

Ruling 7: 2009

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Request for a Ruling from the Designated Members from USA Rugby

The request for a Ruling arises from the way that players are required to join a ruck which appears to be covered by a number of sections in the Law Book and in particular:

Law 16.2 (b)

A player joining a ruck must bind onto the ruck with at least one arm around the body of a team-mate using the whole arm.

Law 10 4 (j)

Players must not charge into a ruck or maul without binding onto a player in the ruck or maul.

This leads to the following questions:

1. Does a player joining a ruck have to bind on a team-mate?
2. Can a player joining a ruck bind on to an opposition player?
3. Does the contact with the arm have to precede contact with any other part of the body?
4. Does the contact with the arm have to be simultaneous with contact with any other part of the body?
5. Can contact with the shoulder precede contact with the binding arm?

Ruling of the Designated Members:

The Designated Members in reviewing the Request for Ruling also had in mind Law 10 4 (g) Dangerous Charging. A player must not charge or knock down an opponent without trying to grasp that player.

The grasping of a player on contact in open play and binding on contact at rucks and mauls is designed to protect players on impact. Bearing this in mind the Designated Members have ruled:

1. If a team-mate is the hindmost player in the ruck then a player must bind onto that player in accordance with Law 16.5 (c) – Offside at the ruck
2. It is recognized in a dynamic game that rucks are not perfectly formed and therefore to comply with Law 16.5 – Offside at the ruck, contact may have to occur with an opposition player. This contact would require a bind to take place in accordance with Law 10.4 (j)
3. In answer to questions 3, 4 and 5 the bind onto another player when joining the ruck must either precede or be simultaneous with contact with any other part of the body including the shoulder of the joining player

Yours sincerely,

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