



GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

FOR COMMUNITY LEVEL RUGBY

IN AUSTRALIA

2022

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2022

GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES 2022

The Game Management Guidelines are an amalgam of outcomes of various conferences and workshops held over the past few years. They have been adapted to reflect the playing, coaching and refereeing of the game at community levels in Australia for 2022.

Comments in red indicate either a Law change or an area of emphasis for 2022.

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that all participants at the community level are aware of the areas of the game that require more specific coaching and/or consistency in refereeing.

SCRUM

Safety at the scrum is paramount. An explanation of the requirements for players at each stage of the engagement is covered in both the Laws of the Game and in the Rugby AU Smart Rugby program. The scrum engagement sequence is the same at all levels of the game.

The referee must control the engagement process. Each of the following 3 calls should result in an action by the players. STABILITY IS PARAMOUNT AT EACH STEP OF THE PROCESS. If any part of the scrum set-up is not right, the referee should call the front rows up and re-start the process.

Engagement sequence in detail

- **CROUCH:** Front rowers should adopt a crouch position with their head and shoulders at or above the level of the hips, feet square, and knees bent sufficiently to make a simple forward movement into engagement. Players should keep their head straight, to maintain the normal and safe alignment of the cervical spine.
- Crutch-binding by locks is illegal in age groups U15 and below (previously U19 and below).
- Once all front-rowers are crouched, there **must** be a non-verbal pause, during which time the referee should be checking that:
 - the distance between opposing front rows should be close enough that players' heads are interlinked (approximately temple to temple, but there should be a clear gap until 'set')
 - the height of the two packs is the same
 - all players are balanced, and are set up straight (not at an angle)
- **BIND:** The bind call requires each prop to bind on the side or back of their opposing prop (not on the arm or shoulder). Props should grab onto the jersey, not just rest their hand in place. (#8 shoulders on.)
- Once all front-rowers are bound, there **must** be a non-verbal pause, during which time the referee should check that:
 - front rowers support their own weight (not using the other front row for support by leaning in and overextending, feet too far back), are balanced and stationary
 - **there is no pre-engagement shoulder to shoulder. GAP AND STABILITY ARE KEY.**
- **SET:** On the SET call, and not before, the front rows should engage the opposition firmly with a short horizontal movement and the props should draw with their outside binds. In this position, all players must be able to maintain body shape and pressure on the opposition scrum.
- Uncontested scrums as a result of a sending off, temporary suspension or injury must be played with eight players per side. (Applies in U13s and older. This would not apply if uncontested scrums are caused by a team starting a match short of a trained front row. Competition rules would apply.)
- Competitions may vary in the application of the uncontested scrum application. Please familiarize yourself with these.

Collapsed scrums and illegal wheeling

- Coaches and referees should ensure pre-match that players are aware of the "Mayday" Procedure and its application. Refer to the Rugby AU Smart Rugby online course for clarification.
- A legal wheel goes forward and through the opposition scrum. A wheel that spins around at pace (usually on its axis) is illegal and should be penalised (PK).

Mayday Procedure

The Mayday Safety Procedure has been developed to enable players and referees to take prompt action to relieve the pressure if this situation occurs in a scrum.

The Mayday Safety Procedure follows this sequence:

- Player calls 'mayday'
- All other players repeat 'mayday'
- Referee immediately blows whistle
- All players stop pushing
- Front rowers release binds on opposite front rower
- All players in the scrum immediately drop to their knees
- Front row land on their faces
- Players remain motionless and listen
- Referee asks, 'Who called mayday?', and 'Are you okay?'
- If player is injured, anyone with a connecting bind to the injured player remains on the ground until medical assistance arrives.
- Referee instructs scrum to disassemble in a sequence.

TACKLE

Global Law Trials

Flying Wedge

Definition

- An illegal type of attack, which usually happens near the goal line, either from a penalty or free-kick or in open play. Team-mates are latched on each side of the ball-carrier in a wedge formation before engaging the opposition. Often one or more of these team-mates is in front of the ball-carrier.

Intention

- To reduce number of events where the ball carrier and multiple support players are in contact (latched) prior to contact, and to protect the tackler who can be faced with the combined force of three opposing players.

Sanction

- Penalty Kick.

Player Pre-latched

Definition

- To recognise the potential for 1-player pre-latching prior to contact, but this player must observe all of the requirements for a first arriving player, particularly the need to stay on their feet. Latched is defined by- being bound to the ball carrier prior to contact.

Intention

- To be more consistent in the management of the 1 player pre-latched player staying on their feet and allowing a contest at the tackle.

Sanction

- Penalty- if the player denies a contest or it is a repeat action.

Tackle protocol for referees

- The order of priority at a tackle situation is almost always:
1. Tackler / Assist Tackler 2. Tackled Player 3. Arriving Players

Tackler and Tackle Assist

- Referees must ensure the tackler first **clearly** releases the tackled player and then either rolls away or gets to their feet **before** attempting to play the ball. The tackler must not hold onto the tackled player as they get to their feet.
- After getting up, the tackler can only play from their side of the tackle 'gate' (PK).
- A tackler who ends up on their opponents' side of the tackle must roll away immediately. Tackler is encouraged to roll towards the sidelines or toward his/her own team.
- Zero tolerance on tacklers who slow up the ball and stop the attacking team gaining quick possession.

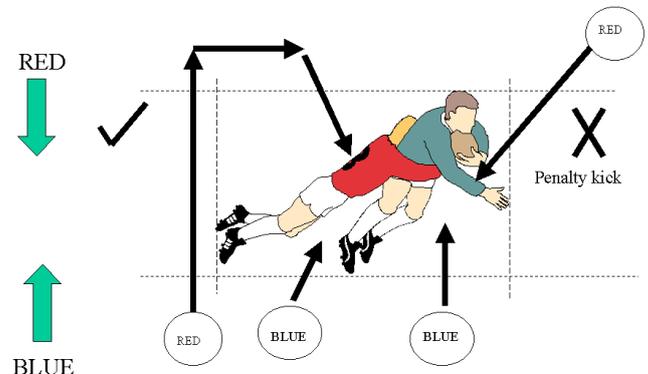
- Players who make a tackle or assist in making a tackle but remain on their feet and do not go to ground (Assist Tackler) must clearly release the tackled player and ball before going back to play the ball. This player must show clear release, ie. 'daylight made obvious' and enter 'through the gate'.

Tackled Player

- The tackled player must not either crawl or re-position their body (e.g., 'extra roll' and 'squeeze ball') to delay the release of the ball when isolated or under pressure. The ball must be available immediately for play (PK). (Note: 'squeeze ball' is illegal entirely in Kids Pathway U6-U12).

Arriving Players

- Players who play the ball after a tackle must do so from the direction of their own goal line and directly behind the tackled player or tackler nearest to their goal line (ie. 'through the gate').
- Referees should decide tackle entry based on how the arriving player enters, not how they exit. A player who comes from depth and cleans on slight angle is acceptable. A player with no depth who removes a 'threat' from side is unacceptable.
- Arriving players must demonstrate positive intent to stay on their feet. 'Plane taking off' is acceptable. 'Plane landing' (to seal possession or deny a contest) is not acceptable.



Post-Tackle Contest

- An offside line is created at a tackle when at least one player is on their feet and over the ball. Each team's offside line runs through the hindmost point of any player in the tackle or on their feet.
- A player who arrives and picks the ball up at a tackle does not form an offside line.
- Any player on their feet who has their hands on the ball immediately after a tackle and before a ruck forms ('jackal') may keep contesting for the ball even if a ruck forms around them.
- No other arriving player at this point may play the ball with their hands, until the ball clearly leaves ruck (i.e. there is no body part over the top of it).
- 'Jackal' players have one shot at the ball. If such a player is driven off the ball by the opposition, then their opportunity to play the ball with their hands has ceased.
- To earn a PK for 'holding on', arriving 'jackal' players must:
 - Be in a position of strength (on feet, with no hands or elbows past the ball on the ground), **and**
 - Attempt to lift ball up needs to be seen, and
 - **NO HANDS-ON GROUND past the ball.**
 - If the 'jackal' player shows the above, the player is not required to survive the clean.
- 'Driving out' at the tackle must be near the ball – ie. 1 metre width either side of the ball. Players must not interfere with players on the fringes or past the ball who are not involved in the tackle/ruck.

RUCK

Offside (pillars)

- Pillars must not have hands on ground ahead of the offside line.
- Pillars must not form an offside 'wall' when setting up a box kick. Players may set up together behind the last feet but can't obstruct tacklers coming through to tackle the kicker or charge down the kick.

"Use it!" at ruck

- When the ball has been clearly won by a team at the ruck, and the ball is available to be played immediately by the scrum-half or another player, the referee should call "Use it!"
- The "Use it!" call does not mean the ball is out.
- The team in possession then has 5 seconds (the countdown is not verbalised) to use the ball. If the ball is not used, a scrum should be awarded to the team not in possession.
- If a team decides to use the tactic of the train while performing a box kick. 'Use it' should be verbalized when the ball is clearly won, not when it has made its way to the back of the train.

Ball out and collapsed ruck

- The ball is only out of a ruck (or scrum) when it is totally exposed, or it is clear of bodies.
- If the ball is being dug out (after being won) or is under the feet of players at the back of the ruck, the scrum-half **cannot be touched until the ball is clearly out of the ruck**. The benefit of any doubt must go to the scrum-half. **Scrum halves are not to baulk when setting up to box kick. (FK)**
- Zero tolerance on defending players at the ruck who target the scrum-half before they have the ball, even if the ball is out of the ruck. Any onside player must play the ball and not the scrum-half.
- Players cannot step through or over the middle of a collapsed ruck before the ball is cleared or the ball is completely clear of bodies. These players are unbound and in front of the last feet and are therefore offside.
- A player must not kick the ball out of a ruck. The player can only hook it in a backwards motion (PK).
- **At a tackle, a player can pick up the ball if one foot is level with or behind the ball. At a ruck, a player can pick up the ball if both feet are level with or behind the ball. If a player is still bound with an opponent, then they cannot pick up the ball.**

OFFSIDE IN GENERAL PLAY

Rationale for emphasis

- When the ball is kicked in general play, any player of the kicking team in front of the kicker is offside.

Requirements for offside players

- If offside players are within 10m of where an opponent is waiting to play the ball or where the ball may land, they **must immediately retreat outside this 10m zone**. This 10m line stretches across the field (it is not a circle).
- Offside players within the 10m who are retreating can only be put onside when an onside teammate runs them on. No action of the team catching the ball puts such an offside player onside.
- Offside players who are not within 10m **must not move forward or towards the ball**. These offside players who are standing still can be put onside when an onside teammate runs them on, or when an opponent runs 5m, kicks, passes or touches but does not catch the ball.
- Offside players **cannot** be run onside unless they are either standing still or retreating out of the 10m zone as applicable.

QUICK THROW AND LINEOUT

Put back into own 22m

- When a ball is passed into the 22-metre area and is touched by an opposing player, or a tackle, ruck, scrum, maul or lineout is formed, then that team can now kick directly into touch and gain ground.
- The ball is considered to have been 'taken back' into a team's 22m area in the following situations:
 - When a team wins possession of a ball from a scrum, ruck, maul or lineout where the mark is outside of the 22m area, even though the rear participants may have their feet within the 22m area
 - When a quick throw-in is passed from in front of the 22m line, back across the 22m line and into the 22m area
 - **When a quick throw-in is taken from within the 22m area when the mark of touch is actually outside the 22m**

Touch-line Law-

A player who is attempting to bring the ball under control is now deemed to be in possession of the ball.

- When a player jumps from inside the playing area, and before landing in touch, manages to knock (or catch and throw) the ball from across plane of touch back into the playing area, this is now **play on** (previously this was in touch).
- Previously whether the ball was rolling or stopped was relevant, now the question is: did the ball reach the plane?
 - If the ball has reached the plane of touch when it is caught, then the catcher is not deemed to have taken the ball into touch.

- If the ball has not reached the plane of touch when it is caught or picked up, then the catcher is deemed to have taken the ball into touch, regardless of if the ball was in motion or stationary.
- The principle above also applies to the goal-lines, touch-in-goal, 22m and dead-ball lines.
- To make a Mark, a player must catch a ball that has reached the plane of the 22-metre line.

50:22

Definition

- If the team in possession kicks the ball from inside their own half indirectly into touch inside their opponents' 22, they will throw into the resultant lineout. The ball cannot be passed or carried back into the defensive half for the 50:22 to be played. The phase must originate inside the defensive half.

Intention

- To encourage the defensive team to put more players in the backfield, thereby creating more attacking space and reducing defensive line speed.

Note: it is not a requirement of the match officials to verbalise whether the 50:22 is in play.

Quick Throw

A quick throw cannot take place if;

- A lineout had already been formed (2 players from each team have reached the line of touch); or
- The ball had been touched after it went into touch by anyone other than the player throwing in or the player who carried the ball into touch; or
- A different ball is used from the one that originally went into touch.

Numbers and Lineout Players

- The minimum number of players to form a lineout is two from each team (i.e., 4 total minimum).
- A receiver at the lineout must be exactly 2 metres back away from the lineout when formed (they can't set up further than 2 metres away). In U13s and above, it is optional for a team to have a receiver.
- It is mandatory for a team to have a player in opposition to the player throwing in the ball. This player must be positioned two metres away from the 5m line **and** two metres away from the line-of-touch.
- Receivers must not join until after the ball has left the thrower's hands (FK), unless another lineout player simultaneously takes the receiver position (i.e., they switch) before the throw.
- In U16s and above, the front support player at the lineout may lift on the thighs, as in senior Law. In U13s-U15s, all support players may still only lift on the shorts.

Lineout Management

- The throwing team must not delay the formation of a lineout by forming a line or huddle away from the line-of-touch. They must set their numbers clearly when forming the lineout, hence giving the defending team a reasonable opportunity to match (FK).
- Sacking is the act of bringing the jumper/ball carrier to the ground by the upper body. Sacking is legal but can only be done after the jumper/ball carrier has returned to the ground and must be done immediately. No sacking of lifters (PK). (Referees should manage teams holding jumpers in the air trying to contrive this PK.)

Teams deciding not to engage the maul at lineout

- If the defenders in the line out choose to not engage the line out drive by leaving the line out as a group, then PK to attacking team.
- If the defenders in the line out choose to not engage the line out drive by simply opening up a gap and creating space, and not leaving the line out, the following process should be followed:
 - The attacking team would need to keep the ball with the front player if they were to drive down-field (therefore play on, general play – defenders could either engage to form a maul or tackle the ball carrier.)
 - If the attacking team immediately passes the ball back to a player behind the front player or at the rear of the group, the referee would tell them to "Use it" which they must do immediately.
 - If the team drives forward with the ball at the back (and ignores the referee's call to "Use it"), the referee should award a scrum to the defending team for "accidental offside" (rather than PK for obstruction).

MAUL

Ball Transfer

- The ball can only be moved backwards hand-to-hand once the maul has formed. A player is not allowed to move/slide to the back of the maul when they are in possession of the ball (PK).
- The ball can be moved backwards hand-to-hand once the maul has formed.
- **The 'ripper' needs to stay in contact with the jumper until the ball is fully transferred and cannot immediately shift lanes. No 'long transfer' of the ball to the back of the maul from the lineout jumper.**

Other Maul Issues – Attack

- When a maul is formed at a lineout or after a kick, defenders must have access to the ball carrier at the formation of the maul. It is obstruction if blockers move in front of the ball carrier before the maul is formed.
- Attacking players must join from behind or alongside the hind-most teammate in the maul – they must not join in front of the player in the maul with the ball.
- Players detaching from a maul with the ball being carried by a player behind a leading player and who engage the opposition are liable to penalty for obstruction (commonly referred to as 'Truck and Trailer' or 'Changing Lanes').

Other Maul Issues – Defence

- Players bound on the side of the maul may not 'slide' forward or 'swim' around the maul. These players are not remaining bound and are not caught up in the maul and are therefore offside.
- Players who join the maul legally and are either caught up in the maul or have remained bound are legally entitled to be in the maul and contest the ball carrier.
- If the defending players choose to unbind and leave the maul, it is still a maul and the maul Laws still apply, i.e., the team in possession may continue to drive forward, and opposing players must join from their side of the maul.

Unplayable and Collapsed Mauls

- A maul moving sideways is considered stationary.
- If the ball carrier in a maul goes to ground, and it is impossible for the ball carrier to make the ball available immediately, the referee should award a scrum with the throw-in to the team that was not in possession when the maul began.

RESTARTS AND KICKS

Penalty Kick and Free Kicks

- If a player takes a Penalty Kick or Free Kick quickly, the ball must leave the hands of the player, and the kick must be taken in the right place (i.e., at or on a line directly behind the mark).
- If a member of the infringing team is in possession, they must put the ball on the ground where they are standing or give the ball to an opponent who tries to take it from them. Player should not do any action that slows a possible quick tap.
- Beware of players contriving an extra 10 metres by intentionally running into offside players who are retreating onside and not taking part in play. Referees should 'play on' in these situations.
- When a Free Kick or Penalty Kick is taken quickly, defending players who are not back 10m are not put onside until they retire 10m or while they are retiring a teammate who was back 10m runs past them. No action of the team taking the penalty kick can put them onside (including running 5m).

Goal line drop-out

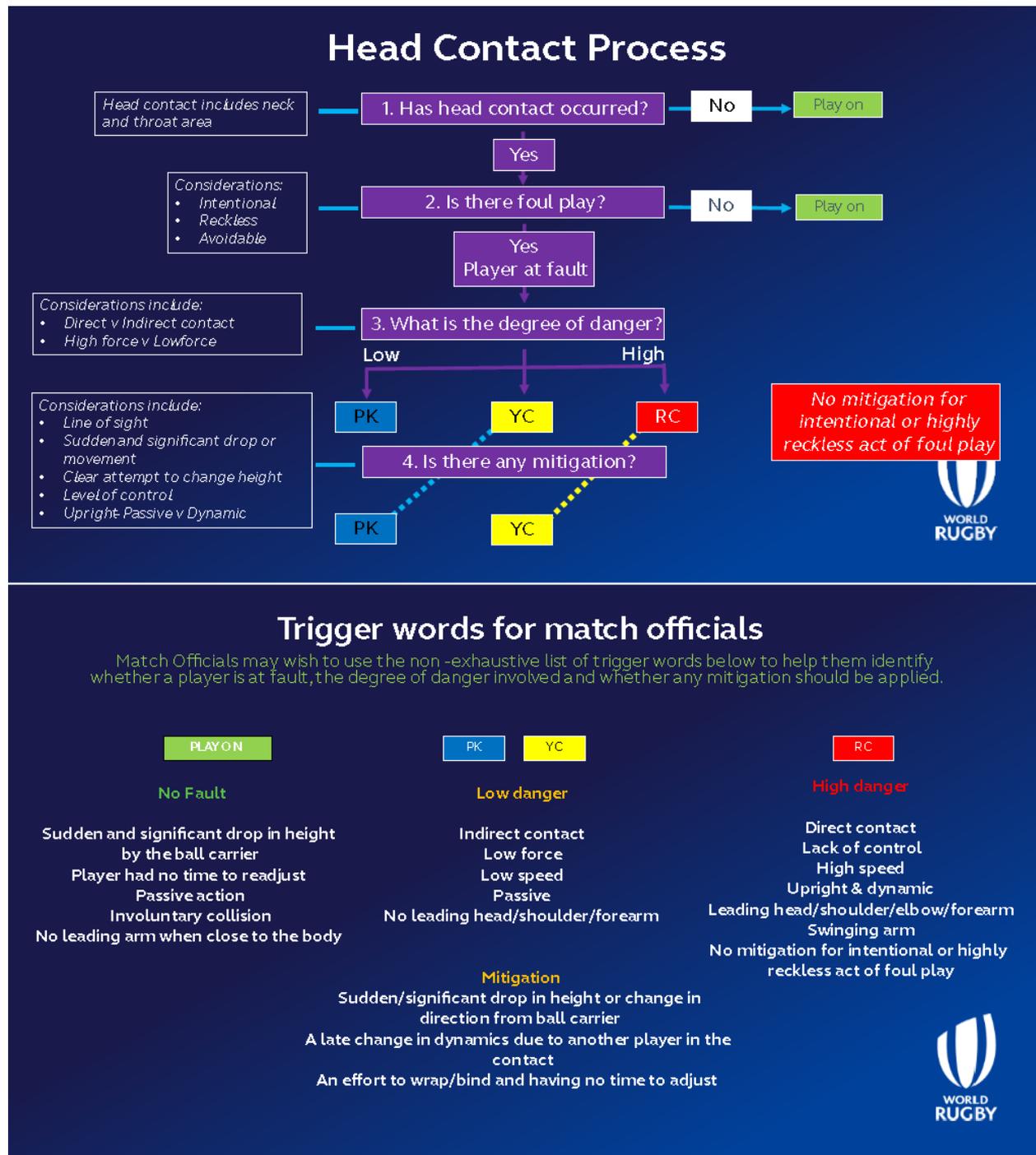
Definition

- **If the ball is held up in in-goal, there is a knock-on from an attacking player in in-goal or an attacking kick is made dead by the defenders in their own in-goal, then play restarts with a goal line drop-out anywhere along the goal line.**

Intention

- To encourage variety in attacking play close to the goal line and to increase ball in play time by replacing a scrum with a kick that must be taken without delay. An opportunity for counterattack is also created.

FOUL PLAY



Please utilise the head contact video for more clarity in the process.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzjDZarcD4>

Repeated and Deliberate Infringements

- Repeated infringements can be:
 - A number of different offences in a short period of time,
 - A pattern of similar offences without a time limit (e.g., regular offences close to the defending team's goal line), or
 - Repeated infringements by an individual without a time limit.
- Deliberate infringements can result in a Penalty Kick and a caution (yellow card) without any warning, depending on the cynical nature of the infringement.

Dangerous Clean outs.

- World Rugby is working to eliminate the practice dangerous clear outs at the breakdown.
- To decide an appropriate sanction (PK, YC or RC), referees should be considering:
 - **Has there been foul play?** – has the player committed an act of foul play? Has there been head contact? Is the player in control of the contact? Is it a legal clean out (use of arms). “Drive not dive”
 - **Level of Danger** – Speed? Has the player come from depth? where did the contact take place?
 - **Players are required to arrive in a controlled manner.**

Cleanout – Targeting the lower limbs of the jackler

Definition

- **A player may lever the jackler out of the contest at the ruck but must not drop their weight onto them or target the lower limbs.**

Intention

- To reduce injury risk to the player being cleaned out.

Sanction

Penalty- referee to judge the severity of the action.

Challenge in the air

- World Rugby has provided guidelines for situations where two players contest for a ball in the air and collide:
 - **Play on** = Fair challenge with both players in a realistic position to catch the ball. Even if the player lands dangerously, play on
 - **PK** = Not a fair challenge, wrong timing but no pulling down
 - **YC** = Not a fair challenge, there is no contest, and the player is pulled down/interfered with landing on their back or side
 - **RC** = Not a fair challenge, there is no contest, and the player is pulled down/interfered with landing on their head, neck or shoulder

Lifting tackles

- World Rugby has provided guidelines for situations where a tackler lifts the player off the ground and their feet pass the horizontal and where the individual lands.
 - **PK** – the player is lifted passed the horizontal and land back on their feet. Even if the player is brought to ground on their feet the action is deemed dangerous in community rugby.
 - **YC** – the player is lifted passed the horizontal and land on side/ back
 - **RC** – the player is lifted passed the horizontal and land on head/neck

Knock-on and intentional knock-on

- If a player, in tackling an opponent, makes contact with the ball and the ball goes forward from the ball carrier's hands, that is a knock-on. If a player rips the ball or deliberately knocks the ball from an opponent's hands and the ball goes forward from the ball carrier's hands, that is not a knock-on.
- The decision-making process for an intentional knock-on is:
 - Was there a **reasonable expectation** the player could regather the ball? If no = PK.
 - Was there an opportunity for a clear line break? If yes = YC.
 - Was there an opportunity for a probable try to be scored? If yes = Penalty Try + YC.

Other Foul Play

- The Law regarding what is commonly called a 'shoulder charge' says that a player must not charge or knock down an opponent carrying the ball without trying to grasp that player. This should be the standard for referees to apply. 'Grasscut' tackles are illegal (diving at a ball carrier's legs).
- In U19 matches, punching and stamping are an automatic send off (red card).
- Players should not appeal for decisions, wave arms, or shout at match officials (e.g., "That's a card!")

OTHER

Blue Card Implementation

- When a player leaves the field due to signs and symptoms of suspected concussion, the referee will show them a Blue Card. This triggers an off-field process. *(Blue Card applies in U13s and older.)*
- A tactically replaced player may return to play to replace a player who has been shown a Blue Card.
- Replacements due to blood injury, concussion or injury due to foul play do not count in the designated number of movements.

Other Laws

- A tactically replaced player may come on to replace a player who has been injured as a result of foul play. If the team chooses to replace a player injured from foul play with a fresh reserve, or if the foul play happens before any player is tactically replaced, then the team doesn't gain any advantage from this Law change. In many Australian competitions with Rolling Replacements this will have no effect.
- If a try is scored close to time expiring, so long as the conversion is kicked (boot striking ball) before time expires, there will be a restart.
- A scrum, lineout or restart kick following a try or touch down, awarded before time expires, must be completed and the ball returned to open play. This includes when the scrum, lineout or restart kick is taken incorrectly.
- If a penalty is kicked into touch after time has elapsed (either half-time or full-time), without touching another player, the throw-in is taken, and play continues until the next time the ball becomes dead.
- Any Penalty Try now = 7 points. No conversion attempt will be taken.

Referee Management

- Referees should manage unnecessary injury stoppages and be pro-active in playing on, e.g., front row players going down with injury at line outs.
- If an injured player is not in the way of the game and the player is being attended to, play on.
- If medical staff attending to a player indicate that an injury is serious, the referee should stop the game.
- **If play approaches an injured player on the ground, the referee should stop the game immediately.**
- Referees should be pro-active in ensuring players with bleeding wounds leave the field for treatment.