
LAW 21 - PENALTY AND FREE KICKS

DEFINITION

Penalty kicks and free kicks are awarded to the non-offending team for infringements by their opponents.

21.1 WHERE PENALTY AND FREE KICKS ARE AWARDED

Unless a Law states otherwise, the mark for a penalty or free kick is at the place of infringement.

21.2 WHERE PENALTY AND FREE KICKS ARE TAKEN

- (a) The kicker must take the penalty or free kick at the mark or anywhere behind it on a line through the mark. If the place for a penalty or free kick is within 5 metres of the opponents' goal-line, the mark for the kick is 5 metres from the goal-line, opposite the place of infringement.
- (b) When a penalty or free kick is awarded for an infringement in in-goal, the mark for the kick is in the field of play, 5 metres from the goal-line, in line with the place of infringement.

Penalty: Any infringement by the kicker's team results in a scrum at the mark. The opposing team throws in the ball.

21.3 HOW THE PENALTY AND FREE KICKS ARE TAKEN

- (a) Any player may take a penalty or free kick awarded for an infringement with any type of kick: punt, drop-kick or place kick. The ball may be kicked with any part of the lower leg from knee to the foot, excluding the knee and the heel.
- (b) Bouncing the ball on the knee is not taking a kick.
Penalty: Any infringement by the kicker's team results in a scrum at the mark. The opposing team throws in the ball.
- (c) The kicker must use the ball that was in play unless the referee decides it was defective.

Penalty: Any infringement by the kicker's team results in a scrum at the mark. The opposing team throws in the ball.

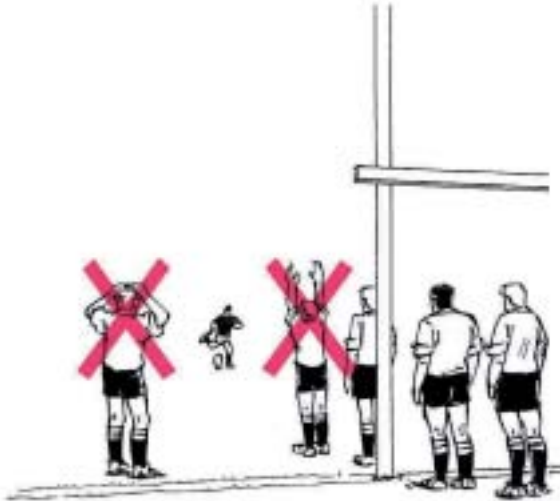
21.4 PENALTY AND FREE KICK OPTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

- (a) Scrum alternative. A team awarded a penalty or free kick may choose a scrum instead. They throw-in the ball.
- (b) No delay. If a kicker indicates to the referee the intention to kick a penalty kick at goal, the kick must be taken within one minute from the time the player indicates the intention to kick at goal. The intention to kick is signalled by the arrival of the kicking tee or sand, or when the player makes a mark on the ground. The player must complete the kick within one minute even if the ball rolls over and has to be placed again. If the one minute is exceeded, the kick is disallowed, a scrum is ordered at the place of the mark and the opponents throw-in the ball. For any other type of kick, the kick must be taken without undue delay.
- (c) A clear kick. The kicker must kick the ball a visible distance. If the kicker is holding it, it must clearly leave the hands. If it is on the ground, it must clearly leave the mark.
- (d) Place kicking for touch. The kicker may punt or drop-kick for touch but must not place kick for touch.
- (e) Kicker's freedom of action. The kicker is free to kick the ball in any direction and may play the ball again.
- (f) Kick taken in the in-goal. When a penalty or free kick is taken in the team's in-goal and a defending player by foul play prevents an opponent from scoring a try, a penalty try is awarded.
- (g) Out of play in the in-goal. If a penalty or free kick is taken in in-goal and the ball goes into touch-in-goal, or on or over the dead ball line, or a defending player makes the ball dead before it has crossed the goal-line, a 5-metre scrum is awarded. The attacking team throws in the ball.
- (h) Behind the ball. All the kicker's team at a penalty or free kick must be behind the ball until it has been kicked, except the placer for a place kick.
- (i) Kick taken quickly. If the penalty or free kick is taken so quickly that players of the kicker's team are still in front of the ball, they are not penalised for being off-side. However, they must retire immediately. They must not stop retiring until they are on-side. They must not take part in the game until they are on-side. This applies to all players of that team, whether they are inside or outside the playing area.

- (j) In this situation, players become on-side when they run behind the team-mate who took the penalty or free kick, or when a team-mate carrying the ball runs in front of them, or when a team-mate who was behind the ball when it was kicked runs in front of them.
- (k) An off-side player cannot be put on-side by any action of an opponent.
Penalty: Unless otherwise stated in Law any infringement by the kicker's team results in a scrum at the mark. The opposing team throw-in the ball.

21.5 SCORING A GOAL FROM A PENALTY KICK

- (a) A penalty goal can be scored from a penalty kick.
- (b) If the kicker indicates to the referee the intention to kick at goal, the kicker must kick at goal. Once the kicker has made the intention clear, there can be no change of the intention. The referee may enquire of the kicker as to the intention.
- (c) If the kicker indicates to the referee the intent to kick at goal, the opposing team must stand still with their hands by their sides from the time the kicker starts to approach to kick until the ball is kicked.



PENALTY KICK AT GOAL

- (d) If the kicker has not indicated an intention to kick at goal but takes a drop-kick and scores a goal, the goal stands.
- (e) If the opposing team infringes while the kick is being taken but the kick at goal is successful, the goal stands. A further penalty is not awarded for the infringement.
- (f) The kicker may place the ball directly on the ground or on sand, sawdust or a kicking tee approved by the Union.

21.6 SCORING FROM A FREE KICK

- (a) A goal cannot be scored from a free kick.
- (b) The team awarded a free kick cannot score a dropped goal until after the ball next becomes dead, or until after an opponent has played or touched it, or has tackled the ball-carrier. This restriction applies also to a scrum taken instead of a free kick.

21.7 WHAT THE OPPOSING TEAM MUST DO AT A PENALTY KICK

- (a) Must run from the mark. The opposing team must immediately run towards their own goal-line until they are at least 10 metres away from the mark for the penalty kick, or until they have reached their goal-line if that is nearer the mark.
- (b) Must keep running. Even if the penalty kick is taken and the kicker's team is playing the ball, opposing players must keep running until they have retired the necessary distance. They must not take part in the game until they have done so.
- (c) Kick taken quickly. If the penalty kick is taken so quickly that opponents have no opportunity to retire, they will not be penalised for this. However, they must continue to retire as described in 21.7(b) above or until a team-mate who was 10 metres from the mark has run in front of them, before they take part in the game.

- (d) Interference. The opposing team must not do anything to delay the penalty kick or obstruct the kicker. They must not intentionally take, throw or kick the ball out of reach of the kicker or the kicker's team-mates.
- Penalty: Any infringement by the opposing team results in a second penalty kick, 10 metres in front of the mark for the first kick. This mark must not be within 5 metres of the goal-line. Any player may take the kick. The kicker may change the type of kick and may choose to kick at goal. If the referee awards a second penalty kick, the second penalty kick is not taken before the referee has made the mark indicating the place of the penalty.**

21.8 WHAT OPTIONS THE OPPOSING TEAM HAVE AT A FREE KICK

- (a) Must run from the mark. The opposing team must immediately run towards their own goal-line until they are at least 10 metres away from the mark for the free kick, or until they have reached their goal-line if that is nearer the mark. If the free kick is in a defending teams in-goal area, the opposing team must immediately run towards their own goal-line until they are at least 10 metres away from the mark and not nearer than 5 metres from the goal-line.
- (b) Must keep running. Even if the free kick is taken and the kicker's team is playing the ball, opposing players must keep running until they have retired the necessary distance. They must not take part in the game until they have done so.
- (c) Kick taken quickly. If the free kick is taken so quickly that opponents have no opportunity to retire, they will not be penalised for this. However, they must continue to retire as described in (b) above or until a team-mate who was 10 metres from the mark has run in front of them, before they take part in the game.
- (d) Interference. The opposing team must not do anything to delay the free kick or obstruct the kicker. They must not intentionally take, throw or kick the ball out of reach of the kicker or the kicker's team-mates.
- (e) Charging the free kick. Once they have retired the necessary distance, players of the opposing team may charge and try to prevent the kick being taken. They may charge the free kick as soon as the kicker starts to approach to kick.
- (f) Preventing the free kick. If the opposing team charge and prevent the free kick being taken, the kick is disallowed. Play restarts with a scrum at the mark. The opposing team throw-in the ball.

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- (g) Free kick taken in the in-goal. If a free kick has been awarded in the in-goal or if it has been awarded in the field of play and the player retires to in-goal to take it, and the opponents charge and prevent the kick from being taken, a 5-metre scrum is ordered. The attacking team throw-in the ball. If a free kick is taken in the in-goal, an opponent who legitimately plays it there can score a try.
- (h) Charged down. If opponents charge down a free kick in the playing area, play continues.
Penalty: Any infringement by the opposing team results in a second free kick, awarded 10 metres in front of the mark for the first kick. This mark must not be within 5 metres of the goal-line. Any player may take the kick. If the referee awards a second free kick, the second free kick is not taken before the referee has made the mark indicating the place of the free kick.

21.9 CONTRIVED INFRINGEMENTS AT THE PENALTY KICK

If the referee believes that the kicker's team has contrived an infringement by their opponents, the referee does not award a further penalty but allows play to continue.

21.10 CONTRIVED INFRINGEMENTS AT THE FREE KICK

- (a) The kicker must not pretend to kick. As soon as the kicker makes a move to kick, the opponents may charge.
- (b) If the referee believes that the kicker's team has contrived an infringement by their opponents, the referee does not award a further free kick but allows play to continue.