clock does not stop when the hooter sounds at the two minute intervals, as there is no time off during the Drop Off.
- vi) At each subsequent two minute period a signal for another player to drop off, will be sounded.
- vii) Once the teams have been reduced to only three players each, no further drop off of players will occur, and the match will continue until a touchdown is scored. Should a player be sent off for the remainder of the match when teams have only three players each, the offending team will forfeit, and lose the match.
- viii) 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.
- ix) The decision on which player will drop off is entirely up to the team management, that is the captain, coach, etc.
- x) A player/team wasting time at a drop off will be penalised at the mark for recommencement of the match.

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) At the drop off time, each team will still reduce their playing strength as per the rules, thus ensuring the one team will have the player advantage as per in the match. Once a team

reaches only three players, no further drop off of players from either team, will occur. Injured players can be replaced at any time.

- d) Mixed Teams can drop off in any sequence provided Rule 5.2 applies and that there is a minimum on one (1) male and one (1) female player on the field at all times.
9. 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 touch is counted and the player is required to Rollball to restart play at the position of contact with the ground. However a touchdown results if an untouched player (other than the half) slides the ball along the ground to or beyond the scoreline. If a player does not release the ball from their hands, no touch is counted and the match continues.
- 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. A Referee 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 Rollball 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. Local competitions may allow the half to score.
- G. Controlling Associations may decide on, and publish a special "for and against" margin, to be awarded for forfeits, and abandoned matches.
- H. If extra time is to be played the controlling association can dispense with the drop off and play a timed sequence to suit local conditions.
- I. If the Drop Off is utilised the Controlling association decides who is responsible for the timing of the two minute intervals (time keeper, referee etc.).

RULE 5 - TEAM COMPOSITION AND SUBSTITUTION

1 Number of Players. A Team consists of fourteen (14) players, no more than six (6) of who 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 Mixed Competition. In mixed competitions, the maximum number of males allowed on the field of play is three (3). The minimum male requirement on the field of play is one (1).

RULING - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the position of the ball at the time the offence is identified.

3 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.

4 Interchange Procedure. Substitute players must remain in their interchange area for the duration of the match. All interchanges must occur at or within the team's Interchange Area, and only after the substituted player has crossed the boundaries and entered the Interchange Area. All interchanges must be made on the one side of the field and without delay.

Physical contact does not have to be made between interchanging players, and 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 enter the interchange area.

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 fourteen (14) 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. Female players in mixed competition may play in any team positions. Male players may interchange with female players providing Rule 5.2 applies.
- C. Attacking and defending players must interchange in accordance with Rule 5.4. 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 six (6) players on the field.
- C. If a team is unable to continue to meet the requirements of Rule 5.2 because of injury caused during the game, the make up of the male-female ratio may be varied at the discretion of the referee, provided both captains agree.

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 / five a side). In addition they can set the minimum number of players per team for the game to continue.
- B. The composition of male and female players in a mixed competition can be varied.
- C. 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, the choice of direction for the first half and the choice of Interchange areas for the duration of the match.

2 Attacking Team. The attacking team is to start the match with a tap at the center of 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 tapped.

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

3 Method. The tap is taken by placing the ball on the ground at or behind the mark, releasing both hands from the ball, tapping the ball with either foot a distance of not more than one (1) metre, and retrieving the ball cleanly. Any player of the attacking team may take the tap. Any onside player of the attacking team may retrieve the ball once the tap has been taken.

RULING - A change of possession at the mark for the tap.

4 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 tap. Defending players may move forward of their positions once the ball has been tapped with the foot.

RULING - A penalty awarded to the attacking team along a line ten (10) metres directly forward of the original mark.

5 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 tap as described in Rules 6.2 and 6.3. 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 and 6.3.

6 Kicking. The ball cannot be kicked or played with the foot except when taking a tap or a Rollball. The half may use the foot to control the ball.

RULING - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the position where the ball made contact with the foot.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. A player taking the tap may face any direction to take the tap and may be forward of the halfway line.
- B. The player taking the tap is to wait until the referee indicates the mark prior to tapping the ball. See also Rule 15 Player Note A.
- C. Players may take the ball behind the mark for a tap up to a maximum of ten (10) metres. No 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 center 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. Note: the tap can be taken up to a distance of ten (10) metres behind 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 six (6) touches prior to changing possession with the opposing team.

2 Changeover Procedure. Following the sixth 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 first pitches or where the attacking player dropped or passed the ball, whichever is of greater advantage to the team gaining possession.

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 effected, a touchdown is scored, or a stoppage occurs as a result of other actions.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. Should a touch be effected 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 DOES NOT result and play is to continue.
- C. Players may intercept behind the defending scoreline. If a player in possession is touched or effects a touch whilst on or behind their defending scoreline the touch counts and play is restarted with a Rollball five (5) metres forward of the scoreline from where the player was touched.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. The controlling association may vary the number of touches to be made before a team must change possession.

- D. If the ball is dropped to the ground a local association may allow the game to continue with rules governing who retains, or gains possession.
- C. Local rules may state that no team has more than six touches even though it may be "touched in flight" by an opponent. In other words the referee will not call "six again". Only an infringement, which results in a penalty, will an attacking team receive multiple possessions.

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 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 penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the ball was passed, flicked, knocked, thrown or otherwise propelled forward.

3 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. The touch count is restarted.

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).

REFEREE NOTES

- A. A Penalty is to result from a forward pass even if the receiver was in an onside position prior to the pass.
- B. Referees are to be aware of players who make any deliberate passes at an opposing player, especially on the fifth (5th) touch.
- C. Forward passes are to be penalised even if the ball goes to ground or if it is the last touch.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. The controlling association may allow a pass to be thrown forward. Alternatively it can restrict the number of passes that can be thrown forward in any set of six passes.
- B. Associations may introduce the "Knock-Down" rule which, allows for the defending team to receive possession if the attacking team does not maintain it. Such would be the case if a defender knocked down a pass or the player in possession threw the ball into an opponent and it came off their hands. If the attacking team doesn't maintain possession – they lose it.
- C. Park Competition Note C in Rule 7 goes hand in hand with Note B above.

RULE 9 - THE ROLLBALL

1 When Required. A player is to perform a Rollball under the following circumstances:

- (a) when a touch has been effected;
- (b) when possession changes due to the sixth touch;
- (c) when possession changes due to the ball going to ground;
- (d) when possession changes due to an infringement by an attacking player at a penalty or a tap;
- (e) When possession changes when the half is touched (or places the ball on or over the scoreline) whilst in possession of the ball;
- (f) When possession changes due to a player in possession of the ball running across the sideline, or
- (g) when so directed by the referee.

2 Method. The attacking player is to position on the mark, face the opponent's (defending) scoreline, stand parallel to the sidelines, and roll the ball backwards along the ground between the feet a distance of not more than one (1) metre. Once the ball is placed on the mark, the attacking player may step over the ball.

RULING - A change of possession at the mark.

3 (a) Attacking Team. Any other player of the attacking team may receive the ball from the Rollball and thus become the half. The half may pass or run with the ball. However, if touched, loses possession.

RULING - A change of possession.

(b) The half is not to delay picking up or gathering the ball. The player who performs the Rollball is not permitted to obstruct or otherwise prevent the defending team from gaining possession or effecting a touch on the half.

RULING - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the infringement occurred.

4 Defending Team. All Players of the defending team are to retire a distance of not less than five (5) metres from the mark for a Rollball. Players of the defending team are not permitted to move forward of the five (5) metre position until the half has made contact with the ball.

RULING - A penalty awarded to the attacking team along a line five (5) metres forward of the mark for the Rollball and nearest the infringement.

5 Actions Without Half in Position. When the player in possession is required to Rollball without a half in position, players of the defending team may move forward of the five (5) metre positions as soon as the ball leaves the hand/s of the player in possession. Should a defending player gain possession, the match is recommenced with a Rollball at the same mark.

6 Voluntary Rollball. A player in possession is not to perform a Rollball unless a touch has been effected.

RULING - A penalty awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the Rollball occurred.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. The ball must touch the ground in a Rollball but does not necessarily have to be rolled. The foot may be used to control the ball.
- B. The player performing the Rollball must ensure the ball passes on the inside of the supporting foot.
- C. Defending players who are offside at the Rollball are liable to penalty and should remain out of play until a touch has been effected or until they have assumed an onside position.
- D. The player performing the Rollball cannot retrieve the ball.
- E. Any defending player involved in a touch must immediately retire to a position along a line five (5) metres forward of the touch or to their own defending scoreline.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. The mark for a tap from a penalty is awarded under Rule 9.4 is along a line five (5) metres forward of the mark for the Rollball and nearest the infringement.
- B. The half is permitted to use the foot to control the ball. However, play must not be delayed. Defending players may move forward as soon as the half has made contact with the ball.
- C. A player in possession may run or stand with the ball extended towards the ground without penalty. However, Rule 9.6 (Voluntary Rollball) applies as soon as the ball is rolled.
- D. In an attempt to encourage a free-flowing match, referees should warn offside players (or teams) and use the advantage rule as applicable (e.g. If a warned offside player moves to make a touch, the referee may call "play on" rather than stop play and penalise the offender). However, if the referee hasn't warned the player (or team) he cannot call "play on" and must allow the touch or penalise the offending player.
- E. Players who delay the Rollball are to be penalised.
- F. Should the half or other attacking players effect a touch on an offside defender following a quick Rollball, the touch will count (and the half would lose possession).
- G. The half is not permitted to score touchdowns. They are unrestricted as to where they can run and may cross the scoreline to link up with support players. Should the half be touched or placed the ball on the ground within the boundaries of the Touchdown Zone, whether the ball is released or not, a change of possession will occur five (5) metres from the scoreline. The change of possession will occur no closer than five (5) metres from the sideline opposite where the half was touched or where the ball touched the ground.
- H. There is no requirement for the ball to be picked up to commence the Rollball, but the referee should ensure the Rollball takes place at the mark.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. The controlling association may allow a defending player to act as a marker and thus not have to retire five metres from the Rollball. Any such rule must have specific instructions governing the marker.
- B. The local competition may allow the half to be touched whilst in possession of the ball without losing possession.
- C. The controlling association may have a time limit (say 3 seconds) in which the half must touch the ball before the defending team can move forward.

RULE 10 - THE TOUCH

1 General. See Rule 1.25 - 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 player retains possession, and they are required to perform the Rollball. The touch count continues, unless it is the sixth (6th) touch.

3 Actions Following Touch. After a touch has been effected, the player in possession is required to stop, return to the mark where the touch occurred if the mark has been over-run, and perform a Rollball without delay.

RULING - A penalty awarded to the defending team at the mark where the Rollball should have been performed.

4 Passing after Touch. A player is not to pass or otherwise deliver the ball after a touch has been effected.

RULING - A penalty awarded to the defending team at the mark where the touch occurred.

5 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.

6 The Mark. The mark for the Rollball is dependent on the position of the player in possession at the time of the touch.

7 Interference After Touch. Following a touch, the ball is deemed to be dead and is brought into play at the Rollball when the half touches the ball or, if there is no half in position, when the ball leaves the hands of the attacking player performing the Rollball. See rule 9.4 and 9.5. Defending players are not to interfere with the player in possession or otherwise prevent the immediate Rollball, after a touch is made.

RULING - A penalty awarded to the attacking team five (5) metres forward of the mark for the Rollball.

8 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 effected, the touch counts and a touchdown is not awarded.

9 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. If the player in possession is the half, a change of possession results in accordance with rule 9.3.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. When effecting touches with the ball, attacking players are to ensure minimum force is used (See Rule 10.1).
- B. If a touch is effected on or over the scoreline before the ball is grounded, no touchdown results. The player in possession is to move from that point to a position five (5) metres from the scoreline to Rollball, provided it is not the sixth (6th) touch.
- C. If in doubt as to the location of the mark for the Rollball, the player in possession should check with the referee.
- D. Attacking players cannot delay the Rollball while awaiting for a half to be in position.
- E. Calling a touch prior to contact is subject to a penalty under Rule 10.5
- F. A player who is touched while in the act of passing should attempt to refrain from releasing the ball.

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 Rollball. 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 10.5
- 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 as a "simultaneous touch". The ball is returned to the attacking player for a Rollball. If the ball goes to ground on such occasions, or if it is the sixth (6th) touch, a change of possession is the result.

- F. Mandatory penalties should not be awarded when players fail to feel slight touches. However, deliberate running on is to be penalised.
- G. Infringements against Rule 10.4 are to be penalised, even if it is the sixth (6th) touch.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. Some local competitions penalise “two handed” touches. This is only permitted if written into the controlling association’s exceptions to the ATA 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 11 - 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. However if a player in possession is touched prior to crossing the sideline, then the touch counts and play continues with a Rollball at the mark where the touch occurred.

RULING - The team NOT responsible for the ball touching or crossing the sideline restarts play with a Rollball 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. Play is restarted with a Rollball five (5) metres infield from where the player in possession crossed 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 counts and play is restarted with a Rollball five (5) metres infield from where the player in possession was touched.

4 Actions Near Defending Scoreline. An attacking team is not required to Rollball within five (5) metres of the defending scoreline. After each touch the player in possession may move forward to the five (5) metre broken line to Rollball.

5 Actions near Attacking Scoreline. When a touch is effected within five (5) metres of the attacking scoreline, a player in possession may move directly behind the mark a distance of up to five (5) metres to the broken line to restart play with a Rollball.

6 Actions further than Five (5) Metres from Defending Scoreline. When defending players are required to defend further than five (5) metres from their defending scoreline, they must move forward beyond the five (5) metre broken line and continue to move forward in an attempt to effect a touch on the player in possession.

RULING - A penalty awarded to the attacking team at the position of the ball at the time the offence is identified.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. When moving forward or backward from the mark in accordance with Rules 11.4 and/or 11.5, players should indicate to the referee that such options have been chosen and thus avoid confusion. Defending players must remain five (5) metres from the Rollball.
- B. When moving forward or backward in accordance with Rules 11.4 and/or 11.5, the player in possession should avoid contact with defending players and should not move sideways from the mark.
- C. When the player in possession is further than five (5) metres from the scoreline and the defending team is defending on or within five metres (5) of their defending scoreline, the defending team must move forward in an attempt to effect a touch. This means the whole team must move out to beyond the five (5) metre line and can only return to the scoreline once a touch is imminent. They may however move back beyond the five metre broken line to realign for the next defensive move once a touch is about to be effected by either the attacking or defending player.
- D. When a player in possession is on or within five (5) metres of their attacking scoreline, the defending team are permitted to remain on, and defend their scoreline.
- E. In respect of Rule 11.6 above a defending player moving forward to effect a touch and who subsequently pull out of making a touch in an attempt to “milk” a penalty for a voluntary Rollball is guilty of an offence and subject to being penalised.

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.
- B. Before a penalty is awarded in accordance with Rule 11.6, the referee must warn the defending team to move forward in an attempt to effect a touch. If the defending team does not move forward in accordance with the referee’s direction a penalty will result.
- C. If the same situation arises again after a tap from a penalty has been taken, (that is, within the attacking team’s following six possessions), and the defending team still refuses to move forward to effect a touch, another penalty is awarded to the attacking team. In addition the referee will instruct the captain of the defending team to remove one (1) player from the field. The player is to return to the interchange area.

That player (or a substitute) cannot be replaced until the defending team gains possession. On each occasion before awarding a penalty the referee must have warned the defending team to move forward of the five (5) metre broken line, to effect a touch.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. In respect of Rule 11.6 local competitions can allow players to defend on their scoreline without having to move forward in an attempt to effect a touch.

RULE 12 - 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 and the touch count restarts. This also applies if the defending player deliberately knocks the ball to the ground. The mark where the Rollball occurs is where the ball first pitches or where the defender touched the ball, whichever is of best advantage to the attacking team.
- 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 and the touch count restarts at the next touch.
- 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 12.1. (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 Rollball where the ball first pitches or where the ball rebounded from the defender, whichever is of best advantage to the team gaining possession.
- 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 on and the touch count continues.

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 six (6) more touches 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 six (6) more at the mark of best advantage.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. In the case of Rule 12.3 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, play should continue and Rule 12.2 applies.
- 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 penalty to the defending team.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. Controlling Association may allow for the ball to go to ground and have either team gain possession. Alternatively if the defending team causes the ball to go to ground they gain possession. See Rule 8 PC Note B – if the attacking team can't maintain possession they lose it.

- B. Local competitions may introduce a “no six again rule” which allows for easy refereeing under these circumstances. Awarding of a penalty is the only occasion possession is maintained after six touches.

RULE 13 - 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 15.4).

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 9.4 - at the Rollball.
- (c) Rule 15.5 - at the tap for a penalty.
- (d) Rule 9 - Referee Note D - offside at a quick Rollball or tap.

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 Rollball 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 10.9 and notes on Rule 9.
- 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 15 for consecutive penalties.

PARK COMPETITION

- A. If a local competition allows forward passes then attacking players being offside needs to be re-defined by the controlling association.

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 the referee or 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 Rollball should be called with no effect to the touch count.

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. A method of taking the tap from a penalty is detailed in Rule 6.3. The ball does not have to be lifted from the ground for the tap. However, the ball must be at or behind the correct mark prior to the tap being taken. (See Rule 6; Player Note C).

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 at the tap as detailed in Rule 6.4.

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.
- C. If a player chooses to Rollball in lieu of a tap, the player who receives the ball is not deemed to be a half.

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 16 - 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 17 - 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 scoreline. The dismissed player cannot be replaced and that player shall receive an automatic two (2) match suspension from all matches conducted by any affiliated Touch Association. 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.

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 for 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 by-laws or regulations.
 - ii) Power to inquire into, and deal with any act.
 - iii) Powers to be given to a Judiciary.
 - iv) The boundaries of their jurisdiction
 - v) 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. (e.g. State or Regional Championships; National Championships or any other event as deemed by the controlling association).

- D. With respect to Referee Note D above, the controlling Association may authorise the referee to DEMAND that the offending player no longer participates in the match.

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

- 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.
- 5 Line Judges Touchdown Zone Officials. Line Judges and Touchdown Zone Officials should be appointed to assist the referee with tasks associated with sidelines scorelines and touchdown zone lines, and other matters at the discretion of the referee. Their normal duties include, indicating the ten (10) metres distance for taps from a penalty, controlling substitutions, matters of backplay and other advice when sought by the central referee.

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.
- B. Referees may consult with line judges and/or touchdown zone officials prior to making decisions.

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.