

Bob Priestley's Interpretation of Rugby Rules

YESTERDAY we dealt with kicks that were to be made with players of the kickers side behind the ball when it was kicked, making them onside and eligible to touch the ball after it was kicked, before an opponent. Today we will deal with kicks that are made while the kicker has players of his side ahead of the ball when it is kicked.

In doing so we deal again with punts, drop and place kicks, and when these kicks are made from behind the line of scrimmage by kicking in the open field with players ahead of the kicker. The matter is important enough to bear repetition so again the statement is made that players of the kicker's side who are ahead of him when he kicks the ball are offside. They can be put onside only when a player of the opposing side touches the ball or by the kicker, or a player of his side who was behind him when he kicked the ball, running up and placing himself ahead of them. This has already been explained in dealing with blocked kicks.

If a player is offside when one of his own side kicks the ball he shall not touch the ball and must allow three yards to the opponent attempting to catch a kicked ball, whether the opponent attempts to catch the ball on the run or while standing still; while it is bouncing; or while he is attempting to pick up a ball that is motionless on the ground, not in possession of a player.

Should this rule be infringed upon and the distance of three yards not be allowed the opponent who is attempting to handle the ball, the side infringing shall be penalized by having the ball scrimmaged by their opponents (the side whose player attempted to handle the ball) fifteen yards in advance of where the offence was committed. (Advance meaning toward the goal of the kicker's side).

Should the offence occur behind the goal line the ball shall be scrimmaged on the ten yard line unless the 15-yard penalty exceeds this

point. If the offence occurs in the field and the distance penalty would bring the scrimmage within ten yards of the penalized team's goal line the ball shall be scrimmaged on the ten yard line by the side not offending, except that if the offence occurs in the field within ten yards of the penalized team's goal line the distance penalty shall then be one-half the distance where the offence occurred and the goal line of the penalized team.

However, if a player when standing still and waiting to catch the ball, suddenly moves in judging the position of the descent of the ball, thus bringing the opponents within the three yards of him, the opponents shall not be penalized, providing they show intent to give the player three yards and do not interfere within that radius.

Also, if a player waiting to pick up a ball which is lying still, feints, in order to draw a tackle, the tackle may be made and no penalty claimed. In this case, if the tackler touches the ball first it is a dead ball and possession goes to the side of the player who made the feint at the point where the ball is dead. If, however, the player who makes the feint, in so doing, touches the ball first, then whoever recovers the ball retains possession of the ball at the spot where it is recovered.

If on a kick from scrimmage, the ball before crossing the line of scrimmage and not having been touched first by an opponent who might be attempting to block the kick, strikes a player of the kicker's side who is offside, the penalty shall be the loss of one down and ten yards. If on the last down, the loss of the ball only.

It might be well to explain here that there are restrictions to penalties when such are to be made within 25 yards of the penalized team's goal line. In such cases the distance penalty shall be not more than one-half the distance between the point where the offence occurred and the said goal line, and in no case shall the ball be brought within the one yard line.