



USA RUGBY
Non-Standard Goal Posts
Issued March 2010

It is a fact of life for rugby in the USA that games are played with some regularity on pitches that do not or cannot have normal goal posts in the goal line. This issue is fairly unique to the US and has not been addressed by the World Rugby.

Unusual goal posts include, but are not limited to:

- “Roll away” posts designed for use on artificial surfaces
- Permanent soccer goal posts with and without a framework behind them for the net.
- Fixed posts for other sports such as American Football.

Safety

The first, and overriding, concern when dealing with these is safety. Frameworks that entail more than simple uprights (e.g. diagonal braces and/or on-the-ground extensions) should be moved, if possible, to the dead ball line. If they cannot be moved, all parts must be adequately padded. This is the referee’s responsibility and cannot be compromised.

Options

As this issue is not addressed in Law, the teams and Unions faced with non-traditional goal post placement need to find a common sense solution. There are two main options:

- #1 Play the game with the existing field conditions, making no accommodation for the position of the goal posts. This serves to keep the game moving smoothly, but changes the deterrent value of penalties because it makes successful kicks at goal less likely. When converting tries, the defending team retires to the line through the goal posts so there is no change in that aspect.
- #2 If a team elects to kick at goal from a penalty, the mark for the kick is advanced by the same distance that the goal posts are set back. This gives penalties their proper weight, but creates another issue. In the event of a missed kick at goal, the defending team will have been moved back artificially. The solution is that a missed kick at goal is automatically dead, regardless of where it ends up. Therefore a penalty kick at goal results in either three points (if successful) or a 22-meter drop out (if not successful).

This is not a Ruling in Law, nor is it a Directive from the USA Competitions Committee. It is left to the local Unions to establish procedures if they see fit, or for the teams involved to agree on a process prior to the game.

Peter Watson
Chair, USA Rugby Law Committee

NSCRO Policy Issued November 2017

All NSCRO playoff matches, including 7s qualifying tournaments, shall utilize Option #1.