

TOUCH

DEFINITIONS

'Kicked directly into touch' means that the ball was kicked into touch without landing on the playing area, and without touching a player or the referee.

'The 22' is the area between the goal line and the 22-metre line, including the 22-metre line *but excluding the goal line*.

The line of touch is an imaginary line in the field of play at right angles to the touchline through the place where the ball is thrown in.

The ball is in touch when it is not being carried by a player and it touches the touchline or anything or anyone on or beyond the touchline.

The ball is in touch when a player is carrying it and the ball carrier (or the ball) touches the touchline or the ground beyond the touchline. The place where the ball carrier (or the ball) touched or crossed the touchline is where it went into touch.

The ball is in touch if a player catches the ball and that player has a foot on the touchline or the ground beyond the touchline. If a player has one foot in the field of play and one foot in touch and holds the ball, the ball is in touch.

If the ball crosses the touchline or touch-in-goal line, and is caught by a player who has both feet in the playing area, the ball is not in touch or touch-in-goal. Such a player may knock the ball into the playing area.

If a player jumps and catches the ball, both feet must land in the playing area otherwise the ball is in touch or touch-in-goal.

A player in touch may kick or knock the ball, but not hold it, provided it has not crossed the plane of the touchline. The plane of the touchline is the vertical space rising immediately above the touchline.

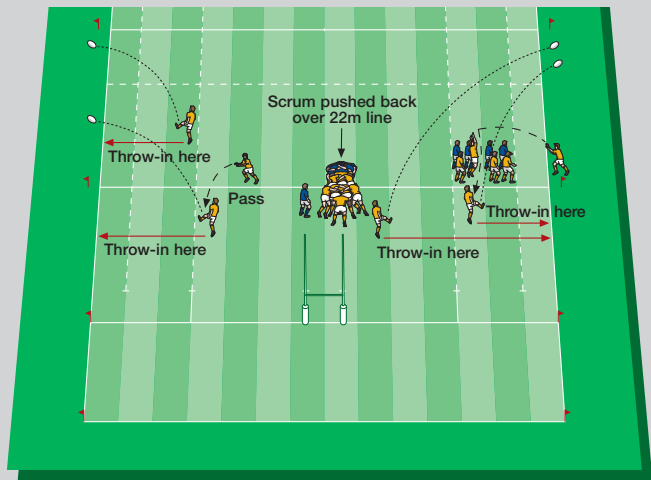
19.1 THROW-IN

NO GAIN IN GROUND

- (a) **Outside a team's 22, a team member kicks directly into touch.** Except for a penalty kick, when a player anywhere in the field of play who is outside the 22 kicks directly into touch, there is no gain in ground. The throw-in is taken either at the place opposite where the player kicked the ball, or at the place where it went into touch, whichever is nearer that player's goal line.
- (b) **When a team causes the ball to be put into their own 22.** When a defending player plays the ball from outside the 22 and it goes into that player's 22 or in-goal area without touching an opposition player and then that player or another player from that team kicks the ball directly into touch before it touches an opposition player, or a tackle takes place or a ruck or maul is formed, there is no gain in ground. This applies when a defending player moves back behind the 22 metre line to take a quick throw-in and then the ball is kicked directly into touch.
- (c) If a player with one or both feet inside the 22 metre line, picks up the ball which was stationary outside the 22 metre line, and kicks it directly into touch, then the player has taken the ball back inside the 22-metre line, so there is no gain in ground.
- (d) **Defending team takes ball into their own 22 at a scrum or lineout.** When a defending team throws the ball into a scrum or lineout outside that team's 22 and the ball then crosses into the team's 22 without touching an opposition player and then a player from the defending team kicks the ball directly into touch before it touches an opposition player, or a tackle takes place or a ruck or maul is formed, there is no gain in ground.

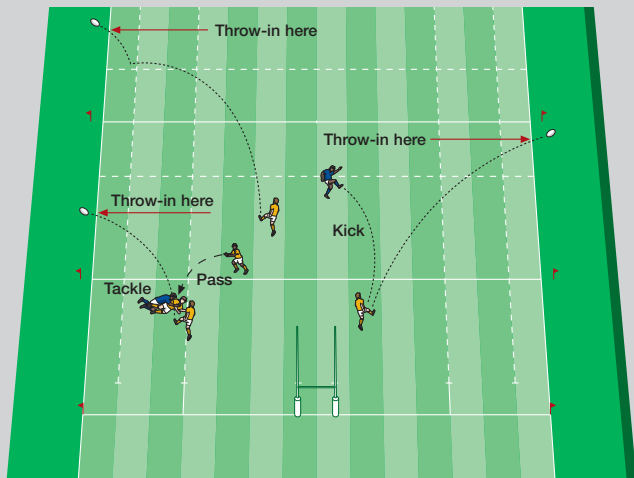
GAIN IN GROUND

- (e) If a player with one or both feet inside the 22 metre line, picks up the ball which was in motion outside the 22 metre line, and kicks it directly into touch from within the 22 metre area, the throw-in is where the ball went into touch.



No gain in ground

- (f) **Player takes ball into their own 22.** When a defending player plays the ball from outside the 22 and it goes into that player's 22 or in-goal area and it touches an opposition player, or a tackle takes place or a ruck or maul is formed and then the ball is kicked by a player of that team directly in touch, the throw-in is where the ball went into touch.
- (g) **Ball put into a player's 22 by the opposition.** When the ball is put into a team's 22 by the opposition, without having touched (or been touched by) a player of the defending team before crossing the 22 and the ball is then kicked into touch by the defending team, the throw-in is where the ball went into touch.



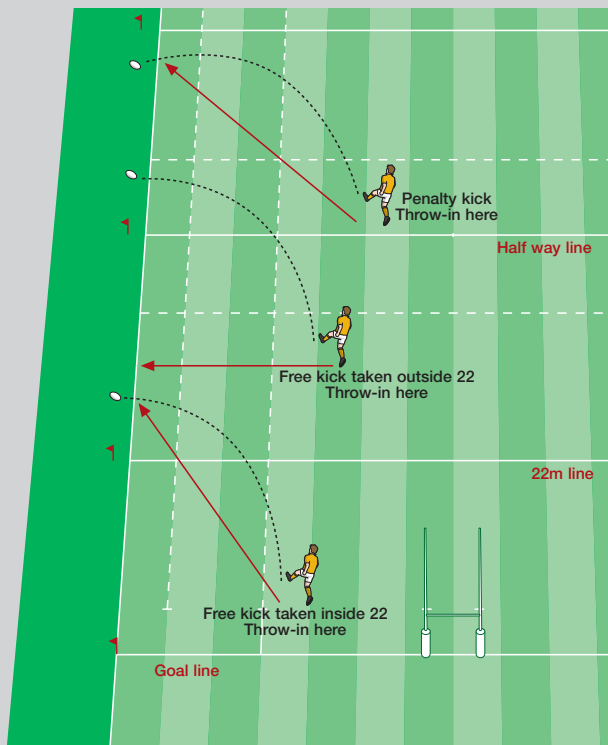
Gain in ground

- (h) **Kicks indirectly into touch.** When a player anywhere in the playing area kicks indirectly into touch so that the ball bounces in the field of play the throw-in is taken where the ball went into touch.

When a player anywhere in the playing area kicks the ball so that it touches or is touched by an opposition player and then goes indirectly into touch so that the ball bounces in the field of play the throw-in is taken where the ball went into touch.

When a player anywhere in the playing area kicks the ball so that it touches or is touched by an opposition player and then goes directly into touch the throw-in is taken in line with where the opposition player touched the ball or where the ball crossed the touchline if that is nearer the opposition player's goal line.

Law 19 Touch and Lineout



Touch & throw-in

PENALTY KICK

- (i) **Penalty kick.** When a player kicks to touch from a penalty kick anywhere in the playing area, the throw-in is taken where the ball went into touch.

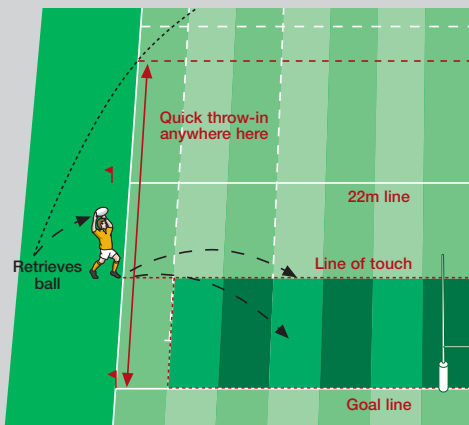
FREE KICK

- (j) **Outside the kicker's 22, no gain in ground.** When a free kick awarded outside the 22 goes directly into touch, the throw-in is in line with where the ball was kicked, or where it went into touch, whichever is nearer the kicker's goal line.
- (k) **Inside the kicker's 22 or in-goal, gain in ground.** When a free kick is awarded in the 22 or in-goal and the kick goes directly into touch, the throw-in is where the ball went into touch.

19.2 QUICK THROW-IN

- (a) A player may take a quick throw-in without waiting for a lineout to form.
- (b) For a quick throw-in, the player may be anywhere outside the field of play between the place where the ball went into touch and the player's goal line.
- (c) A player must not take a quick throw-in after the lineout has formed. If the player does, the quick throw-in is disallowed. The same team throws in at the lineout.
- (d) For a quick throw-in, the player must use the ball that went into touch. A quick throw-in is not permitted if another person has touched the ball apart from the player throwing it in and an opponent who carried it into touch. The same team throws into the lineout.

- (e) At a quick throw-in, if the player throws the ball in the direction of the opposition's goal line or if the ball does not travel at least 5 metres to the 5-metre line along or behind the line of touch before it touches the ground or a player, or if the player steps into the field of play when the ball is thrown, then the quick throw-in is disallowed. The opposing team chooses to throw in at either a lineout where the quick throw-in was attempted, or a scrum on the 15-metre line at that place. If they too throw in the ball incorrectly at the lineout, a scrum is formed on the 15-metre line. The team that first threw in the ball throws in the ball at the scrum.
- (f) At a quick throw-in a player may throw the ball in straight along the line of touch or towards that player's goal line.
- (g) At a quick throw-in, a player may come to the line of touch and leave without being penalised.



Quick throw-in

- (h) At a quick throw-in, a player must not prevent the ball being thrown in 5 metres.

Sanction: Free Kick on 15-metre line

- (i) If a player carrying the ball is forced into touch, that player must release the ball to an opposition player so that there can be a quick throw-in.

Sanction: Penalty kick on 15-metre line

19.3 OTHER THROW INS

On all other occasions, the throw-in is taken where the ball went into touch.

19.4 WHO THROWS IN

The throw-in is taken by an opponent of the player who last held or touched the ball before it went into touch. When there is doubt, the attacking team takes the throw-in.

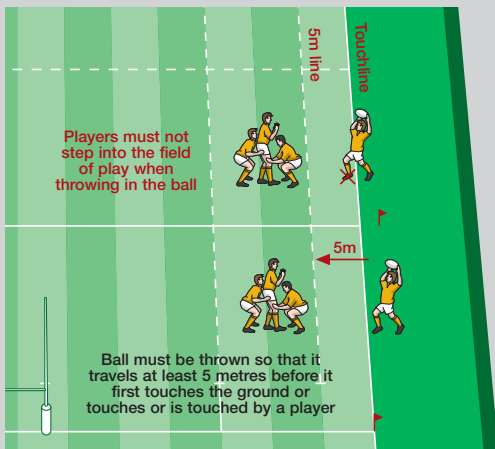
Exception: When a team takes a penalty kick, and the ball is kicked into touch, the throw-in is taken by a player of the team that took the penalty kick. This applies whether the ball was kicked directly or indirectly into touch.

19.5 PLAYER WITH FOOT IN TOUCH

- (a) If a player with one or both feet on or beyond the touch-line (or touch-in-goal line), picks up the ball, which was stationary within the playing area, that player has picked up the ball in the playing area and thereby that player has taken the ball into touch (or touch-in-goal).
- (b) If a player with one or both feet on or beyond the touch-line (or touch-in-goal line), picks up the ball, which was in motion within the playing area, that player is deemed to have picked up the ball in touch (or touch-in-goal).

19.6 HOW THE THROW-IN IS TAKEN

The player taking the throw-in must stand at the correct place. The player must not step into the field of play when the ball is thrown. The ball must be thrown straight, so that it travels at least 5 metres along the line of touch before it first touches the ground or touches or is touched by a player.



How the throw-in takes place

19.7 INCORRECT THROW-IN

- (a) If the throw-in at a lineout is incorrect, the opposing team has the choice of throwing in at a lineout or a scrum on the 15-metre line. If they choose the throw-in to the lineout and it is again incorrect, a scrum is formed. The team that took the first throw-in throws in the ball.

- (b) The throw-in at the lineout must be taken without delay and without pretending to throw.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line
- (c) A player must not intentionally or repeatedly throw the ball in not straight.
Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line

LINEOUT

DEFINITIONS

The purpose of the lineout is to restart play, quickly, safely and fairly, after the ball has gone into touch, with a throw-in between two lines of players.

Lineout players. Lineout players are the players who form the two lines that make a lineout.

Receiver. The receiver is the player in position to catch the ball when lineout players pass or knock the ball back from the lineout. Any player may be the receiver but each team may have only one receiver at a lineout.

Players taking part in the lineout known as participating players. Players taking part in the lineout are the player who throws-in and an immediate opponent, the two players waiting to receive the ball from the lineout and the lineout players.

All other players. All other players who are not taking part in the lineout must be at least 10 metres behind the line of touch, on or behind their goal line if that is nearer, until the lineout ends.

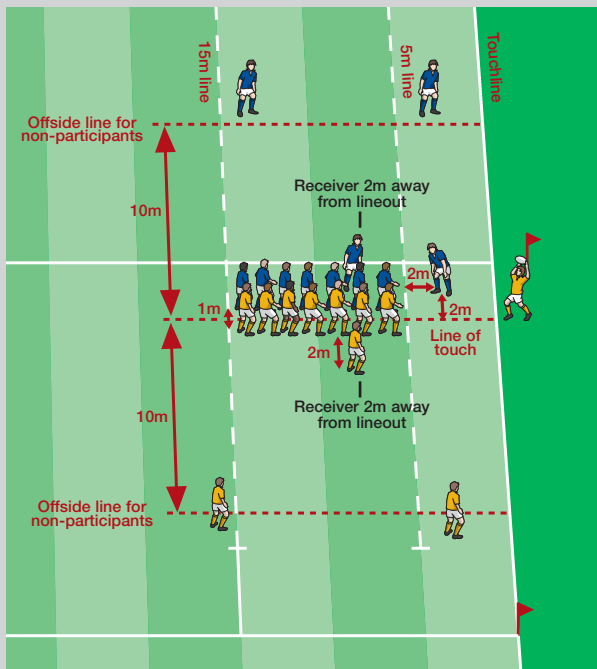
15-metre line. The 15-metre line is 15 metres infield and parallel with the touchline.

Scrum after lineout. Any scrum ordered because of an infringement or stoppage at the lineout is on the 15-metre line on the line of touch.

19.8 FORMING A LINEOUT

- (a) **Minimum.** At least two players from each team must form a lineout.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line
- (b) **Maximum.** The team throwing in the ball decides the maximum number of players in the lineout.
- (c) The opposing team may have fewer lineout players but they must not have more.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line
- (d) When the ball is in touch, every player who approaches the line of touch is presumed to do so to form a lineout. Players who approach the line of touch must do so without delay. Players of either team must not leave the lineout once they have taken up a position in the lineout until the lineout has ended.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line
- (e) If the team throwing in the ball put fewer than the usual number of players in the lineout, their opponents must be given a reasonable time to move enough players out of the lineout to satisfy this Law.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line
- (f) These players must leave the lineout without delay. They must move to the offside line, 10 metres behind the line of touch. If the lineout ends before they reach this line, they may rejoin play.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line
- (g) **Failure to form a lineout.** A team must not voluntarily fail to form a lineout.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line
- (h) **Where the lineout players must stand.** The front of the lineout is not less than 5 metres from the touchline. The back of the lineout is not more than 15 metres from the touchline. All lineout players must stand between these two points.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line

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The lineout



- (i) **Where the receiver must stand.** The receiver must stand at least 2 metres towards that player's goal line from that player's team-mates who are lineout players and between 5 and 15 metres from the touchline until the lineout begins.

Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line

Exception: The receiver may run into the gap and perform any of the actions available to any other player in the lineout. The receiver is liable to sanction for offences in the lineout as would be other players in the lineout.

- (j) **Player between touch and 5 metres.** The team not throwing in must have a player standing between the touchline and the 5-metre line on that team's side of the line of touch when the lineout is formed. That player must stand **2 metres from the line of touch** and 2 metres from the 5-metre line.

Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line

- (k) Participating players in a lineout may change places before the ball is thrown.

- (l) **Two single straight lines.** The lineout players of both teams form two single parallel lines each at right angles to the touchline.

Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line

- (m) Opposing players forming a lineout must keep a clear space between their inside shoulders. This space is determined when players are in an upright stance.

Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line

- (n) **Metre gap.** Each line of players must be half a metre on their side of the line of touch.

Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line

- (o) The line of touch must not be within 5 metres of the goal line.

- (p) After the lineout has formed, but before the ball has been thrown in, a player must not hold, push, charge into, or obstruct an opponent.

Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line



19.9 BEGINNING AND ENDING A LINEOUT

- (a) **Lineout begins.** The lineout begins when the ball leaves the hands of the player throwing it in.
- (b) **Lineout ends.** The lineout ends when the ball or a player carrying it leaves the lineout.

This includes the following:

When the ball is thrown, knocked or kicked out of the lineout, the lineout ends.

When the ball or a player carrying the ball moves into the area between the 5-metre line and the touchline, the lineout ends.

When a lineout player hands the ball to a player who is peeling off, the lineout ends.

When the ball is thrown beyond the 15-metre line, or when a player takes or puts it beyond that line, the lineout ends.

When a ruck or maul develops in a lineout, and all the feet of all the players in the ruck or maul move beyond the line of touch, the lineout ends.

When the ball becomes unplayable in a lineout, the lineout ends. Play restarts with a scrum.

19.10 OPTIONS AVAILABLE IN A LINEOUT

- (a) **Levering on an opponent.** A lineout player must not use an opponent as a support when jumping.
Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line
- (b) **Holding or shoving.** A lineout player must not hold, push, charge, obstruct or grasp an opponent not holding the ball except when a ruck or maul is taking place.
Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line
- (c) **Illegal charging.** A lineout player must not charge an opponent except in an attempt to tackle the opponent or to play the ball.
Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line
- (d) **Lifting and supporting.** Players may assist a team-mate in jumping for the ball by lifting and supporting that player providing that the lifting and/or supporting players do not support the jumping team-mate below the shorts from behind or below the thighs from the front.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line
- (e) **Pre-gripping is permitted.** Players who are going to lift or support a team-mate jumping for the ball may pre-grip that team-mate providing they do not pre-grip below the shorts from behind and below the thighs from the front.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line
- (f) **Jumping, supporting or lifting before the ball is thrown.** A player must not jump or be lifted or supported before the ball has left the hands of the player throwing in.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line
- (g) **Lowering a Player.** Players who support a jumping team-mate must lower that player to the ground as soon as the ball has been won by a player of either team.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line
- (h) **Blocking the throw-in.** A lineout player must not stand less than 5 metres from the touchline. A lineout player must not prevent the ball being thrown in 5 metres.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line

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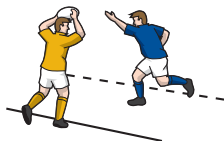
No levering on an opponent



No holding or shoving



No illegal charging



No blocking the throw



Pre-gripping is permitted



Lifting of lineout players is permitted



- (i) When the ball has been thrown beyond a player in the lineout, that player may move to the space between the touchline and the 5-metre line. If the player moves into that space the player must not move towards that player's goal line before the lineout ends, except in a peeling off movement.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line
- (j) **Catching or deflecting.** When jumping for the ball, a player must use either both hands or the inside arm to try to catch or deflect the ball. The jumper must not use the outside arm alone to try to catch or deflect the ball. If the jumper has both hands above the head either hand may be used to play the ball.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line

19.11 PLAYER THROWING-IN

There are four options available to the player throwing in:

- (a) The thrower may stay within 5 metres of the touchline.
- (b) The thrower may retire to the offside line 10 metres behind the line of touch.
- (c) The thrower may join the lineout as soon as the ball has been thrown in.
- (d) The thrower may move into the receiver position if that position is empty. If the thrower goes anywhere else, the thrower is offside.

Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line

19.12 PEELING OFF

DEFINITIONS

A lineout player 'peels off' when leaving the lineout to catch the ball knocked or passed back by a team-mate.

- (a) **When:** A player must not peel off until the ball has left the hands of the player throwing it in.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line, in line with the line of touch.
- (b) A player who peels off, must stay within the area from that player's line of touch to 10 metres from the line of touch, and must keep moving until the lineout has ended.
Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line, in line with the line of touch.
- (c) Players may change their positions in the lineout before the ball is thrown in.

19.13 OFFSIDE LINES AT THE LINEOUT

- (a) When a lineout forms, there are two separate offside lines, parallel to the goal lines, for the teams.
- (b) **Participating players.** One offside line applies to the players taking part in the lineout (usually some or all of the forwards, plus the scrum half and the player throwing in). Until the ball is thrown in, and has touched a player or the ground, this offside line is the line of touch. After that, the offside line is a line through the ball.
- (c) **Players not taking part.** The other offside line applies to the players not taking part in the lineout (usually the backs). For them, the offside line is 10 metres behind the line of touch or their goal line, if that is nearer.

19.14 OFFSIDE WHEN TAKING PART IN THE LINEOUT

- (a) **Before the ball has touched a player or the ground.** A player must not overstep the line of touch. A player is offside if, before the ball has touched a player or the ground, that player oversteps the line of touch, unless doing so while jumping for the ball. The player must jump from that player's side of the line of touch.

Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line

- (b) If a player jumps and crosses the line of touch but fails to catch the ball, that player is not penalised provided that player gets back onside without delay.

Players jumping for the ball may take a step in any direction providing they do not step across the line of touch.

Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line

- (c) **After the ball has touched a player or the ground.** A player not carrying the ball is offside if, after the ball has touched a player or the ground, that player steps in front of the ball, unless tackling (or trying to tackle) an opponent. Any attempt to tackle must start from that player's side of the ball.

Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line

- (d) The referee must penalise any player who, intentionally or not, moves into an offside position without trying to win possession or tackle an opponent.

Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line

- (e) No player of either team participating in the lineout may leave the lineout until it has ended.

Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line

- (f) **Long throw-in.** If the player who is throwing in throws the ball beyond the 15-metre line, a player taking part in the lineout may run infield beyond the 15-metre line as soon as the ball leaves the hands of the player throwing in.

If this happens, an opponent may also run infield. If a player runs infield to take a long throw in, and the ball is not thrown beyond the 15-metre line, this player is offside and must be penalised.

Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line

- (g) **Ruck and maul from a lineout.** When a ruck or a maul develops in a lineout the offside line for a player taking part in the lineout no longer runs through the ball. The offside line is now the hindmost foot of that player's team in the ruck or maul.
- (h) The lineout ends when the ruck or maul leaves the line of touch. For this to happen, all the feet of all the players in the ruck or maul must have left the line of touch.
- (i) A player taking part in the lineout must either join the ruck or maul, or retire to the offside line and stay at that line, otherwise that player is offside.
Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line
- (j) The rest of the Law of ruck or maul applies. A player must not join the ruck or maul from the opponents' side.
Sanction: Penalty kick
- (k) Players must not join it in front of the offside line. If they do, they are offside.
Sanction: Penalty kick on the 15-metre line

19.15 OFFSIDE WHEN NOT TAKING PART IN THE LINEOUT

- (a) A player who is not taking part in the lineout is offside if that player oversteps the offside line before the lineout has ended.
Sanction: Penalty kick on the offending team's offside line opposite the place of infringement, at least 15 metres from the touchline.
- (b) **Players not yet onside when the ball is thrown in.** A player may throw in the ball even if a team-mate has not yet reached the offside line. However, if this player is not trying to reach an onside position without delay, this player is offside.
Sanction: Penalty kick on the offending team's offside line opposite the place of infringement, at least 15 metres from the touchline
- (c) **Long throw in.** If the player who is throwing in throws the ball beyond the 15-metre line, a player of the same team may run forward to take the ball as soon as the ball leaves the hands of the player throwing in. If that player does so, opponents may also run forward. If a player runs forward to take a long throw in, and the ball is not thrown beyond the 15-metre line, this player is offside and must be penalised.
Sanction: Penalty kick on the offending team's offside line, opposite the place of infringement, at least 15 metres from the touchline
- (d) **Ruck and maul from a lineout.** When a ruck or maul develops in a lineout, the lineout has not ended until all the feet of all the players in the ruck or maul have moved beyond the line of touch.

Until then, the offside line for players not taking part in the lineout is still 10 metres behind the line of touch, or the goal line if that is nearer. A player who oversteps this offside line is offside.

Sanction: Penalty kick on the offside line, at least 15 metres from the touchline