



# NATIONAL SAFEPLAY CODE

(2009 Version)

(FOR PLAYERS AGED 15 YEARS AND UNDER)



## INTRODUCTION

The Safeplay Code was developed to emphasise safety and good conduct within the game of Rugby League by creating the best possible on-field environment and actively controlling undesirable actions. It applies to all players up to and including the Under 15 years age group.

## 1. TACKLE ZONE

The Code: TACKLES ABOVE THE ARMPITS ARE NOT PERMITTED

Application: (a) When a ball-carrier is running with an upright posture, any tackle in which the defender's arm(s) makes contact above an armpit constitutes an infringement.  
(b) It is an infringement for a defender/tackler to set upon the head or neck region of a ball-carrier.  
(c) A defender, in front of a ball-carrier who is diving or running with a "stooped" posture, is permitted to come in contact with the ball-carrier's shoulder provided the defender's arm(s) extends down the shoulder and trunk, i.e. underneath the ball-carrier.

Reference: Law Book - Section 15, Law 1 (b), Page 38

## 2. DANGEROUS TACKLES

The Code: (2.1) THE TACKLER'S LEGS CANNOT BE USED TO TRIP IN A THROW.

Application: The use of the legs in a tackle is not permissible. Using the legs (even if the defender has a hand hold on the ball-carrier) to trip or throw constitutes an infringement.

Reference: Law Book - Section 15, Note to Law 1 (a), Page 38

The Code: (2.2) ADOPTING A CROTCH HOLD IS MISCONDUCT

Application: Adopting a crotch hold i.e. by placing either a hand or arm in the crotch region is an infringement.

Reference: Law Book - Section 15, Law 1 (d), Page 38

The Code: (2.3) NO VERTICAL LIFT IN A TACKLE IS PERMITTED

Application: Vertical lifting in a tackle is an infringement.

No defender(s), during the course of a tackle, are permitted to vertically lift the ball-carrier. If the possibility of a vertical lift occurs, i.e. one or both feet of the ball-carrier have been lifted off the ground, the referee must immediately blow the whistle to prevent the tackle from continuing. (This is not to be confused with a tackle that, in the same motion, "knocks" a player off his feet).

The Code: (2.4) A BALL-CARRIER CANNOT BE LIFTED AND DRIVEN

Application: A tackle that results in the ball-carrier being lifted and remaining off the ground while the tackler takes two (2) or more steps to drive the player (in any direction and while the ball-carrier's feet are off the ground) is an infringement.

Reference: Law Book - Section 15, Law 1 (d), Notes 1 (d), Page 38

The Code: (2.5) THE ADDITIONAL FOLLOWING ACTION(S) BY A TACKLER WILL ALSO INCUR AN IMMEDIATE PENALTY

Application: Whilst a player, in possession, is moving, it is an infringement for a defender to lift the trailing foot of the ball-carrier from behind. (Again, this is not to be confused with a tackle that in the same motion, "knocks" a player off his feet).

The Code: (2.6) A DEFENDER CANNOT "PUSH" THE BALL-CARRIER TO EFFECT/COMPLETE A TACKLE

Application: A defender who pushes the ball-carrier to effect/complete a tackle is guilty of an infringement.

## 3. SHOULDER CHARGE

The Code: A DEFENDER CANNOT "SHOULDER CHARGE" A BALL-CARRIER TO AFFECT A TACKLE.

Application: A defender who runs at a ball-carrier and, without attempting to tackle, grab or hold the ball-carrier, charges to make contact with the shoulder or with the upper arm (tucked into the side) is guilty of an infringement.

Reference: Law Book - Section 15, considered "Misconduct" or "Dangerous Play"

## 4. VICIOUS PALM

The Code: AN ATTACKING PLAYER CANNOT "THRUST" OUT AN ARM TO CONTACT THE DEFENDER ABOVE THE SHOULDER

Application: Any attacking player who violently punches or thrusts out an arm or uses an outstretched stiff arm so that the hand or fist contacts the neck, face or head of a defender commits an infringement. (This section does not state that a player cannot legitimately 'palm' the head, neck or face).

Reference: Law Book - Section 15, Law 1 (a), Page 38

## 5. SLINGING

The Code: THE USE OF THE BALL-CARRIER'S ARM, OR JERSEY TO SLING OR SWING A PLAYER IS PROHIBITED

Application: A defender who uses the arm or jersey of the ball-carrier to sling or swing the player in a tackle commits an infringement.

Reference: Law Book - Section 11, Note to Law 1. Page 23

## 6. SANDBAGGING (FLOPPING)

The Code: A DEFENDER CANNOT DROP OR FALL ON A PRONE PLAYER.

Application: It is an infringement for a defender to drop, dive or fall on a player in possession of the ball who is prone or stationary on the ground and not attempting to play-on. (A simple hand-on completes the tackle).

Reference: Law Book - Section 15, Law 1 (e) & (i), Page 38

## 7. SURRENDER (IN THE TACKLE)

The Code: BALL-CARRIERS MAY SURRENDER IN THE TACKLE. WHEN SMALL AND/OR INEXPERIENCED PLAYERS ARE INVOLVED IN A "SURRENDER", DEFENDERS MUST NOT COMPLETE THE TACKLE

Application: This rule is designed to protect beginners and small players by minimising risk and eliminating excessively robust play. The referee, NOT the player, calls 'held'. Players who are at an obvious disadvantage because of low levels of experience, are of small stature or show a lack of skill are to be protected when in possession of the ball and being tackled. Halt to play is to be called (BY THE REFEREE) when these players submit to the tackle or are held, subdued or their progress is halted by bigger or more experienced players. Failure by a tackler to respond to the referee's call is an infringement.

Reference: Law Book - Section 11, Law 2 (c), Page 23, Note to 2 (c), Page 24

## 8. VERBAL ABUSE / FOUL LANGUAGE

The Code: THE USE OF OBSCENE EXPLETIVES, THREATENING OR DENIGRATING WORDS IS NOT PERMITTED

Application: Verbal abuse, obscene language and sledging, including comments or words that threaten or denigrate an opponent, referee or supporter is an infringement. (If the individual cannot be identified, the team should be cautioned through the captain).

Reference: Law Book - Section 15, Law 1 (f), Page 38

## 9. SCRUMS

The Code: PUSHING OR PULLING IN, OR ROTATING A SCRUM IS NOT PERMITTED.

Application: All scrums are to be de-powered. Scrums will form as per the following instruction: FORM, ENGAGE & HOLD. A team that deliberately pushes or pulls in, or rotates a scrum is guilty of an infringement. Once the ball has been fed into the scrum, hookers only may strike for the ball. Second row players can lift a foot to rake the ball out of the scrum, but cannot step forward over the ball to cause the ball to come out of the scrum.

Reference: Law Book - Section 12, Law 4, Page 30

It should be noted that every penalty under the Safeplay Code should be accompanied by a caution and instruction to the player responsible for the infringement.

## IMPORTANT NOTE

IT IS MANDATORY THAT A PENALTY KICK FOLLOW ANY ACT THAT TRANSGRESSES THE SAFEPLAY CODE. ACTION, IN ADDITION TO A PENALTY FOR A BREACH (i.e. SIN BIN OR REPLACEMENT IN MINI/MOD) IS DISMISSAL AT THE DISCRETION OF THE REFEREE. (Refer International Laws, Section 13, 1 (a) and Section 15 - Players Misconduct)

### ADVANTAGE PLAY & THE SAFEPLAY CODE

A penalty kick must follow any infringement.

1. IF NO ADVANTAGE OCCURS, the penalty is to be awarded immediately.
2. IF AN ADVANTAGE OCCURS, the penalty is to be awarded either at the breakdown in play immediately after the misconduct occurred, (unless a try is imminent) or where the act of misconduct occurred, whichever is to the greater advantage to the non-offending team.
3. WHEN A TRY HAS BEEN SCORED in the same play in which the act of misconduct occurred or in the immediate play thereafter (the imminent factor), the penalty kick, additional to the conversion, will be awarded in front of the goal posts. A kick at goal must be taken from the penalty kick (place or drop) and play restarted from the centre on the half-way line irrespective of the outcome of the kick.

Acknowledgement - The original Safeplay Code was written by Graham Chaffey, NSW Rugby League.



Australian Government  
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