
LAW 6 - MATCH OFFICIALS

DEFINITIONS

Every match is under the control of Match Officials who consist of the Referee and two Touch Judges. Additional persons, as authorised by the match organisers may include the referee and/or reserve touch judge, an official to assist the Referee in making decisions by using technological devices, the time keeper, the Match Doctor, the team doctors, the non-playing members of the teams and the ball persons.

6.A. REFEREE

BEFORE THE MATCH

6.A.1 APPOINTING THE REFEREE

The referee is appointed by the match organiser. If no referee has been appointed the two teams may agree upon a referee. If they cannot agree, the home team appoints a referee.

6.A.2 REPLACING THE REFEREE

If the referee is unable to complete the match, the referee's replacement is appointed according to the instructions of the match organiser. If the match organiser has given no instructions, the referee appoints the replacement. If the referee cannot do so, the home team appoints a replacement.

6.A.3 DUTIES OF THE REFEREE BEFORE THE MATCH

- (a) Toss. The referee organises the toss. One of the captains tosses a coin and the other captain calls to see who wins the toss. The winner of the toss decides whether to kick-off or to choose an end. If the winner of the toss decides to choose an end, the opponents must kick-off and vice versa.
- (b) Players' clothing inspection. The referee must inspect the players' clothing to ensure it is in compliance with Law 4. The referee may delegate responsibility for the inspection of players' clothing to the touch judges.

6.A.4 LIMITATION ON THE REFEREE

The referees must not give advice to either team before the match.

DURING THE MATCH

6.A.5 THE DUTIES OF THE REFEREE IN THE PLAYING ENCLOSURE

- (a) The referee is the sole judge of fact and of Law during a match. The referee must apply fairly all the Laws of the Game in every match.
- (b) When the match organiser has authorised the application of an experimental Law as approved by the IRB Council, the referee may apply these Laws in prescribed matches.
- (c) The referee keeps the time.
- (d) The referee keeps the score.
- (e) The referee gives permission to the players to leave the playing area.
- (f) The referee gives permission to the replacements or substitutes to enter the playing area.
- (g) The referee gives permission to the team doctors or medically trained persons or their assistants to enter the playing area, as and when permitted by the Law.
- (h) The referee gives permission to each of the coaches to enter the playing area at half time to attend their teams during the interval.

6.A.6 PLAYERS DISPUTING A REFEREE'S DECISION

All players must respect the authority of the referee. They must not dispute the referee's decisions. They must stop playing at once when the referee blows the whistle except at a kick-off.

Penalty: Penalty Kick at the place of infringement or where play would next commence.

6.A.7 REFEREE ALTERING A DECISION

The referee may alter a decision when a touch judge has raised the flag to signal touch or an act of foul play.

6.A.8 REFEREE CONSULTING WITH OTHERS

- (a) The referee may consult with touch judges in regard to matters relating to their duties, the Law relating to foul play, or timekeeping.
- (b) A match organiser may appoint an official who uses technological devices. If the referee is unsure when making a decision in in-goal involving a try being scored or a touch down, that official may be consulted.
- (c) The official may be consulted if the referee is unsure when making a decision in in-goal with regard to the scoring of a try or a touch down when foul play in in-goal may have been involved.
- (d) The official may be consulted in relation to the success or otherwise of kicks at goal.
- (e) The official may be consulted if the referee or touch judge is unsure if a player was or was not in touch when attempting to ground the ball to score a try.
- (f) The official may be consulted if the referee or touch judges are unsure when making a decision relating to touch-in-goal and the ball being made dead if a score may have occurred.
- (g) A match organiser may appoint a timekeeper who will signify the end of each half.
- (h) The referee must not consult with any other persons.

6.A.9 THE REFEREE'S WHISTLE

- (a) The referee must carry a whistle and blow the whistle to indicate the beginning and end of each half of the match.
- (b) The referee has power to stop play at any time.
- (c) The referee must blow the whistle to indicate a score, or a touch down.

- (d) The referee must blow the whistle to stop play because of an infringement or for an offence of foul play. When the referee cautions or sends off the offender, the referee must whistle a second time when the penalty kick or penalty try is awarded.
- (e) The referee must blow the whistle when the ball has gone out of play, or when it has become unplayable, or when a penalty is awarded.
- (f) The referee must blow the whistle when the ball or the ball-carrier touches the referee and either team gains an advantage from this.
- (g) The referee must blow the whistle when it would be dangerous to let play continue. This includes when a scrum collapses, or when a front row player is lifted into the air or is forced upwards out of a scrum, or when it is probable that a player has been seriously injured.
- (h) The referee may blow the whistle to stop play for any other reason according to the Laws.

6.A.10 THE REFEREE AND INJURY

- (a) If a player is injured and continuation of play would be dangerous, the referee must blow the whistle immediately.
- (b) If the referee stops play because a player has been injured, and there has been no infringement and the ball has not been made dead, play restarts with a scrum. The team last in possession throws in the ball. If neither team was in possession, the attacking team throws in the ball.
- (c) The referee must blow the whistle if continuation of play would be dangerous for any reason.

6.A.11 THE BALL TOUCHING THE REFEREE

- (a) If the ball or the ball-carrier touches the referee and neither team gains an advantage, play continues.
- (b) If either team gains an advantage in the field of play, the referee orders a scrum and the team that last played the ball has the throw-in.
- (c) If either team gains an advantage in in-goal, if the ball is in possession of an attacking player the referee awards a try where the contact took place.
- (d) If either team gains an advantage in in-goal, if the ball is in possession of a defending player, the referee awards a touch down where the contact took place.

6.A.12 THE BALL IN IN-GOAL TOUCHED BY NON-PLAYER

The referee judges what would have happened next and awards a try or a touch down at the place where the ball was touched.

AFTER THE MATCH

6.A.13 SCORE

The referee communicates the score to the teams and to the match organiser.

6.A.14 PLAYER SENT-OFF

If a player is sent off the referee gives the match organiser a written report on the foul play infringement as soon as possible.

6.B. TOUCH JUDGES

BEFORE THE MATCH

6.B.1 APPOINTING TOUCH JUDGES

There are two touch judges for every match. Unless they have been appointed by or under the authority of the match organiser, each team provides a touch judge.

6.B.2 REPLACING A TOUCH JUDGE

The match organiser may nominate a person to act as a replacement for the referee or the touch judges. This person is called the reserve touch judge and stands in the perimeter area.

6.B.3 CONTROL OF TOUCH JUDGES

The referee has control over both touch judges. The referee may tell them what their duties are, and may overrule their decisions. If a touch judge is unsatisfactory the referee may ask that the touch judge be replaced. If the referee believes a touch judge is guilty of misconduct, the referee has power to send the touch judge off and make a report to the match organiser.

DURING THE MATCH

6.B.4 WHERE THE TOUCH JUDGES SHOULD BE

- (a) There is one touch judge on each side of the ground. The touch judge remains in touch except when judging a kick at goal. When judging a kick at goal the touch judges stand in in-goal behind the goal posts.
- (b) A touch judge may enter the playing area when reporting an offence of dangerous play or misconduct to the referee. The touch judge may do this only at the next stoppage in play.

6.B.5 TOUCH JUDGE SIGNALS

- (a) Each touch judge carries a flag or something similar with which to signal decisions.
- (b) Signalling result of kick at goal. When a conversion kick or a penalty kick at goal is being taken, the touch judges must help the referee by signalling the result of the kick. One touch judge stands at or behind each goal post. If the ball goes over the cross-bar and between the posts, the touch judge raises the flag to indicate a goal.
- (c) Signalling touch. When the ball or the ball-carrier has gone into touch, the touch judge must hold up the flag. The touch judge must stand at the place of the throw-in and point to the team entitled to throw in. The touch judge must also signal when the ball or the ball-carrier has gone into touch-in-goal.
- (d) When to lower the flag. When the ball is thrown in, the touch judge must lower the flag, with the following exceptions:



Kick at goal successful

Exception 1: When the player throwing in puts any part of either foot in the field of play, the touch judge keeps the flag up.

Exception 2: When the team not entitled to throw-in has done so, the touch judge keeps the flag up.



Signalling touch and team to throw-in

Exception 3: When, at a quick throw-in, the ball that went into touch is replaced by another ball, or after it went into touch or it has been touched by anyone except the player who takes the throw-in, the touch judge keeps the flag up.

- (e) It is for the referee, and not the touch judge, to decide whether or not the ball was thrown in from the correct place.
- (f) Signalling foul play. A touch judge signals that foul play or misconduct has been seen by holding the flag horizontally and pointing infield at right angles to the touch-line.

6.B.6 AFTER SIGNALLING FOUL PLAY



Signalling foul play

A match organiser may give authority to the touch judge to signal for foul play. If a touch judge signals foul play, the touch judge must stay in touch and continue to carry out all the other duties until the next stoppage in play. The touch judge may then enter the playing area to report the offence to the referee. The referee may then take whatever action is needed. Any penalty awarded will be in accordance with Law 10 – Foul Play.

AFTER THE MATCH

6.B.7 PLAYER SENT-OFF

If a player has been sent-off following a touch judge's signal, the touch judge submits a written report about the incident to the referee as soon as possible after the match and provides it to the match organiser.

6.C. ADDITIONAL PERSONS

6.C.1 RESERVE TOUCH JUDGE

When a reserve touch judge is appointed, the referee's authority regarding replacements and substitutions may be delegated to the reserve touch judge.

6.C.2 THOSE WHO MAY ENTER THE PLAYING AREA

The match doctor and the non-playing members of the team may enter the playing area as authorised by the referee.

6.C.3 LIMITS TO ENTERING THE PLAYING AREA

In the case of injury, these persons may enter the playing area while play continues, provided they have permission from the referee. Otherwise, they enter only when the ball is dead.