

# NATIONAL TOUCH RUGBY ASSOCIATION LIMITED

## RULE BOOK

**THIRD EDITION January 2003**

The National Touch Rugby Rule Book has been written for the people who want to play touch rugby, you can read this book to have an understanding of the game.

The game of touch rugby is for the enjoyment of all people and NTRA hopes that this rule book assists in developing the player's knowledge of the game.

National Touch Rugby is for the *non-elite players* in Australia. We at NTRA cater for the families who wish to join up and just have fun. NTRA is for the family based players.

NTRA allows all families to travel with the players selected to tournaments and stay together as a family.

NTRA also allows its Referees to stay with their families too. NTRA assists its referees financially at these tournaments.

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## **1. FIELD DIMENSIONS**

Field Measurements : Sidelines are to be 70 m in length with the tryline 50 m in width. Variations at Association level are allowable. A dead ball area may be marked a minimum of 5 m in length. If the dead ball area is not marked, then the area is defined by the next natural boundary.

Field Markings : Fields should be marked with at least visible trylines, sidelines and halfway lines. Safety markers should be used to highlight these lines – 10 m either side of half way line and 5 m out from each tryline.

## **2. PLAYER ATTIRE & BALL**

Ball : A specially identified and made touch ball should be used.

Clothing : All players from an individual team must be wearing identical team shirts. Other clothing that must be worn : shorts (or like for females), socks and touch shoes. Shoes with screw-in tags or cleats are NOT to be worn. Moulded soles can be worn, but can be no longer than 1 cm in length.

Shirt Numbers : All players are to wear an individual identifying number on the back of the shirt not less than 16cm in height. Alternatively, a number can be worn on both sleeves, not less than 8 cm in height.

Safety Requirements : No jewellery may be worn by male or female players or referees (referees watches must be covered with a wristband). Fingernails must be taped or trimmed, level with the fingertip. Only prescription glasses/sunglasses may be worn by players and referees. Players who wish to wear sunglasses whilst playing, MUST sign off on a liability waiver from all players, affiliate administrators and referees. They wear their sunglasses at their own risk and any injuries they receive or they inflict on others, whilst wearing the sunglasses is at their own risk. Affiliate's Rules apply.

### **3. MODE OF PLAY AND DURATION**

Length of Play : The game is 40 minutes long comprising two 20 minutes halves and a 5 minutes half-time break. Variations may exist from one affiliate to another.

Completion of Game : The game ceases when play becomes “dead” at the expiration of time eg try, touch effected, ball dropped or run over sideline. If a penalty has been awarded when time expires, then the penalty place kick (tap) must be taken prior to conclusion of game.

Try : A try can be scored by any player except for the dummy half, by placing the ball on or over the attacking tryline between the sidelines and dead ball line. One point is awarded to the scoring team.

Attempted Try : If in attempting to score a try, within 5 metres of attacking tryline, a player puts the ball down and does not release it, the rule is “play on”. This player is still in possession of the ball. If the player does release the ball then it is deemed the player has lost possession and change over to the defending team occurs.

Team Composition : 14 players maximum are allowed per team with no more than 7 players on the field at a time. For NTRA tournaments (State, National and International games) 12 players is maximum with 6 players on the field at a time.

Minimum Numbers : The minimum number of players needed for a game to start is 5 (4 for the NTRA tournaments). Players injured during the game and sin binned players are still deemed to be part of the team composition, although players who have been sent off are not.

Mixed Teams : The maximum number of males allowed on the field is 4 and the minimum 1 (7-a-side competition). Combinations of males and females is allowed if less than the 7 players are being used, but no more males than stated above. For NTRA tournaments, maximum number of males allowed on the field is 3 and the minimum is 1.

Interchange : The interchange box is the 10 metre to 10 metre on either side of the halfway line. Players may interchange as many times as possible, as long as they make contact with the player entering the field at the sideline during general play. After a try (ball is deemed “dead”), substitutions may be made without contact being made.

#### **4. START OF PLAY**

Coin Toss : The referee will oversee the toss of the coin by the two captains. The captain winning the toss, wins possession of the ball (the place kick

(tap)) for the start of the game and has the choice of direction for the first half.

Start of Play : Play is started by a place kick (tap) taken in the centre of the halfway line.

The Place Kick (tap) : The place kick (tap) is taken by placing the ball on the ground, releasing it, touching the ball with the foot, not more than 1 metre in any direction, and picking up the ball cleanly. Any onside player of the attacking team may take the place kick (tap) and any other onside player from the attacking team may pick the ball up once it has been touched with the foot. If the place kick (tap) is taken incorrectly, then a change of possession (rollball) occurs at the mark for the (former) place kick (tap).

Re-Commencement of Play : The second half of a game is to be started by the opposite team that started the first half with a place kick (tap) as described above. Following a try, the team that has been scored against, re-starts play with a place kick (tap) at the centre of the halfway line.

Kicking : The ball cannot be kicked or deliberately played at with the foot except when taking a place kick (tap) or at the rollball. The dummy half may use the foot to control (trap) the ball during a rollball. If this rule is broken, then the non-offending team will receive a penalty at the position where the ball made contact with the foot.

Injuries: there is no time out for injuries. The clock counts down whilst an injury is being attended to. Once cleared, then the game continues without extra time being added for the injury.

Affiliates may cancel the game or apply their own rule interpretations.

Position for the place kick (tap) : A player taking a place kick (tap) must wait for the referee to indicate the mark prior to taking the place kick (tap). If the player takes the place kick (tap) before the referee has indicated the mark, then the place kick (tap) is to be taken from the offending player, it will be a roll ball to the non-offending team where the place kick (tap) was meant to be. If the mark has been indicated by the referee and the player

takes the place kick on the wrong spot, then a roll ball will occur at the position where the original place kick (tap) was meant to be.

## **5. POSSESSION**

Possession : 6 touches are allowed per possession, as long as other rules don't influence the count.

Changeover : When possession of the ball changes from one team to the other (eg 6<sup>th</sup> touch, penalty) the player losing possession must hand or pass the ball to the nearest opposition player, or return the ball to the mark, or if an opposition player asks for the ball, it must be given to them. All of these procedures must be without delay. If a delay occurs because of a player not abiding by the above rule, then a penalty is to be awarded where the infringement has occurred.

Dropped Ball : If the ball is dropped to the ground, a change of possession (rollball) occurs where the ball first hits the ground or where the player last touched the ball, whichever is of greater advantage to the team gaining possession.

Juggling the Ball : If an attacking player is juggling the ball, attempting to catch the ball and is touched while the ball is in the air, a touch is to count if the player catches it. If the player does not catch the ball and it hits the ground, a change of possession will occur. If the player is juggling the ball and is touched whilst trying to gain possession and another onside team mate catches the ball, a touch will count on the player touched. Once a player first touches the ball, when attempting to catch the ball, they are deemed to be in control of the ball.

Placed Ball : If a player places the ball on the ground and doesn't let go of the ball then picks it up, play will continue as the player still has control of the ball.

## **6. THE PASS**

Forward Pass : A forward pass is deemed when the ball is caught in front of the position from which it was delivered. The ball may have been passed, flicked, knocked, thrown or blown by the wind, but if it travels and is caught in front of where it came from, it is to be ruled a "forward pass" - a penalty is awarded to the non-offending team at the position the ball was delivered from.

Knocked Down pass : A pass that is knocked down by an opposition player with any part of their body, unintentionally will result in a change of possession. A pass that is intentionally knocked down by a player, will result in the touch count being restarted.

## **7. THE ROLLBALL**

The Rollball : The rollball is to be made by facing the opposition try line, parallel to the sidelines and having the ball pass between or under the feet. The ball may be rolled not more than 1 metre and placed on the ground and stepped over. If a rollball is performed incorrectly, a changeover will occur.

Rollball at Penalty : A rollball may be taken instead of a penalty place kick (tap). If this option is taken, then the dummy half may be touched without having to hand over possession. If the dummy half is touched with the ball in general play, a change over is ruled with the non-offending team receiving a rollball where the dummy half was touched.

No Touch : A player who performs a rollball without a touch being effected will be penalized. A penalty is awarded to the non-offending team where the infringement occurred.

Delayed Rollball : Once a player is touched or told by the referee to roll the ball, they must roll the ball without delay or be penalized.

Touch : A touch can be effected by either the attacker or defender, using minimum force. A touch can be made with any part of the body or clothing, the ball included. If more than minimum force is used, a penalty is awarded to the non-offending team where the infringement occurred.

Touch and Pass : If the ball is passed after a touch has been made, then a penalty is awarded to the non-offending team at the position the touch occurred. The ball is considered being delivered when the ball is past mid-line of the body in the normal motion of passing. If a player is touched whilst delivering the ball then “play on” is called.

Claimed Touch : A player can only call a touch when a touch is made. If a touch is called, but hasn't been made, and an advantage is apparent, the referee will call “play on”, otherwise a penalty place kick (tap) is to be

awarded to the attacking team where the touch is claimed. Players who claim touches when a touch hasn't been made, on repeated occasions, or deliberately call a touch when it hasn't been made, should be sent to the Sin Bin area or sent off for the remainder of the game. The referee can only penalize a player for a "no touch" if he/she is ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN that no contact has been made.

The Position : The position for a rollball after a touch has been made, is the position that the attacking player is located, at the time of the touch ( not where the ball is).

An attacking team is not required to rollball within 5 metres of the defending tryline or behind the defending tryline. After each touch, in this zone, the player in possession may move forward to the 5 m line to restart with a rollball.

An attacking team does not have to perform a rollball within 5 metres of their own attacking tryline or over their attacking tryline. After each touch, in this zone, the player in possession may move directly backwards to the 5 metre line to restart play with a rollball.

## **8. BALL TOUCHED IN FLIGHT**

Six more touches : If a defending player attempts to intercept a pass and a player on the attacking team regains the ball before it touches the ground, then the play continues with the next touch being the first.

Intercept : If a defending player intercepts a pass in general play, play on results as long as no other rules are infringed. If a defending player intercepts a pass behind their defending tryline and no touch is made, “play on” is called until the next touch or try eventuates. If a touch is made inside the try line area, the touch is counted, but the player brings play out to a rollball 5 metres out from their own tryline.

## **9. OFFSIDE**

Attacking on side at rollball : Attacking players may be forward of the player in possession at a rollball as long as they do not interfere with the defending players.

Attacking onside at Penalty Place kick (tap) : Attacking players are to remain onside at a place kick (tap) until the ball has been place kicked (tapped). If an attacking player is offside at a place kick (tap), then a change of possession is ruled at the mark for the original place kick (tap).

Defender onside at Place kick (tap) : To be onside at a penalty place kick (tap), defending players must retire 10 metres from the mark for the place kick (tap). When the ball has been tapped with the foot, the defenders may move forward.

Defenders onside at rollball : To be onside at the rollball, defending players must be back 8 metres from the position of the rollball. When the ball has been touched by the dummy half, then the defending players may move forward. The dummy half must not delay in playing at the ball. If a defender does not adhere to this rule, then a penalty is awarded to the attacking team 8 metres forward of the mark for the rollball.

No Dummy Half : When an attacking player performs a rollball without a dummy half in place (more than 1 metre away) then the defending team may move forward from their onside position (8 metres) . If a defender claims possession of the ball (touches it) then a changeover occurs by way of a rollball.

Advantage : Where possible, any offside player should be warned and an advantage played to the attacking player. “Play on” is called, when an offside player has been warned, so as to encourage a free flowing game. If an offside player has not been warned, then “play on” CANNOT be called and a penalty **MUST** be given.

Onside at Tryline : When defending the try line, a defender must have **both** feet **on** or **behind** the try line.

No Freeze on the tryline : When the defending team is defending inside their 5 metre try line area, the defending team **MUST** move forward (not backwards or sideways) no matter how slow they move forward, in an attempt to make a touch (the touch may go back as far as the field allows) . Once the touch is made, the defenders may move backwards to the try line.

If the referee instructs the player/players to go forward and make the touch and they don't go forward, then a penalty is to be awarded to the attacking team. Referees are not to penalize players who are nowhere near the immediate play.

Defenders' actions after a touch : Defending players who have made a touch, must retire backwards (in a straight line) from where the touch was effected, making every effort to remain out of play to the 8 metres defensive line to be onside at the next touch. Should a player in possession effect a touch on an offside defender who is making every effort to retire and remains out of play, the touch is to count. If the player in possession is the dummy half, a change of possession results.

## **10. OBSTRUCTION**

Attacking Obstruction : Attacking players must not use their own team players or the referees to obstruct a defending player from making a touch. If an infringement occurs, then a penalty is awarded to the defending team at the mark where the infringement has occurred. If a referee obstructs play without disadvantaging any player, then play should continue uninterrupted. However, if any player becomes disadvantaged, then play should be stopped

and recommenced with a rollball where the obstruction occurred, without any addition to the touch count.

**Defending Obstruction :** Defending players must not obstruct attacking players from supporting a player in possession. If an infringement occurs, a penalty is awarded to the attacking team at the position of the infringement provided the stoppage is not to the disadvantage of the attacking team.

**Penalty Try :** A penalty try may be awarded when any member of the defending team or spectators prevents the attacking team from scoring a try by any action which is outside the rules or spirit of the game. The referee must consult with his/her fellow referees controlling the game and have no doubt that a try would have been scored.

## **11. DISCIPLINE**

**Referee :** The referees' decisions are made based on knowledge of the game rules and they retain the final decision in all matters. The referee has authority over players, coaches, officials and spectators of both teams within 10 metres around the field where the game is being played. Referees must also adjudicate on matters that are outside the spirit of the game by means of cautions, penalties or dismissals. The spirit of the game refers to, but is not

bound by: swearing, sledging, abusing officials or any other action which brings disrepute to the game.

Team Captain : The team captain holds the responsibility for his/her players, team officials' and spectators' behaviour. A captain may seek interpretations of rulings from the referee, as long as they are brief, respectful and does not delay play. Captains must keep in mind that this is a courtesy extended to them by the referees and not a right.

Send Off A] : Send Off – No Replacement – A player who has previously been sent to the Sin Bin and continues to infringe the rules of the game, **or** a player who commits an act which is dangerous or grossly infringes the rules, will be sent off for the remainder of the game. The player receives an automatic 2 week suspension from all matches governed by any Affiliated National Touch Rugby Association. Referees must submit a send off report as soon as possible after the game in accordance with local Affiliates' requirements.

Sin Bin B] : This is a player who infringes the rules eg. phantom touch, hard touches, abuse of a referee or another player. The player NO longer stands at the end of the field. He/ she must stand at their tryline witches hat 5 metres away from the hat. If there is a common sideline, then the player must stand at the opposite tryline witches hat. This takes the Sin Binned player totally out of the game, they cannot move from this area. This player is still counted for the team numbers on the field.

Sub Off C]– Replacement Allowed – **After a player has been Sin Binned only.** If the player still infringes the rules, a referee can suggest to a team captain that they can replace the player(s) for the remainder of the game . The team may then continue with a full complement of players. If the captain declines this offer, then the player will be sent off in accordance with rule A] above. Affiliates may amend this rule interpretation to include sending the “subbed” player for 2 weeks automatic suspension.

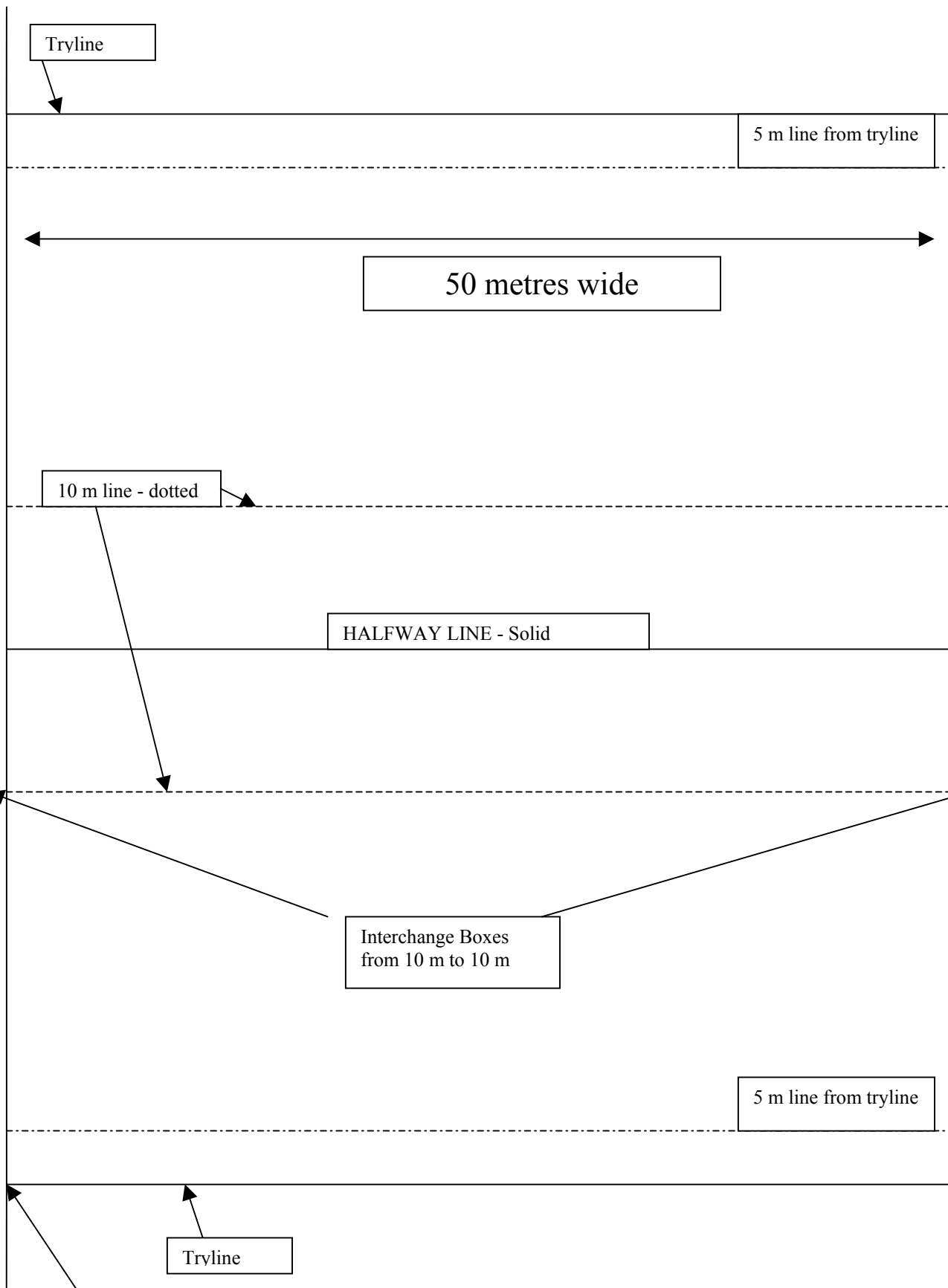
A player can still be sent off in any game if the incident is warranted, but can't be replaced.

Sudden Death : At the end of a drawn game, referees must toss the coin again. Teams will take the field with 3 players only, they may interchange these players anytime while the sudden death is being played. Each team has the benefit of one set of 6 touches each. In the mixed division, player composition is 2 men and 1 woman to take the field.

This rule may be varied as appropriate, by Affiliates at local level as deemed by the relevant affiliate's committee.

Blood Bin Policy : Any player who has an open wound, will be directed by the referee immediately to be replaced. The wound is to be completely covered and if playing shirt has blood on it, **MUST** be replaced with a clean shirt.

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Sin Bin (at either end of field) - 5 metres away from corner marker (either corner at referees'