



AUSTRALIAN

TOUCH

ASSOCIATION

Playing Rules

1987

THE RULES OF TOUCH 1987

FOREWORD

May I introduce you to the third edition of the Playing Rules of our Sport. It is most pleasing to note the tremendous interest which these rules created during the period of the past twelve (12) months. Although there are areas of disagreement and apprehension relating to some of the rules, the general input from all areas of our Sport has been most encouraging.

The history of our Sport will show that the period of the first two editions of our playing rules showed a gradual and more educated approach to the laws of our game, and I feel sure you understand the effort of our Rules Sub-Committee, and the hours of deliberation which took place to ensure the rules would improve our game.

There has been in the past, a relaxed attitude to affiliates not conforming with the A.T.A. Playing Rules. I feel there has been sufficient time for State and Local affiliates to understand the rules and the philosophy of having a formal set of playing rules. Unfortunately there are still areas who seek affiliation and yet want to retain some form of independence when it comes to the rules played. To ensure the continued success of our sport, compliance with these rules is essential. The International Touch Board has adopted these rules, this is indeed a great honour for Australian Touch and tremendous for our sport in general. I feel confident that your enjoyment of the game will increase with a thorough knowledge of the rules.

JANUARY, 1987

Peter Rooney
Executive Director

THE PLAYING RULES OF TOUCH 1987

Including: Rules for Indoor Touch
Beach Touch
Experimental Touch
Touchball

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1986 Rule amendments indicated by line in margin.

RULE 1 — DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Unless the contrary intention appears, the following definitions and terminology apply to the game of Touch:

Actinghalf is the player who receives the ball behind the player in possession at the rollball.

Attacking Team is the team which has possession or is gaining possession.

Attacking Scoreline is the line on or over which a team has to place the ball to score.

Advantage is that property or part of play which gives one team the potential to improve its position or score relative to the other team.

Behind means in a position or direction towards a team's defending scoreline.

Dead Ball means when the ball is out of play and includes the period following a touch until the ball is brought back into play at the rollball and the period following a touchdown until the game is recommenced.

Defending Scoreline is the scoreline behind a team.

Defending Team is the team without the ball.

Delivered means to part with the ball.

Field Of Play is the playing area bounded by the sidelines and scorelines.

Forward means in a position or direction towards a team's own attacking scoreline.

Full Time occurs at the expiration of the normal time allowed for play.

Mark (For a Touch) is the position where the attacking player is at the time of the touch.

Mark (For A Tap) is the centre of the halfway line for the commencement or recommencement of play; or the position where a tap is awarded as a result of infringement.

Offside means in a position forward of the ball for an attacking player and in position liable to penalty for a defending player.

Onside means in a position whereby a player may legitimately become involved with play.

Rebound occurs when the ball deflects from or makes contact with a player other than the player who first had possession.

Rollball is the normal act of bringing the ball into play following a touch or a change of possession.

Ruling is the decision made by the referee as a result of particular circumstances. It is normally a tap or change of possession.

Scorelines are the boundaries at the end of the field of play. They extend from one sideline to the other.

Sidelines are the side boundaries of the field of play.

Tap is the method of commencing the game, recommencing the game at half-time and after a touchdown has been scored. It is also the method of recommencing play when a penalty is awarded.

Touch is contact on any part of the body between a player in possession and a defending player. A touch includes contact on the ball, hair or clothing and may be made by a defending player or by the player in possession.

Touchdown is the result of an attacking player placing the ball on or over the team's attacking scoreline.

RULE 2 — THE FIELD AND THE BALL

1. **Field of Play.** The field of play is rectangular in shape and measures seventy (70) metres in length by fifty (50) metres in width.
2. **Markings.** Line markings defining the field of play are to be at least 2.5cm in width and are to be laid out as shown in the diagram on page 5 (see Fig. 1 The Field of Play). Sidelines are to be extended at least five (5) metres beyond the scorelines. The scorelines are in the field of play and the sidelines are out of play.
3. **Markers.** Suitably sized markers of a distinguishing colour and made from a safe and pliable material are to be positioned at the intersections of sidelines and scorelines; and at the intersections of the halfway line with the sidelines (see Fig. 1 The Field of Play).
4. **Playing Surface.** The playing surface is normally grass however, other surfaces approved by the Australian Touch Association may be used. Ground surfaces which may cause injury are to be avoided.
5. **The Ball.** The game is to be played with an oval, inflated ball of a shape, colour and size approved by the Australian Touch Association. The ball should be inflated to the recommended air pressure.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. A defending player must have both feet on or behind the defending scoreline to be onside.
- B. Team captains have the right to lodge a complaint regarding field dimensions or playing conditions (e.g. weather or the state of the ground) prior to the commencement of the match.
- C. The ball must not be hidden under player attire.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Players may lean over the defending scoreline and remain onside providing contact is not made with the ground inside the field of play.
- B. The referee is to inspect the boundaries and markers for clarity and safety, prior to the commencement of the game.

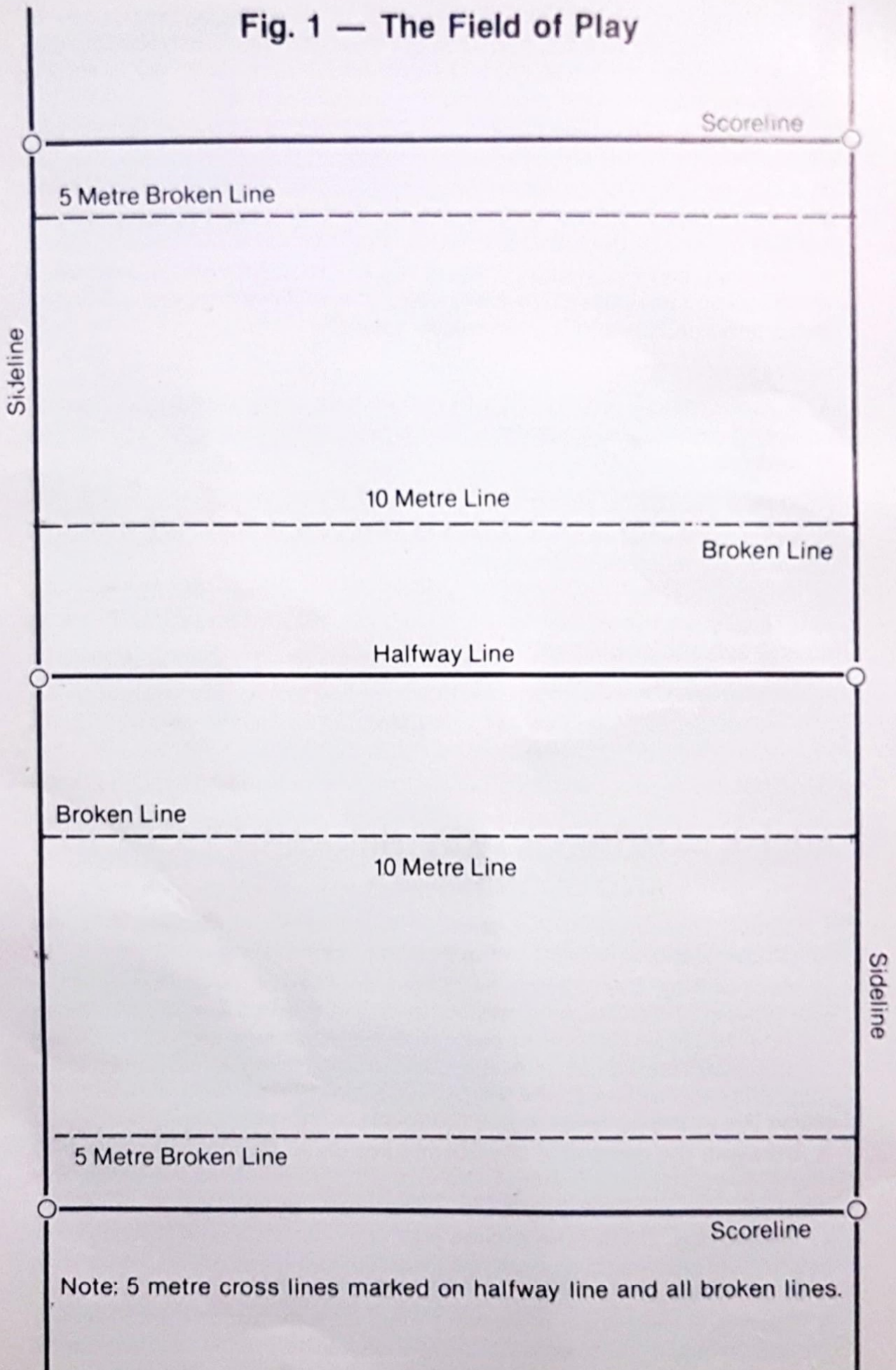
ADMINISTRATOR NOTES

- A. Association officials should ensure that all grounds used for competition matches are marked as shown. As a minimum, it is essential that scorelines, sidelines and the halfway line are correctly marked.
- B. Any decision on variation to dimensions or on playing conditions rests with competent association officials.
- C. Corner markers are to be positioned with the base along the outer edge of the sideline and the centre of the marker in line with the scoreline.

RULE 3 — PLAYER ATTIRE

1. **Uniforms.** All participating players are to be correctly attired in team uniforms approved by the local controlling association. Uniforms consist of upper apparel, shorts (or briefs for female players) and socks with footwear.

Fig. 1 — The Field of Play



Note: 5 metre cross lines marked on halfway line and all broken lines.

2. **Footwear.** Shoes without screw-in studs or cleats are to be worn by all players. Light leather or synthetic boots with soft moulded soles are permitted, providing individual studs are not longer than one (1) cm in length, the measurement being taken from the sole of the boot.

3. **Identification Numbers.** All players are to wear an indentifying number, not less than sixteen (16) cm in height, clearly displayed on the front or rear of the upper garment. Numbers may be positioned on both sleeves as an alternative providing the numbers are not less than eight (8) cm in height. No two players of the same team may wear the same number

4. **Jewellery and Fingernails.** Players are not to participate in any match while wearing any item of jewellery which might prove dangerous. Long or sharp fingernails are to be trimmed or taped.

PLAYER NOTES.

A. Players may, in conditions of cold weather, wear additional clothing providing colours and numbers are displayed, subject to local association procedures.

REFEREE NOTES

A. Referees are not to allow players to participate in any match unless the above dress requirements are met.

B. Referees are to inspect team clothing and footwear prior to matches. Fingernails and jewellery in womens and mixed competitions are to receive specific inspection.

ADMINISTRATOR NOTES

A. Identification numbers of participating players should be in chronological order, however this is not mandatory.

B. Minor dress variations may be approved by controlling associations.

RULE 4 — MODE OF PLAY, DURATION AND SCORING

1. **Object.** The object of the game of Touch is for each team to score touchdowns and to prevent the opposition from scoring.

2. **Mode of Play.** The ball may be passed, knocked or handed between on-side players of the attacking team who may in turn run or otherwise move with the ball in an attempt to gain territorial advantage and score. Defending players prevent the attacking team from gaining a territorial advantage. Either defending or attacking players may initiate touches which will cause the attacking team to use the touch count (see Rule 7.1).

3. **Duration.** The game is of fifty (50) minutes duration, consisting of two (2) twenty-five (25) minute halves. There is a five (5) minute halftime break. The duration may only be extended for exceptional circumstances.

4. **End of Play.** When time expires play is to continue until the ball next becomes dead. Should a penalty be awarded during this period the penalty is to be taken.

5. **Scoring.** A touchdown is awarded when a player places the ball on the ground on or over the team's attacking scoreline and within the boundaries of the extended sidelines. A touchdown is worth one (1) point.

6. **Penalty Touchdown.** A penalty touchdown should be awarded if any action by a player or spectator deemed by the referee to be contrary to these Rules or the spirit of the game of Touch, prevents an attacking team from scoring.

7. **The Winner.** The team scoring the most touchdowns is declared the winner. In the event of neither team scoring, or in the event of both teams scoring the same number of touchdowns, a draw is declared.

8. **Competition Points.** Points are awarded in competition matches in accordance with:

WIN	— 3 POINTS
BYE	— 3 POINTS
DRAW	— 2 POINTS
LOSS	— 1 POINT
FORFEIT	— 0 POINTS

9. **Progression.** When a single winner is required and the game is drawn up to an extra ten (10) minutes each way is played. The team which first scores during this extra time becomes the winner. Should no touchdowns be scored during extra time the team which began in the higher position should progress. In finals, however, the teams should be declared joint champions.

10. **Abandoned Games:** If a game is abandoned due to any circumstances the controlling Association shall decide the result.

PLAYER NOTES

A. If a player places the ball on the ground short of the line while attempting to score, a touch is counted and the player is required to rollball to restart play. However a score results if an untouched player slides the ball along the ground to or beyond the scoreline.

REFEREE NOTES

A. Referees should be aware of players who commit "professional fouls" and should take appropriate action.

B. With regard to the awarding of a penalty touchdown, a referee is to be sure that a touchdown would have occurred had it not been for the illegal action of the player or spectator concerned.

C. If in attempting to score, a player either makes contact with the corner marker or crosses the extended sideline, no touchdown is awarded and the game is recommenced by the opposition with a rollball five metres from the scoreline and five metres in from the sideline.

ADMINISTRATOR NOTES

A. The controlling association should endeavour to provide official time-keepers for all matches. Should time-keepers not be appointed, the referee is to act as the sole time-keeper.

B. The duration of matches may be varied by controlling associations to suit particular competition requirements. In such cases, durations are to be advised to all teams well in advance.

C. Competition points may be varied by controlling associations to suit particular competition requirements.

D. A touchdown may have varied value as decided by the controlling association to suit particular competition requirements.

E. To separate teams on equal competition points, the Simple Averages method is used (difference in touchdowns "for" and "against", with the higher progressing). If teams are still equal the Percentage method is applied (fraction consisting of "for" over "against" multiplied by 100, with the higher progressing).

F. Controlling associations may decide on and publish a points "for-and-against" margin to be awarded for forfeits and for abandoned matches.

RULE 5 — TEAM COMPOSITION AND SUBSTITUTION

1. **Number of Players.** A team consists of eleven (11) players, no more than seven (7) of whom are allowed on the field at any time.

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the position of the ball at the time the offence is identified.

2. **Mixed Competition.** In mixed competitions the maximum number of males allowed on the field is four (4).

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the position of the ball at the time the offence is identified.

3. **Substitution.** Players may substitute at any time in accordance with the interchange procedure. There is no limit to the number of times a player may interchange.

4. **Interchange Procedure.** Following the scoring of a touchdown players may interchange without physical contact with the substituting players. All other interchanges must occur at the sideline, in an onside position and the players involved must make physical contact prior to the substitute entering the field of play. Interchange may occur on either side of the field unless local restrictions apply. The substituting player must immediately enter the field of play.

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team five (5) metres infield from where the substituted player left the field.

PLAYER NOTES

A. Although a team consists of eleven (11) players, a minimum of five (5) is required for the game to continue. All players who are involved in the game both on and off the field of play are under the direct control of the referee.

B. Female players in mixed competition may play in any team positions. Male players may interchange with female players providing Rule 5.2 applies.

C. Players must make physical contact with substituting players off the field.

D. Attacking and defending players must interchange in accordance with Rule 5.4. Intending substitutes must not voluntarily remain off the field.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Should the number of players on the field from one team fall below five (5), the game is finished and the non-offending team is declared the winner. This applies if players have been dismissed for the remainder of the game, but not for injuries or dismissals for periods of time.
- B. If line referees are officiating, all interchanges are to be conducted under their control and in accordance with Rule 5.
- C. Players who arrive late for a game may enter the field immediately, providing their team does not have seven (7) players on the field, subject to local By-laws.
- D. Any player deemed to be guilty of misconduct will be liable to disciplinary action.
- E. Any coach or official deemed guilty of misconduct will be reported to the appropriate officials.
- F. If a team is unable to continue to meet the requirements of rule 5.2 because of injury caused during the game, the makeup of the male-female ratio may be varied at the discretion of the referee.

RULE 6 — COMMENCEMENT AND RECOMMENCEMENT OF PLAY

1. **The Toss.** Team captains are to toss a coin in the presence of the referee and the captain winning the toss has possession for the commencement of the first half and also has the choice of direction for the first half.
2. **Attacking Team.** The attacking team is to start the game with a tap at the centre of the halfway line following the indication to commence play from the referee. All players of the attacking team are to remain in an on-side position until the ball has been tapped.

RULING

A change of possession at the centre of the halfway line.

3. **Method.** The tap is taken by placing the ball on the ground at or behind the mark, releasing both hands from the ball, tapping the ball with either foot a distance of not more than one (1) metre, and retrieving the ball cleanly. Any player of the attacking team may take the tap. Any onside player of the attacking team may retrieve the ball once the tap has been taken.

RULING

A change of possession at the mark for the tap.

4. **Defending Team.** All players of the defending team are required to retire a distance of not less than ten (10) metres from the mark for the tap. Defending players may move forward of their positions once the ball has been tapped with the foot.

RULING

A tap awarded to the attacking team at a mark ten (10) metres forward of the original mark.

5. **Recommencement of Play.** For the recommencement of play following the half-time break, the team losing the toss is to start the game with a tap as described in Rules 6.2 and 6.3. For the recommencement of play following the scoring of a touchdown, the team against which the score was made is to recommence play as described in Rules 6.2 and 6.3.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. The player taking the tap may face any direction to take the tap and may be forward of the halfway line.
- B. The player taking the tap is to wait until the referee indicates the mark prior to tapping the ball.
- C. Players may take the ball behind the mark for a tap up to a maximum of ten (10) metres. No sideways movement of the mark is allowed.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Referees are to ensure that there is minimum delay between the scoring of touchdowns and the recommencement of play.
- B. Referees should penalise defending players who attempt to delay play following a touchdown.

RULE 7 — POSSESSION

- 1. **General.** Providing other Rules do not apply, the team with the ball is entitled to six (6) touches prior to changing possession with the opposing team.
- 2. **Changeover Procedure.** Following the sixth touch or the loss of possession due to any other means, players of the team losing possession are to hand or pass the ball to the nearest opposition player, or place the ball on the ground at the mark without delay. Attacking players who request the ball are to be given the ball. Players are not to delay the changeover procedure.

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team ten (10) metres forward of the mark for the change of possession or penalty.

- 3. **Ball to Ground.** If the ball is dropped to the ground a change of possession results. The mark for possession change is where the ball first pitches or where the attacking player dropped or passed the ball, whichever is to the best advantage of the team gaining possession.
- 4. **Mishandled Ball.** If a player mishandles the ball and providing the ball does not go to ground, play is to continue.
- 5. **Intercepts.** Intercepts by onside defending players are allowed. Following an intercept play continues until the first touch is effected, a touchdown is scored, or a stoppage occurs as a result of other actions.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. Should a touch be effected on a player in possession while the ball may not be physically in the hands (e.g. while juggling or trying to maintain control), the touch is to count.
- B. Providing the same player retrieves the ball prior to it going to ground, any knock forward resultant from an intercept is allowed.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Referees are to be aware of players deliberately attempting to delay play during normal changeover procedures.
- B. If the ball contacts the ground while still under the control of a player (e.g. falling over) a change of possession does not result and play is to continue (see Referee Note to Rule 4).

C. If the referee considers that a touch made by a defending player caused the ball to go to ground, the touch counts and possession is retained by the attacking player. The touch count continues.

RULE 8 — PASSING

1. **General.** A player in possession may pass, flick, knock, throw or otherwise deliver the ball to any other onside player in the attacking team.

2. **Forward Pass.** A player in possession is not to pass, flick, knock, throw or otherwise propel the ball in a forward direction (see Player Notes to Rule 7).

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the ball was passed flicked, knocked, thrown or otherwise propelled forward.

3. **Passing into Opposition.** A player who passes the ball at or towards a defending player and thereby causes the ball to go to ground shall lose possession. However, if the defending player attempts to catch the ball or play at the ball and the ball goes to ground, the attacking team retains possession. Play is restarted at the mark where the ball goes to ground or at the position of best advantage for the non-offending team. The touch count is restarted.

PLAYER NOTES

A. A player who, in attempting to control the ball, juggles or knocks the ball forward, is not to be penalised. (See Player Notes to Rule 7).

REFEREE NOTES

A. A penalty is to result from a forward pass even if the receiver was in an onside position prior to the pass.

B. Referees are to be aware of players who make any deliberate passes at an opposing player, especially on the fifth (5th) touch.

C. Forward passes are to be penalised even if the ball goes to ground or if it is the last touch.

RULE 9 — THE ROLLBALL

1. **When Required.** A player is to perform a rollball under the following circumstances:

- (a) when a touch has been effected
- (b) when possession changes due to the sixth touch
- (c) when possession changes due to a ball to ground
- (d) when possession changes due to an infringement by an attacking player at a tap or
- (e) when so directed by the referee.

2. **Method.** The attacking player is to position on the mark, face the opponent's (defending) scoreline, stand parallel to the sidelines and immediately roll the ball backwards along the ground between the feet a distance of not more than one (1) metre.

RULING

A change of possession at the mark.

3. **Attacking Team.** Any other player of the attacking team may receive the ball from the rollball and thus become the actinghalf. The actinghalf may pass or run with the ball however, if touched, loses possession. The actinghalf is not to delay picking up or gathering the ball. The player who performs the rollball is not permitted to obstruct or otherwise prevent the defending team from gaining possession or effecting a touch on the actinghalf.

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the infringement occurred.

4. **Defending Team.** All players of the defending team are to retire a distance of not less than five (5) metres from the mark. Players of the defending team are not permitted to move forward of the five (5) metre position until the actinghalf has touched the ball.

RULING

A tap awarded to the attacking team five (5) metres forward of the mark for the rollball.

5. **Actions without Actinghalf in Position.** When the player in possession is required to rollball without an actinghalf in position, players of the defending team may move forward of the five (5) metre positions as soon as the ball leaves the hand/s of the player in possession. Should a defending player gain possession the game is restarted with a rollball.

6. **Voluntary Rollball.** A player in possession is not to perform a rollball unless a touch has been effected.

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the mark where the rollball occurred.

PLAYER NOTES

A. The ball must touch the ground in a rollball and should be rolled backward under control. The foot may be used to control the ball.

B. The player performing the rollball must be stationary and will not be penalised if the rollball is performed while balancing on one foot providing the ball passes on the inside of the supporting foot.

D. Players who are offside at the rollball are liable to penalty and should remain out of play.

E. The player performing the rollball cannot retrieve the ball.

F. Any defending player involved in a touch must immediately retire five (5) metres backwards from the position of the touch or to their own scoreline.

REFEREE NOTES

A. The mark for a penalty awarded under Rule 9.4 is along a line five (5) metres forward of the mark for the rollball and nearest the infringement.

B. The actinghalf is permitted to use the foot to control the ball however play must not be delayed. Defending players may move forward as soon as the actinghalf has touched the ball.

- C. A player in possession may run or stand with the ball extended towards the ground without penalty. However, Rule 9.6 applies as soon as the ball touches the ground.
- D. In an attempt to encourage a free-flowing game, referees should warn offside players and use the advantage rule as applicable (e.g. if a warned offside player moves to make a touch, the referee may call "play on" rather than stop play and penalise the offender).
- E. Players who delay the rollball are to be penalised.
- F. Should the acting half effect a touch on an offside defender following a quick rollball, "play on" may be called providing the defender is attempting to retire.
- G. There is no requirement for the ball to be picked up to commence rollball, but the referee should ensure the rollball takes place at the mark.

RULE 10 — THE TOUCH

1. **General.** See Definitions, Rule 1. Players of both defending and attacking teams are to use the minimum force necessary to effect touches.

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team and, as a minimum, a warning to the offending player.

2. **Ball Knocked from Hands.** If the ball is knocked from the hands of a player in possession during a touch, the touch counts and the player retains possession and is required to perform the rollball (unless it is the sixth touch). The touch count continues.

3. **Actions Following Touch.** After a touch has been effected, the player in possession is required to stop, return to the mark where the touch occurred if the mark has been over-run, and perform a rollball immediately.

RULING

A tap awarded to the defending team at the mark.

4. **Passing after Touch.** A player is not to pass or otherwise deliver the ball after a touch has been effected.

RULING

A tap awarded to the defending team at the mark where the touch occurred.

5. **Claimed Touch.** A player must not claim or otherwise call for a touch unless a touch has actually been made.

RULING

If an advantage is apparent, the referee will indicate "play on"; otherwise a tap is to be awarded to the attacking team where the touch was claimed. Additionally, following a second infringement against this Rule, a player is to be sent from the field of play for not less than a period of time.

6. **The Mark.** The mark for the rollball is dependent on the position of the player in possession at the time of the touch.

7. Interference after Touch. Following a touch the ball is deemed to be dead and is brought into play at the rollball when the acting half touches the ball or, if there is no acting half, when the ball leaves the hand/s (see Rules 9.4 and 9.5). Defending players are not to interfere with the player in possession or otherwise prevent the immediate rollball after a touch is made.

RULING

A tap awarded to the attacking team at the mark.

8. Touched while Scoring. If a player simultaneously places the ball on or over the scoreline at the same time a defending player makes a touch, the touch does not count and a touchdown is awarded.

9. Touch on Offside Defender. Should a player in possession effect a touch on an offside defender who is making every effort to retire and remain out of play, the touch is to count. If the player in possession is the acting half a change of possession results in accordance with Rule 9.3.

PLAYER NOTES

A. When effecting touches with the ball, attacking players are to ensure that the minimum force is used (see Rule 10.1).

B. If a touch is effected on or over the scoreline before the ball is grounded, no touchdown results. The player in possession is to move from that point to a position five (5) metres from the scoreline to rollball, provided it is not the sixth touch.

C. If in doubt as to the location of the mark for the rollball the player in possession should check with the referee.

D. Attacking players cannot delay the rollball while awaiting an acting half.

E. Calling a touch prior to contact is subject to penalty under Rule 10.5.

F. A player who is touched while in the act of passing is to refrain from releasing the ball.

REFEREE NOTES

A. More than the minimum physical force applies to both attacking and defending players and includes should charges, slaps, pushing or unnecessary shoving with the ball and should be dealt with severely. Following an initial penalty and warning, subsequent offenders are to be dismissed.

B. A player should be instructed to regather the ball if it is knocked or dropped to the ground during or following a touch. However, players who attempt to delay play by such deliberate acts are to be penalised under Rule 10.3.

C. If defending players effect contact after an attacking player has delivered the ball, play continues and "play on" is to be called.

D. Unless the referee is sure no contact was made, the referee should acknowledge all claimed touches and call back the player in possession for a rollball. Should the referee observe a defending player claim a touch without contact and unless there is an advantage to the attacking team, a penalty and warning are to be awarded under Rule 10.5.

E. In the rare occasion that the referee is unable to distinguish between a pass before a touch and a pass after a touch and provided the ball does not go to ground, the touch counts as a "simultaneous touch" and the ball is returned to the attacking player for a rollball. If the ball goes to ground on such occasions, or if it is the sixth touch, a change of possession is to result.

F. Mandatory penalties should not be awarded when players fall to feel slight touches however, deliberate run-ons are to be penalised.

G. Infringements against Rule 10.4 are to be penalised, even if it is the sixth touch.

RULE 11 — BALL ON OR OVER SIDELINE/OVER SCORELINE

1. **On or Over Sideline.** The ball becomes dead when it or a player in possession touches or crosses the sideline and a change of possession results. However, if a player in possession is touched prior to crossing the sideline, then the touch counts and play continues with a rollball at the mark where the touch occurred.

RULING

The team not responsible for the ball touching or crossing the sideline restarts play with a rollball five (5) metres infield from where the ball or the player in possession touched or crossed the sideline, or at the position of best advantage for the attacking team.

2. **Touched Over Attacking Scoreline.** If a player in possession is touched after crossing the attacking scoreline and prior to the scoring of a touchdown, the touch counts and play is restarted with a rollball up to five (5) metres infield from where the ball crossed the scoreline.

3. **Ball on or Behind Defending Scoreline.** If an attacking player passes or carries the ball on or over the defending scoreline, a change of possession results and play is restarted with a rollball five (5) metres infield from where the player touched or crossed the scoreline or where the ball crossed the scoreline.

4. **Actions Near Defending Scoreline.** An attacking team is not required to rollball within five (5) metres of the defending scoreline. After each touch the player in possession may move forward to the five (5) metre broken line to rollball.

5. **Actions Near Attacking Scoreline.** When a touch is effected within five (5) metres of the attacking scoreline, a player in possession may move directly behind the mark a distance of up to five (5) metres to the broken line to restart with a rollball.

PLAYER NOTES

A. When moving forward or backward from the mark in accordance with Rule 11.4 or 11.5 players should indicate to the referee that such options have been chosen and thus avoid confusion.

B. When moving forward or backward in accordance with Rule 11.4 or 11.5 the player in possession should avoid contact with defending players and should not move sideways from the mark.

C. Attacking players are not required to exercise the option in accordance with Rule 11.4 or 11.5. The actions are optional at the discretion of the players. However, referees should encourage novice players to use the rules.

RULE 12 — BALL TOUCHED IN FLIGHT

- 1. Intentional Contact by Defender.** If the ball goes to ground following a defender's attempt to gain possession, the attacking team retains the ball and the touch count restarts. This also applies if the defending player deliberately knocks the ball to ground. The mark where the rollball occurs is where the ball first pitches or where the defender touched the ball, whichever is the best advantage for the attacking team.
- 2. Intentional Contact but not to Ground.** If a defending player touches the ball in flight and the ball is retrieved by an attacking player, play continues and the touch count restarts at the next touch.
- 3. Intentional Contact and Touched Again by Attacker.** If an attacking player attempts to gather the ball after a deflection by a defender and the ball goes to ground, the attacking team retains possession and the touch count restarts for Rule 12.1 above (see Referee Note A, below).
- 4. Rebound and Ball to Ground.** If the ball rebounds from a defending player who has not made an attempt to retrieve the ball and the ball goes to ground, a change of possession results and play restarts with a rollball where the ball first pitches or where the ball rebounded from the defender, whichever is the best advantage to the team gaining possession.
- 5. Rebounds but not to Ground.** If the ball rebounds from a defending player who has not made an attempt to retrieve the ball and the ball is regained by an attacking player, play and the touch count continue.

PLAYER NOTES

A. If an attacking player considers a deflection from a defending player is difficult to retrieve, the player may either let the ball go to ground (and receive six more touches from the mark of best advantage), or the player may attempt to retrieve the ball (and if the ball then goes to ground receive six more touches from the mark of best advantage).

REFEREE NOTES

A. In the case of Rule 12.3 above, the referee is to decide whether the deflection by the defending player was the cause of the ball to ground. Should the deflection be such that it could reasonably be retrieved by the attacking player, then a change of possession results.

B. If a ball deflected from a defending player travels in a forward direction and is then retrieved by a player of the attacking team, play should continue and Rule 12.2 applies.

C. Unintentional contact by a defending player includes contact on the arms and hands providing an attempt is not made to secure possession.

D. If a ball is passed forward and is then deflected by a defending player back to the attacking team, Rule 8.2 applies, with a penalty to the defending team.

RULE 13 — OFFSIDE

1. **Attacking Team.** A player in the attacking team is offside when that player is forward of the player who has possession or who last had possession. In general play offside attacking players who do not interfere with play remain liable to penalty.

2. **Attacking Player Offside at Tap.** Attacking players are to remain onside at a tap until the ball has been tapped.

RULING

A change of possession at the mark (see Rules 6.2 and 15.4).

3. **Defending Team.** A player of the defending team is offside when the following rules are infringed:

- (a) Rule 6.4 at the commencement and recommencement of play.
- (b) Rule 9.4 at the rollball.
- (c) Rule 15.5 at the tap for a penalty.

RULING

A tap awarded to the attacking team in accordance with the above Rules.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. Attacking players who are offside are non-effective and should return to an onside position as soon as possible.
- B. Offside defending players must at all times make an effort to retire to an onside position.
- C. Offside defenders at the rollball must make every effort to remain clear of advancing attacking players.
- D. A defending player must have both feet on or behind the defending scoreline to be onside when a rollball occurs within five (5) metres of that player's scoreline.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Refer to Notes of Rule 9.
- B. Defending players who are retiring should not normally be penalised while taking no active part in the game. However, they should ensure that they move out of the path of the advancing attacking players.
- C. Refer to Notes of Rule 15 for consecutive penalties.

RULE 14 — OBSTRUCTION

1. **Attacking Team.** Players of the attacking team are not to obstruct defending players from attempting to effect a touch. A player in possession must not run or otherwise move behind the referee or other players in the attacking team in an attempt to avoid a touch.

RULING

A tap to the defending team at the mark where the infringement occurred.

2. **Defending Team.** Players in the defending team are not to obstruct or otherwise interfere with attacking players supporting the player in possession.

RULING

A tap to the defending team at the mark where the infringement occurred.

2. **Defending Team.** Players in the defending team are not to obstruct or otherwise interfere with attacking players supporting the player in possession.

RULING

A tap awarded to the non-offending team at the mark of infringement providing the stoppage is not to the disadvantage of the attacking team.

PLAYER NOTES

A. A player supporting the player in possession is entitled to run as necessary to obtain the best supporting position. However, in moving to a supporting position attacking players must not deliberately interfere with defending players.

REFEREE NOTES

A. Referees should note any change in the line of support adopted by attacking players.

B. Accepted sub-unit skills such as wraps or run-arounds do not constitute obstruction.

C. If a player in possession runs into the referee or the referee runs into a player in possession, "play on" should result if there is no advantage either way. However, if the incident has an effect on the proceedings, a rollball should be called with no effect on the touch count.

RULE 15 — THE PENALTY TAP

1. **General.** A penalty tap is to be awarded for an infringement by any player in accordance with the rules contained herein.

2. **Location of Tap.** The mark for the tap is normally at the location of the infringement unless otherwise detailed in specific Rules. For infringements which occur on the boundaries or outside the field of play, the location of the tap is to be five (5) metres infield from where the infringement occurred.

3. **Method.** The method of taking a tap is detailed in Rule 6.3. The ball does not have to be lifted from the ground for a tap however, the ball must be at or behind the correct mark prior to the tap being taken.

RULING

A change of possession at the mark.

4. **Attacking Team.** Players of the attacking team are to be onside at the tap.

RULING

A change of possession at the mark.

5. **Defending Team.** Players of the defending team are to be onside at the tap as detailed in Rule 6.4.

RULING

A tap awarded to the attacking team along a line ten (10) metres directly forward of the original mark and nearest to the infringement.

PLAYER NOTES

A. The player who is to take the tap penalty is required to wait until the referee indicates the location of the mark before the tap can be taken. However a player may take a quick tap providing the referee acknowledges such a request and providing the tap is taken at or behind the correct mark.

B. For a tap within ten (10) metres of the scoreline players may take the ball directly behind the mark up to a maximum of ten (10) metres distance from the scoreline.

C. If a player chooses to rollball when a penalty tap is awarded, the player who receives the ball becomes the actinghalf and Rule 9.3 applies. If the player uses the foot at the rollball in lieu of a tap the player who receives the ball is not the actinghalf.

REFEREE NOTES

A. To allow the full advantage of a penalty to be realised there is to be minimum delay between awarding a penalty and the indication of the appropriate mark.

B. A player may take the ball back behind the mark for a tap to allow room to execute a move. In such cases the defending players must remain not closer than ten (10) metres from the mark or at the scoreline, whichever is the closest.

C. If an attacking player effects a touch on an offside defending player (usually following a quick tap) in an attempt to gain a further penalty, the referee may call "play on" depending on the actions of the defending player.

D. If an offside defending player (whether that player is retiring or not) attempts to obstruct or effect a touch on an attacking player following a quick tap, the referee should play the advantage and allow play to continue or award a penalty tap, whichever is the greater advantage to the attacking team.

E. To ensure control is maintained during a sequence of quick taps, the referee is to ensure that the location of the mark is correctly indicated.

F. Referees should indicate to the player who receives the ball at a rollball in lieu of a tap whether that player has become an actinghalf or not.

RULE 16 — ADVANTAGE

1. The principle of advantage to the non-offending team is to apply at all times, providing some advantage is readily obvious. Once a team is given the advantage that team does not necessarily forfeit the right to other action as described in these Rules.

PLAYER NOTES

A. Players should at all times play in accordance with the Rules of Touch and allow the referee to interpret advantage.

B. Players who use unnecessary force or whose actions unfairly prevent any other player from gaining an advantage will be liable to penalty.

RULE 17 — DISCIPLINE AND PLAYER MISCONDUCT

1. **General.** Players who infringe the Rules of Touch are liable to penalty or other appropriate action according to the seriousness of the infringement. Penalties are to be awarded in accordance with applicable Rules.
2. **Frequent Indiscipline.** A player who continually breaches the playing Rules is liable to dismissal. Team captains are responsible for the conduct of players in their respective teams and should be aware that undisciplined players are disruptive to the spirit of the game.
3. **Dismissal.** Any player may be dismissed as follows:
 - (a) **Period of Time.** A player dismissed for repeated infringements or any offence requiring more than a penalty is to move from the field of play and remain in a position midway along the team's attacking scoreline and no closer than five (5) metres to the scoreline. The dismissed player cannot be replaced.
 - (b) **Remainder of Game.** A player dismissed after any previous dismissal or for an offence such as gross misconduct or a dangerous act is to take no further part in the match and is to move to and remain not closer than ten (10) metres from the sideline. The dismissed player cannot be replaced and that player incurs a two (2) week suspension from all matches conducted by any Touch Association.
4. **Striking Officials.** Any player who is found guilty of striking and/or assaulting an official, referee or line referee is liable to disqualification from playing the game of Touch for life.
5. **Disciplinary Reports.** Officials are required to submit dismissal reports or any other reports required in accordance with the governing regulations of local associations.

PLAYER NOTES

A. A player sent from the field for a period of time is to remain at the mid-point of the attacking scoreline until recalled by the referee.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. The referee is the sole judge of time in relation to dismissed players.
- B. A referee is required to advise the team captain as to the reason for a player's dismissal.
- C. Referees must submit a written report on players sent from the field for the remainder of the game.

ADMINISTRATOR NOTES

- A. Controlling associations are to ensure that their constitution provides for:
 1. The powers for the general committee or executive to make appropriate By-Laws or Regulations.
 2. The power to enquire into and deal with any act.
 3. Powers to be given to a Judiciary.
 4. The boundaries of jurisdiction.
- B. Players sent from the field for the remainder of the game in a weekend tournament or K.O. Carnival will receive an automatic two (2) game suspension. (e.g. State or Regional Championships; National Teams Championships or National Championships).

RULE 18 — THE REFEREE AND LINE REFEREES

1. **The Referee.** The referee is the sole judge on matters of fact and is required to adjudicate on the Rules of the game during play. The referee may impose any sanction necessary to control the game and in particular, award penalties for infringements against the Rules.
2. **Authority of Referee.** Players, coaches and officials of both teams are under the control of the officiating referees.
3. **Area of Control.** The playing area under control of the referee extends from within the boundaries of the field of play, to an area which covers substitute players and officials involved in the particular game.
4. **Line Referees.** Line referees should be appointed to assist the referee with tasks associated with sidelines and other matters at the discretion of the referee. Their normal duties include indicating the ten (10) metre distance for penalty taps, controlling substitution, matters of backplay and other advice when sought by the central referee.

PLAYER NOTES

- A. Team captains may respectfully enquire of the referee, matters of varying interpretation or causes of penalties. Any discussion is to be brief and polite and must not delay play. Other team members should not talk to the referee.
- B. Players should indicate to line referees when substitution is to occur.

REFEREE NOTES

- A. Referees must familiarise themselves with grounds, markings and officials prior to the commencement of matches.
 - B. Referees may consult with line referees prior to making decisions.
- The following rule variations are included to provide players and coaches with variety and flexibility in developing skills under different conditions. The changes are included herein as guidelines only. Teachers, coaches and players alike are invited to vary the rules to suit individual participants. The activities suit players of all ages and abilities and can be amended further.

INDOOR TOUCH

Indoor Touch can be played as an alternative to the standard game however, because of the hard (usually wooden) playing surface, special attention must be given to rules which reduce the incidence of falling to the ground.

The following variations are suggested.

FIELD OF PLAY

Unless the indoor surface has suitably marked lines of approximate proportions to a basketball court, it is advisable to use the full dimensions of any hall or gymnasium to define the boundaries of the field of play. These boundaries should include the walls, which act as sidelines and scorelines respectively.

PLAYER ATTIRE

Footwear must be worn however, shoes should not have any tags, cleats or highly raised surfaces because of the hard nature of the floor. Ideally footwear should have a very soft cushioning effect and similar supporting properties to the standard basketball shoe.

Competitive performers may wish to wear elbow and knee guards similar to those available for skateboard and roller skating activities.

DURATION, MODE OF PLAY AND SCORING

Duration may be varied as required.

Scoring may be varied to allow players to score by effecting a touch with the ball on the attacking wall (i.e. the scorewall).

THE TOUCH

To reduce the chances of players falling over and incurring injuries on the hard indoor floors, it is advisable that two-handed touches are used. Further qualification, such as two-handed touches on body between shoulders and hips may also be utilised.

TEAM COMPOSITION AND SUBSTITUTION

Number of players will depend on size of playing field. It is the width of field available which will dictate the most suitable number. The following scale can be used as a guide:

50 metres wide	— 7 each side
40 metres wide	— 6 each side
35 metres wide	— 5 each side
30 metres wide	— 5 each side
25 metres wide	— 4 each side
20 metres wide	— 4 each side
less than 20 metres	— not suitable for competition

Substitution will be subject to the number of players available and the size of the field. Normal rules should apply during interchange.

SIDELINES AND SCORELINES

If the walls are used as sidewalls and scorewalls all normal rules apply however, where five (5) metres infield is used it is suggested that three (3) metres be applied for smaller indoor fields.

BEACH TOUCH

Touch is ideally suited as a beach activity either as recreation for various groups or as a training variety for competitive teams.

The following variations are suggested.

THE FIELD OF PLAY

Dimensions will vary according to the size of beach available. Although soft sand and hard sand areas may be included in the one field, this will provide participants with the opportunity to take advantage of the differing surfaces. It may be necessary to include sections of shallow water however, this will only add to both the recreational and training benefits. Markers can be made from mounds of sand or such items as beach towels.

PLAYER ATTIRE

It is necessary that competing players are able to identify their opponents and while recreational beach touch lends itself to casual attire or swimwear some sort of light clothing should be worn.

Additionally, the clothing offers some protection from possible sand burns and sunburn.

Footwear is not necessary for Beach Touch.

TEAM COMPOSITION

The number of players will depend on the size of the field and often the size of beach available will indicate the number of players that can be accommodated. The following can be used as a guide:

50 metres wide	— 7 each side
40 metres wide	— 6 each side
35 metres wide	— 5 each side
30 metres wide	— 5 each side
25 metres wide	— 4 each side
20 metres wide	— 4 each side
Less than 20 metres	— not suitable for competition

Substitutions should be given some priority if field dimensions available do not allow the majority to participate. A system of compulsory changeovers may be necessary.

THE ROLLBALL

Rather than attempt the rollball on sandy beaches it is recommended that players perform a pass between their legs to the waiting actinghalf. Alternatively, the touched player may touch the ball on the ground and then pass. A third alternative is to touch the ball with the foot prior to passing. It is suggested that one of these methods be selected and used rather than the normal rollball.

ACTINGHALF

Should a player use alternative methods of bringing the ball back into play following a touch it is necessary to clarify the rules relating to the actinghalf. The simplest method is to make the receiver of the first pass following a touch the actinghalf and normal rules apply as from then. Another option removes all rules referring to an actinghalf and any player may run and be touched without losing possession. Touched players must still be required to pass to restart the game.

EXPERIMENTAL TOUCH AND TOUCHBALL

Touch as a sport lends itself to many variations. The following variations incorporate some of these. Moreover as possible future developments it is important that amendments and rule changes are well tried and justified.

Touchball and Experimental Touch are two exciting variations which can be used as a recreational activity or as variety as for competitive teams.

The following amendments are suggested:

Experimental Touch incorporates all the normal playing rules for Touch. There are two variations.

THE ROLLBALL

Instead of rolling the ball backwards along the ground the player may either pass the ball between the legs or bounce the ball to the waiting acting half. In either case the ball must be released by the player in possession prior to the acting half touching the ball.

FORWARD PASS

An optional forward pass is allowed by the attacking team once in each six touches under the following conditions:

1. All attacking players must be onside at the rollball prior to the forward pass.
2. The forward pass can only be initiated from within the attacking team's own defensive half (i.e. nearest their defending scoreline).
3. The forward pass must go a minimum of ten (10) metres in a forward direction. (i.e. a pass which travels thirty (30) metres across field and only five (5) metres forward is not allowed).
4. A forward pass must be received (caught) no closer than fifteen (15) metres from the team's attacking scoreline.
5. If the ball is intercepted play continues.
6. If the attacking team is responsible for the ball going to ground for any reason a change of possession results and the mark for the rollball is the mark where the forward pass was thrown.

The ball may be played as normal prior to the forward pass. If a successful forward pass is made, no further forward passes may be made prior to the next possession change. Conventional touch rules apply within a team's attacking half of the field.

TOUCHBALL

Touchball is a recreational and fitness activity suitable for up to thirty players. It provides for many touch skills and is equally as simple to play.

THE FIELD AND THE BALL

The dimensions may vary depending on the number of participants. Up to twenty (20) players can be accommodated on a normal touch field and up to thirty (30) on a rugby-size field.

A normal touchball is suitable however, a soccer, rugby or even tennis ball will suffice.

Once some degree of expertise is achieved, a number of balls can be introduced as an alternative.

MODE OF PLAY AND SCORING

The game is commenced with a throw-up between two players of opposite teams. All other participants are required to remain outside a ten (10) metre area.

Players can run and pass the ball in any direction however, if touched by an opponent, they have two paces or two seconds to pass the ball. The ball must be touched by another player before that player can become involved again.

If the ball goes to ground possession is given to the team which was not last to touch the ball.

There is no limit to the number of touches which can be made on a team. Possession changes through intercepts and ball to ground.

Scoring is achieved in the normal manner however, variations can be introduced such as requiring the ball to be passed to a team player standing at the centre of the scoreline etc.

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