
LAW 8 - ADVANTAGE

DEFINITION

The Law of advantage takes precedence over most other Laws and its purpose is to make play more continuous with fewer stoppages for infringements. Players are encouraged to play to the whistle despite infringements by their opponents. When the result of an infringement by one team is that their opposing team may gain an advantage, the referee does not whistle immediately for the infringement.

8.1 ADVANTAGE IN PRACTICE

- (a) The referee is sole judge of whether or not a team has gained an advantage. The referee has wide discretion when making decisions.
- (b) Advantage can be either territorial or tactical.
- (c) Territorial advantage means a gain in ground.
- (d) Tactical advantage means freedom for the non-offending team to play the ball as they wish.

8.2 WHEN ADVANTAGE DOES NOT ARISE

The advantage must be clear and real. A mere opportunity to gain advantage is not enough. If the non-offending team does not gain an advantage, the referee blows the whistle and brings play back to the place of infringement.

8.3 WHEN THE ADVANTAGE LAW IS NOT APPLIED

- (a) Referee contact. Advantage must not be applied when the ball, or a player carrying it, touches the referee.
- (b) Ball out of tunnel. Advantage must not be applied when the ball comes out of either end of the tunnel at a scrum without having been played.
- (c) Wheeled scrum. Advantage must not be applied when the scrum is wheeled through more than 90 degrees (so that the middle line has passed beyond a position parallel to the touch-line).

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- (d) Collapsed scrum. Advantage must not be applied when a scrum collapses. The referee must blow the whistle immediately.
 - (e) Player lifted in the air. Advantage must not be applied when a player in a scrum is lifted in the air or forced upwards out of the scrum. The referee must blow the whistle immediately.

8.4 IMMEDIATE WHISTLE WHEN NO ADVANTAGE

The referee blows the whistle immediately once the referee decides an advantage cannot be gained by the non-offending team.

8.5 MORE THAN ONE INFRINGEMENT

- (a) If there is more than one infringement by the same team the referee applies the advantage Law.
- (b) If advantage is being played following an infringement by one team and then the other team commit an infringement, the referee blows the whistle and applies the sanctions associated with the first infringement.