

DEFINITIONS

A ruck is a phase of play where one or more players from each team, who are on their feet, in physical contact, close around the ball on the ground. Open play has ended.

Players are rucking when they are in a ruck and using their feet to try to win or keep possession of the ball, without being guilty of foul play.



Ruck

16.1 FORMING A RUCK

- (a) **Where can a ruck take place.** A ruck can take place only in the field of play.
- (b) **How can a ruck form.** Players are on their feet. At least one player must be in physical contact with an opponent. The ball must be on the ground. If the ball is off the ground for any reason, the ruck is not formed.

16.2 JOINING A RUCK

- (a) All players forming, joining or taking part in a ruck must have their heads and shoulders no lower than their hips.
Sanction: Free Kick
- (b) A player joining a ruck must bind on a team-mate or an opponent, using the whole arm. The bind must either precede, or be simultaneous with, contact with any other part of the body of the player joining the ruck.
Sanction: Penalty kick
- (c) Placing a hand on another player in the ruck does not constitute binding.
Sanction: Penalty kick
- (d) All players forming, joining or taking part in a ruck must be on their feet.
Sanction: Penalty kick

16.3 RUCKING

- (a) Players in a ruck must endeavour to stay on their feet.
Sanction: Penalty kick
- (b) A player must not intentionally fall or kneel in a ruck. This is dangerous play.
Sanction: Penalty kick
- (c) A player must not intentionally collapse a ruck. This is dangerous play.
Sanction: Penalty kick

- (d) A player must not jump on top of a ruck.
Sanction: Penalty kick
- (e) Players must have their heads and shoulders no lower than their hips.
Sanction: Free Kick
- (f) A player rucking for the ball must not intentionally ruck players on the ground. A player rucking for the ball must try to step over players on the ground and must not intentionally step on them. A player rucking must do so near the ball.
Sanction: Penalty kick

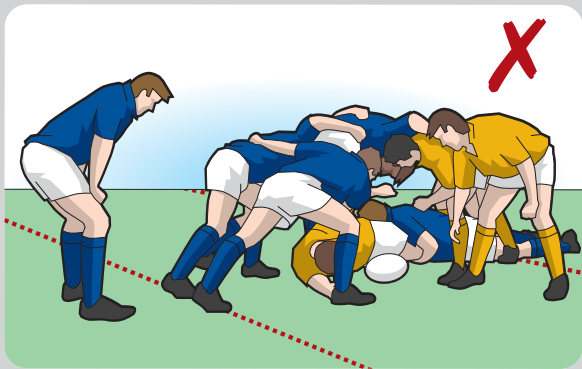
16.4 OTHER RUCK OFFENCES

- (a) Players must not return the ball into a ruck.
Sanction: Free Kick
- (b) Players must not handle the ball in a ruck except after a tackle if they are on their feet and have their hands on the ball before the ruck is formed.
Sanction: Penalty kick
- (c) Players must not pick up the ball in a ruck with their legs.
Sanction: Penalty kick
- (d) Players on the ground in or near the ruck must try to move away from the ball. These players must not interfere with the ball in the ruck or as it comes out of the ruck.
Sanction: Penalty kick
- (e) A player must not fall on or over a ball as it is coming out of a ruck.
Sanction: Penalty kick
- (f) A player must not take any action to make the opposing team think that the ball is out of the ruck while it is still in the ruck.
Sanction: Free Kick

16.5 OFFSIDE AT THE RUCK

- (a) **The offside line.** There are two offside lines parallel to the goal lines, one for each team. Each offside line runs through the hindmost foot of the hindmost player in the ruck. If the hindmost foot of the hindmost player is on or behind the goal line, the offside line for the defending team is the goal line.
- (b) Players must either join a ruck, or retire behind the offside line immediately. If a player loiters at the side of a ruck, the player is offside.

Sanction: Penalty kick



At a ruck or maul, the offside line runs through the hindmost foot of the player of the same team. The player in the yellow jersey on the right hand side is offside.

- (c) **Players joining or rejoining the ruck.** A player joining a ruck must do so from behind the foot of the hindmost team-mate in the ruck. A player may join alongside this hindmost player. If a player joins the ruck from the opponents' side, or in front of the hindmost team-mate, the player is offside. A player may bind onto an opposition player providing the player is not otherwise offside.

Sanction: Penalty kick on the offending team's offside line

- (d) **Players not joining the ruck.** If a player is in front of the offside line and does not join the ruck, the player must retire behind the offside line at once. If a player who is behind the offside line oversteps it and does not join the ruck the player is offside.

Sanction: Penalty kick on the offending team's offside line

16.6 SUCCESSFUL END TO A RUCK

A ruck ends successfully when the ball leaves the ruck, or when the ball is on or over the goal line.

16.7 UNSUCCESSFUL END TO A RUCK

- (a) A ruck ends unsuccessfully when the ball becomes unplayable and a scrum is ordered.

The team that was moving forward immediately before the ball became unplayable in the ruck throws in the ball.

If neither team was moving forward, or if the referee cannot decide which team was moving forward before the ball became unplayable in the ruck, the team that was moving forward before the ruck began throws in the ball.

If neither team was moving forward, then the attacking team throws in the ball.

- (b) Before the referee blows the whistle for a scrum, the referee allows a reasonable amount of time for the ball to emerge, especially if either team is moving forward. If the ruck stops moving, or if the referee decides that the ball will probably not emerge within a reasonable time, the referee must order a scrum.