



**To:** Secretaries / CEOs of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership  
**From:** David Carrigy, Head of External & Member Relations  
**Subject:** Law Ruling by Designated Members of Rugby Committee  
**Date:** October 22, 2008  
**ELV Ruling:** 4 : 2008

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**The NZRU has requested a ruling relating to Law 20 12 and ELV Ruling 2**

“ELV Ruling 2 refers to Law 20.12 (d) and (e) Offside at the Scrum.

The Ruling by the Designated Members was asked for by the FIR.  
Law 20.12 (e) states:

*(e) The scrum half whose team does not win possession of the ball must not move away from the scrum and then remain in front of the offside line. For that scrum half that runs through the hindmost foot of that player's team in the scrum.*

This means that the scrum half must stay close to the scrum and not in front of the offside line being the hindmost foot of his scrum.

It could also be inferred that providing the scrum half remains behind the offside line running through the hindmost foot of his scrum he does not have to stay close to the scrum.

The NZRU asks the Designated Members for a ruling please”.

For the sake of clarity and completeness the Law relating to offside at the scrum is produced below

**20.12 OFFSIDE AT THE SCRUM**

(a) When the scrum is set, the scrum half not throwing the ball into the scrum must take up a position either at the same side of the scrum as the scrum half throwing in the ball or behind the offside line defined for other players.



(b) **Offside for scrum-halves.** When a team has won the ball in a scrum, the scrum half of that team is offside if both feet are in front of the ball while it is still in the scrum. If the scrum half has only one foot in front of the ball, the scrum half is not offside.

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick

(c) When a team has won the ball in a scrum, the scrum half of the opposing team is offside if that scrum half steps in front of the ball with either foot while the ball is still in the scrum.

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick

(d) The scrum half whose team does not win possession of the ball must not move to the opposite side of the scrum and overstep the offside line for that scrum half that runs through the hindmost foot of that player's team in the scrum.

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick

(e) The scrum half whose team does not win possession of the ball must not move away from the scrum and then remain in front of the offside line for that scrum half that runs through the hindmost foot of that player's team in the scrum.

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick

(f) Any player may be scrum half, but a team can have only one scrum half at each scrum.

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick on the offside line

(g) **Offside for players not in the scrum.** Players who are not in the scrum and who are not the team's scrum half, are offside if they remain in front of their offside line or overstep the offside line which is a line parallel to the goal lines and 5 metres from the hindmost player of each team in a scrum .

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick on the offside line

#### **Ruling - ELV Ruling 4 - Superseding ELV Ruling 2**

The scrum half who is not throwing the ball into the scrum must either

- take up a position at the same side of the scrum as the scrum half throwing in the ball, or



- o behind the offside line for players not participating in the scrum (5 metres back from the hindmost player in that player's scrum).  
**Reference Law 20. 12 (a)**

Once the ball has been won by a team, the scrum half of the team that does not win possession (and who has been either the scrum half throwing in the ball or the opposition scrum half who took up a position on the same side of the scrum as the scrum half throwing in the ball) may follow the ball in the scrum providing that that player does not put either foot in front of the ball. **Reference Law 12. 12 (c)**

The other option available to the scrum half is to move behind his or her offside line that runs through the hindmost foot of that player's team in the scrum. Providing that scrum half whose team does not win possession does not move away from the scrum until he or she reaches the offside line (**Reference Law 20. 12 d**). The scrum half can take up any position behind that offside line providing that he or she does not step over that offside line on either side of the scrum (**Reference Law 20.12 (d)** and **Reference Law 20. 12 (e)**) Providing the scrum half in opposition to the team that wins the ball does not go across the offside line (a line that runs through the hindmost foot of that player's team in the scrum) he or she does not have to stay close to the scrum.

### **In Summary**

1. Both scrum halves must take up a position on the same side of the scrum as the scrum half throwing in the ball (the scrum half not throwing in the ball may be positioned behind the offside line for the non participants and must stay there until the scrum is over).
2. After the ball has been won the scrum half of the team who has not won the ball who was positioned next to the player throwing in the ball can do one of two things:
  - a. Follow the ball whilst remaining on side
  - b. Go directly back to the hindmost foot in the scrum and then take up a position anywhere behind this offside line.

**Yours faithfully**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Carrigy', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

**David Carrigy**  
**Head of External and Member Relations**