

Law 6.16: TMO Protocol
Implementation as Global Law Trial: 1 January 2025

The intention of this Protocol is to allow the TMO to support and enable the on-field team to make better, more accurate decisions when they are in need of such support.
It is not to enable the TMO to drive decision making.

Section 1: Guiding principles

- The referee remains the lead decision-maker of the officiating team. The intention of the protocol is to provide the referee, assistant referees and the TMO (commonly referred to as the Team of 4 – ToF4) with a technology-based solution to collectively make better and more accurate decisions.
- The Protocol operates in the space commonly defined as “**clear and obvious.**” For clarity purposes, this is defined as an incident that is unlikely to be refereed in any other way.
- The application of the TMO Protocol must be credible & consistent and in doing so, contribute to maintaining the integrity of the game.
- The Protocol enables the To4 to make formal referrals where discussions are needed to decide on the best game decision, but also allow them to make live calls where they are in no doubt as to what the outcome of a particular incident may be.

Section 2: Types of Referrals

Referrals are classified as either formal referrals, or live referrals.

1. Formal referrals:

- Where any member of the To4 wishes to formally refer an incident within protocol, then the referee will instigate a formal process with play and time stopped.
- The time window for any process following a try is until the subsequent restart kick, not the conversion kick.

2. Live referrals:

- Where any member of the T04 can make an accurate call without having to formally refer to the TMO.
- Live referrals are only intended to be used where the on-field team have missed a clear and obvious incident/decision that does **not** need formal referral.
- This may be a live call by the TMO, after reviewing a video replay or delay screen.
- Laws covered are indicated in the section below

Timeframes for any referral

Figure 1: Referral Timeframes

Since Last Restart of Play	Foul play
Attacking Passage of Play *	Knock-on
	Throw forward
	Touch & Lineout
Within 2-Phases of Play	Offside
	Maul obstruction
	Tackle complete

* Or 2-phases should an attacking passage of play be less than 2-phases

Section 3: Protocol Detail

Definitions:

- **Attacking passage of play** - the passage of play since the last restart (if there has been no turnover in possession), or the passage of play since the last turnover in possession has taken place. What falls within this timeframe referral wise is contained in Figure 1.
- **'Two-phases of play'** - A phase of play is defined in the Laws of the Game as a scrum, lineout, ruck or maul – see pictorial diagram in Annex 1

Referrals:

Where any of the match officials believe a **clear and obvious** infringement may have occurred.

Aspects of play in the following laws may be reviewed if a clear and obvious offence takes place and it occurred within **two-phases** of a try being scored, but before the next restart kick:

Law 8: Scoring
Law 10: Offside in Open Play
Law 14.1-14.3: Tackle
Law 15.4-15.9: Offside at a Ruck
Law 16.4-16.7: Offside at a Maul
Law 18.30-18.36: Touch, Quick Throw & Lineout
Law 19.27-19.33: Offside at a Scrum
Law 21: In-goal
Law 20: Penalty & Free-Kick

The following may be formally reviewed within the last **attacking passage of play** before a try is scored:

	Live call permitted scope
Law 11 – Knock-on	Clear & obvious knock-on, & where on-field team have awarded scrum to incorrect team. Where a PK is awarded after a knock-on is observed, the TMO should alert the referee to the knock-on and the referee will go back for the knock-on, unless the PK is for foul play.
Law 11 – Throw forward	Clear & obvious throw forward
Law 18.1-18.8 - Touch, Quick Throw & Lineout	Whether ball was in touch & who should throw the ball in.

The following may be reviewed at any stage of the game, **since the last restart** and before play restarts again:

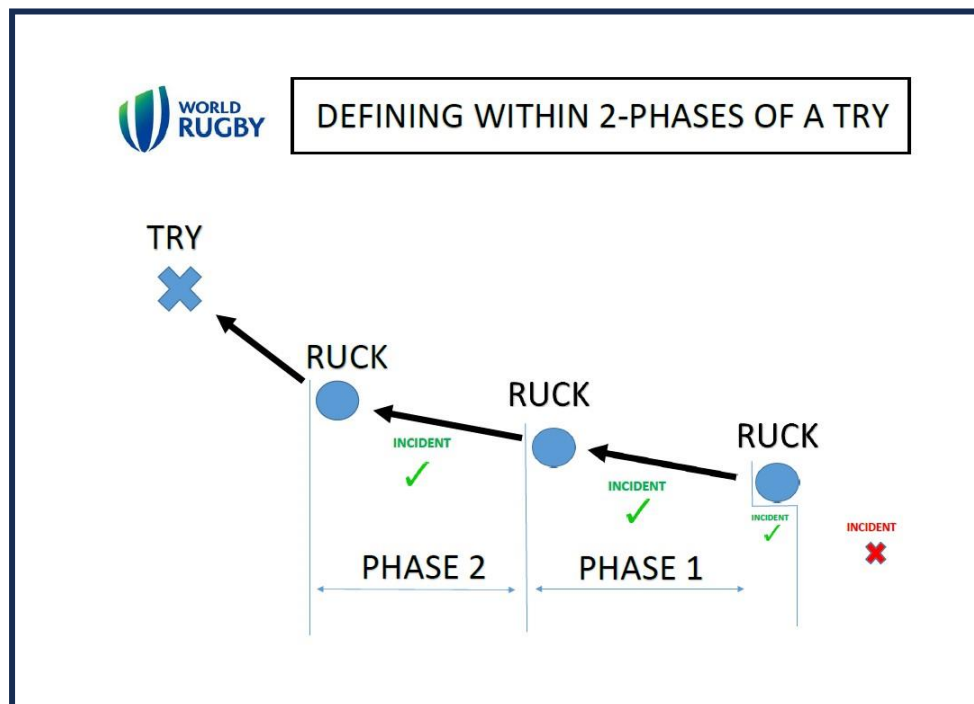
	Live call permitted scope
Law 9: Foul play	Dangerous play where the outcome would only be a Penalty

Clarification points

For any of these offences:

- This includes up until the start of a lineout after a kick to touch from a penalty or free kick.
- Should a quick tap or quick throw take place, and the TMO is unable to come in before the tap/throw is taken, the TMO may come in at the next available opportunity.

Annex 1: Pictorial definition of 2-phases of play



* A phase of play is defined in the Laws of the Game as a scrum, lineout, ruck or maul.