

IRB DIRECTIVES – Season 09–10 Laws 10.1 (b), Law 10.1 (c), 15 and 16

Guidance to Society Training Officers

We suggest you adopt the following approach with these materials

1. Download the Clips on Obstruction and Hands in the Ruck. The DVDs can be accessed through an IRB portal at the following address and using the password indicated. Please follow the link:

<https://portal.irb.com/matchofficials>

User: matchofficials@irbportal

Password: N22DeLTV (Note: the password is case sensitive).

2. Acquaint yourself with the clips and the information on the second sheet
3. Copy the second sheet in preparation for a Society meeting
4. Distribute the second sheet at the meeting before showing the clips. This will give the delegates a context in which to view the clips.
5. Show the Obstruction clips before the Hands in the Ruck clips and use the guides below

Obstruction Clips – these are reasonably straightforward and, we would suggest, not all that common at our level. NB We need to ensure the player goes up and down safely before we worry if obstruction has happened

No.	Teams	Comments
1	Blue v Red	Subtle obstruction by Blue lifters. (Does this happen at Society level often?)
2	Gold v Blue	Clear obstruction by Gold lifter at back of lineout
3	Black v Green	Unsubtle obstruction by Green
4	Blue v White	Obstruction by Blue lifter. Similar to Clip 1.
5	Blue v Green	Green player stepping across the gap at lineout top obstruct in subsequent maul
6	White v Blue	Obstruction by White – less obvious than Clip 5
7	Green v Black	Obstruction by Green 4 at driving maul
8	Blue v Red	Obstruction by Blue at driving maul

Hands in the Ruck clips – these are more problematic. Make sure the delegates focus on the main issue which is the timing of the hands in the ruck not body positions. We have to accept that the players we referee will not have the skills or strength to accomplish some of the play shown in the clips

No.	Teams	Comments
1	Blue v White	Correct Decision – white player steals the ball. Hands on before ruck forms
2	Black v White	Correct Decision – white player steals the ball. Good clear example.
3	Red v Blue	Correct Decision – red player steals the ball. Hands on before ruck forms
4	Green v Black	Correct Decision – Green player steals the ball. Hands on before ruck forms. (Not entirely sure Green could support his weight on his arms. Better if he had gone for the ball with his hands rather than putting elbows on the ground?)
5	White v Black	Correct Decision – white player steals the ball. Hands on before ruck forms
6	Black v Gold	Correct Decision – gold player steals the ball. Hands on before ruck forms
7	Green v Gold	Correct Decision – gold player steals the ball. Hands on before ruck forms. Good example
8	Red v Blue	No longer a Penalty. Referee blows too early and does not allow a competition
9	Blue v Red	Ditto – remember the priorities (The game on TV is not the same as ours?)
10	Blue v Red	Ditto – consider the priorities, man on his feet is king. (Ditto – game on TV reminder?)

- The Scenarios in the guidance have been compressed so that it occupies 1 page. If you wish to rearrange with pica dots etc then please do so.
- So the message from the IRB is give the legal player on his feet the chance to compete for the ball.
- Don't call Ruck too early or when there isn't one!
- {NB Remember the IRB Directive re Dangerous Tackling from last season}

1. Context

RFU Guidance

- *Bear in mind that these Directives are not huge changes but refinements which will have a varying impact, dependent upon the level of the match. Remember that the needs of the game at Society Level are not those of the game on TV. The interpretation of the Laws is, and always has been, dependent upon the skills, fitness and ambitions of the players.*
- *As a Match Official (of any type) you will need to make judgements on what is best for the match in front of you. You are strongly advised not come with a whole set of pre-conceived ideas on how you will view these directives.*
- *As with the ELVs of last year, some referees made the understandable mistake of concentrating so much on them that they forgot to referee the rest of the Laws. Keep these directives at the back of your head not the front.*

2. IRB Directives on Law 10

(b) Running in front of a ball carrier. A player must not intentionally move or stand in front of a team-mate carrying the ball thereby preventing opponents from tackling the current ball carrier or the opportunity to tackle potential ball carriers when they gain possession. **Penalty:** Penalty Kick

(c) Blocking the tackler. A player must not intentionally move or stand in a position that prevents an opponent from tackling a ball carrier. **Penalty:** Penalty Kick

RFU Guidance

- *At Society level, the main area of concern is likely to be at the lineout so when a referee briefs the front rows s/he should remind the props “when you lift the jumper make sure you have not moved into the gap when you bring him down – don’t block”. Keep it low key and put the responsibility where it belongs. At the top end of the game a referee might be forced to penalise right away whereas at lower levels the referee may have the opportunity at the first infraction to remind the props of their responsibilities without the application of a Penalty Kick. At Society level perhaps award a scrum to opposition for accidental offside*
- *Referee the game in front of you, not the game you watched on TV or read about in a training manual*

3. IRB Directives on Laws 15 and 16

Providing a player from either side on their feet after a tackle comply with all aspects of Law 15 and have their hands on the ball prior to contact with an opposition player on his feet, that player may continue with possession of the ball.

Any other players joining the player with his/her hands on the ball must not handle the ball in accordance with Law 16.4 (b). If the ball is not in possession of any player after a tackle and a ruck is formed players may not use their hands in accordance with Law 16.4 (b).

RFU Guidance

Our priorities remain 1. The Tackler 2. The Ball Carrier 3. Arriving Players. None of the above has changed. The Directive says - if a player on his feet has his hands on the ball at a tackle and players from either side bind around him then he does not have to release the ball.

*Scenario A – Blue Ball carrier is tackled by Red – both comply with Law. Red 7 has hands on the ball but has not secured it (i.e. has not lifted it off the ground) → no ruck, still a Tackle. Blue 7 enters tackle zone legally, “through the gate”^{**} and 1) dives on the ball → PK Red (not a fair contest); 2) makes no attempt to bind on to Red 7 when he makes contact → PK Red (unsafe); or 3) binds on to Red 7 → Ruck (Referee can call “Ruck” if s/he wishes. “Hands Off” would appear to be inappropriate)*

*Scenario B – Blue Ball carrier is tackled by Red – both comply with Law. Red 7 has hands on ball and has secured it (i.e. has lifted it off the ground) no ruck or maul formed. Blue 7 enters tackle zone legally, “through the gate”^{**} and 1) makes no attempt to bind on to Red 7 when he makes contact → PK Red (unsafe) or 2) binds on to Red 7 → No Ruck or Maul. (Referee should not call “Ruck” or “Hands Off”)*

(- we must be vigilant over side entry by both sides to allow a fair contest)*

General Points

- *If the player contesting the ball drops it (not forward) when other players have bound on to him then he cannot have a “second go” and calling “Ruck” or “Hands off” would be appropriate.*
- *We must be vigilant with arriving players at the tackle area when the ball is being contested as described above to ensure that they stay on their feet, enter via the “gate” so that we have a safe, fair contest as mentioned above.*
- *As with the ELVs of last year, we all may have to wait a few weeks of the season to see how the players at our level respond to the directives*

Key Messages

1. *Don’t over complicate things – work with the players not against them.*
2. *Priorities remain same Tackler → Ball Carrier → Arriving Players*
3. *Accurately identify (i.e. know the responsibilities and rights of) the tackler, tackled & arriving players)*
4. *Reward players on feet*
5. *Referee’s arrival is key – fitness and angles*