



# NATIONAL SAFE PLAY CODE

## 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) It is an infringement if, whilst attempting to effect a tackle on a ball-carrier running with an upright posture, a defender makes contact above the armpits intentionally, recklessly or carelessly.  
(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/hands on the ball-carrier) to trip or throw the ball carrier constitutes an infringement.

Reference: Law Book - Section 15, to Law 1 (a) and (d), 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 (i), 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).

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

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: It is an infringement if, during the course of a tackle, a defender or defenders intentionally lift the leg/foot of the ball carrier. (This is not to be confused with a tackle that in the same motion, “knocks” a player off his feet).

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

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.

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

### 3. SHOULDER CHARGE

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

Application: Shoulder Charge – is where a defender, without attempting to tackle, grab or hold the ball-carrier (or any opposing player) using the arms or hands, makes direct physical contact with the shoulder or the upper arm (tucked into the side).

Reference: Law Book – Section 15, 1(k) Page 38.

#### **4. VICIOUS PALM**

The Code: THE BALL-CARRIER CANNOT "THRUST" OUT AN ARM TO CONTACT THE DEFENDER ABOVE THE SHOULDER.

Application: It is an infringement for the ball-carrier to violently punch, thrust out an arm or use an outstretched stiff arm so as to make contact with the hand or fist to the defending player's head, neck or face. (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, Notes 1 (a). 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 (i), Page 38.

#### **7. SURRENDER (IN THE TACKLE)**

The Code: THE BALL-CARRIER 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. A 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 2 (c), Page 24.

#### **8. VERBAL ABUSE / FOUL LANGUAGE**

The Code: IT IS AN INFRINGEMENT TO USE THREATENING OR OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE.

Application: Verbal abuse, obscene language and sledging, including comments or words that threaten or denigrate an opponent, referee or supporter is an infringement.

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, only the hookers 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 Safestay Code should be accompanied by a caution and instruction to the player responsible for the infringement.

## IMPORTANT NOTE

IT IS MANDATORY THAT A PENALTY IS AWARDED FOLLOWING ANY BREACH/INFRINGEMENT OF THE SAFEPLAY CODE. IN ADDITION TO A PENALTY FOR A BREACH, REFEREES AT THEIR DISCRETION MAY:

- SIN BIN THE OFFENDING PLAYER (INTERNATIONAL GAME ONLY)
- DISMISS THE OFFENDING PLAYER FROM FIELD OF PLAY (INTERNATIONAL GAME ONLY)  
Refer International Laws, Section 13, 1 (a) and Section 15- Player's Misconduct
- REPLACEMENT IN MINI/MOD GAME  
Refer Rugby League Laws of Mini Footy & Mod League Page 14, Law (25) & Page 37 Law (23)

## ADVANTAGE PLAY & THE SAFEPLAY CODE

A penalty kick must follow any infringement.

1. IF NO ADVANTAGE OCCURS, the penalty is to be awarded immediately at the mark where the infringement occurred.
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 re-started from the centre on the half-way line irrespective of the outcome of the kick.

## A NOTE ON MODIFIED GAMES ("Laws of Modified Games", Corcoran, 2002.)

The 'Sin Bin' does not apply in Mini Footy or Mod League games. Should a player be guilty of such conduct that "merits" suspension from the field for a time, then the referee is to advise the player's team Captain of the problem and direct that the player be replaced for the remainder of that period of play during which the misconduct occurred.

A player's Captain may be directed to replace the player for the remainder of the game should that player's misconduct warrant such action. In this case, the offending player cannot take any further part in the match. A player - replaced for a period (Mini) or half (Mod) who resumes playing in a later period / half AND is guilty of further misconduct MUST be dismissed WITHOUT REPLACEMENT. (International Laws apply here).

## IMPLEMENTING THE Safeplay CODE

**Promoting the Code** All parents, players, coaches and referees should familiarise themselves with the "Safeplay Code" before the commencement of the season and subsequent matches. A copy of the Code should be available and prominently displayed at match venues and training sessions.

**Referees** The Referee's total implementation of the Safeplay Code is the key to its success. Referees must be fully briefed on the detailed workings of the "Safeplay Code". The most suitable personnel to do this are the appointed Coaching and Development Staff or Referees' Co-ordinators/Providers/Coaches.

**Coaches** Coaches are the other vital factor in ensuring that the Code is applied successfully. All coaches must ensure that their players are aware of, and fully understand, the "Safeplay Code" and observe it "to the letter".

**All Matches** To ensure that all parties fully understand the Safeplay Code, a pre-match meeting should be held, at International Law games, between the match Referee, Coaches, Ground Officials and where possible, team Captains. It may take a few matches for Referees and players to become accustomed to the Code. However, the right balance will soon be achieved as long as all concerned work together and realise that the code will benefit all players and the game.

[The original Safeplay Code was written by Graham Chaffey - NSWRL - and trialed by the NSWCR in 1995.]



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