



GAME MANAGEMENT

SEASON 2026-2027 GUIDELINES



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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

- **Must release, move away, roll to either side ④ 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 on the opposition's side and interfere with arriving support players. **PK**
- Once on their feet must get onside, and/or come from the direction of their own try line before playing the ball. **PK**

TACKLE ASSIST

- A player who assists a teammate with bringing a ball carrier to ground, or who holds the ball carrier during a tackle, but who does not go to ground themselves.
- **They must clearly release the ball carrier** - both hands off the ball and ball carrier in a clear action that is reasonable for the referee to see. **PK**
- The tackle assist must be on their side of the tackle, or move out of the breakdown zone and enter through their side, 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.

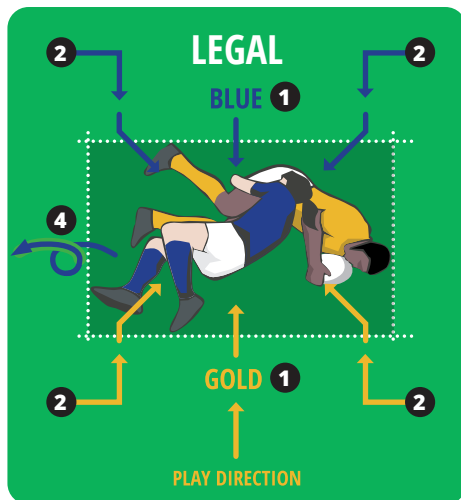
BALL CARRIER

- **Must release, place, or pass the ball. PK**
- Isolated ball carriers must not roll, crawl or re-position their body to prevent access to the ball by an opponent who is in a legal position. **PK**
- **U19: Players may not use the squeeze ball technique. PK**

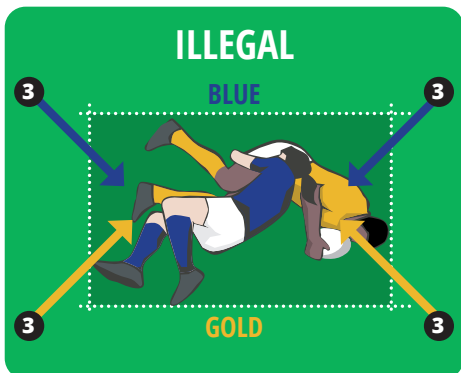


TACKLE ZONE

- Arriving players at the tackle zone must approach from the direction of their own try line. **①**
- Players have to **②** 'square up' to enter through the zone, and can then clear out an opponent.
- The tackle is a dynamic situation with moving bodies. The important priorities are the direction the player comes from and that they enter the zone square.



- Players may not enter through the **③** side of the tackle area.
- Retreating defenders that enter the tackle must do so from their side. They cannot put their hands on the ball before 'squaring up' **③**.

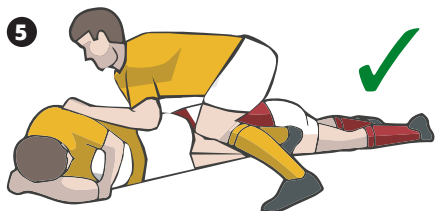


JACKLER

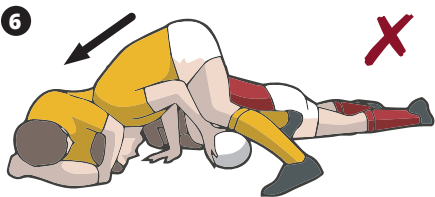
- **The first arriving team-mate of the tackler at the tackle is the jackler.**
- Clean outs which target or drop weight onto the jackler's lower limbs are not allowed. **PK**
- Jackler must not lean on their hands/elbows beyond the ball and then scoop the ball. **PK**
- Jackler should only be rewarded if they clearly lift/pull the ball upwards.
- 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 hand/s.
- The scrumhalf may not hold the ball and move it without lifting it (dummy/balk). **FK**
- **The player in the scrumhalf position must not be tackled or interfered with until the ball is clearly out of the ruck.** A player involved in, or leaving, the ruck must not play an opponent within 1m who is attempting to move the ball away. Any doubt goes to the scrumhalf. An opponent must not knock the ball forward from 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 behind the ball.
- A player in a ruck may unbind and pick up the ball as long as **both feet** are behind the ball.



KICK-OFF

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

TRY LINE DROP-OUT

- The attacking team plays, kicks in open play, or carries the ball into in-goal, fails to score, and the ball is then:
 - Made dead in in-goal.
 - Held up.
 - Carried or played into touch-in-goal or over the dead-ball line.
- An attacking player knocks the ball forward in the opponents' in-goal, regardless of which team put the ball into in-goal.
- The ball is charged down from the field of play and subsequently goes dead through the opposition's in-goal.
- A kick-off or restart kick enters in-goal and a defender does not make the ball dead 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 (rather than a scrum at the place of the kick).

NOTE

- If a restart or drop-out is kicked directly into touch and the non-kicking team selects the scrum option, the scrum is on the sanction line, in line with where the ball was kicked.
- Sanction lines are:
 - Try line Drop-Out: 5m from the try line
 - 22m Drop-Out: 22m line
 - Kick-off: Halfway line

PENALTIES & FREE KICKS

- Need to be taken correctly (kicked a visible distance/clearly leave the hands if holding the ball/clearly leave the mark if it is on the ground), **or it is a turnover scrum.**
- Need to be taken within close proximity (1m) of the mark, or behind it, **or it must be retaken.**
- At a scrum, the kick must not be taken alongside the scrum; it must be on the mark or behind the 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.
- If a player is yellow-carded for failing to retire 10m following a quickly taken free kick, play restarts with a **penalty kick 10m in front of the original mark.**
- A team awarded a Free Kick may not choose to have a scrum.

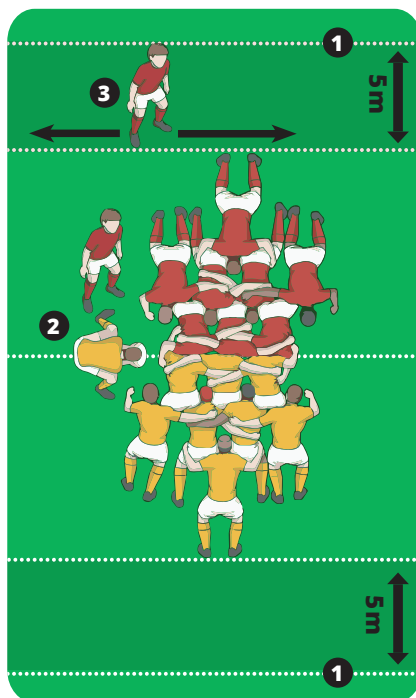


LINEOUTS

- 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.

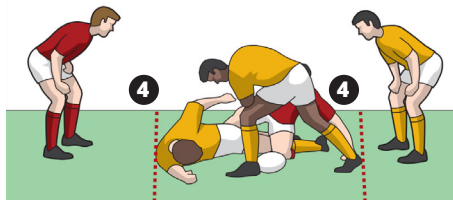
SCRUM

- 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 **1**, 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 hindmost point offside line of the scrum **3** and may move laterally across the field. **When the player chooses this option, they must be at the tunnel on the put-in side when the ball is put in.**



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.



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 onside 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 to be obstruction. **PK**

OFFSIDE IN FRONT OF KICKER

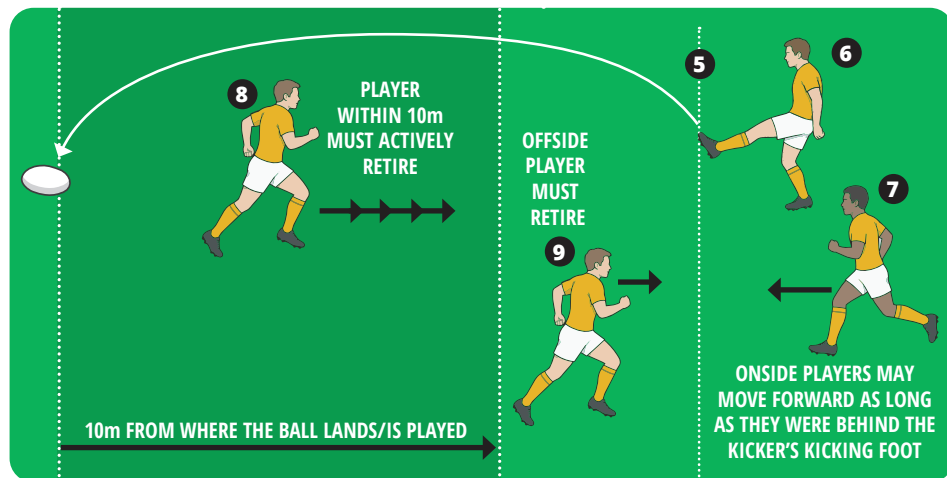
- At an open-play kick, the offside line is determined by the foot that kicks the ball. **5**

- Players in front of a team-mate who kicks the ball, **must retreat** until they have been put onside by the kicker **6** or a team-mate **7** that was onside.

PK or SCRUM

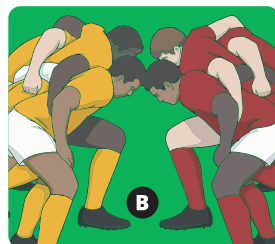
- Players in front of the kicker and **within 10-meters 8** of where the ball lands or is played **must actively retire** until they are onside. **PK or SCRUM**
- Offside players **9** must actively retire and cannot move forward until put onside. **PK or SCRUM**

- If the referee communicates to offside players to retreat ("**Retreat + Color/Number**"), players should retreat until they are put onside. Continuing to move forward, slowing down or stopping is still offside.
- 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 onside.
- The 10m law does not apply when the kick is charged down or touched in an attempted charge-down.**



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. **Hookers must have a brake foot in place during "Crouch" and "Bind" phases, and is removed on "Set". FK**

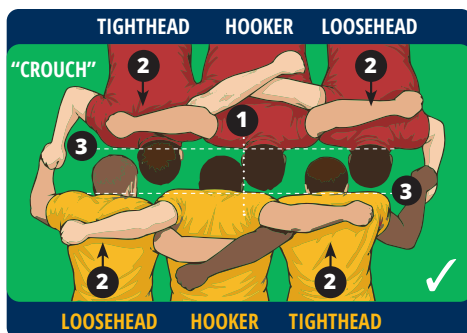


ENGAGEMENT

- 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.**



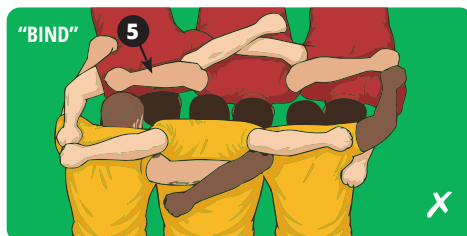
BIND

- There must be a clear gap between opposing shoulders, 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 the 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 may not be pushed more than 1.5m (2 steps), nor intentionally wheeled. 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.

• Except at elite levels, for safety reasons, if a scrum collapses, the referee should immediately blow the whistle and reset or penalize if appropriate.

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.

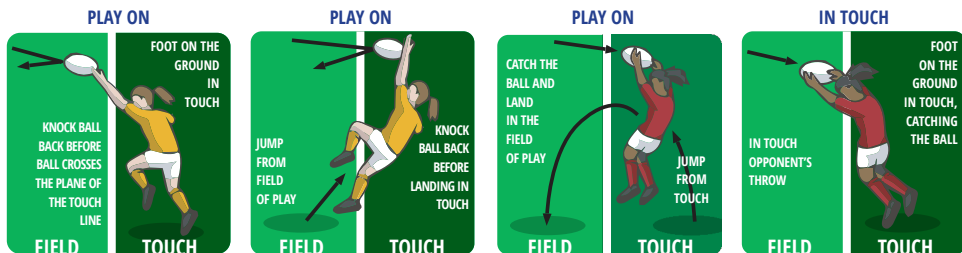
• All uncontested scrums must have 8 players per team.

• 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.

• **At elite levels (Major League Rugby and Women's Elite Rugby), having insufficient trained players causing uncontested scrums will result in reduction of the team's players. At the community level, this requirement is no longer in effect.**

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





QUICK THROW

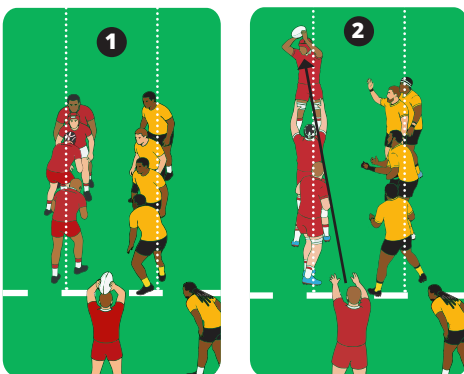
- Players must not prevent their opponents taking a quick throw by failing to release the ball, throwing it away or intentionally touching it. **PK**
- Players must not stand within 5m of the touch line and attempt to block a quick throw-in. **FK** (The player throwing in must not deliberately target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

50:22

- If a player, in their own half, kicks the ball indirectly into touch in the opposition's 22, the resulting lineout is awarded to the kicker's team. To qualify:
 - The team must not have taken the ball into their half.
 - A tackle, ruck or maul took place within the half.
 - An opponent touched the ball within the kicker's 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.

LINEOUT

- 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 does not lift a teammate to compete for the ball, then play shall continue despite a throw not being straight **2**, as long as the ball enters the lineout at the tunnel.
- The throwing team sets the numbers, and the nonthrowing 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 nonthrowing 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 from 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**



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**

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 team-mates 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, but must not move along the outside (often looks like a 'swimming' action). **PK**
- **If a maul turns, and defenders are on the opposition's side of the maul, they must unbind and return to an onside position. (Referees may initially manage players before penalizing).** **PK**
- 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.

DAINGEROUS PLAY

- Players must not engage in reckless or dangerous play.
- Dangerous tackling: Late, high, in the air, no arms, dump/ spear tackle.
- A dump/spear tackle is when a player lifts an opponent off the ground, beyond the horizontal, and drops or drives that player to the ground - often identified by a tackler's one elbow pointing upwards while lifting the opponent.
- Mitigation should not be applied if the tackled player in a spear tackle or contest in the air would have otherwise landed on their head/neck if not for their arm bracing their fall. **PK & RC**

- A 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

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

FOUL PLAY	MINIMUM SANCTION		
	RC	YC	PK
LATE, HIGH, or SHOULDER CHARGE	ALL THREE PRESENT	TWO OF THREE PRESENT	ANY ONE PRESENT
NO ARMS CHOPPING TACKLE	DIRECT JOINT CONTACT LAUNCH AT LEGS	LOW FORCE	
HEAD or NECK: CHOKER, GRAB, or ROLL	CHOKING NECK ROLL & FOLLOW THROUGH	CHOKER & RELEASE NECK ROLL & RELEASE	ACCIDENTAL WITH IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CROC ROLL	DROPS WEIGHT INTO JOINTS	MEDIUM DANGER	LOW DANGER
LIFTING DUMP/ SPEAR TACKLE	LIFTING PAST HORIZONTAL & LANDS ON HEAD/NECK	LIFTING PAST HORIZONTAL & LANDS ON BACK/SIDE	NOT LIFTING PAST HORIZONTAL BUT DANGEROUS
CHALLENGE IN THE AIR	NOT FAIR CHALLENGE & LANDS ON HEAD/NECK	NOT FAIR CHALLENGE & LANDS ON BACK/SIDE	NOT FAIR CHALLENGE WRONG TIMING
OVER THE SHOULDER SEATBELT TACKLE			LOW FORCE

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**

PUSHING A TEAM-MATE

- Except in a scrum, ruck or maul, a player must not push or propel a team-mate, with or without the ball, into contact or toward an opponent. **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. **PK**
- Intentionally knock, place, push or throw the ball with an arm or hand from the playing area. **PK**
- Do anything that may lead the match officials to consider that an opponent has committed an infringement. **PK**
- Waste time. **FK**

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**

TACKLER: 9.13 & 14.5

A player must not tackle an opponent early, late or dangerously. Dangerous tackling includes tackling or attempting to tackle an opponent in a way that leads to head contact, or above the base of the sternum while either player is in open-field play. **PK**

NOTE:

The shoulder line for tackle height only applies in elite rugby (Major League Rugby and Women's Elite Rugby).

BALL CARRIER: 9.11 & 14.1

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	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 there is a late and significant drop in the ball carrier's height immediately prior to contact, and the tackler makes contact above the sternum, the tackler will not be penalized.

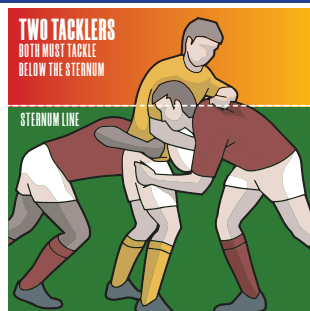
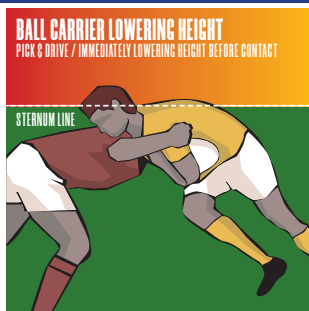
DANGEROUS ACTIONS BY THE BALL CARRIER REGARDING TACKLE HEIGHT

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**
Penalize the ball carrier only when their action is reckless or dangerous.

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 ADVANTAGE

- 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 ADVANTAGE

- For a 'penalty kick advantage' to accrue, the nonoffending 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.



END OF THE HALF: A half ends when the ball becomes dead after time has expired unless:

- A scrum, lineout or restart kick, awarded before time expired, has not been completed and the ball has not returned to open play. This includes when the lineout is taken incorrectly, or a restart kick is taken incorrectly or fails to enter open play.
- A penalty is kicked dead, without the ball first being tapped or without the ball touching another player.
- A try has been scored and the conversion kick has not yet been taken.

CONVERSIONS:

- **TIME:** Must be taken within 60 seconds; a different ball may be used. After a stoppage, the 60-second clock starts when play resumes.
- **DEFENDERS:** Must retire to their try line. Once the kicker is settled, their first step or lifted foot begins the approach, regardless of direction. Defenders may then jump or charge from the try line but must not be physically supported by team-mates.

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 must 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).

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, team-mates 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 8. a. 50:22
- LAW 12.12 TRY LINE DROP-OUT

