# Nigel Owens challenges controversial schoolboy try over penalty kick rules



Legendary referee Nigel Owens has weighed in on a contentious schoolboy try that has sparked considerable debate online. The incident occurred during a match between Marlborough Boys’ College and Nelson College in New Zealand, where a penalty taken by Marlborough centre Anru Erasmus resulted in an innovative yet controversial scoring method. Instead of a conventional kick at the posts, Erasmus opted to chip the ball towards the left corner of the field, enabling his teammate Finn Neal to score an uncontested try. The refereeing team awarded the try, believing that the play conformed to the rules.

However, Owens, who boasts significant experience officiating at the highest levels of rugby, including the 2015 Rugby World Cup final, has publicly countered the decision on social media. He argued that the try should not have been awarded, noting the absence of a genuine attempt to kick at goal as stipulated by World Rugby’s regulations. Specifically, under Law 8.20, a team must indicate their intention to kick at goal and then perform a proper kick; failing to do so nullifies any subsequent scoring from that play. Owens asserted that in this case, the penalty should have been annulled, and a scrum awarded instead.

The rules governing such scenarios are crucial to understanding how the game is meant to operate. According to World Rugby, the intention to take a kick must be clearly communicated—this can be signalled through various means including the arrival of the kicking tee or sand, or when a player marks the ground. This stipulation not only upholds the integrity of the game but ensures that all teams compete on a level playing field.

Under recent changes approved by World Rugby, the emphasis has been placed on enforcing existing laws to facilitate smoother gameplay. A series of directives taking effect from January 2023 aim to reduce time-wasting and speed up the game. These include a shot clock that mandates that kickers take their penalty shots within 60 seconds of indicating their intent. Such measures are designed to enhance the spectator experience, particularly in the lead-up to the 2023 Rugby World Cup, and signify a shift towards a more dynamic format.

With the introduction of these law amendments, there is a clear push for a more fluid game, with the governing body already working towards future changes. A new set of rule adjustments due in July 2024 will further fine-tune aspects of play, including offside laws following kicks and measures to prevent certain negative player actions. This progressive approach reflects the evolving nature of rugby, aiming to attract a broader, younger fanbase while maintaining the sport’s storied traditions.

The discussion surrounding this particular try underscores the importance of clarity and adherence to the rules, which serve as the backbone of both grassroots and professional rugby. As the sport continues to grow, engaging with its laws and regulations becomes ever more critical in ensuring fair play and enhancing the overall enjoyment for players and fans alike.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/rugby/rugby-union/nigel-owens-tiktok-try-viral-school-rugby-b2761185.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/rugby/rugby-union/nigel-owens-tiktok-try-viral-school-rugby-b2761185.html> - Nigel Owens, a renowned rugby referee, has commented on a controversial schoolboy try that has gone viral. In a match between Marlborough Boys’ College and Nelson College in New Zealand, Marlborough centre Anru Erasmus took a penalty kick that was chipped towards the left corner, allowing teammate Finn Neal to score an uncontested try. Owens stated that the try should not have been awarded, as there was no genuine attempt to kick at goal, and the penalty should have been voided, resulting in a scrum instead. World Rugby's Law 8.20 requires a genuine attempt to kick at goal for such a try to be valid.
3. <https://www.world.rugby/media-zone/advisory/778344> - World Rugby has announced a series of law applications to be implemented from 1 January 2023, aimed at enhancing the flow of the game. These guidelines are designed to assist match officials, players, and coaches, and to improve the fan experience. The directives include stricter adherence to existing laws to speed up the game, such as Law 8.8d, which mandates that the kicker takes the conversion within 90 seconds from the time the try was awarded, and Law 8.21, which requires the penalty kick to be taken within 60 seconds from the time the team indicates their intention to do so. ([world.rugby](https://www.world.rugby/media-zone/advisory/778344?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.florugby.com/articles/10220855-latest-world-rugby-law-directives-include-shot-clock-from-january-1> - World Rugby has announced a package of directives for implementation from January 1, including the use of a shot clock to expedite kickers taking conversions and penalty kicks at goal. These measures aim to speed up the game, reduce reliance on TMO reviews, limit water carrier interventions, penalise negative player actions, and clarify deliberate knock-ons. The directives are part of a broader effort to enhance the sport ahead of the 2023 Rugby World Cup. ([florugby.com](https://www.florugby.com/articles/10220855-latest-world-rugby-law-directives-include-shot-clock-from-january-1?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.planetrugby.com/news/world-rugby-laws-shot-clock-timer-introduced-for-penalties-and-scrums-with-officials-encouraged-to-cut-down-on-time-wasting> - World Rugby has introduced a shot clock timer for penalties and scrums, aiming to increase the speed of the game and reduce time-wasting. The new law alterations, effective from January 1, 2023, include Law 8.8d, which requires the kicker to take the conversion within 90 seconds from the time the try was awarded, and Law 8.21, which mandates the penalty kick to be taken within 60 seconds from the time the team indicates their intention to do so. ([planetrugby.com](https://www.planetrugby.com/news/world-rugby-laws-shot-clock-timer-introduced-for-penalties-and-scrums-with-officials-encouraged-to-cut-down-on-time-wasting?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://springboks.rugby/news-features/articles/2024/05/09/world-rugby-confirms-fan-focused-law-changes/> - World Rugby has approved a package of law amendments to be implemented from 1 July 2024, aimed at enhancing the sport's entertainment value. The amendments include changes to offside from kicks in open play, options available from a free-kick, and the removal of the practice of 'crocodile rolling' a player away from the tackle/ruck area. These changes are part of the 'Shape of the Game' action plan to grow rugby's audience share and increase its accessibility among a broader, younger fanbase. ([springboks.rugby](https://springboks.rugby/news-features/articles/2024/05/09/world-rugby-confirms-fan-focused-law-changes/?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.rugbytoolbox.co.nz/referees/referee-development/law-questions-and-answers/law-8-scoring> - This resource provides detailed explanations of Law 8, which pertains to scoring in rugby union. It covers various aspects, including how goals are scored, the requirements for successful conversions, penalty goals, and dropped goals. The document also addresses specific scenarios, such as what happens if the ball is kicked higher than the goal posts or if the ball is blown backwards after being kicked. Additionally, it discusses the rights of a team to a conversion attempt after a try has been scored and the procedures for taking the kick. ([rugbytoolbox.co.nz](https://www.rugbytoolbox.co.nz/referees/referee-development/law-questions-and-answers/law-8-scoring?utm_source=openai))