

**I.T.R.A.<sup>®</sup>**



**[www.tagrugby.ie](http://www.tagrugby.ie)**

**OFFICIAL LAWS BOOK  
2019**

## **PLAY TAG**

- **Tag Social Leagues**
- **Tag Premiership**
- **Tag Beach Series**
- **Pig 'n' Porter Tag Festival, Limerick**
- **Tag Championships**

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# SPIRIT OF TAG

**ZERO TOLERANCE** for clumsy, dangerous contact during tag play.

**ZERO TOLERANCE** for foul language towards referee or fellow players (yellow card)

**TAG HANDSHAKES** – introduce yourself and shake hands with both captains prior to the game. Encourage both teams to line up and shake hands after game with all of opposition players.

## **ITRA Referee Reminders:**

“Run @ Spaces, Not faces!”

### **Referees should:**

- 1) Arrive at least 30min before scheduled kick off time.
- 2) Check in with Venue Manager (VM) on arrival at venue
- 3) Collect your match score cards, rugby ball, 2 sets of tags. Leave equipment on pitch for next referee/match unless you are last round.
- 4) Ensure you have your official referee shirt, whistle, red and yellow cards, watch, pencil and pen.
- 5) Always fully warm-up and stretch before game.
- 6) If you are refereeing in the first round you should be there in plenty of time to mark-out your pitch.
- 7) 5 minutes before the hooter sounds (3 short blasts), call both teams on to pitch, introduce yourself and check you have the correct teams on the correct pitch, give one set of tags to each team and do toss with captains (Paper-Rock-Scissors). Count “1”, “2”, “3” and players open their hand, keep going until there is a winner (paper beats rock, rock beats scissors, scissors beats paper), The winning captain gets choice of both which direction they will play in the first half and which team will kick off. This is reversed for the second half.
- 8) Safety. Inform both teams that NO jewelry can be worn (watches, rings, bracelets). Shirts must be tucked inside shorts. Prescription sports goggles are allowed (No spectacles/shades). Baseball caps are permitted

but must be worn backwards, with peak against the neck. Soft floppy peaked caps & bucket hats are also permitted. Only official match shorts are allowed.

- 9) Start on hooter (single long blast) and finish at next stoppage after hooter sounds to end 1st half or 2nd half.
- 10) Remember to publicly call out scores to both teams after each try. Take time to correctly mark in scores to avoid errors. Do NOT let teams pressurize you as the referee.
- 11) At the final whistle, call out match score and which team is the winner. Both team captains MUST sign score card
- 12) Make sure 2 full sets of tags and ball are there for next game.
- 13) Do not leave venue without handing back your score cards to VM.
- 14) If you are refereeing last round, the winning tag team collects the cones for the referee.

### **Refereeing Tips:**

1. No Contact. Run @ spaces, not faces!
2. Remember, you are the person in charge of the game. Make your decision & stick to it.
3. Keep up with play, if you fall behind you will not be in a position to make the right call.
4. Call "Tag 1", "Tag 2" etc. Loud whistle blast for penalties.
5. Communication: Talk to teams, inform them of your decisions, be clear about why you are making the call. Lack of communication leads to player frustration.
6. Finally, never abandon your match. If you feel the players are out of control and you have done all you can, stop the match, call a timeout and immediately call over the VM to help sort out situation. That is what they are there for. In all cases if you are unsure, always refer to your VM.

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## 1. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**ADVANTAGE** - Is to allow play to proceed to the advantage of the team which has not committed an offence or infringement.

**ARM** - (Re Knock-On) is defined where the arm joins the shoulder at the arm-pit.

**ATTACKER** - Is a member of the attacking team.

**ATTACKING TEAM** - Is the team who has possession of the ball.

**BALL CARRIER** - Is a member of the attacking team who has possession of the ball.

**BALL PLAYER** - Is the member of the attacking team who is imparting motion to the ball at the play-the-ball area with his/her foot.

**BAULK** – The dummy-half pretends to pick up the ball.

**BONUS BOX** - This is a box marked out 5m wide in the middle of the try line and 3m deep. For Social Tag, only female players can score in the bonus box to receive an additional 1 point (therefore getting 4 points for a female bonus box try). A try is awarded when the ball is placed directly on / partly over the try line and bonus box lines. A player can access the bonus box from the front, side or back line to score a try, as there is no dead ball line.

**CHANGEOVER** - Is the surrendering of the ball to the opposing side.

**CLOSE THE GAP** – When two defenders move towards each other and close the path of the ball carrier.

**CONTACT** – The touching or collision of bodies whether deliberate or accidental.

**DEFENDER** - Is a member of the defending team.

**DEFENDING TEAM** - Is the team without possession of the ball.

**DEFENSIVE LINE** - Is a line of defending players.

**DIVE** - A dynamic movement head first through the air where both feet leave the ground.

**DROP KICK** - The ball is released from the hands and is kicked as it rebounds off the ground.

**DUMMY-HALF** - Is the attacking player who takes up position immediately behind the ball player during the play-the-ball.

**FIELD-OF-PLAY** - The area within the touchline and try line.

**FORWARD PASS** - Passing the ball forward towards opponents try line.

**GROUNDING THE BALL** - Placing the ball with downward pressure on or over the opponent's try line and bonus box lines with hand, hands, wrist or forearm.



**IN POSSESSION** - A player has control of the ball with their hands or arm.

**IRREGULARLY AFFECTED** - A team may be disadvantaged by play being irregularly affected, e.g. ball hitting a referee and bouncing back to kicking team.

**JUMP** - To spring with two feet off the ground in a vertical direction and landing on your feet.

**KICK** - Deliberately striking the ball with the leg from below the knee to the toe. This action does not include blocking or trapping the ball with the foot or leg.

**KICKING TEAM** - Is the team which kicks the ball.

**KICK-OFF POINT** - Is the position at the centre of the halfway line.

**KICK TO WASTE TIME** - Is a kick that is deliberately kicked out over the sideline or try line to waste time.

**KNOCK-ON** - Propel the ball forward with hand or arm towards opponent's try line.

**KNOCK-BACK** - Propel the ball towards own try line with hand or arm.

**LATE TAG** - Is when a tag is taken off the ball carrier after they have passed or kicked the ball.

**LOOSE BALL** - When the ball is on the ground in open play, e.g. from a knock-on, pass back, etc, any player may dive/fall on the ball to gain possession once it is safe to do so. If an opponent is within tagging distance the referee will call a tag. If no opponent is within tagging distance, the player can get back to his/her feet and play on.

**MARKER** - Is the defending player who stands immediately and directly opposite the ball player during the play-the-ball.

**MERCY RULE** - In the event of one team taking a lead of ten (10) or more points in a match the bonus box and accelerate-her law become null and void for that team (see Law 4.2). Regardless of who scores, if the lead remains ten (10) points or more the team trailing will restart play with a tap kick from the half way line (after the referees whistle and signal).

**MISLEADING AND DECEPTIVE CONDUCT** - When a defending player calls for the ball to deceive the attacker into passing the ball to them.

**OBSTRUCTION** - Is the act of preventing an opponent from tagging the attacking player in possession.

**OFF-SIDE** - A defending player not back the required distance or an attacking player in front of the player in possession.

**OFF-SIDE TAG** - Is when player in an offside position removes one or more tags from an attacking player.



**PASS** - Is to throw the ball in a sideways or backwards direction from one player to another.

**PLAY ON** – Continue play

**PENALISE** - Is to award a penalty against an offending player.

**PENALTY TRY** - A try awarded by the referee when in their opinion a try would have been scored subject to an infringement or foul play by an opponent.

**PHANTOM TAG** – Is when a defender calls they have made a tag but have missed it, e.g. “yes” call.

**PLACE KICK** - Is to kick the ball after it has been placed on the ground and released from the hands.

**PLAYING AT THE BALL** - Any deliberate attempt to gain possession or touch the ball.

**PLAY-THE-BALL** - When the ball player uses the sole of the foot to propel/ roll the ball behind him/her.

**PLAYING AREA** – Includes the field of play and the area restricted to spectators by any means such as a fence, rope or line.

**PRE TAG** – Is when a tag is taken off a player before they receive the ball.

**SIMULTANEOUS TAG** – A player is tagged at the same time as they kick or pass the ball (“Play-On”).

**SLEDGING** - A verbal insult directed at a player, official or spectator, includes references to racial slurs and sexist comments.

**SURRENDER** - Is when the ball carrier deliberately gives up and does not attempt to attack during the play, e.g. when the ball carrier turns their hip towards the defender or stands in a stationary position and swivels their hips offering up their tags..

**TAG** – The removal of the tag from the ball carrier's shorts/tights.

**TAGGING DISTANCE** - When a defender is deemed to be close enough (arm's reach) to an attacker to be able to remove their tag, (referee's discretion).

**TAP KICK** – A deliberate touch of the ball with the foot. The ball can be either on the ground or in the hand. The ball should not leave the hand.

**VOLUNTARY TAG** - Is when an attacking player either plays the ball with both tags attached or deliberately removes one or both of his/her own tags.

**ZERO TAG** – Is when the opposition picks up the ball from a knock-on or forward pass and plays on. The first tag is counted as a zero tag.





## **2. PLAYING THE GAME**

- 2.1. The objective of the game is to ground the ball over the opponent's try line to score tries. The player in possession of the ball may run, kick or pass the ball attempting to get further downfield and cross the opponent's try line. It is the objective of the team without the ball to prevent this by removing a "tag" from the ball carrier.
- 2.2. The attacking team has six "plays" or "tags" to place the ball on or over the defending team's try line. After six "tags" a changeover occurs and the defending team then becomes the attacking team.
- 2.3. The captains of the two teams shall toss for choice of ends. The captain winning the toss has both the choice of which direction to run and which team will use a place kick from the centre of the field to start the game.
- 2.4. The only time a kicking team player may dive at the ball from a general play kick is to score a try. If the player re-gathers the ball before it touches the ground or brings the ball down on or over the try line with downward pressure a try will be awarded.
- 2.5. Once play has started an attacking player who is on-side can run with the ball, kick it in any direction and throw or knock it in any direction other than towards his opponent's try line.
- 2.6. A player who during play is holding the ball (ball carrier) may be tagged by an opposing player (defending player) or players in order to prevent him/her from running with the ball, kicking or passing the ball to his/her team mates.
- 2.7. A player not in possession of the ball, either a defender or attacker cannot be tagged or obstructed during the game.
- 2.8. Tag is a non-tackling/soft-contact game. Accidental contact may occur but contact should be avoided.



### **3. PLAYER'S AND PLAYING EQUIPMENT**

- 3.1. Each social team is permitted a match day squad of up to fourteen (14) players.
- 3.2. There can be a maximum of seven (7) players per team on the field at any one time. Any number of replacements per team is allowed during the course of the game with unlimited interchange.
- 3.3. The game shall be played by two (2) teams each consisting of at least five (5) players per side. In the case of mixed social competitions, the maximum number of male players on the field at anytime is four (4).
- 3.4. There will be no stoppage of play during interchange of players. The player must leave the field of play before the replacement can enter the field except when there is a stoppage of play, e.g. try or injury.
- 3.5. If a player is bleeding, the referee shall direct this player to leave the field and seek medical attention before rejoining the game.
- 3.6. If a player shows any signs of concussion the referee will ask for the player to be removed from the pitch and to take no further part in the match. It is the team's responsibility to monitor the player and ensure the player's after match care.
- 3.7. Players shall not wear anything that might prove dangerous to other players. Player's normal clothing shall consist of a shirt of distinctive colours and/or patterns, a pair of authorised shorts, plastic studded boots (no metal studs) or runners and authorised tags.
- 3.8. Player's shirts or tops must not have pockets or zips or anything the referee considers potentially harmful to other players.
- 3.9. The referee should inspect player's equipment prior to the commencement of the game and if necessary, the referee can prevent a player from participating in the game if he/she considers a player's equipment is dangerous.
- 3.10. If the ball bursts as a player is restarting play, that player will be allowed another kick after the ball has been replaced.
- 3.11. If a player grounds the ball for a try and the ball bursts during this action the try will be allowed.



- 3.12. If the ball bursts during general play, play is stopped, the ball is replaced, a “tag” is counted and play is restarted with a play-the-ball by the attacking team where the ball burst. If the ball bursts on the sixth “tag”, play is restarted with a changeover awarded to the defending team after the ball is replaced at the point where the ball burst.

#### **4. SCORING**

- 4.1. In mixed social tag one (1) point is awarded for a male try, for a female try it is three (3) points.
- 4.2. The referee can award a penalty try if in the referee’s opinion a try would have been scored except for an infringement by an opponent. In mixed social tag one (1) point is awarded for a male penalty try, for a female penalty try it is four (4) points.
- 4.3. **BONUS BOX:** This is a box marked out 5m wide in the middle of the try line and 3m deep. For mixed social teams only female players are permitted to score in the bonus box. A female try will be an additional 1 point, making a total of 4pts. If the **MERCY RULE** is in force, i.e. one team has taken a lead of ten (10) or more points in a match the bonus box becomes null and void to them whilst they remain ten (10) or more points in front.
- 4.4. **FEMALE ACCELERATE-HER LAW:** In social matches, the captain has the option to play the game with four or more female players on the pitch at the same time. In this case the team will be allocated four points for a female try when playing with four females on the pitch, five points when playing with five females, etc., up to seven points if all players on the pitch are female. However the captain is obliged to inform the referee that his/her team wish to utilise the “female accelerate-her” law and how many female players will be on the pitch. If the number of females is reduced by the captain without informing the referee the team will be penalised and the female accelerate-her law will no longer be availed of for the remainder of the match by that team. The ‘accelerate-her’ law may only be deployed at the first stoppage in play after the team gain possession of the ball, .e.g. at a changeover. Similarly, changes to the ‘accelerate-her’ law, i.e.



an increase or reduction in the number of female players on the pitch, may only be requested by the captain to the referee when the team next regain possession of the ball. After scoring a try a team must wait until they next regain possession of the ball before changing the 'accelerate-her' law. The accelerate-her law is suspended during the application of the mercy rule for the leading team. A team can play with four or more females on the pitch and not invoke the accelerate-her law.

- 4.5. The game shall be won by the team scoring the greater number of points. If the score is equal or if both teams fail to score, then the game shall be drawn.
- 4.6. **Extra Time Golden Try Rule:** In mixed social tag in the knock out stages of any ITRA competition if a game is tied at full time an additional period of time (maximum of five minutes) shall be played until one team scores and that team is then declared the winner (golden try). If no team scores within the five minutes of additional time the team that scored the first try in the match shall be deemed the winner. If there was no score in the match play will continue until a try is scored and that team will be deemed the winner. However, if the scores are tied at full time and if a team has had a player sent off (red carded) in the match or has had more players red carded in the match than their opponents, then that team will be deemed to have lost the match. Note this sanction is in addition to any scoring penalties resulting from the red card(s).
- 4.7. A try can be scored from a kick in general play if the ball is re-gathered or controlled before the ball touches the ground on or beyond the try line.
- 4.8. If the ball crosses the try line, then travels outside an imaginary touch-in-goal line, the ball is dead.
- 4.9. A player cannot pass the ball back after crossing the try line nor can he/she run back into the field of play to pass the ball back to another player or to re-cross the try line to score. Decision – penalty 10 meters out directly in line with the infringement.
- 4.10. A player can dive in the air from the field of play whilst running with the ball or chasing a kick to score a try. Should the dive initiate contact or be deemed dangerous by the referee a penalty will be awarded. An attacker cannot deliberately dive over a player in an attempt to score a try.



## **5. DEFENCE RULES**

- 5.1. The progress of the ball carrier can only be halted if a defender removes one or both of the attacker's tags. If both tags are removed by one or more defenders then the point where the first tag was removed will be where the ball is played.
- 5.2. When a tag is removed, the defender must hold it in the air at the point where the tag was made, place it on the ground and may assume a marker position directly in front and no further than one (1) meter from the tagged player or return to the defensive line. The ball carrier must return to the point where the tag was removed and play-the-ball before replacing his/her tag. The marker must remain directly in front of the play-the-ball and cannot lean to one side to give themselves an advantage.
- 5.3. When the ball carriers progress has been halted and they are in the action of playing the ball, the defensive line is set seven (7) meters back from the play-the-ball area and one defender may act as a marker. The 'marker' player is optional.
- 5.4. The marker must stand directly in front and no further than 1 meter from the play-the-ball.
- 5.5. The marker and the defensive line can only move forward when the ball is touched by the dummy-half. If the dummy-half baulks the referee should call "play on". If a team continually baulks the referee may issue a warning and if it continues penalize.
- 5.6. If the marker retreats more than one meter from the play-the-ball before the dummy half touches the ball he/she must retreat straight back to the defensive line before taking any further part in the game
- 5.7. If the attacking side fails to score before the sixth tag has been made, a changeover will be awarded to the defending team at the point where the sixth tag was affected. This team will then become the attacking team and they will now receive six (6) tags to attempt to score a try.
- 5.8. A player may defend with one (1) or no tags, however if he/she receives the ball, which has been kicked, dropped or propelled forward, they must immediately play-the-ball at the place of receipt.



## **DEFENDING TEAM INFRINGEMENTS**

NOTE: The referee should consider advantage play prior to penalizing. Penalties may be awarded at the point of the infringement in the following circumstances:-

- 5.9. When a defender deliberately moves into the ball carriers path (without gaining position first) and contact is made, the defender will be judged as initiating this contact.
- 5.10. A defending player, must in the referee's opinion, be attempting to remove a tag and not deliberately impeding the progress of the ball carrier or any attacking player with their body. If an attacking player's progress is impeded, with or without the ball, a penalty may be awarded.
- 5.11. A defender cannot at any time hold onto an attacking player or their uniform. If this occurs and no advantage is gained by the attacking team, a penalty may be awarded.
- 5.12. When a defender calls tag without physically removing the tag, a "Phantom Tag".
- 5.13. When a defending player calls for the ball as a deliberate means to deceive the attacker into passing them the ball
- 5.14. When a defender tags an attacking player and throws the tag more than one (1) meter away from the mark where the tag occurred.
- 5.15. When the marker fails to stand directly in-line with the ball player when the ball is being played.
- 5.16. When the marker interferes with the ball player at the play-the-ball or moves too early.
- 5.17. The marker cannot strike for the ball whilst the ball is being played.
- 5.18. The marker under no circumstance can run around and retrieve the ball from the dummy-half position. This will result in a penalty (safety issue).
- 5.19. If a defending team player excluding the marker is less than seven (7) meters from the play-the-ball when the ball is being played. A penalty may be awarded at the point where the offside player(s) should have been standing in the defensive line.



**If a defender removes an attacker's tag when they are not in possession of the ball, the referee has the following options:-**

- 5.20. If it is just as the attacker has passed the ball, the Referee should call "**Play On, Simultaneous**" no action is taken and the attacker must replace the tag before being able to progress the ball downfield, (simultaneous tag/off-load)
- 5.21. If it is after the attacker has passed the ball, the Referee should call "**Late Tag, Play On**" and allow the attacking team to progress the ball with only one or no tags on. This may result in a player scoring with one or no tags on. This is one case of the "Advantage Rule" being applied.
- 5.22. If it is after the attacker has kicked the ball, the referee should call "**Late Tag, Play On**" and allow the attacking team the opportunity to re-gather the ball. If the referee deems no advantage has been gained by the kicking team (re-gathers ball, late in tag count, etc.) he should penalise the defending team where the ball stops, crosses the touch line or try line or where the opposition takes possession of the ball.
- 5.23. If a defender removes a support players tag before they receive the ball the referee should call "**Pre Tag, Play On**" and allow the advantage play.
- 5.24. If a defender in an off-side position removes an attacking player's tag, the referee should call "**Offside Tag, Play On**" and allow the advantage play.
- 5.25. A player who has been illegally tagged (Laws 5.21, 5.22, 5.23 and 5.24) and still has one remaining tag on can only be stopped by a defender removing the remaining tag. If both tags were illegally removed, the player will be deemed "tagged" when a defender comes within tagging distance.
- 5.26. An illegally tagged player can pass or kick the ball and re-gather the ball in the same play and still continue without their missing tag(s).
- 5.27. If no advantage is gained above the referee should penalise the defender & may consider the use of the sin bin.



## **6. ATTACKING RULES**

- 6.1. When in possession of the ball, the ball carrier can attempt to position the ball further downfield by running, kicking or passing the ball to his/her team mates. An attacker can only progress the ball with two tags on unless advantage is being played due to a late, pre or offside tag.
- 6.2. The attacking team shall be allowed six (6) successive tags and then a changeover will occur.
- 6.3. When an attacking player who has possession of the ball (ball carrier) has one or more tags legally removed by a defending player the ball carrier must return to the point where the first tag was removed and play-the-ball without delay.
- 6.4. Another attacking team player will take up a position directly behind the ball player and assume the dummy-half position. The play-the-ball is initiated when the ball player places the ball under one of his/her feet and heels it backwards with the foot to the dummy-half, who then initiates the next play by passing, kicking or running the ball. The ball is deemed live when the ball touches (hand or foot) or is played at by the dummy half. After playing the ball, the ball player should replace his/her tag on their shorts before participating in the attack again. (NOTE: If the attacking team take a play-the-ball close to their try line and the ball crosses the team's try line from the heel back it is NOT dead, i.e. the dummy half may pick up the ball and play on.)
- 6.5. If there is no marker the ball player may replace his/her tag, place the ball on the ground, release the hands from the ball and tap the ball with the foot and continue play. If he/she is missing a tag they may only pass or kick the ball taking no more than one (1) step.
- 6.6. If the attacking side is tagged a sixth (6th) time, the attacking player places the ball on the ground and a changeover will be awarded to the defending team.
- 6.7. If an attacking player gathers the ball in open play, e.g. from a pass or kick, and has only one (1) tag on, the referee will call an additional tag and a roll will occur from that position. (NOTE: Exception to this law is if the player has been illegally tagged, Laws 5.21 to 5.24, and called by the referee), in which case they can play on.





- 6.8. If the ball carrier falls to the ground, or a player dives/falls on a loose ball, and a defender is within tagging distance, a tag will be deemed to be effected. This applies to the ball carrier when crossing for a try, if any part of the body (other than the feet) of the ball carrier touches the ground before the try line, and before the ball is placed on or over the try line, then a try cannot be awarded if a defender is close enough to effect a tag. The ball carrier will be asked to play-the-ball no more than one (1) meter out from the try line and the tag count will continue. If this occurs on the last tag, a changeover will be awarded to the defending team.

**The ball carrier can drop to the ground after they have crossed the try line to score a try even with defenders within tagging distance.**

- 6.9. An attacking player may receive a pass behind their own try line or may run behind their own try line when in possession of the ball. If an attacking player is tagged behind their own try line or the ball is dropped backwards and hits the ground over their own try line, play will restart with a drop kick from the centre of the try line.
- 6.10. The dummy-half can pass or kick the ball with only one or less tags on as long as they take no more than one step. If he/she should take more than one step, they will be called back to the mark and the next tag will be counted.
- 6.11. Simultaneous tag/ball off load situations will usually result in a, **“Play-on Simultaneous”** call from the referee and since Tag is predominantly an attacking game, the benefit of the doubt will be given to the attacking team. If the ball off-load is deemed to have been executed after the “tag”, the tagged player must return to the mark and play-the-ball where the tag occurred without penalty.
- 6.12. If the ball carrier off-loads the ball as their tag(s) are removed and the referee calls **“Play-on Simultaneous”**, they must replace the tag(s) before being able to further the ball’s progress. If this player fails to replace the tags and receives the ball, play is stopped and a tag is counted
- 6.13. If the ball carrier comes into contact with the referee whilst trying to evade a “tag”, a tag will be counted.



- 6.14. If an attacking player receives the ball with his/her shirt out and a defender is within tagging distance the referee will call a **"Tag"**. Repeated shirt out infringements may result in a warning from the referee subsequently and a penalty.
- 6.15. A player cannot touch his/her own tag whilst in possession of the ball. If they do the referee will call a **"Tag"**.
- 6.16. If the ball goes over the try line from an attacking team kick and then crosses the plane of the imaginary side line play the ball is deemed dead and play will restart with a tap kick to the other team 10m out centre field. The first tag made is "Tag 0".
- 6.17. If an attacking player knocks on over the try line whilst scoring a try, play will restart with a tap kick 10m out centre field to the other team. The first tag made is "Tag 1".
- 6.18. When a knock on or forward pass occurs the referee should consider advantage play. See Laws section 8. below.
- 6.19. If an attacking player knocks on within 10m of the try line a change-over will occur in line with the knock on 10m out from the try line. If within 10m of the touch line, move in 10m.
- 6.20. A ball bouncing off the body or head is not a knock on. The referee will call play on. (A knock-on is when the ball is propelled forward with hand or arm towards opponents try line.)
- 6.21. If the ball carrier is "tagged" over the try line prior to placing the ball down for a try, he/she shall be asked to play-the-ball five (5) meters out from the try line and the "tag" count will continue.

### **ATTACKING TEAM CHANGEOVERS**

- 6.22. If the ball comes into contact with the referee after being kicked or passed and play is irregularly affected, a changeover will be awarded to the defending team at the point where the contact occurred.
- 6.23. If any attacking player is "tagged" over the try line prior to placing the ball down for a try and it is the last tag, a changeover will be awarded to the defending team five (5) meters out from the try line.



- 6.24. When the ball carrier accidentally or deliberately crosses the touchline before their tag is removed, a changeover will be awarded to the defending team ten (10) meters in from where the ball carrier crossed the touchline.
- 6.25. When the ball player accidentally steps over the touchline whilst playing the ball, a changeover will be awarded to the defending team ten (10) meters in from where the ball player stepped over the touchline.
- 6.26. If the ball player whilst in the action of playing the ball loses control of the ball and drops the ball on the ground as opposed to playing the ball, a changeover will be awarded to the defending team at the point where the ball player lost control of the ball
- 6.27. **THE THREE SECOND RULE.** If the ball player delays the play the ball or if there is no dummy-half or if the dummy-half has not picked up the ball, the referee can start a three second count. If the referee reaches the third count a changeover will be awarded (referee will determine when the count starts). At no time can the marker move during the three seconds to pick up the ball. If three seconds expires, the referee will award a changeover. If the marker or the defensive line move forward before the referee completes the three second count they will be deemed to be offside.

## **ATTACKING TEAM INFRINGEMENTS**

**The referee may award a penalty where the infringement occurred in the following circumstances:-**

- 6.28. The ball carrier must not attempt to bump or fend off a defender in their attempts to remove a tag or whilst chasing the ball. The ball carrier can in no way protect his/her tag with their hands, head, elbows, ball, etc.
- 6.29. The ball carrier must not jump (with two feet directly off the ground) to avoid being tagged, however they may spin/swivel to avoid being tagged as long as they do not initiate contact. Similarly a player may not dip to lower the height of his/her tags. A player may jump to receive a ball from a kick or pass and play on.



- 6.30. The ball carrier will be penalised if he/she bends their body forward to prevent being tagged.
- 6.31. In changing direction on the run the ball carrier steps into a defender endeavoring to make a tag. Onus is on the ball carrier to avoid contact.
- 6.32. When an attacking player prevents a defending player from executing a tag by running behind his team mate(s) causing an obstruction.
- 6.33. When the ball carrier executes a voluntary tag by deliberately playing the ball with both tags intact.
- 6.34. When the ball carrier deliberately removes his/her own tag.
- 6.35. When the ball player interferes with the marker at the play-the-ball.
- 6.36. When the ball is deliberately passed in a forward direction.
- 6.37. When the ball carrier gives up and does not attempt to attack during the play, e.g. when the ball carrier turns their hip towards the defender or stands in a stationary position and swivels their hips offering up their tags. (surrender rule/voluntary tag)
- 6.38. If the play the ball is deliberately delayed the referee will initiate the three second count.
- 6.39. When an attacking player is in front of the play the ball they cannot get involved in the next play. If they do the penalty is awarded where they became involved.
- 6.40. When a player baulks in picking up the ball in the dummy-half position this is deceptive behavior and not in the true spirit of the game.



## 7. KICKING RULES

### KICK-OFF RULES

- 7.1. The team wins the toss chooses both which direction to run and which team will kick-off. This is reversed for the second half.
- 7.2. The kick-off in Mixed Social tag is taken by any female player. It is a place kick from the centre of the halfway line. No kicking tee can be used.
- 7.3. When a try is scored the team that scored the try will kick-off to the non-scoring team to restart play. The restart can only be taken once the referee is ready and has whistled and signaled to restart the game.
- 7.4. **Mercy Rule:** In the event of one team taking a lead of ten (10) or more points in a match; the 'Mercy Rule' will apply. Regardless of who scores if the lead remains ten (10) points or more the team trailing will restart play with a tap kick (after the referees whistle and signal).
- 7.5. The ball from the kick-off must travel ten (10) meters before any player of the kicking team may touch it or attempt to play the ball. However, after the kick the receiving team may encroach on the 10m and attempt to gain possession of the ball. If they do not secure the ball it is immediately deemed "in-play". If the attacking team touch the ball before it travels 10m or before the defending team touch the ball they will be penalized.
- 7.6. The ball from the kick-off must bounce within the field of play before going over the touch or try line.
- 7.7. The players of the team kicking off (kicking team) must not cross the halfway line until the ball is kicked.
- 7.8. The team receiving the ball can be no closer than ten (10) meters from the halfway line at the time of the kick-off.
- 7.9. If the ball from the kick-off bounces over the touchline, a changeover will be awarded to the receiving team, ten (10) meters in from the touchline to where the ball crossed the line.
- 7.10. If the ball from the kick-off or drop kick bounces in the field of play and passes the plane of the opposition's try line whether touched or not, play will restart with a dropout from the centre of the try line by the receiving team.



- 7.11. If the ball is caught on the full over the try line, i.e. has not bounced in the field of play, the referee will call “Play On”.
- 7.12. The ball must not be kicked directly at an opponent or the referee.
- 7.13. The referee will deem if a kick has been “played at” or “not played at” by the non-kicking team. If the ball has been deemed “played at” by the opposing team (blocked intentionally) and is re-gathered by the kicking team, the tag count will restart and the first tag will be “Tag 1”. If the kick is deemed “not played” by the referee and the ball is retrieved by the kicking team, the tag count will continue from where it was before the kick.

**All kick-off infringements will result in a penalty being awarded at the centre of the halfway line.**

#### **DROPOUT KICKING RULES**

- 7.14. A dropout is a drop kick taken from the centre of the try line, which can be taken by any player.
- 7.15. The ball from a dropout must bounce within the field of play before going over the touch or try line.
- 7.16. The ball from the dropout must cross the ten (10) meter line from the try line before any player of any team may touch the ball.
- 7.17. The players of the team dropping out must not cross the try line until the ball is kicked.
- 7.18. The team receiving the ball can be no closer than ten (10) meters from the try line at the time of the dropout.
- 7.19. If the ball from the dropout bounces over the touchline a changeover will be awarded to the receiving team ten (10) meters in from the touchline where the ball crossed the line.
- 7.20. If the ball from the dropout bounces over the receiver’s try line whether touched or not, a dropout from the receiver’s try line will be taken by the receiving team. However, if the ball is caught on the full over the try line, the referee will call “Play On”.
- 7.21. If the ball from the dropout goes out on the full over the try line or touch line, i.e. has not bounced in the field of play, the game will restart with a penalty to the receiving team ten (10) meters out from the kickers try line.



**All dropout infringements will result in a penalty ten (10) meters in field from the centre of the try line.**

### **GENERAL PLAY KICKING RULES**

- 7.22. The attacking team may kick the ball on any tag. However, the ball must not travel higher than the referee's shoulders before bouncing.
- 7.23. If a player kicks the ball and is simultaneously tagged and the referee calls "play-on simultaneous" the kicker cannot promote the ball with another kick. If the kicker kicks the ball a second time a penalty is awarded at the point of the second kick.
- 7.24. Only attacking team players behind the kicker when the ball is kicked are onside. If the attacking players are onside they may chase the ball downfield to retrieve the ball or affect a tag.
- 7.25. If an attacking player is in front of the kicker when the ball is kicked, this player is offside and cannot affect a tag until either the ball receiver has run ten (10) meters in any direction or the kicker runs past the offside player and puts him/her onside. However an offside player cannot be placed onside by the kicker if he/she is already within 10 meters of the receiver.
- 7.26. If the attacking offside player deliberately plays at the ball or affects a tag a penalty should be awarded at that point. (Referee may allow advantage play).
- 7.27. If the ball is kicked and it crosses the receiving team's try line after a receiving team player deliberately played at the ball, a dropout will restart play.
- 7.28. If the ball was touched but not played at deliberately then a changeover will be awarded to the non kicking team ten (10) meters out from the try line where the ball crossed the line.
- 7.29. If an attacking team player or the kicker deliberately impedes the progress of a defending player who is attempting to take possession of the ball after a kick downfield, a penalty will be awarded to the defending team at the point where the defending team player was impeded.
- 7.30. A kicking team player cannot dive, slip or fall on the ball (see exception in law 7.31 below). This applies to all kicks whether in general play or restarts



of play A non-kicking player playing at the ball does not nullify this diving rule.

- 7.31. If an attacker kicks in general play and the ball lands in the field of play and then crosses the try line and is grounded by an attacking player in a controlled manner before the ball lands on the ground or is touched by or touches a defender a try will be awarded. In this situation the kicking team player may dive to retrieve the ball in the air and then ground the ball to score a try, as long as it is safe to do so. If a try is not scored then Law 7.32 below applies.
- 7.32. If the ball is kicked and crosses the plane of the non-kicking team's try line and no try is scored (see Law 7.31 above) the defending team will receive a tap kick ten (10) meters out in the centre of the field. However, the defending team will receive seven tags, i.e. the first tag will be counted as tag zero.
- 7.33. If the ball is kicked and played at by the non-kicking team and crosses the plane of the try line a dropout will restart play.
- 7.34. A player cannot kick the ball with only one or no tags on unless they have been pre, late or offside tagged. The exception is a dummy-half or a player taking a penalty tap kick who may kick the ball as long as he/she takes no more than one step.

### **GENERAL PLAY KICKING CHANGEOVERS**

- 7.35. If the ball travels higher than the referee's shoulder before first hitting the ground, a changeover will be awarded to the defending team at the origin of the kick. A referee may consider the advantage rule and play on.
- 7.36. If the ball is kicked and it goes out of the field of play on the full, the non-kicking team (defending team) will receive a changeover at the point where the kick was taken.
- 7.37. If the ball is kicked and it lands in the field of play then rolls out over the touchline, the non-kicking team will receive a changeover ten (10) meters in from where the ball crossed the touchline.
- 7.38. If the ball is kicked and played at by any member of the non-kicking team and the ball rolls over the touchline, the kicking team shall play the ball ten





(10) meters in from where the ball crossed the touchline and the tag count will be restarted.

- 7.39. If the ball is kicked and touches, but not played at by, any member of the non-kicking team and the ball rolls over the touchline, the non-kicking team will receive a changeover ten (10) meters in from where the ball crossed the touchline.
- 7.40. If an attacking player is in front of the kicker when the ball is kicked and the ball accidentally strikes the offside player a changeover will be awarded to the defending team at the point of contact. The referee may allow a defending player an advantage if he/she re-gathers the ball in this situation.
- 7.41. If a kick in general play (or from a set play) touches the referee and play is irregularly affected a changeover at the point of contact will occur.
- 7.42. **(Kick to waste time)** If a kick in general play is deemed by the referee to have been deliberately kicked over the sideline or try line to waste time a five (5) minute sin bin will be given to the player responsible and a penalty awarded to the non-offending side at half way or where the ball was kicked from, whichever is the greatest advantage.
- 7.43. If a kick in general play (or from a set play) hits an opponent or the referee and the referee deems the contact to be careless or deliberate a penalty can be awarded against the kicking team.

## **8. KNOCK-ON AND KNOCK BACK**

- 8.1. If a player propels the ball in a forward direction with their hand or arm and the ball comes into contact with the ground, an opponent or the referee, a knock-on will be ruled. A changeover will be awarded to the non-offending team. The referee may allow the non-offending team to take possession and gain an advantage. If they are tagged it will be a zero (0) tag.
- 8.2. If an attacking team player propels the ball in a backward direction play will continue ("play-on").
- 8.3. If an attacking team knocks-on and no advantage is gained by the defending team, the ball is returned to the point of the original knock-on and the defending team will receive a changeover.
- 8.4. If the attacking team causes the ball to come into contact with the ground



by a knock on, the defending team may immediately kick the ball to gain an advantage. If this team (defending team at the time of knock-on) then retrieves the ball after the kick, "play-on" will be called by the referee and the next "tag" will be counted as a zero (0) tag regardless of field position. If they fail to re-gather the ball, no advantage has been gained by the defending team and the ball will be returned back to the point of the original knock-on and the defending team will receive the changeover.

- 8.5. Advantage is at the referee's discretion but should result in a strategic gain in ground to the non-offending team. If after progressing the ball downfield the non-offending team pass or kick the ball then they have achieved advantage. To avoid doubt even if they do pass or kick the ball and re-gather, the first tag after the knock-on is "Tag 0".
- 8.6. The ball carrier cannot deliberately throw or tap the ball forward past a defender to re-gather.
- 8.7. If the ball hits off any part of the body, bar the arm, and goes forward, this is not a knock on.
- 8.8. If a player uses their arm or arms to block an opponents' kick and the ball goes forward, this is not a knock on.

## **9. PENALTIES**

**Penalties are taken by a tap kick after the referee has verbally and physically indicated the mark.** A tap kick is a deliberate touch of the ball with the foot. The ball can be either on the ground or in the hand (the ball should not leave the hand).

**Note: If a player chooses to use the play the ball action instead of taking the tap kick it is still deemed as a tap kick.**

- 9.1. A penalty shall be awarded against any player who is guilty of misconduct provided that this is not to the disadvantage of the non-offending team. Unless otherwise stated, all penalties are given where the infringement occurs.
- 9.2. If a penalty kick is not taken on the mark designated by the referee, the



referee will stop play & ask the team to take the tap kick again.

- 9.3. Offending team must retire ten (10) metres from the penalty mark.
- 9.4. Further misconduct by the offending team shall allow the referee to advance the mark once only, by ten (10) metres or as near to the try line as possible.
- 9.5. If a kicker is interfered with after kicking the ball or one of his team mates giving chase, the penalty will be awarded where the ball stops or is stopped by an opposing player. If the ball crosses the touchline or try line the penalty is given ten (10) metres in field.
- 9.6. If misconduct occurs on any player as they are chasing a kick and the ball rolls over or lands over the try line on the full, the penalty will be awarded to the non-offending team, either ten (10) metres from the try line in the field of play and opposite to where the ball crossed the try line or at the point where the player was impeded, whichever is the greatest advantage to the non-offending team.

## **10. DISCIPLINE**

- 10.1 All players are under the control of the referee from the time they enter the playing field to the time they leave. In the event of misconduct by a player, the referee shall, at his/her discretion, warn, sin-bin (yellow card) or dismiss (red card) the player.
- 10.2. A warning may be administered to a team as a whole (via the captain) or to an individual player. If a warning is given to a team, each team player is considered to have received an individual warning.
- 10.3. The power to sin-bin (Yellow Card) is at the discretion of the referee. A sin-binned player can take no further part in the match, and cannot be replaced, for the duration of the suspension and shall re-enter the playing field only when permitted to do so by the referee. (P)
- 10.4. A suspended player shall take up a position behind the opposition's try line for the duration of the suspension. A suspended player must give both their tags to the referee who will retain them during the period of the suspension.
- 10.5. The duration of the sin bin shall be five (5) minutes



10.6. The Yellow Card, or sin-bin, may be used for incidents such as the following:

- a) Blatant disregard for the laws
- b) Continued law infringements
- c) Talking back to the referee, displaying dissent or slagging opponents
- d) Repeated late tags and/or pre tags
- e) Repeated off-side
- f) Deliberate or clumsy contact infringements
- g) Professional foul
- h) Deliberate or careless tearing of an opponent's shorts or clothing
- i) Disputing the referee's decision
- j) Unsporting behaviour, i.e. behaviour contrary to the true spirit of the game.

10.7. The referee may dismiss a player (Red Card) for the remainder of the game if the referee deems the offence to be serious enough e.g. fighting, deliberate contact. If a player is dismissed from the field he/she automatically receives a two-week suspension from all ITRA arranged fixtures and may receive additional sanction at the discretion of the ITRA disciplinary committee.

The Red Card may be used for the following incidents:

- a) Striking, or attempting to strike an opponent with any part of the body
- b) Kicking, or attempting to kick an opponent including tripping or attempted trip
- c) Head butting, or attempting to head butt an opponent
- d) Any form of physical intimidation towards the referee
- e) Strong verbal abuse towards a referee or an opponent
- f) Where a referee gives a second yellow card in a single match to the same player.

10.8. A player who receives a red card shall take no further participation in the game nor shall he/she be permitted to take up a position within the playing



area where the referee deems his/her presence is likely to provoke further incidents. The referee may instruct the player to leave the playing area or the grounds if necessary. (P)

- 10.9. In a social fixture if a female player receives a red or yellow card and that team is already playing the minimum number of female players (1 female / 4 males) and cannot replace a female player on the pitch with another female player. Then they forfeit the game.
- 10.10. The referee has the authority to issue a red or yellow card to any team player in the playing area, i.e. including substitutes on the touchline. If a substitute receives a red or yellow card then the team must reduce the number of players on the field accordingly, for 5 minutes if a yellow card, or permanently for a red card. The five point reduction applies for a team who have a player red carded on the touchline (see Law 10.2.)
- 10.11. The referee has the authority to issue a red card up to thirty (30) minutes after the end of a match. Any related incidents occurring after this time shall be reported by the referee to the Venue Manager and the ITRA disciplinary committee who may then apply sanctions to a player or players and/or team or teams.
- 10.12. The team of a player or players issued with a red card during or after a match will be deducted five points for that match for every player who received a red-card. For example if a game ends in a score of 9 points to 5 in favour of the "Red" team but that team had a player sent off with a red card the score will be altered to 4 points to 5 in favour of the "Yellow" team.
- 10.13. In the event of a red card being issued during a knock-out match (i.e. Semi-Final / Final) if the match is tied after normal time, rather than go into "Golden Try" extra time, the team with the most number of red cards will automatically lose the match. If teams have the same number of red cards, "Golden Try" extra time will apply. So avoid red cards, enter into the Spirit of Tag please.
- 10.14. If a referee is assaulted or unduly harassed by any person as a result of a match under his/her control the referee shall submit a report of the incident to the ITRA. If this occurs during a match, the match may be temporarily suspended while the Venue Manager is consulted by the referee. The Venue Manager has the authority to abandon the match in which case



the offending team will forfeit the game. When a match is abandoned as a result of one team's actions a score of ten points to nil will be recorded to the non-offending team unless the score difference is greater at the time of the stoppage in which case that score will prevail. The Venue Manager can have a game stopped while a player/spectator is removed from the venue. In all cases the ITRA reserve the right to take further action including whatever disciplinary action they deem necessary.

- 10.15. If a team fields a suspended player, that team will automatically forfeit the match. The suspended player will then receive additional sanction including a possible ban for the remainder of that year.

## **11. PREMIERSHIP, CHAMPIONSHIP AND SUPER LEAGUE LAWS**

**All the above competitions are played under the International Tag Federation (ITF) World Cup laws. The main differences between these are the above social league laws are as follows:**

- 11.1 There can be a maximum of eight (8) players per team on the field at any one time. Each Premiership / Super League team is permitted a match day squad of up to sixteen (16) players. Any number of replacements per team is allowed during the course of the game with unlimited interchange.
- 11.2 Each squad member shall have a unique number on their playing shirt corresponding to the number on the ITRA Team Registration sheet that night.
- 11.3 One (1) point is awarded for a try. In mixed games, for a female try two (2) points are awarded. A penalty try is two (2) points. In mixed games, a penalty try for female players is three (3) points.
- 11.4 **BONUS BOX:** This is a box marked out 5m wide in the middle of the try line and 3m deep. Every try scored in the bonus box will be an additional 1 point. For mixed teams, a female try will be a total of 3pts. The **MERCY RULE** will also apply; so in the event of one team taking a lead of 10 or more points in a match the bonus box becomes null and void to them whilst they remain 10 or more points in front.



- 11.5 The kick-off is a place kick taken by any player from the centre of the halfway line. No kicking tee can be used.
- 11.6 **FIFTY/TEN METER (50/10) KICKING RULE** – When a ball is kicked either from a kick-off or in general play from within a team's half of the pitch and the ball bounces in the field of play and crosses the touch line within 10m of the opponents' try line, the kicking team will receive a play the ball. The play the ball will be taken 10m in from the touch line and 10m out from the try line.
- 11.7 **DROP-OFF RULE:** During the knock out stage of a tournament, if a match is drawn at full time, then additional time shall be played to determine a winner. The referee shall stop the match at normal time and a new toss will be taken to determine direction and tap off. Both sides will immediately reduce the number of players on the pitch to five (5) with a maximum of three (3) males. The first team to score a try will be deemed the winner subject to the "right-of-reply" See law 11.8 below. During "Drop-Off" all tries are worth one point only, whether scored by a female or a male.
- 11.8 **RIGHT OF REPLY:** If the team that taps off scores a try within the first set of six (6) tags, then their opponents will receive a 'right of reply'. This means their opponents will get a tap off to attempt to score a try on their first 'set of six' (6) tags. The "right-to-reply" can continue until one team does not manage to score a return try straight away and hence that team loses the game. If the team that taps off to restart the additional time does not score a try on their first set of six tags then it is golden try time, i.e. first team to score a try wins.
- 11.9 During this period of additional time no interchange will be allowed. (This can be changed by the tournament organizers).
- 11.10 The Tag playing field is a full International size pitch; 50m wide x 70m in length.



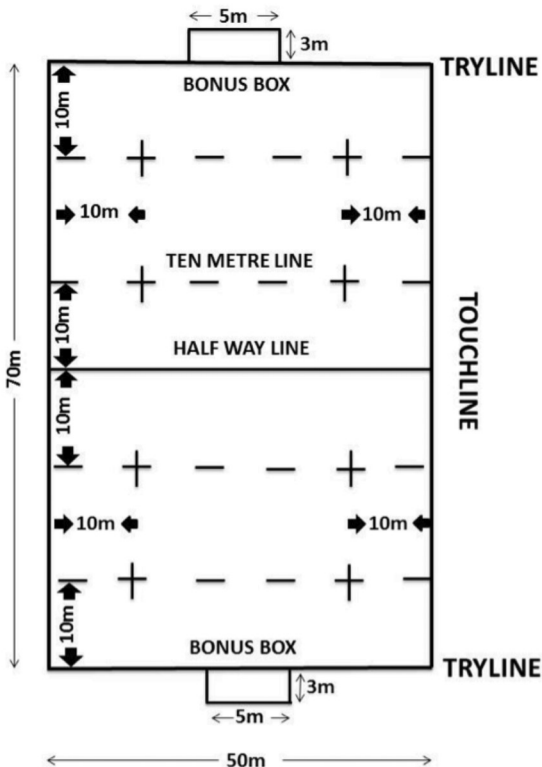
## **12. DUTIES OF A REFEREE**

- 12.1 The referee is responsible for ensuring the laws of the game are adhered to. The referee is the sole judge of fact and law on the field of play.
- 12.2 The referee shall record the score and all tries scored during the match. The timekeeper (normally the Venue Manager) is the person responsible for keeping the time. All matches are synchronized with a siren.
- 12.3 When the siren sounds, it is at the next stoppage of play that the referee will blow the whistle to end the game. If the next or subsequent stoppage in play is a penalty the referee shall allow time for the penalty to be taken and the game continues until the next stoppage. The siren does not end the match.
- 12.4 The referee should inspect players' equipment prior to the commencement of the game and if necessary, the referee can prevent a player from participating in the game if he/she considers a player's equipment is dangerous.
- 12.5 Additional time will not be played at the end of a match to compensate for lost time due to injury or other stoppage.





**13. ITF PLAYING FIELD FOR WORLD CUP**  
(PREMIERSHIP & SUPER LEAGUE pitch measurements)

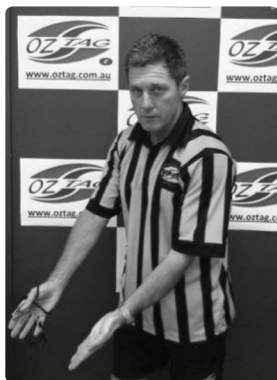




## 14. REFEREE HAND SIGNALS



Kick off - commence game



Knock on



Forward pass - Stage 1



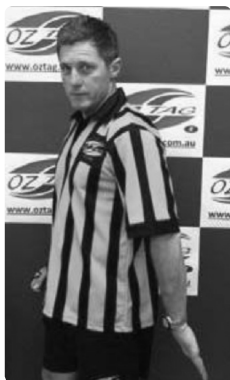
Forward pass - stage 2



Fend – Stage 1



Fend – Stage 2



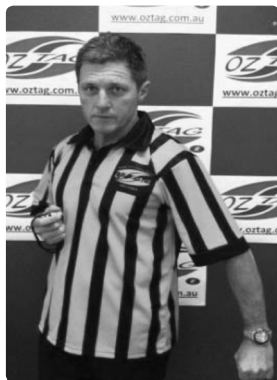
Fend – Stage 3



Change over



Late Tag – Stage 1



Late Tag – Stage 2



Stop Play – Stage 1



Stop Play – Stage 2



Penalty



Offside – Stage 1



Offside – Stage 2



Offside – Stage 3



Contact



6 again – Stage 1



6 again – Stage 1



5th & last



End of game – Stage 1



End of game – Stage 2



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## NOTES



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## NOTES





## **INTERNATIONAL TAG FEDERATION**

The Irish Tag Rugby Association is a full member of the International Tag Federation (ITF) and operates according to official ITF Tag Laws.

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