



GAME MANAGEMENT

SEASON 2025-2026

GUIDELINES



These Game Management Guidelines are created upon the principles and spirit of the game, to clarify Law application and to provide all rugby participants direction, and a foundation for the game to be played.

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TACKLER ASSIST

- **Must clearly release the ball carrier** - both hands off the ball and ball carrier's body in a clear action that is reasonable for the referee to see. **PK**
- The tackler assist must be in their gate, or move out of the breakdown zone and enter through their gate, before playing the ball. **PK**
- Players who do not release until they get cleaned out may achieve their goal to slow down the recycle and can be penalized.

TACKLER

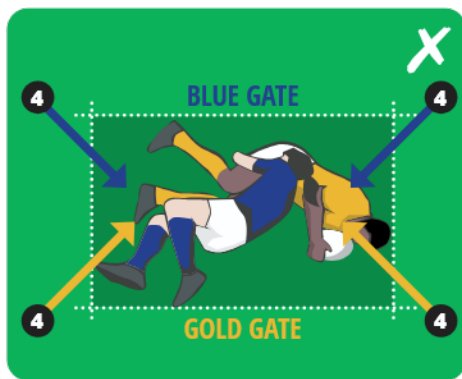
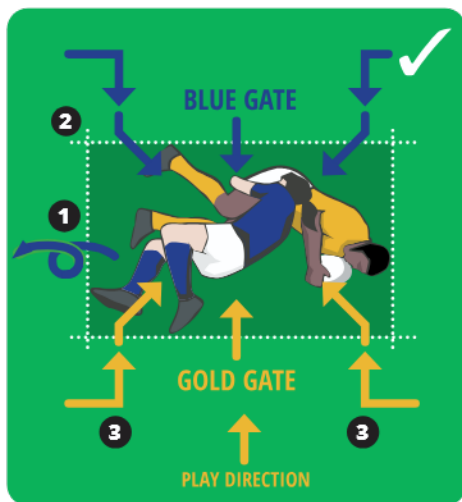
- **Must release, move away, roll to either side 1, or get up**, all without impacting ball delivery or arriving players. **PK**
- Must not roll into oncoming opposition support players, or get to their feet in the opposition's gate area and interfere with arriving support players. **PK**
- Once on their feet must get beside, and/or come around through their gate before playing the ball. **PK**

BALL CARRIER

- **Must release, place, or pass the ball. PK**
- Isolated ball carriers must not roll, crawl or re-position their body to prevent legal poaching. **PK**
- Ball carriers may only put their hands on the ground briefly, to maintain their own balance and stability. **PK**
- **U19: Players may not use the squeeze ball technique.**

BREAKDOWN ZONE & GATE

- Create an imaginary rectangle **2**, that is parallel to the touch lines and try lines, to include the players involved in the tackle. The side of the rectangle on the side of the player's try line, is their gate and the area that they must enter the tackle/breakdown zone.
- They have to **3** "square up" and enter through the gate, and can then clear out an opponent.
- Players may not enter through the **4** side of the gate.

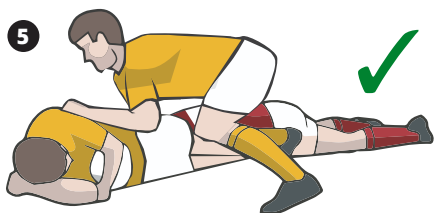


JACKLER

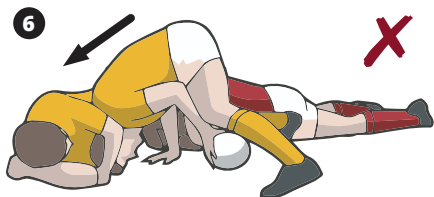
- **The first arriving team-mate of the tackler at the tackle is the jackler.** Clean outs which target or drop weight onto the jackler's lower limbs are not allowed. **PK**
- Jackler must not lean on their hands/elbows beyond the ball and then scoop the ball up or stand up with the ball. **PK**
- Jackler should only be rewarded if they clearly lift/pull the ball up.
- Jackler only has one chance at the ball. If the jackler is driven off the ball by the opposition then their opportunity to play the ball with their hands has ceased.

ARRIVING PLAYERS

- **May bind onto a player on the ground** **5**, as long as they retain their weight on their feet.



- **May shift a defender** and go to ground as long as they are making the ball available.
- Must not lean on the ground or on players on the ground, sealing and preventing a contest. **6** **PK**



- Must not drive/tackle players beyond the tackle/ruck. After more than 1m past, they must let go of opponents. **PK**

ONE PLAYER PRE-LATCHED

- One player may pre-latch on a ball carrier prior to contact. Once a tackle is made on the ball carrier, this player must observe all of the requirements for a first arriving player, particularly the need to stay on their feet.

RUCK

- Neck roll (grabbing a player around the neck and pulling them to the ground) or charging into rucks leading with the shoulder, is illegal - see FOUL PLAY. **PK**
- Players must not kick the ball in a ruck, but may hook the ball back to their side. **PK**
- Unbound players must not step through or over the middle of a collapsed ruck. These players are in front of the last feet and are therefore offside. **PK**
- When the ball is clearly won and available to be played, the referee should call **"Use it"**. **Players have 5 seconds to play the ball. It is fine to remind the player one more time, "Use it now"**. If they don't then use it, it's a turnover scrum.
- Players must not pull opponents through the ruck. **PK**

BALL OUT at BREAKDOWN

- The ball is out when there are **no bodies over the ball**.
- Digging for the ball is not out.
- Hands on the ball or holding the ball when it is on the ground is not out. **Lifting the ball clear of bodies is out.**
- The player in the scrumhalf position may move the ball back with their foot. If the ball is available to be used, and they roll the ball back with their hands, the ball is out. The scrumhalf may not hold the ball and move it without lifting it (dummy/balk). **FK**
- **The player in the scrumhalf position cannot be touched until the ball is clearly out of the ruck.** The benefit of any doubt must go to the player in the scrumhalf position. A player cannot knock the ball forward out of the scrumhalf's hands. **PK**
- A player on their feet over the ball at a tackle may pick up the ball as long as at least **one foot** is on their try line side of the ball.
- A player in a ruck may unbind and pick up the ball as long as **both feet** are on their try line side of the ball.

KICK-OFF

- A kick-off cannot be taken until the receiving team are in position behind their 10m line.

SCENARIOS RESULTING IN A TRY LINE

DROP-OUT RESTART

- An attacking kick, other than a kick-off, restart kick, drop goal or penalty kick at goal, is grounded or made dead by the defending team in their own in-goal.
- An attacking player knocks on in the opponents' in-goal.
- The ball is put into in-goal by an attacking player and the ball is held up, or a defender makes it dead.
- A kick-off or restart goes into in-goal and a defender makes the ball dead, but not immediately.

22m DROP-OUT RESTART

- An unsuccessful penalty kick at goal, or an attempted drop-goal is kicked through in-goal or goes into in-goal and is made dead.
- A kick in general play or a penalty/free kick is kicked dead through in-goal, and the opposition team chooses a drop-out.

FREE KICK

A team awarded a Free Kick may not choose to have a scrum.

PENALTIES & FREE KICKS

- Need to be taken correctly, and within close proximity (1m) of the mark, or behind it. At a scrum, the kick must not be taken alongside the scrum.
- If the kick is taken from the wrong mark they need to retake it.
- The kick must be taken with a correct kick (kicked a visible distance/ clearly leave the hands if holding the ball/clearly leave the mark if it is on the ground), otherwise it is a turnover scrum.
- If a kick is awarded another 10m forward, the referee should walk to the new mark, and may advise defenders of the new offside line. Attackers can only start play once the mark is given.
- If taken quickly, defenders that are not back 10m have to keep retreating and must not take part in the game until they are 10m from the mark or a team-mate who was 10m from the mark moves in front of them.

LINEOUTS

- Backlines to remain 10m until the lineout is over. **PK**
- The lineout is over when:
 - The ball or a player in possession of the ball leaves the lineout, enters the area between the touch and the 5-meter line, or goes over the 15-meter line.
 - A ruck or maul forms and the feet of all participants move across the mark of touch.
- Backlines of the team throwing in, may advance before the ball crosses the 15m line in anticipation of a long throw.

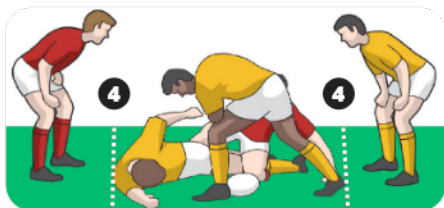
SCRUM

- Both backlines must remain 5m from the hindmost point of the scrum (even when the scrum moves) until the scrum is over. **1 PK**
- The defensive scrumhalf can either take up a position on the offside line, 5m from the hindmost point, or start at the put-in side next to the opposition scrumhalf. After the ball is put in, they may either:
 - Remain near to the scrum and **move no further than the center line of the tunnel** **2** (if the scrum wheels the player can move with the tunnel), or
 - They retire to behind the last-foot offside line of the scrum **3** and may move laterally across the field.



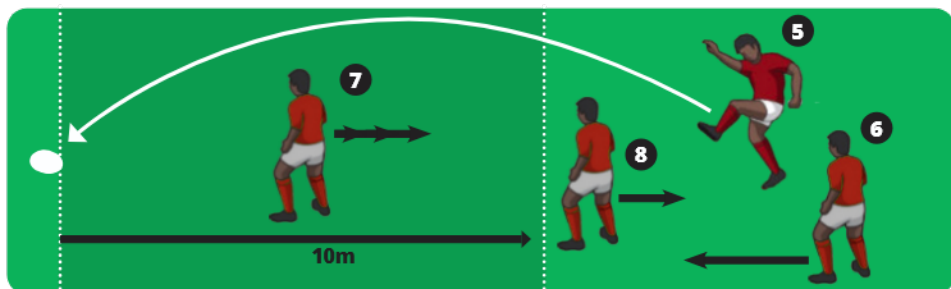
TACKLE

- One player on their feet and over the ball, without an immediate pickup, creates offside lines through **4** the hindmost point of tackle participants.



OFFSIDE IN FRONT OF KICKER

- **Players in front of a team-mate who kicks the ball, must retreat** until they have been put outside by the kicker **5** or a team-mate **6** that was outside.
PK or SCRUM
- Players in front of the kicker and within 10-meters **7** of where the ball lands or is played must actively retire until they are outside. **PK or SCRUM**
- Offside players **8**, cannot be put outside unless they are retreating. **PK or SCRUM**



RUCK/MAUL

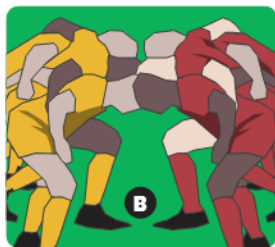
- Offside lines are formed through the hindmost point of ruck/maul participants.
- Defending players close to the ruck must not have hands on the ground ahead of the offside line. **PK**
- **A player who is, or was, part of the ruck/maul may not play an opponent near it (within 1m) who is attempting to play the ball away. PK**
- Players of the team in possession of the ball, who are outside and behind the last foot, **must not remain in a position between defenders and a player on their team who kicks the ball.** This is considered obstruction. **PK**

- If the referee communicates to offside players to retreat, players should retreat and not just slow down and continue to move forward or stop until they are put outside.
 - Offside players must retreat even when the ball looks like it will go into touch because a quick throw may be an option. **PK or SCRUM**
- However, if players have been retreating, once the quick throw is taken, they are outside.

SET-UP

• Safety is always the highest priority.

- Teams must be ready to form the scrum within 30 seconds of the mark being made. **FK**
- Make a mark. Each Hooker's right foot to be left of the mark **1** to ensure space for each front row player. It provides a **B** brake foot to reduce pressure on hookers. The brake foot must remain in place until "SET". **FK**

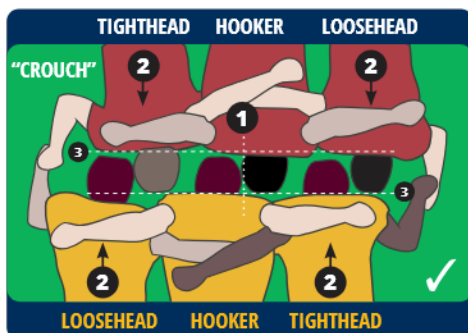


ENGAGEMENT

- The referee must control the engagement process. **Each of the following 3 calls should result in an action by the players.** Stability is essential at each step of the process.
- The referee should be patient and not rush, and should restart the process if there are any issues.

CROUCH

- All players' bodies should be straight, **2** and shoulders in line **3**.
- The height of the two packs must be the same.
- Loosehead's inside (right) shoulder needs to be in line with their hooker's left shoulder and must not be tucked under **4**, and the tighthead must not be angled in **5**.
- **Only once all players are stable and balanced should the referee proceed with the next call.**



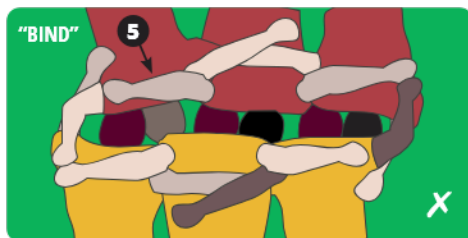
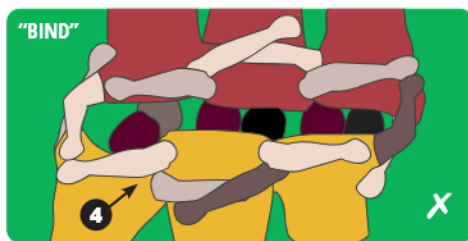
BIND

- There must be a clear gap between teams, no pre-engagement. **FK**
- Players must support their own weight and not lean against their opponents with their head.
- Only once the scrum has settled and all players are balanced should the referee proceed with the next call.

SET

• The scrum must be square and steady before the put-in.

- No movement, wheel, step back, or early push. **FK**
- The scrumhalf may align their left shoulder on the middle line of the scrum, thereby standing a shoulder-width closer to their side of their scrum, but they should be square to the scrum and the ball put in straight.
- The scrumhalf should put the ball in without delay. **FK**



DURING THE SCRUM

- The hooker of the put-in team has to hook the ball. Their scrum must not push over the ball without a hook. **FK**
- **U19: The scrum can only be pushed 1.5m (2 steps). FK**
- A legal wheel goes forward and through the opposition scrum. Only after both props have made a forward movement together and established dominance, will a team be allowed to wheel.
- A wheel that spins around at pace (usually on its axis, often initiated by the back five players) is illegal. **PK**
- If the scrum wheels through 90° (**U19: 45°**) without illegal actions, reset the scrum with the original team put-in.
- When the scrum is stationary, and the ball has been available to be played for 3 to 5 seconds, the referee should call "Use it". The referee should not take away an advantage of dominance from either team by rushing the call.

FREE KICK AT SCRUM

- A team awarded a Free Kick may not choose to have a scrum.

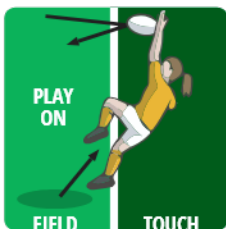
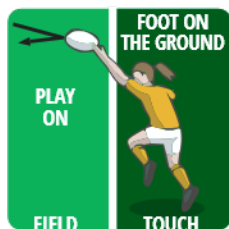
UNCONTESTED SCRUMS

- If a team does not have a front row player available that is suitably trained in the position required, uncontested scrums are ordered.
- All uncontested scrums must have 8 players per team.
- On all occasions of uncontested scrums, if you have a front row player available that is not suitably trained in the position required, they still need to come on and scrum in the front row.

REASONS A TEAM CANNOT PROVIDE A SUITABLY TRAINED FRONT ROW PLAYER	INJURY	YELLOW CARD	RED CARD	BLOOD SUB	FOUL PLAY	HEAD INJURY
THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS THAT A TEAM IS ALLOWED ON THE FIELD	14	13	13	15	15	15
		ADDITIONAL PLAYER TO LEAVE THE FIELD				

Photo by Alice Tsui





QUICK THROW

- Players must not prevent their opponents taking a quick throw by failing to release the ball, throwing it away or intentionally touching it. **PK**
- Players must not stand within 5m of the touch line and attempt to block a quick throw-in. **FK**
(The player throwing in must not deliberately target such a player to gain a free kick.)

LINEOUT SET-UP

- **Teams must form the lineout within 30 seconds of the mark being made. FK**
- Non-throwing player in the 5m channel (2m x 2m), backlines 10m, receiver (optional) 2m from the lineout.
- A large gap allows more structure, more room for the throw and allows for cleaner ball.
- A straight throw is allowed in the space between player's heads **1**, however, if the defense do not lift a teammate to compete for the ball, then play shall continue despite a throw not being straight, as long as the ball enters the lineout at the tunnel.
- The throwing team sets the numbers, and the non-throwing team may have the same or fewer players in the lineout. **FK**
- It is the referee's responsibility to count the number of players in the lineout, and if possible, may warn the non-throwing team before sanctioning. **FK**
- Players cannot walk-in and jump in one movement, there must be a clear pause. The referee may reset the lineout before escalating.
- Players must not form a line away the lineout, they must form in the lineout. The referee may manage before escalating.
- A player may not leave the lineout before the ball is thrown. **FK**

50:22

- A player, in their own half, kicks the ball indirectly into touch in the opposition's 22. Either the team did not take the ball into their half, or a tackle, ruck or maul took place within the half, or an opponent touched the ball within the half.
This variation applies for a free kick or scrum/lineout awarded on the halfway line when the ball emerges in their half, but not at a kick-off or any type of restart kick.



DURING THE LINEOUT

- 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.
- If players change positions before the throw, they need to do so on the outside of team-mates and not into the gap. **FK**
- Players may not interfere with opponents or the lifters when the jumper is in the air. **PK**
- Players who lift or support a team-mate, must lower that player to the ground safely as soon as the ball is won by either team. **FK**
- Sacking (bringing the jumper to the ground by the upper body) may only be done after the jumper has landed and must be done immediately. **PK**

FREE KICK AT LINEOUT

- A team awarded a Free Kick may not choose to have a scrum, but may choose a lineout.

MAUL: ATTACK

- Attacking players must not move in front of the ball carrier to block opponents before the maul is formed. **PK**
- The 'ripper' (team-mate taking the ball from the jumper) must stay in physical contact with the jumper until the ball is transferred. No 'long transfer' of the ball to a player at the back of the maul. **PK**
- Players with the ball must not move/slide to the back of the maul. The ball can only be moved backwards hand-to-hand. **PK**
- The maul must remain in the same 'lane'. The ball-carrier must not detach from the maul while bound behind teammates to allow the maul to start moving forward again (commonly referred to as 'truck and trailer' or 'changing lanes'). **PK**



MAUL: DEFENSE

- Defenders must not enter the side of the maul. Defenders must travel through the maul, or remain bound in their original position if the maul turns, but must not move along the outside (often looks like a 'swimming' action). **PK**
- Defenders in the maul are entitled to contest the ball carrier in the maul, even though they may appear to be on the 'wrong' side.
- A single defender may sack the opposition jumper when they have landed, however, they cannot pull the player to ground after a maul is formed. **PK**
- If defenders drop off or choose to unbind and leave the maul, what remains is still a maul. The attack may continue to drive forward in the same 'lane', and defenders must join from their side of the maul.

LINEOUT DEFENSE NOT ENGAGING IN MAUL

- **Defense must not choose to not engage by stepping back, leaving the lineout. PK**
- Defense may choose to not engage by staying in the lineout and opening up a gap to avoid contact with opponents.
- If the attacking team keeps the ball with the front-most player in the huddle, they may move forward. Defenders may either engage to form a maul, or tackle the ball carrier.
- If the attacking team clearly transfers the ball behind the front-most player in the huddle, the referee must tell them to "Use it", which they must do immediately. If they don't, it is a turnover scrum.

MAUL: UNPLAYABLE

- If a ball carrier is held up and a maul forms, the referee should communicate "Maul" so everyone is aware that a maul has formed.
- In a dynamic situation, the referee should avoid calling "Maul" until the ball carrier is clearly held up. Until then the contest should be refereed as a tackle scenario if it goes to ground.
- A maul moving laterally is considered stationary.
- If a maul is stationary and it is unlikely the ball will emerge, the referee should call a turnover scrum to prevent players from charging into the maul. If the ball is clearly being moved with the purpose to play it away, allowing the attack a little more time is acceptable.
- If the ball carrier in a maul goes to ground, they must make the ball available immediately, otherwise a turnover scrum should be awarded.



DANGEROUS PLAY

- Players must not engage in reckless or dangerous play.
- Dangerous tackling: Late, high, in the air, no arms, dump/ spear tackle.
- Ball carrier must not lead with the forearm to the neck/ head.
- **U19: Players may not fend to the face, head or neck.**

- **At an attacking ruck/breakdown close to the goal line, a player who picks up the ball may not dive forward over the ruck in an attempt to score a try. PK**

FOUL PLAY	SANCTION FRAMEWORK		
	RC	YC	PK
HEAD/NECK CONTACT	DIRECT HIGH FORCE	DIRECT LOW FORCE INDIRECT HIGH FORCE	INDIRECT LOW FORCE

FOUL PLAY	MINIMUM SANCTION		
	RC	YC	PK
LATE, HIGH, or SHOULDER CHARGE	ALL THREE PRESENT	TWO OF THREE PRESENT	ANY ONE PRESENT

WAS THERE FOUL PLAY?

- Intentional, Reckless, and/or Avoidable

DEGREE OF DANGER

- Direct/Indirect Contact
- High Force/Low Force

IS THERE MITIGATION?

- Sudden / significant drop in height or change in direction from ball carrier
- A late change in dynamics due to another player in the contact
- An effort to wrap / bind and having no time to adjust
- Passive tackler: Feet planted, zero forward movement, falls backwards

FACTORS AGAINST MITIGATION

- Mitigation will not apply for intentional or highly reckless acts of foul play
- Open space and time to make a decision

NO ARMS CHOPPING TACKLE	DIRECT JOINT CONTACT LAUNCH AT LEGS	LOW FORCE	
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HEAD or NECK: CHOKING, GRAB, or ROLL	CHOKING NECK ROLL & FOLLOW THROUGH	CHOKE & RELEASE NECK ROLL & RELEASE	ACCIDENTAL WITH IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CROC ROLL	DROPS WEIGHT INTO JOINTS	MEDIUM DANGER	LOW DANGER
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LIFTING DUMP/SPEAR TACKLE	LIFTING PAST HORIZONTAL & LANDS ON HEAD/NECK	LIFTING PAST HORIZONTAL & LANDS ON BACK/SIDE	NOT LIFTING PAST HORIZONTAL BUT DANGEROUS
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CHALLENGE IN THE AIR	NOT FAIR CHALLENGE & LANDS ON HEAD/NECK	NOT FAIR CHALLENGE & LANDS ON BACK/SIDE	NOT FAIR CHALLENGE WRONG TIMING
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OVER THE SHOULDER SEATBELT TACKLE			LOW FORCE
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OBSTRUCTION: DUMMY RUNNER and DEFENDER contact

- Was dummy runner in front of the ball carrier (i.e. not in a position to receive a pass)?
- Did the dummy runner initiate contact with the defender?
- If yes to either, and the defender could have legitimately made a play on the ball-carrier, then **PK**. If no, **PLAY ON**.

OBSTRUCTION: KICKS

- A player must not prevent an opponent from having the opportunity to play the ball, other than competing for possession. **PK**
- Escort runners must not slow down or move in front of opponents to protect the catcher. **PK**

FLYING WEDGE

- More than one team-mate must not latch/bind together with the ball-carrier, in any formation, before engaging the opposition. **PK**

CHALLENGE IN THE AIR

- If two players are contesting for the ball in the air, it is a “fair challenge” when both players are in a realistic position to play the ball – determined by the timing and height of their jump.
- A player having their “eyes on the ball” is not sufficient.
- If it is a fair challenge, **PLAY ON**, if not **PK** (see table).

HURDLING

- A player must not jump into or over a tackler. **PK**
- A player must not jump onto or over a ruck. **PK**

SAFETY

- If the referee believes a player has been seriously injured they should stop the game immediately.
- If an injured player is not in the way of the game and the player is being attended to by medical staff, play may continue.

REPEATED INFRINGEMENTS

- A team/player must not repeatedly infringe the laws. Repeated infringements can be:
 - A number of different infringements in a short period of time.
 - A pattern of similar infringements without a time limit (e.g. regular infringements inside the 22m area).
 - Repeated infringements by an individual without a time limit.

Should result in a discussion/warning and/or a yellow card.

UNFAIR PLAY

- A player must not:
 - Intentionally infringe any law of the game. This is particularly relevant when a team is under pressure. Intentional infringements can result in a yellow card without any warning.
 - Intentionally knock, place, push or throw the ball with an arm or hand from the playing area.
 - Do anything that may lead the match officials to consider that an opponent has committed an infringement.
 - Waste time.

INTENTIONAL KNOCK-ON

- Was there a reasonable expectation the player could regather the ball?
- If Yes, then scrum for the knock. If No, then **PK** for intentional knock-on.
- Intentional knock-on where there is a potential line break. **PK & YC**
- Intentional knock-on where there is a probable try scenario. **PT & YC**

- 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.

TACKLE HEIGHT TRIAL LAW

TACKLER: 9.13

A player must not tackle an opponent early, late or dangerously. Dangerous tackling includes, but is not limited to, tackling or attempting to tackle an opponent above the line of the shoulders even if the tackle starts below the line of the shoulders, or tackling or attempting to tackle an opponent above the base of the sternum while either player is running in open field play. **PK**

BALL CARRIER: 9.11

Players must not do anything that is reckless or dangerous to others including leading with the elbow or forearm, or jumping into, or over, a tackler, or leading with the head into an opponent while running in open field play. **PK**



HEAD/NECK CONTACT
FOLLOW THE WORLD
RUGBY HEAD CONTACT
PROCESS



**ABOVE THE
BASE OF THE
STERNUM MAY
BE PENALIZED**



**OPEN FIELD
PLAY
HIGHER
SPEED
COLLISIONS**

**LEGAL
TARGET
AREA FOR
TACKLING**

BELOW THE BASE OF THE STERNUM



HEAD CONTACT PROCESS

Where there is head or neck contact, in any scenario, use of World Rugby's existing Head Contact Process has not changed. This tackle height law should not result in any more, or any less, penalties, yellow cards, or red cards through use of this Process.

OPEN FIELD PLAY

The term "open field play" is used in the new law in recognition of the fact that the body positions of players in the immediate vicinity of a ruck or in a maul may not be compatible with the new law.

Collisions in this aspect of the game (i.e. 'pick and drive') are not at high speed and are rarely dangerous, so the new law does not apply to those situations. It also recognizes that players attempting to ground the ball in-goal are often diving downward.

BALL CARRIER LOWERING HEIGHT

If the ball carrier lowers their body position immediately prior to contact, and the tackler makes contact above the sternum, the tackler will not be penalized. There is no sanction against a ball-carrier in this scenario (unless dangerous).

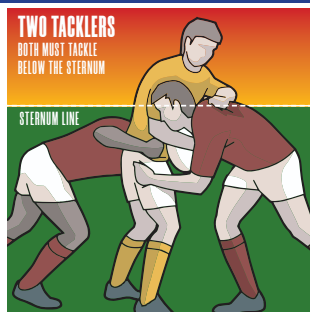
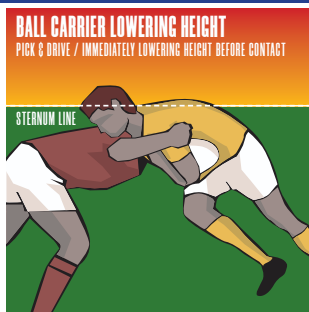
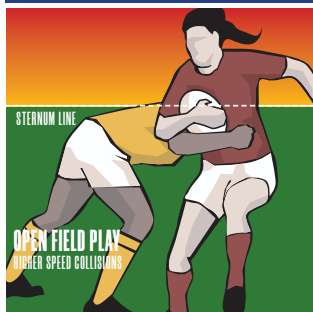
DANGEROUS ACTIONS BY THE BALL CARRIER REGARDING TACKLE HEIGHT

If the ball carrier attempts to prevent the tackler from making a legal tackle by bending at the waist and leading with the head into contact in open field play, this is considered dangerous play per amended Law 9.11. **PK**

TWO TACKLERS

A secondary tackler must also tackle below the ball carrier's sternum. Players may compete for the ball, and may form a maul.

PLAY ON SITUATIONS



CROCODILE ROLL (GATOR ROLL)

The crocodile roll is now a prohibited action. It is where a player uses their body weight to laterally roll/twist/pull a player, who is on their feet in the tackle area, to ground.

PK

A crocodile roll around the head/neck area requires additional sanction. **PK & YC/RC**

A player may only remove the jackler from the tackle area by pushing/driving them backwards (including by grabbing the knee/leg), but must not roll, pull or twist an opponent.

PK

A player must not drop their weight onto an opponent or target the lower limbs. **PK & YC/RC**

SCRUM

- For a 'scrum advantage' to accrue, the non-offending team needs to have gained **clear and real possession** mostly equivalent to that which they would get from a scrum.
- Best practice is for the team to have controlled possession, ball in hand (not during a pass) or ball secured and available at a tackle/ruck, before advantage is called over.
- If a team with scrum advantage kicks the ball, this does not **automatically** mean advantage is over. Advantage may or may not be over, depending on the scenario.
- If a team has a dominant scrum, the referee may allow their opponents a little more opportunity to gain scrum advantage.

PENALTY

- For a 'penalty kick advantage' to accrue, the non-offending team must gain either **tactical or territorial advantage** mostly equivalent to that of receiving the Penalty Kick.
- Best practice is to consider ball possession and control, field position, the temperament of the game, and the possibility that an advantage will accrue, before playing a penalty kick advantage.
- A penalty kick is a big advantage in itself as teams can kick long distances to touch or for goal.
- If a team is being dominated or is under pressure, an immediate penalty kick is often the better option, rather than forcing advantage.

Photo by Pooja Singh



NOTE: CONVERSIONS to be taken within 60 seconds. If there is a stoppage after a try (for an injury as an example), then restart at 60 seconds for the conversion kick when play continues.

ARRIVING AT THE MATCH

- The referee should arrive early, at least 1 hour before kick-off.
- The referee should check the ground (to be sure it is safe and field markings).
- The team coaches and referee should introduce themselves to each other. The referee should arrange when the equipment check and pre-match briefing would best suit each team before their warm-up (within reason). Both the teams and the match officials should meet without disrupting the preparations and warm-up of either party.
- Each team should make clear to the referee how many substitutes they have and that they have the correct number of suitably trained front-row players.



PRE-MATCH BRIEFING

- **Keep it simple** - this is primarily an opportunity for the captain and referee to introduce themselves and build trust.
- Should include the referee, captain, front-row players and scrumhalves.
- The referee should outline the scrum engagement sequence and their expectations.
- The scrumhalf should be reminded to put the ball in without delay when the scrum is steady.
- The scrumhalf should be reminded that the mark for Penalties and Free Kicks is where the infringement occurred and not run towards the referee if they want to take a quick tap.
- If any party has any questions, they should be asked and answered appropriately.



CAPTAIN MEETING & COIN TOSS

- The referee should establish what color/name they will use for each team. A color is always preferable (select one unique to each team if possible).
- If the captains need to talk to the referee about an issue, they may do so only at stoppages, but not at Penalty/Free Kicks when the opposition may want to take a quick tap.
- The captains and referee should agree that the referee will communicate through the captains to get messages to their players, and in reverse any queries from players should come through their respective captains.
- The home team will toss the coin and the captain of the visiting team will call. The winner of the toss selects to kick off or choose and end. (Some inexperienced captains may ask to receive the kick off, which is not an option.) If the winning captain chooses an end, the opposing team must kick off. If the winning captain chooses to kick off, the opposing captain must choose an end.

THE MATCH

- If Assistant Referees are not assigned, each team must provide touch judges. The referee should introduce themselves to the touch judges, and instruct them on their duties.
- You may have one Assistant Referee and one Touch Judge, depending on the qualification of each.
- If the field has technical zones for teams, they should be used. If not, each team should be between the 10m and 22m, on the same side (teams must not be on opposite sides of the field).

08 GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES / ABUSE OF RUGBY PARTICIPANTS



VERBAL ABUSE

Verbal abuse directed at rugby participants should not be tolerated and the following process should be followed:

- The referee will walk to the sideline on the halfway line. Call the head coach to the halfway line, and instruct them to ask the identified person to refrain from their behavior. If the identified person is the head coach the referee addresses them directly or may ask the team captain to assist.
- On the second occasion the referee will request the identified person to be removed from the grounds.
- A zero tolerance approach should be applied and if the person refuses to leave the referee should request that team's captain to assist.
- Failing compliance the referee abandons the match.
- The referee restarts the game according to the latest stoppage and does not award a penalty due to the sideline behavior.
- Red and Yellow Cards must not be shown to non-players (coaches, water carriers, medical staff, etc.).
- The referee should report the incident to their local governing body.

SAFESPORT

- The safety of its members is of paramount importance to USA Rugby. USA Rugby has zero tolerance for abuse and misconduct. This includes not only on-pitch safety, but also off-pitch safety in any part of USA Rugby's programs.
- USA Rugby and the US Center for SafeSport require the reporting of sexual misconduct by or of any member of USA Rugby to the US Center for SafeSport Response and Resolution Office.
- USA Rugby strongly encourages reporting of both sexual misconduct and any other misconduct or abuse, which can be submitted here: <https://usa.rugby/safesport>
- Any questions about the USA Rugby SafeSport Program can be directed to the USA Rugby SafeSport Liaison officer.



09 GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES / CONCUSSION



USA RUGBY CONCUSSION POLICY

- If a player shows symptoms of concussion before, during or after a match, that player must be removed from play immediately, not to return during that match. Any loss of consciousness requires removal of a player. No Exceptions. There is no HIA (Head Injury Assessment) at community level, all matches are to be played under World Rugby's Recognise & Remove Policy.
- The player needs to be evaluated by appropriate medical staff. Best practice would be evaluation by a medical physician who has training in concussion evaluation and management. A player must do this before returning to play rugby in any form.
- If a concussion is diagnosed, that player must sit out of activity with full rest for the minimum guidelines as listed:

- **Adults** - 1 week (seven full days) AND be symptom free before beginning the 5 day Graduated Return to Play Protocols. Not returning to contact rugby before GRTP fully complete and symptom free.
- **Youth** and HS players (18 and under) - 2 weeks (14 full days) AND be symptom free before beginning the 5 day Graduated Return to Play Protocols. Not returning to contact rugby before GRTP fully complete and symptom free.
- Once a player is cleared by a physician, they should be closely monitored for any lingering symptoms by coaches, parents, teammates and medical staff and be removed from play immediately if symptoms occur.
- For more information and resources, please visit: <https://usa.rugby/concussion>



LAW VARIATIONS

- Players have 30 seconds to kick conversions or penalty goals (both are drop kicks only).
- Yellow Cards are 2 minutes (playing time).
- The scoring team kicks-off following a score.
- The sanctions for kick-off infringements (in front of the kicker, not 10m, directly into touch, etc.) are Free Kicks and not scrums. **FK**
- Teams must form lineouts and scrums within 15 seconds. **FK**
- A front-row player must not intentionally kick the ball out of the scrum in the direction of the opponents' try line. **PK**
- Unless alternate arrangements are made by match organizers, a team may nominate and use up to 5 replacements.

BREAKDOWN

- In sevens, there is an emphasis on quick ball and promoting fair contest.
- Tacklers must roll immediately and must not interfere with the ball. **PK**
- Tackled players must not roll, crawl or re-position their body to prevent legal poaching. **PK**
- Arriving players must enter correctly and stay on their feet. **PK**
- Legal dominance should be rewarded by the referee.

LINEOUT

- The non-throwing team must have a player in the 5m channel (2m x 2m). Some teams forget this player or prefer to have them stand in the backline, but this is not allowed. The referee should manage first before escalating to a sanction. **FK**

THROWING THE BALL AWAY

- Players must not throw the ball away:
 - Following the awarding of a Penalty Kick, to prevent a quick tap. **PK & YC**
 - Following the ball going into touch, to prevent a quick throw-in. **PK & YC**

INTENTIONAL KNOCK ON

- In sevens, every scenario is considered a 'potential line break'. Therefore, any intentional knock-on is sanctioned with a Yellow Card. **PK & YC**

ADVANTAGE

Good ball with time and space, or a clear tactical opportunity usually means advantage has accrued. This often means a short advantage for both scrum and penalty kick advantages.

- In many cases, awarding a Penalty Kick is of greater benefit to the non-offending team than playing advantage.

THE FOLLOWING LAWS DO NOT APPLY TO SEVENS

- LAW 18.8. a. 50:22
- LAW 12.12 TRY LINE DROP-OUT

