

**To:** Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership

**From:** Hugh H. Penman-Head of Council and Member Services

**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

**Ruling:** 3: 2003

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> June 2003

**Number of pages (incl. cover):**

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**SRU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 15-Tackle & Law 17 Maul:**

Team A win the ball in a line-out. The ball carrier is joined by several of his team mates and they move off the line of touch towards their opponents' goal-line. One player of team B on his own grasps the ball –carrier and brings him to ground.

1. Is the maul formed under Law 17 as soon as the player from Team B grasps the player from Team A and he then collapses the maul.
2. Is the player from Team B tackling the ball-carrier under Law 15 and play should therefore continue.

**The Designated Members have ruled the following in answer to questions raised:**

1. Is the maul formed under Law 17 as soon as the player from Team B grasps the player from Team A and he then collapses the maul?

**Ruling**

By definition, given the abovementioned scenario, a maul has formed. Therefore given this scenario, if the player from Team B collapses the maul, then he is liable to penalty.

2. Is the player from Team B tackling the ball-carrier under Law 15 and play should therefore continue?

**Ruling**

By definition, given the abovementioned scenario, a tackle has not occurred.

**Yours sincerely,**

Hugh H. Penman  
**Head of Council and Member Services**

**To:** Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership

**From:** Hugh H. Penman-Head of Council and Member Services

**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

**Ruling:** 6: 2003

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> July 2003

**Number of pages (incl. cover): 1**

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**The Scottish Rugby Union has requested a ruling with regard to Law 17 as follows:**

"I refer to Ruling 3: 2003 contained in your fax of 7th June 2003 in response to the SRU with regard to a ruling under Law 15 - Tackle and Law 17 - Maul. It is noted that the Designated Members ruled that the player is liable to penalty for collapsing the maul. I would ask you to refer the definition of Law 17 - Maul to the designated Members for further consideration.

Under the definition, " A maul occurs when a player carrying the ball is held by **one or more opponents** and one or more of the ball carriers team mates bind onto the ball carrier."

If this is deemed to be sequential, a maul is not formed if players from the ball carrier's team join on to the ball carrier before the opposition.

It is noted under a previous Ruling that where three players move beyond the line of touch to receive the ball they are treated as one player and are not liable to penalty. In our opinion, if we treat the ball carrier and his team mates as one player, this would allow the ball carrier to be brought to ground under the Tackle Law."

**The Designated Members have ruled as follows in answer to the question raised:**

1. Under the definition, " A maul occurs when a player carrying the ball is held by **one or more opponents** and one or more of the ball carriers team mates bind onto the ball carrier."  
If this is deemed to be sequential, a maul is not formed if players from the ball carrier's team join on to the ball carrier before the opposition.

**Ruling**

Whilst a maul is considered to be built by the ball carrier, one or more opponents and one or more of the ball carriers team mates, it does not have to have any of the three player components joining in any specific order.

**Yours sincerely,**

Hugh H. Penman  
**Head of Council and Member Services**

**To:** Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership

**From:** Hugh H. Penman-Head of Council and Member Services

**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

**Ruling:** 8: 2003

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**IRFU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 15 Tackle & Law 17**

**Maul:**

We would be grateful for clarification of your ruling of 7<sup>th</sup> June (Ruling 3:2003) in response to the query from S.R.U.

Our understanding is that:

1. Team A win the ball and the ball carrier is joined by several of his team mates and they move towards the opponents goal line. If a player from Team B grasps an opponent and thus forms a maul, which **he then collapses**, he is liable to penalty.
2. However, if the player from Team B **instantaneously brings the ball carrier to ground**, then, under Law 7 mode of play, he is not liable to penalty, as this constitutes a tackle.

Otherwise the defence of certain situations would appear impossible e.g.:

- Players of Team A joined together, breaking away from a maul with the ball carrier (at the front of this group) not being tackleable.
- Player of Team A, in open play, running towards Team B's goal line is joined by a team mate(s), and not being tackleable.

**The Designated Members have ruled the following in answer to the question raised:**

1. Team A win the ball and the ball carrier is joined by several of his team mates and they move towards the opponents goal line. If a player from Team B grasps an opponent and thus forms a maul, which **he then collapses**, he is liable to penalty.
2. However, if the player from Team B **instantaneously brings the ball carrier to ground**, then, under Law 7 mode of play, he is not liable to penalty, as this constitutes a tackle.

**Ruling**

1. It is assumed by the wording of the original Law Ruling request from the SRU, and again in this request, that the ball and players had moved off the line of touch. In this scenario, if the player from Team B grasps an opponent who is not the ball-carrier, then a maul has not been formed, and he is playing an opponent without the ball.

If the player was to have grasped the ball-carrier, and did not bind to the ball-carrier as per the definition of binding, then a maul has not been formed. If the grasping player then brings the ball-carrier to ground, there is no penalty as there was no maul formed.

Binding-Definition: Grasping firmly another player's body between the shoulder and the hip with the whole arm in contact from hand to shoulder.

If a player binds on an opposition player who is a ball-carrier (who is already bound to a team mate) from shoulder to hip with at least one arm around the body, by definition he has bound onto the player and therefore any action taken to bring the ball carrier to ground constitutes an illegal collapse of the maul.

If however, the player of the team not in possession of the ball is the first player from his team to make contact with the ball-carrier (who is bound with a team mate), and that player does not bind the ball-carrier around the body from shoulder to hip (i.e grasps the ball-carrier below the hip) he is not bound to the ball-carrier and can complete a tackle in accordance with Law.

2. It is assumed by the wording of the original Law Ruling request from the SRU, and again in this part of the request, that the ball and players had moved off the line of touch.

In this second scenario, the same issues as noted in Ruling 8.1 above apply, plus the following.

The word 'instantaneously', does not affect the outcomes listed under the Ruling 8.1.

**Note:** If at a line-out, the catcher of the ball comes to ground (hereafter called the ball-carrier), and then an opposition player **immediately** brings the ball-carrier to ground, he is not liable to penalty.

**Yours sincerely,**

Hugh H. Penman

**Head of Council and Member Services**

**To:** Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership

**From:** Hugh H. Penman-Head of Council and Member Services

**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Laws Committee

**Ruling:** 11: 2003

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NZRFU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 15 Tackle and Law 17

Maul:

The NZRFU is in receipt of Ruling 3:2003. The Union seeks further clarification on the interpretation implicit in Ruling 3. In order to bring further clarity to what is involved in forming a maul and collapsing a maul we would request answers to the following questions.

1. Team A wins a 5m attacking scrum. The #8 detaches with the ball, and #6 binds on immediately and they drive towards the line.
  - a. A defending player drives in low and wraps his arms around the legs (knee height) of the #8, who still has his #6 bound to him. The #8 still in possession of the ball is brought to ground.

By his actions is the defender:

    - i. Forming a maul?
    - ii. Collapsing a maul?
  
2. Team A wins a 5m attacking scrum. The #8 detaches with the ball, and #6 binds on immediately and they drive towards the line.
  - a. A defending player, while remaining on his feet, grasps his jersey (shoulder region) of the #8, who still has his #6 bound to him, and immediately brings him to ground.

By his actions is the defender:

    - i. Forming a maul?
    - ii. Collapsing a maul?

3. Team A wins a 5m attacking scrum. The #8 detaches with the ball, and #6 binds on immediately and they drive towards the line.
  - a. A defending player, while remaining on his feet, drives into the #8, who still has his #6 bound to him, and binds on him in an effort to prevent their forward progress.

By his actions is the defender:

    - i. Forming a maul?

If the answer to 3.a.i. is yes, and the defender now drags the maul to the ground, is he:

    - ii. Collapsing a maul?

**The Designated Members have ruled the following in answer to the question raised:**

1. Team A wins a 5m attacking scrum. The #8 detaches with the ball, and #6 binds on immediately and they drive towards the line.
  - a. A defending player drives in low and wraps his arms around the legs (knee height) of the #8, who still has his #6 bound to him. The #8 still in possession of the ball is brought to ground.

By his actions is the defender:

    - i. Forming a maul?
    - ii. Collapsing a maul?

**Ruling**

The defender has not formed a maul, nor has he collapsed a maul.

2. Team A wins a 5m attacking scrum. The #8 detaches with the ball, and #6 binds on immediately and they drive towards the line.
  - a. A defending player, while remaining on his feet, grasps his jersey (shoulder region) of the #8, who still has his #6 bound to him, and immediately brings him to ground.

By his actions is the defender:

    - i. Forming a maul?
    - ii. Collapsing a maul?

**Ruling**

The defender, if he has not bound (by definition) to the ball-carrier #8, has not formed a maul, nor has he collapsed a maul.

3. Team A wins a 5m attacking scrum. The #8 detaches with the ball, and #6

binds on immediately and they drive towards the line.

a. A defending player, while remaining on his feet, drives into the #8,

who still has his #6 bound to him, and binds on him in an effort to

prevent their forward progress.

By his actions is the defender:

i. Forming a maul?

If the answer to 3.a.i. is yes, and the defender now drags the maul to the ground, is he:

ii. **Collapsing a maul?**

### **Ruling**

The defender has formed a maul, and has collapsed a maul, and is therefore subject to penalty.

**Yours sincerely,**

Hugh H. Penman

**Head of Council and Member Services**

**To:** Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership

**From:** David Carrigy, Council & Member Services Manager

**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Rugby Committee

**Date:** November 29, 2006

**Ruling:** 9: 2006

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**The FFR has requested a ruling with regard to Law 17 Maul**

1. During a maul the ball carrier and one of his team mates leave the maul.
  - a. Can an opponent tackle the ball carrier?
  - b. Does the ball carrier have to be the lead player?
2. During a maul. The defending teams players leave the maul, with the exception of only one player who remains bound.
  - a. Can this player tackle the ball carrier?
3. During a lineout, the players who won the ball form a maul but no opponent goes to join this group of players.
  - a. Does this group of players constitute a maul?
  - b. Can an opponent tackle the ball carrier?
  - c. Does the ball carrier have to be the lead player?

**The Designated Members have ruled the following in answer to the question raised:**

1.
  - a. Yes as it is no longer a maul.
  - b. Yes otherwise it is obstruction.
2.
  - a. It is still a maul, and the maul cannot be collapsed.
3.
  - a. It is not a maul by definition.
  - b. Yes
  - c. Yes otherwise it is obstruction.

**Yours sincerely,  
David Carrigy  
Council & Member Services Manager**