



DETAILED REVIEW OF CHANGES TO PLAYING RULES

# **Detailed Review of Changes** **to the Federation of International Touch** **International *Playing Rules*, 5th Edition**

1 August 2020

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Endorsed August 2020

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## DETAILED REVIEW OF CHANGES TO PLAYING RULES

### Introduction

In November 2019, The Federation of International Touch (FIT) held a conference in Paris and introduced the International *Playing Rules*, 5th Edition. FIT is trialing the *Playing Rules* for two years starting from 2020.

The updated *Playing Rules* were originally commissioned and endorsed by Touch Football Australia.

Touch Singapore (TSG) have adopted the *Playing Rules* for all competitions commencing 1 August 2020.

This 'Detailed Review of Changes' provides a comprehensive review of the main changes between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> edition *Playing Rules*. This review is for guidance purposes only. The reader must refer to the *Playing Rules* or contact TSG Director of Referees to clarify any Rule or interpretation.

The revised *Playing Rules* reflect how Touch Football is played at the elite level. These changes will drive improvement and a more consistent interpretation of the Rules.

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### Terminology

Terminology used throughout the Rules realign the sport of Touch Football with its origin - rugby league. Additionally, the terminology better reflects terminology used amongst our community. *Touchdowns* are now called *Tries*, the *Score Zone* is now the *In-Goal Area*, the *Score Line* is the *Try Line* and a *Period of Time* is now called *Sin Bin*.<sup>i</sup>

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; Definitions and Terminology/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; Definitions and Terminology

### Field Markings

The introduction of a 7 metre zone to replace the current 5 metre zone at either end of the field. Upon any defender entering the 7 metre zone, all players must move forward at reasonable pace.<sup>ii</sup>

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; Definitions and Terminology and Appendix 1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; Rule 2 Figure 1

### Toss

The team winning the toss has the choice of direction their team wishes to run; the choice of Interchange Area and the choice of which team will commence the match with possession.<sup>iii</sup>

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 7.1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 6.1

*This Rule gives the captain that wins the Toss greater choice across key areas of the game.*

### Rollball to occur 7 metres in-field from the Sideline

When the ball or the player carrying the ball makes contact with the Sideline or any ground outside the Field of Play, the restart occurs 7 metres in-field, not 5 metres.<sup>iv</sup>

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 13.6/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; Ruling 11.A

*This Rule aligns with the introduction of the 7 metre Rule to ensure consistency and uniformity throughout the game.*

### Zero Touch count following an intercept or ball touched in-flight by Defender

If a player intercepts the ball, the next Touch is counted as a Zero Touch.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 9.2/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; N/A

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*This Rule provides an extra Advantage for the team gaining possession and rewards their positive play. The Referee must signal zero Touch after the Touch is made.*

If a Pass is thrown forward and an intercept occurs, the Referee should wait to see if an Advantage is taken by the Attacking Team and then decide to play on or award the Penalty. If no Advantage is gained, the Penalty should be awarded. Good Refereeing would play advantage first whenever possible when an infringement occurs

If the ball is intentionally touched in flight by a defending team and regathered by the Attacking Team the next Touch will be counted as a zero Touch. The Referee must signal zero Touch upon the Touch being made.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 12.2/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 12.2

### **Defence in the 7 metre zone – speed to move forward and not dropping early**

When any player from the Defending team enters their teams 7 metre zone, all defenders must move forward at a *Reasonable Pace* until the Touch is imminent or made.

*Reasonable Pace* is deemed as making a positive intent to initiate a Touch. Defenders can no longer take small steps or deliberately slow their forward motion and claim this is *Reasonable Pace*. As a guide *Reasonable Pace* is a fast walk. The Referee is the sole adjudicator of *Reasonable Pace*.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 10.13/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 11.5.2

*This rule is aimed at speeding up the game and creating more attacking opportunities.*

Defenders cannot drop to the *Try Line* when the ball enters the 7 metre zone. Defenders do not need to keep moving forward; however, they cannot drop until the Touch is imminent or made.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 10.14/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 11.5.2

*This Rule has been introduced to prevent players in the defending team from dropping as soon as an attacking player enters the 7 metre zone. This will keep the defenders forward until the Touch is imminent or made. The key is for the Referee to police the moving forward at a Reasonable Pace to ensure the game is not dominated by defence.*

### **Defenders to retire 7 metres**

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Defenders must retire a distance of 7 metres from the Roll ball as opposed to the current 'not less than 5 metre' rule.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 15.1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 9.8

*This Rule aligns with the way the game is refereed. The Referee must maintain a strict 7 meters at all times and particularly near the Try Line. If a player in Possession of the ball is touched and the Roll ball occurs on the 7 metre line, the Referee must ensure all defenders have both feet on or behind the Try Line. Similarly, if a defender is touched and the Rollball occurs 1 metre outside the 7 metre zone, the Referee must ensure all defenders have both feet 1 metre in front of the Try Line. Application of the Rules in accordance with a firm and fixed 7 metres will result in more consistent management of players at and around the Try Line.*

### **Defence in the 7 metre zone – Sin Binning for 3 infringements**

When any defender enters the 7 metre zone, any 3 consecutive infringements that result in penalties by the defending team will result in the last player to infringe being given an Exclusion. That is, they are sent to the *Sin Bin*. The *Sin Binned* player can return to the field when their team regains possession. The *Sin Bin Area* is directly behind the Dead Ball Line.

The previous rule to remove a defender following two infringements for not moving forward or dropping early within the 5 metre zone no longer applies.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 18.8/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; N/A

*This Rule will give Attacking Teams an Advantage if players on the Defending team continually infringe.*

**Note:** The previous Rule to remove a Defender when they were penalised twice in the same possession no longer applies.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; N/A/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 11.7

### **Incorrect restarts**

The Referee must indicate the Mark prior to a Tap being taken.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 18.5/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 15.4

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An incorrect restart, such as tap taken off the Mark or tap taken instead of a Rollball will no longer result in a Change of Possession. The player will be instructed to return to the correct Mark and perform the correct re-start.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 18.1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 15.B

A Tap taken to restart the match can only be taken when all attackers are on-side, at least 4 defenders are on-side or as directed by the Referee. If the attacking does not adhere to these Rules they are advised to return to the Mark and re-take the Tap.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 7.6/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 15.4

If a team delays taking the Penalty tap, a Penalty is awarded to the non-offending team at the point of infringement. The Change of Possession rule no longer applies.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 18.6/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 15F

The Penalty tap must be taken on the Mark. If a team does not take the tap on the Mark, the Referee must advise the player to return to the Mark and re-take the Tap. No infringement occurs for taking a Tap off the Mark.

*This Rule is designed to provide more consistency among Referees when allowing teams to take or not take a quick re-start.*

### **Interchanges during a breakaway**

A team is not permitted to make an Interchange after a break away or taking an intercept. Any player entering the Field of Play from the Interchange during a break away or intercept, regardless of whether a Try is scored or not will be sent to the Sin Bin. The Referee must award a Penalty Try if the Interchange prevented a Try from being scored.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 17.7/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; N/A

### **Rollball**

The player performing the Rollball is required to make a 'genuine attempt' to stand parallel to the Sidelines. Passing one foot over the ball is permitted.

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A player must make a 'genuine attempt' to correct their body position and stand parallel to the Sidelines. If a player is running diagonally, and makes an attempt to stand parallel to the Sidelines, the Referee should allow play to continue.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 13.1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 9.1

### **Actions without Half in position**

If the player who is Half is not within 1 metre of the Rollball, they are not considered the Half. When the Half is not within 1 metre of the Rollball, defenders in an onside position may move forward as soon as the player performing the Rollball releases the ball. The Referee must use pro-active communication to inform teams whether the Half is in position or not. Players may move forward prior to the Referee communicating no Half is in position. The players do this at their own risk and are liable to Penalty/ Advantage if the Referee viewed the Half to be in position.

If the defending player makes contact with the ball, a Change of Possession occurs.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 13.12.1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 9.8

*The key element under this Rule is the 1 metre distance from the Rollball. The Referee is the sole judge on whether a Half is in position. The Rule is in place to improve consistency of whether a player is the Half or moving into a position to become the Half.*

### **Retiring Line of a Defender**

After affecting a Touch, a retreating Defender may choose any direction and may change direction as often as they like, provided they do not interfere or obstruct the Attacking Team when returning to an onside position.

### **Scoring**

An attacking player must now have *control of the ball* prior to placing it on or over the Try Line. The Rules clearly requires the attacking player to have *control of the ball*.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 14.3/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 4.5

*This Rule places the onus on the attacking player to have control of the ball. The ground can no longer be used to bring the ball under control. The Rule aligns with the Drop Ball Rule to ensure consistency is applied throughout the game.*

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### Interfering with the Rollball

If a Defender interferes with the Rollball, either intentionally or unintentionally, a Penalty is awarded to the Attacking Team. The Mark for the Penalty is 10 metres directly forward of the infringement.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 13.7/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 15.B

*The Rule advances the Mark for the Penalty to give maximum Advantage to the non-offending team. The Rule is designed to discourage defenders from slowing the Rollball and Ruck. The Referee should not advance the Mark to a position inside the 7 metre zone.*

### Phantom Touch

A player is penalised and immediately sent to the Sin Bin when calling a Phantom Touch. See paragraph on Sin Bin for the new Sin Bin process.

Referees should show flexibility with this Rule. If a player immediately withdraws a claim for a Touch the Referee may only issue a Penalty. If the player does not immediately withdraw the claim for Touch, the Sin Bin must be used.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 10.2/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; N/A

*The Rule is designed to stamp out Phantom Touches by giving maximum Advantage to the non-offending team.*

### Deliberate Forward Pass

It is now expressly stated that an intentional Pass/ throw/ flick/ knock etc in a forward motion over an opposition player and regaining possession is prohibited. A Penalty is awarded at the point of the infringement.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 11.2/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; N/A

### Intentionally Passing the ball into a Defender

A player from the Attacking Team cannot deliberately Pass the ball into a Defender, who is not interfering with the Pass, in an attempt to be awarded six again. The non-offending team is awarded a Penalty, rather than a Change of Possession.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 12.7/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; N/A

*This Rule seeks to remove a play that is against the spirit of the game.*

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### Rollball off the Mark

When a player does not perform a Rollball on the Mark, a Penalty is awarded and the Mark is where the infringement occurred, not where the Rollball should have been performed.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 13.2/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; Rulings 9.A

### Attacking player obstructing a Defender

It is explicitly stated a player in possession of the ball cannot hold or otherwise impede a defending player in any way.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 16.2/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 10.3

*The Rule sets out to penalize attacking players for impeding a defending player. A common area where a defender is impeded is when a player performing the Rollball holds the defender or when a Half scoops through to the In-Goal and an attacking player impedes a defender.*

### More than 6 players on the field

When a team has more than six players on the field a Penalty is awarded to the non-offending team. The mark for the Penalty is either 7 metres infield on the halfway Line or the position of the ball, whichever gives the greater Advantage.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 5.1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 5.B

*The Rule provides consistency on where the mark is for having more than six players on the field. If the mark is not taken 7 metres infield on the halfway line, the Referee must be proactive and advise the teams that the Mark is where the greater Advantage is.*

### Sin Bin

Any player sent to the Sin Bin (formerly Period of Time) will remain in the Sin Bin for a compulsory 4 completed sets of Possession. The time a player spends off the field will no longer be at the discretion of the Referee.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; Definitions and Terminology/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 17.4.1

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Possession refers to a team having control of the ball and they are entitled to 6 Touches. Any action that causes the Touch Count to re-start will result in a continuation of that Possession. For example, if a defender knocks the ball down or gives away a Penalty, this does not mean Possession is completed, the Possession continues. When a team forfeits the ball by dropping it or completing six Touches, they have completed one set of Possession.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; Definitions and Terminology/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 17.4

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 22.4/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 17.4.1

*This Rule provides greater consistency in its application when assessing infringements.*

The On-field Referee must indicate the commencement and end of the Sin Bin time.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 22.1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 17.4.1

Any player sent to the Sin Bin must return to the Interchange Area prior to returning to the Field of Play.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 22.3/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 17.4.1

*This Rule prevents players returning from the Sin Bin and running directly onto the Field of Play and potentially interfering with the other team. The team that had a player sent to the Sin Bin can allow an alternative player to enter the Field of Play upon the Sin Bin time ending. The Sin Bin player must reach the Interchange Area prior to another player entering the Field of Play.*

### **Forced Interchange**

The Rules specifically state the procedures for a Forced Interchange. The Referee must stop the match, direct the ball be placed on the ground at the Mark of infringement, advise the player the reason for the Forced Interchange, direct that player to the Interchange Area, display the signal and award the Penalty.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 21.1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 17.3

*The Rules provide more clarity around the procedure to Force an Interchange to ensure a consistent process is followed by all Referees.*

### **Drop-off procedure**

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The Drop-off procedure has been simplified to improve consistency across all major tournaments and events. The Drop-off procedure commences with a 2 minute period of extra time with 2 players from both teams removed, creating 4v4 (provided no player(s) were dismissed from the field). The team that did not commence the match with possession, commences the Drop-off.

The team in the lead at the expiry of 2 minutes is declared the Winner. Should neither team be leading at the expiry of 2 minutes, play is paused at the next Touch or Dead Ball and both teams remove a player to create 3v3. The match continues with the first team to score declared the Winner.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 24.1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 4.9

If a player is serving time in the Sin Bin at the end of the match, their team commences the Drop-off with 1 less player.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 24.3/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; N/A

A team cannot have fewer than 3 players on the field. If a player is dismissed from the field leaving 2 players on the field, the non-offending team is declared the Winner.

In mixed division games there must not be more than 2 males on the field during the Drop-off. If a male player is serving time in the Sin Bin or has been Dismissed for the remainder of the match, the offending team will commence the Drop-off with 1 male on the field.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 24.2/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 4.9.11.2

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 24.2.1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 4.9.11.1

### **Coaching from the Dead Ball Line**

The Rules specifically prevents a Team Official from communicating or coaching either verbally or non-verbally, with players from either Team or the Referees. Coaches and Team Officials are not to communicate with Players and Referees when positioned behind the Dead Ball Line. Coaching and communication is only allowed from the Sub Box Area.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 6.2/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 5.5

### **Dead Heat Catch**

The notion of a Defender and an Attacker gaining possession of the ball at the same time no longer exists. The Referee is to make a firm decision on which player gains control of the ball.

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FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; N/A/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 7.7

### **Simultaneous Touch**

The notion of a simultaneous Touch no longer exists. The Referee must make a decision and distinguish between a Pass prior to a Touch or a Pass after a Touch.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; N/A/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 10.10

### **Try Line Markers are deemed part of the Field of Play**

The Try Line markers placed at the junction of the Sideline and Try Line are deemed to be in the Field of Play.

If a Player in Possession of the ball makes contact with a Try Line marker, and provided they do not Touch any part of the Sideline or ground beyond the Side Line, play continues. Additionally, if an attacking player in possession of the ball places the ball on the marker prior to being touched and with no part of their body touching the Side Line or ground beyond the Sideline, a Try is awarded.

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 1.4.1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> N/A

### **Footwear**

The Rule specifically bans Referees from wearing screw in or metal studs. The obligation for players to not wear screw in or metal studs remains in place.<sup>v</sup>

FIT 5<sup>th</sup> edn; 4.6.1/ FIT 4<sup>th</sup> edn; 3.3

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### Acknowledgement

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Queries must be directed to Touch Singapore, Director of Referees at [referees@touchsingapore.net](mailto:referees@touchsingapore.net)

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