



smart **RUGBY**

AUSTRALIAN RUGBY UNION

CONFIDENCE IN CONTACT

A GUIDE TO THE TELSTRA SMARTRUGBY PROGRAM



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission





'RUGBY IS A PHYSICAL, EXCITING GAME - THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT IT. BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'LL LET MY PLAYERS BE CARELESS IN THE WAY THEY PLAY. IN FACT, TECHNIQUE AND SAFETY ARE DIRECTLY CONNECTED IN EVERYTHING THE WALLABIES DO. WE TRAIN TO TACKLE AND SCRUMMAGE THE RIGHT WAY TO AVOID UNNECESSARY INJURIES AND ACTUALLY GET MUCH MORE POWER AND EFFICIENCY. THE TELSTRA SMARTRUGBY PROGRAM IS FANTASTIC BECAUSE IT TAKES THE WALLABY TRAINING ETHOS AND COMMUNICATES IT TO ALL PLAYER LEVELS, FROM UNDER 9'S TO SENIORS, ACROSS AUSTRALIA. THE BENEFITS ARE DIRECT AND OBVIOUS - YOU CAN FIELD YOUR BEST TEAM ALMOST EVERY WEEK AND HAVE THEM PLAYING WITH A HIGHER DEGREE OF SKILL, TECHNIQUE AND GREATER CORE STRENGTH.'

EDDIE JONES

NATIONAL "WALLABIES" COACH



'TELSTRA SMARTRUGBY WAS A MAJOR FOCUS FOR WARNERVALE RUGBY CLUB IN 2004. PROVIDING A SAFE PLAYING AND TRAINING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL OF OUR PLAYERS IS PARAMOUNT TO THE CLUB, AND THE SKILLS INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM HAS HELPED MINIMISE THE RISK TO ALL PLAYERS.

IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM RESULTED IN A REDUCTION OF MINOR AND SERIOUS INJURIES ACROSS THE ALL AGE GROUPS, FROM THE CLUB'S THREE UNDER-8 SIDES RIGHT UP TO THE SENIOR TEAM. THIS WAS HIGHLY EVIDENT IN OUR CLUB THIS YEAR WITH MANY OF OUR SENIORS PLAYERS BEING WELL OVER THE AGE OF THIRTY, REPORTING ONLY MINIMAL OR NO INJURIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR DUE TO THE DRILLS AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE TELSTRA SMARTRUGBY PROGRAM.'

MATTHEW BULL

CLUB DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
WARNERVALE RUGBY CLUB



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ABOUT TELSTRA SMARTRUGBY

WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF RUGBY?

Rugby is a body contact sport. This is the essential difference between Rugby and almost any other sport. It's also what makes Rugby so exciting to watch and satisfying to play.

By its nature, body contact has the potential for injury. If we are to successfully train the next generation of Rugby players we must give them the skills to approach body contact with confidence. The Telstra SmartRugby program is the ARU's way of achieving this: its aim is to ensure that coaches across Australia build 'smart' playing techniques into all aspects of Rugby training and play, at all age and skill levels. We call it 'smart' Rugby because it's not just about player safety (though that is an important part) but about players using correct techniques to become more confident.

The program is not intended to reduce the intensity of Rugby competition in any way. Instead it encourages players to respect their opponents and to have regard for their own safety by adopting proven safe and effective methods of performing contact skills. Basically it's a health and safety program for the game of Rugby, and to be fully effective it requires ongoing commitment.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

The Telstra SmartRugby program has three main features:

1. A technical program for all players, delivered by their coach at the beginning of the season. Elements of the program will also be built into regular training.
2. Additional technical training for at-risk players (such as those making the transition from U19 law to senior laws) and inexperienced players at any age.
3. A Telstra SmartRugby Coordinator in each club, school or association. The Coordinator, who must be registered with the ARU, oversees the program and is the conduit for safety information between the ARU and the club or school.

The program starts with a 'train-the-trainer' session at the beginning of the season. At this 2 to 2 1/2 hour session the Coordinator will train all Coaches and Match Officials in the correct techniques to show their players/members. Coaches will then give their own on-field session to players, similar in structure to the train-the-trainer session. The techniques learnt are then built into regular training throughout the season, so that Telstra SmartRugby becomes an integral part of coaching at your club, school or association.



A TYPICAL TWO-HOUR 'TRAIN-THE-TRAINER' SESSION

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Introduction | 'playing smart' | 10 mins |
| Skills training | 1. Stability, balance and agility | 20 mins |
| | 2. Tackle and post-tackle | 45 mins |
| | 3. Scrum | 20 mins |
| | 4. Lineout and restart | 15 mins |
| Conclusion and questions | | 10 mins |

Telstra SmartRugby is compulsory for all clubs and schools across Australia, but it will only really work if Coordinator, Coaches and Match Officials get behind it by learning about it, following its training techniques and 'transferring the knowledge' to players. And the benefits are many – not just fewer injuries (which makes for happier parents and fewer coaching selection crises) but more effective tackles and scrums and a greater focus of team effort at the breakdown, lineouts and restarts. A further important benefit is ensuring protection under the law for a club or school if injuries do occur.

CONFIDENCE IN CONTACT – HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

All players, from top professionals to junior and senior recreational players, aspire to play free-flowing running rugby without injuries and foul play. This booklet is a step-by-step guide for coaches on how to help players achieve this goal.

This booklet essentially follows the order of the pre-season training session. We start with balance and stability (page 13), as these underline all good Rugby play. We then focus strongly on the number one area for potential injury, the tackle and post-tackle (page 15). We then look at the other important areas: the scrum (page 24) and the lineout and restart (page 34).

For each skill area there is an explanation of what is trying to be achieved, then detailed description and illustrations of the exercises coaches can use to develop skills in this area. The exercises are progressive (e.g. start with a standing tackle but gradually speed it up and add more force) and we have also suggested ways to vary the exercises and add your own ideas to keep players interested.

COMMON RUGBY INJURIES AND HOW THEY OCCUR

THE STATISTICS

Recent injury statistics show that around 40% of all injuries, and 75% of serious spinal injuries over the last ten years, occur at the tackle – with injuries almost equally divided between the tackler and the ball carrier. Further investigation suggests the main cause of these injuries is poor tackling technique, such as having the head bending down on impact, or not going to ground properly once tackled. Rugby has changed greatly over the years – 65% of time is now spent at the tackle contest, so players must be skilled in this area.

Scrum account for only a small proportion of overall injuries (2%) but have been responsible for 25% of recent serious spinal injuries. Injuries can occur in scrums due to a player being forced into an awkward body position under the pressure exerted by fellow players.

In lineouts and the restart of play, injuries can occur when a player is pushed while in the air and falls awkwardly. Injuries can also occur in a range of other situations during a game and even at training (statistics show that 15% of injuries occur during coach-supervised practice sessions).

Some other facts about Rugby injuries are worth bearing in mind:

- In men's Rugby the leg is the most commonly injured part of the body (up to 48% of injuries), followed by the arm (up to 29%) and the head or face (up to 27%).
- Schoolboy Rugby and women's Rugby have a higher incidence of head and face injuries, including concussion, than other levels of Rugby.
- A high proportion of injuries (up to 56%) occur during the tackle phase in all levels of Rugby.

THE SOLUTION

The major underlying feature of most Rugby injuries is poor body position and technique, and this is something that can be fixed by good training. The Telstra SmartRugby program, therefore, focuses on correct body position in:

- overall play (stability, balance and agility)
- the tackle (e.g. head up, arms ready, low centre of gravity)
- the scrum (e.g. binding properly, engaging at the right time, using the legs for strength)
- lineouts and restarts (e.g. supporting the ball catcher, going to ground safely).

Another important aspect of preventing injuries is sensible selection of players according to position, experience, age, size and body type.



PREVENTING RUGBY UNION INJURIES

Effective injury prevention involves a host of measures such as physical preparation (e.g. conditioning, warming-up, stretching and cooling-down); skill and technique development; use of protective equipment; enforcement of game laws; rule/law changes; and the management of general safety issues by administrators, coaches, referees and other personnel. The following safety tips apply to all players, irrespective of the level of play.

PREPARATION TO PLAY

- Players should undertake physical pre-season preparation during the off-season, and obtain advice on their conditioning program from either a coach or fitness advisor.
- Coaches should be trained in the correct methods for teaching rugby skills and techniques.
- Tackling should be the focus of regular skills training and be progressively introduced to players.
- At the tackle contest, players should try to remain on their feet. Training of team play for the breakdown is important, as is the prevention of foul play.
- Players should recognise that injuries to either themselves or other players can still occur with the use of protective equipment.
- Injured players should return to play only after appropriate rehabilitation to regain their strength, fitness and mobility.
- Players with a previous severe injury should consult their sports medicine practitioner about the value of using protective equipment in their individual case.

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Only IRB approved protective equipment may be used.
- Please note that, headgear does not prevent concussion, but may reduce the chance of soft tissue injury.
- Players should be encouraged to wear a mouth guard at all times during games and practices in which impacts to the teeth and jaw are possible.

PRE-PARTICIPATION SCREENING

- Children, new players and those older than 35 years, should consider undergoing pre-participation medical screening, with a qualified and experienced practitioner (e.g. sports physician or a general practitioner with a sports medicine interest).
- Players should be prepared to accept advice of a sports medicine professional that they should not play if they have a condition that places them at risk of injury.

WARM-UP AND WARM-DOWN PROCEDURES

- A standard warm-up (15-20min) should consist of aerobic activity, stretching and skill practice immediately before a game.
- Players should learn and use correct techniques for regular stretching. Regular checking by a coach or trainer is advised.
- A warm-down (10-15 min) should consist of light aerobic activity and stretching immediately after a match or practice session.



ROLE OF THE COORDINATOR, COACH AND MATCH OFFICIAL

COORDINATOR

A Telstra SmartRugby Coordinator must make sure everyone does their job in ensuring players can learn to approach contact with confidence. The Coordinator should be an influential member of the club or school, be blessed with common sense and have a sound background in the game of Rugby. If you are the Coordinator for your club or school you must ensure that:

- all players who tackle must be trained in the principles of Telstra SmartRugby before their first game each year (ie. trial or competition match)
- enough practice time during the year is devoted to body contact training by players in transitional age groups (e.g. moving from U19 to senior laws) and inexperienced players of all ages; this may require careful monitoring of new players and late starters in a season
- the ARU Safety Directives poster is prominently displayed, and the ARU guidelines for safe match and practice environments are complied with; these explain what to do to prevent injuries and what to do if an injury occurs
- your club or school continues to follow the program throughout the season; this may involve observing training sessions, checking equipment, and ensuring that experience and physique are taken into account when selecting players
- you notify the ARU's Quality Assurance Manager when your club, school or association is Telstra SmartRugby compliant (has satisfied all the requirements of the program) to receive a compliance certificate.

COACH AND MATCH OFFICIAL

The Coordinator oversees the Telstra SmartRugby program but it is the coach who makes it happen. If you are a coach you **must**:

- attend a Telstra SmartRugby session every 2 years (**includes match officials**)
- run pre-season technical training session for all players; your role here is not only to teach the skills but to impress on players the need for 'playing smart'
- build smart training techniques into regular practices throughout the season; this will often be done in consultation with your club or school's Coordinator.
- report any safety-related issues that arise to the Coordinator.

THE LEGAL SITUATION

The Telstra SmartRugby program has been designed to allow clubs and schools to fulfil their legal responsibilities regarding safety in playing Rugby.

"People who organise and conduct any sporting activities at schools or clubs have a 'Duty of Care' to all participants. This is a responsibility, which cannot be eliminated and should not be ignored.

The Telstra SmartRugby program has been developed as a tool to assist those who organise and conduct rugby at schools and clubs discharge their Duty of Care obligation. The Telstra SmartRugby coordinator has no more or no less a Duty of Care than others involved in the organisation and conduct of rugby. The coordinator will remind those organising and conducting Rugby in clubs and schools of their Duty of Care obligation. We should not lose sight of the fact that all coaches in all sports accept the Duty of Care responsibility when they accept the role of coach. A club, association, school, coach or match official who has implemented to their players, the practices recommended in the Telstra SmartRugby Program is better equipped to meet their legal Duty of Care obligation.

When a Telstra SmartRugby Coordinator becomes aware of the failure by those involved in the organisation and conduct of Rugby, to comply with and act consistently with the Telstra SmartRugby Program (and in particular the mandatory technical program), the Telstra SmartRugby Coordinator should inform the Member Union/Quality Assurance Manager of the ARU, of that information, in writing, as soon as possible. In particular, if the mandatory technical program has not been completed by the commencement of the competition, the Member Union or ARU must be informed."

Under the program, Coordinators and coaches have a 'duty of care' to all participants.

Note that this applies equally: the Coordinator has no more or less duty of care than anyone else involved in the organisation and conduct of Rugby. The Coordinator does, however, have the added responsibility of making sure the program is followed, and in informing the ARU if it is not being followed (particularly if the technical program has not been completed before the competition season starts).



INSURANCE

Anyone registered on the ARU database (MyRugbyAdmin) in a club, school or association within a State Union or ARU sanctioned Rugby competition is covered by the national ARU Insurance Scheme. This applies to registered players, coaches, trainers, managers, administrators, volunteer workers, selectors, referees and touch judges.

Top-up insurance on a team or club basis is available and recommended; ask your Club Secretary or ARU Insurer (Gow Gates ph: 1800 811 371). It is also recommended that players and officials take out separate private health insurance.

The booklet covers all the basics of the Telstra SmartRugby technical program. It is (we hope) simple to follow, and compact enough to take with you out on the training field. If you use the training exercises given, your players will develop confidence in contact, have less risk of injury and, most important of all, enjoy their Rugby even more.

BALANCE AND STABILITY

- Only players on their feet can participate in the game of Rugby. Players on the ground are out of play and cannot do anything to assist their team.
- Players on the ground are more likely to be injured.
- Rugby is a leg-based game. The strong muscles of the leg generate power to overcome opposition and can assist a player to resist force applied by an opponent. Unless a player has good balance and stability they can neither generate and deliver force nor resist it.
- There are many instances in Rugby when players go to ground because they lack balance, stability and body control. Balance, stability and body control are acquired skills and can be improved by practice.
- Although legs are the major source of power, the force is frequently delivered through the upper body. It is necessary for the “core of the body” to be both strong and controlled for this process to be successful.
- It is particularly valuable for young players to participate in activities that will improve their balance, stability and their core body strength.
- During a match, players tend to concentrate on upper body activity, to the detriment of effective use of the legs. It is important that coaches emphasise correct footwork and that activities are included in practice sessions that will ensure that it is automatic in a match situation. Correct use of the feet and legs takes many sessions to acquire.



PRACTICE ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP STABILITY/BALANCE/LEG DRIVE

Practice drills.

Stability 1 v 1:

- Shadowing exercise – sideways, backwards, forwards
- Free hands – attempt to slap partner's knees
- Shoulder grips – attempt to slap partner's knees
- Hands on shoulders, attempt to destabilise partner
- Wrist grip – attempt to slap partner's face
- Wrist grip, ball, use opposition as a brace – prevent partner from touching ball
- As above, but change hands each 5 seconds
- Player on all fours – resists partner's attempts to turn on back
- Player face down on ground – partner prevents player from getting to feet

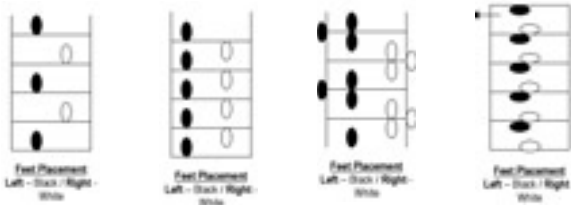
Agility exercises with flags and cones

Rotation activities

Lower abdominal exercises

Action / reaction drills

Agility exercises



The emphasis in all of these activities is on stability through appropriate use of the legs. Players should work in restricted areas, eg grid. Correction of errors should be based on observation of footwork and body shape.

TACKLE

LAW 15 – TACKLE: Ball carrier brought to ground

DEFINITION

A tackle occurs when the ball-carrier is held by one or more opponents and is brought to the ground.

A ball-carrier who is not held is not a tackled player and a tackle has not taken place.

Opposition players who hold the ball-carrier and bring that player to ground, and who also go to ground, are known as tacklers.

Opposition players who hold the ball-carrier and do not go to ground are not tacklers.

TACKLE – REFEREE MANAGEMENT

- Referees will focus closely on the tackler. This is intended to ensure the ball carrier is allowed to exercise his/her options under the tackle law and should ensure more contestability and resultant continuity at the tackle.
- All referees are to call the tackle in the following manner and sequence.
 - To the tackler: “release him/her” and/or “move away”
 - To the tackled player: “play it”

OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO BALL CARRIER WHEN TACKLED

- A tackled player must immediately:
 - pass the ball to a supporting player;
 - or release the ball by placing it on the ground in any direction,;
 - or push the ball away from him/her (but not in a forward direction).

Placing the ball after the tackle



1



2



3

PRACTICE ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP TACKLING SKILLS

- Preliminary tracking activity based on:
 - footwork and positioning
 - two-handed tag
- Safety for ball carrier based on:
 - footwork to maintain balance and control
 - finding space and avoiding full body contact
 - dropping the centre of gravity
 - falling properly with two hands on ball, rolling action and no hands out.
- Safety for the tackler based on
 - positioning footwork (tracking)
 - choice of target area between hips and the bottom of the shorts
 - leg, shoulder relationship
 - use of arms and position of the head at contact
 - leg drive to ensure tackler finishes on top

Note: the modern game is much more front on than side on. Tacklers must try to position the ball carrier so that they are at an angle of between 15° and 45° when making contact.

- Defensive or low tackle drills, 1 v 1
 - arm hook / head position
 - above plus leg action / two arms
 - above plus start on haunches using leg drive

(These drills are described in detail in Chapter 4 of the Level I Manual)
- Defensive or low tackle drills, 1 v 1
 - in corridor
- When competent progress to realistic situations, involving tracking and/or tackling. eg 1 v 1, 2 v 3, 3 v 5, etc.

Placing the ball after the tackle



1



2



3

KEY POINTS FOR LOW TACKLE

DEFENSIVE TACKLE KEY POINTS

1. Position the ball carrier to the side if possible 15-45 degrees.
2. Approach – in upright position with hands up high, in front with palms up.
3. Sight the target — above the knees.
4. Balance and dip (late).
5. Place lead foot in close.
6. Head to the side of opponent (ear against thigh), looking up
7. Firm contact with front of shoulder
8. Wrap arms and lock (hand to elbow), cheek to thigh (no gaps).
9. Squeeze.
10. Fall (on top of) the ball carrier.
11. Quickly regain feet.

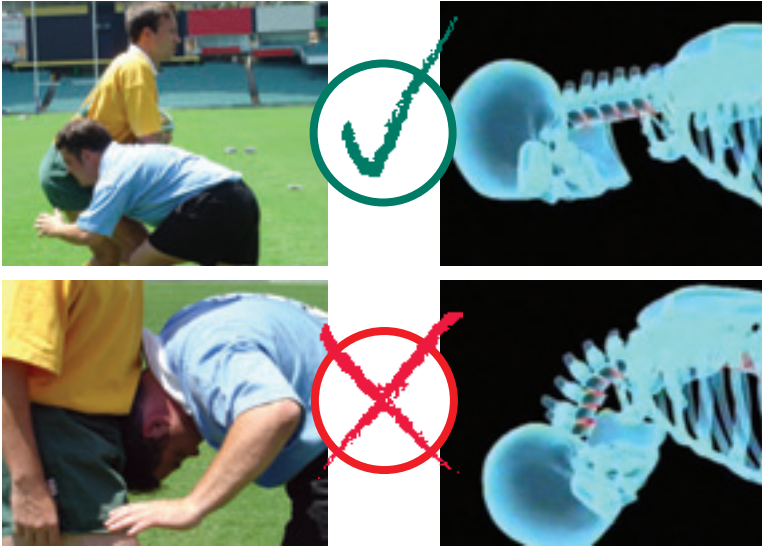
BALL CARRIER GOING TO GROUND KEY POINTS

1. Hold ball in two hands.
2. Keep hips square.
3. Lower centre of gravity, leaning forward and broadening the base of feet. This assists stability.
4. Hug ball into chest and squeeze hard on the ball with both hands when going to the ground.
5. Making contact with hard parts of the body such as shoulders or hip in rolling motion.
6. On NO account put out an arm to break the fall
7. Exercise options immediately.

Tackling Practice Sequence – On Knees



Hyperflexion of the cervical spine resulting in fracture dislocation



ACUTE SPINAL INJURIES

(Mechanisms of scrum injuries)

In rugby generally, and in particularly within scrums, the most commonly reported injury mechanism is '**Hyperflexion**' of the cervical spine, with or without rotation.

The majority of all scrum injuries occur during either the engagement or the collapsing of the scrum. Injuries associated with scrum impact tend to occur when the front rows of the scrum crash together with some players unready. The players who are not ready may attempt to pull back and avoid the engagement. The remaining players may drive directly into the torsos of their opponents risking injury to themselves.

TEACHING SEQUENCE FOR LOW TACKLE

| Tackler's action | Ball carrier's action (key points in bold) | Key points of the defensive Tackle to be emphasised |
|---|---|--|
| <p>On knees, indicates preferred shoulder, with arm hook. Makes contact. 3 on left, 3 on right.</p> | <p>Walks towards tackler (holding ball in two hands) and stops upon firm shoulder contact. Keep hips square.</p> | <p>Sight the target, above the knees. Hands high, in front with palms up. Place head to the side, looking up. Firm shoulder contact.</p> |
| <p>On one knee, indicates preferred shoulder. Makes contact and affects arm clasp. 3 on left, 3 on right.</p> | <p>Walks towards tackler (holding ball in two hands) but does not stop walking, if insufficient shoulder contact and arm squeeze lower centre of gravity.</p> | <p>Wrap arms and lock (hand to elbow), cheek to thigh (no gaps). Squeeze.</p> |
| <p>Standing upright, indicates preferred shoulder. Step and dip Make tackle. 3 on left, 3 on right.</p> | <p>Jogs towards tackler (holding ball in two hands) and maintains gait (if possible) after tackle. Hug/squeeze ball when going to ground.</p> | <p>Balance and dip (late). Lead foot in close. Fall (on top of) the ball carrier.</p> |
| <p>Standing upright, indicates preferred shoulder. Moves forward when ball carrier starts advance. Makes tackle. 3 on left, 3 on right.</p> | <p>Jogs towards tackler and maintain gait (if possible) after tackle. Exercise options immediately.</p> | <p>Position the ball carrier to the side, if possible. Approach in upright position. Quickly regain feet.</p> |

Note: The full sequence is suitable for inexperienced and younger players. It may be valuable for experienced players to briefly revisit the above sequence.



Tackling Practice Sequence - Standing



Tackling Practice Sequence - Standing (rear view)



The shaded area (in red) is the correct impact area using the front of the shoulder, rather than the more easily damaged top of the shoulder



POST TACKLE (SUPPORT)

LAW 16 – RUCK

DEFINITION

A ruck is a phase of play where one or more players from each team, who are on their feet, in physical contact, close around the ball on the ground. Open play has ended.

Rucking. Players are rucking when they are in a ruck and using their feet to try to win or keep possession of the ball, without being guilty of foul play.

- If the tackle is incomplete and the ball carrier is still on his/her feet, the 1st support player must decide how best to assist the ball carrier. If the ball carrier is stable then the support player should secure the ball. If the ball carrier is unstable the 1st support player should bind onto him and let the next support player secure the ball.
- If the tackle has been completed and the ball is on the ground, the 1st support player should generally secure the ball. Because opposition players will arrive quickly the support player should be in a strong stable position, able to resist opposition pressure.
- Players ‘cleaning out’ other players over the ball should also improve their chances of staying on their feet by shortening their stride and driving slightly upwards into the opposition players.



ARRIVING PLAYERS AT THE TACKLE

- Arriving players on their feet have all rights to the ball at the tackle.
- Players arriving at the tackle site must enter through “the gate” determined by the position of the tackler and tackled players bodies.
- Arriving players attempting to gain possession of the ball, must not have any part of their body supported by players on the ground (ie: bridging/stacking). All weight must be supported by their feet.
- Any arriving players clearing out at the tackle must do so safely, with their arms out.
- Shoulder charges are not permissible.

A player on their feet has all the rights to the ball



POST TACKLE (MAUL)

LAW 17 – MAUL

DEFINITION

A maul occurs when a player carrying the ball is held by one or more opponents, and one or more of the ball-carriers team mates bind on the ball-carrier. A maul therefore consists of at least three players, all on their feet; the ball-carrier and one player from each team. All the players involved, caught in or bound to the maul and must be on their feet and moving towards a goal-line. Open play has ended.

- Support for player on feet and ripping the ball taught as a leg-based activity.
- Drills to ensure that players can safely perform the securing of the ball from the ground after a tackle and also perform effective cleanouts without going to ground.

Note: the current interpretation of the ‘entrance gate’ at a post tackle situation has increased the incidence of head on contact but has reduced the momentum of the players involved.

Support for player on feet



1



2



3

SCRUM

LAW 20 – SCRUM

DEFINITION

The purpose of the scrum is to restart play quickly, safely and fairly, after a minor infringement or stoppage.

A scrum is formed in the field of play when eight players from each team, bound together in three rows from each team, close up with their opponents so that the heads of the front rows are interlocked. This creates a tunnel into which the scrum-half throws in the ball so that the front row players can compete for possession by hooking the ball with either of their feet.

The middle line of the scrum must not be within 5 metres of the goal-line. A scrum cannot take place within 5 metres of touch-line.

The tunnel is a space between two front rows.

The player of either team who throws the ball into the scrum is the scrum-half.

The middle line is an imaginary line on the ground in the tunnel beneath the line where the shoulders of the two front rows meet.

The middle player in each front row is the hooker.

The players on either side of the hooker are the props. The left side props are the loose-head props. The right side props are the tight-head props.

The two players in the second row who push on the props and the hooker are the locks.

The outside players who bind into the second or third rows are the flankers.

The player in the third row who usually pushes on both locks is the No.8. Alternatively, the No.8. may push on a lock and a flanker.

INTRODUCTION

- “The purpose of the scrum is to restart play quickly, safely and fairly, after a minor infringement or a stoppage.”
- The scrum should be safe, square, solid, stable and synchronised.

POSITION SPECIFIC BODY SHAPE

- Players selected in the front row should have a short neck and be flexible at shoulders, hips and ankles.
- Players with thin, long necks should not be selected in the front row.

SAFE AND EFFECTIVE SCRUMMAGING

- The key to safe and effective scrummaging is correct body shape.
- It is far more important to spend time on acquiring and maintaining a good body shape than it is to pack a full scrum. To this end, much of preparation for scrummaging should involve individual activities.
- The most effective position for scrummaging and to protect the participants neck is to have the chin and chest as far through as possible.

Factors in preventing injuries include:

1. Front row trained (technically prepared)
2. Experienced (live scrum experience)
3. Size and power (physically developed)
4. Mentally prepared (comfortable in scrumage position)

BUILDING A FRONT ROW

HOKKER (NO.2)

- Must be the **first forward** on the mark.
- Feet shoulder width apart (heel to toe) and feet pointing straight ahead.
- Lower centre of gravity.
- Chin off chest, looking up.

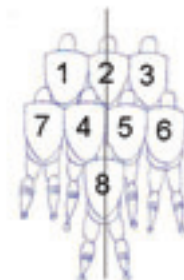
LOOSE HEAD PROP (NO.1)

- Approach from behind, not from the side.
- Plant right foot first.
- Chest high bind on hooker (No.2).
- Square up.

TIGHT HEAD PROP (NO.3)

- Approach from behind, not from the side.
- Plant left foot first.
- Jersey/shorts bind on hooker (No.2).
- Square up.

Front row binding



SCRUM ENGAGEMENT SEQUENCE

- The scrum front row should assemble 'off-set.' This means the hookers are opposite the gap between opposition hooker and prop.

Crouch

- The front row is in a crouched position with the back five engaged.
- Front row should have their weight on the balls of their feet.

Touch (Under 19 Laws)

- The props 'touch' opposition on upper arm to judge distance **NOT** to hold or grip the jersey of your opposition.
- Heads up

Hold

- Props and hooker focus on target area.
- All players must be able to support their own weight (ie: be in a stable position)

Engage

- Engage the opposition firmly with a short horizontal movement.
- Props take binds and 'draw with arms.'
- Abdominals 'on' and breath.
- Maintain body shape and pressure on opposition scrums.

SCRUM ENGAGEMENT SEQUENCE (SENIOR LAWS)

The 'phased sequence of engagement' is to be strictly observed and it has been directed that referees verbally manage each step in the sequence **CROUCH & HOLD** and then **ENGAGE** when both front rows are ready.

Front row players must adopt the **CROUCH** position before the engagement. Head and shoulders must remain above the level of the hips with knees bent sufficiently to make a simple forward movement into engagement.

Players should keep their chin up and head straight in order to maintain the normal and safe alignment of the cervical spine.

The **HOLD** then is to give players time to see that this safe alignment has been made before they **ENGAGE** and to sight their target area.

SCRUM ENGAGEMENT SEQUENCE (UNDER 19)

All levels Under 19 will continue to observe the sequence:-

Front row players must adopt the **CROUCH** position before the engagement. Head and shoulders must remain above the level of the hips with knees bent sufficiently to make a simple forward movement into engagement.

Players should keep their chin up and head straight in order to maintain the normal and safe alignment of the cervical spine.

CROUCH-TOUCH-HOLD-ENGAGE

Following the **CROUCH** a light **TOUCH** on the upper arm will establish a safe distance for engagement. **HOLD** means to pause prior to the **ENGAGE** call from the referee, **NOT** to hold or grip the jersey of your opposition. The referee will manage the entire sequence of events in the engagement process.

SCRUMMAGE COLLAPSE

In the event of a scrummage collapse the referee must whistle immediately so that players stop pushing.

Scrum Engagement Sequence (Under 19 Laws)



1. Crouch



2. Touch



3. Hold



4. Engage

SCRUM PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

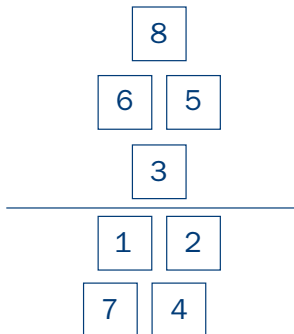
- 1 v 1, up and down, forwards and backwards or sideways
- 1 v 2, using back muscles and legs in a controlled manner whilst maintaining body shape.
- 3 v 3, front row v front row, practicing engagement and grips
- 4 v 4, Loose Head Prop, Hooker, Lock, Flanker versus Tight Head Prop, Lock, Flanker, No.8

Example of 1 v 1



* Ensure correct technique is used and match players by size/strength.

Example of 4 v 4



ISOMETRIC NECK EXERCISES

THESE NECK EXERCISES WILL STRENGTHEN YOU AND YOUR GAME:

- All rugby training programs should always include the most vulnerable part - the neck. Remember that a broken arm or leg can put you out for the season, a neck injury could put you in a wheel chair for life.
- The following simple exercises, which will take a matter of minutes, will develop the neck muscles and help against the chance of doing irreparable damage during a game or training.



1. Static stretch, press head firmly forward. Hold for 15 seconds and change.



2. Static stretch, pull head back into hands. Hold for 15 seconds.



3. Static stretch, use both hands for added resistance. Complete both sides holding each stretch for 15 seconds.



4. Static stretch, pushing chin into firm hands. Hold for 15 seconds.





1. Apply pressure to the forehead with both hands. Continue applying pressure while simultaneously moving the head forward and back in a nodding action. Ensure the movement is slow and controlled.



2. Apply pressure to the back of the head with both hands. Continue applying pressure while simultaneously moving the head forward and back in a nodding action. Ensure the movement is slow and controlled. Complete 5 repetitions



3. Using one hand, apply pressure to the side of the head. Continue applying pressure while simultaneously moving the head toward and away from the shoulder. Complete 5 repetitions on both sides.



4. Using both hands, apply pressure under the chin. Continue applying pressure while simultaneously moving the head up and down in a nodding action. Complete 5 repetitions.

MAYDAY CALL/PROCEDURE

At some stage either during training or in a game a scrum will collapse or 'go down'. It is important for all players to understand what to do when this occurs. The major emphasis is to keep "spines in line and chest and chin through".

If a player calls 'Mayday' it means that he/she is going to ground.

The "Mayday" call is a safety technique put into operation when a scrum is considered by a player to be collapsing, or has collapsed, or when a player believes that he/she is in a potentially dangerous position.

It was considered necessary to have a recognised call Australia wide which would allow people to have an understanding of what actions they should take when one of the above mentioned situations occurs in a scrum.

The following is a description of the process to be followed by players, when the "Mayday" call is heard. Referees should be acutely aware of the process, as they may well be the person who can talk the players through the correct disengagement sequence.

The injured player should not be moved after the "Mayday" call. All other players should follow the sequence below.

- The player makes a loud call, "MAYDAY". **The referee should immediately blow the whistle.**
- The Back 5 (locks, flankers and No 8) should immediately stop pushing to release pressure on the front row.
- All players should then lower to their knees in a controlled manner. This takes the majority of the weight off.
- The second movement is to lower the top half of their body.
- The front row then softly land on their face, which is termed a "face plant".
- Having collapsed into this position and taken the weight off, none of the parties should look sideways. Rotation and flexion is the cause of many injuries.
- For example if the hooker is injured, neither front rower should look sideways to see how the hooker is, because that will also expose them to the same or similar injuries.
- Don't look sideways, just collapse straight to the ground.
- The call is then made by the referee, "DOES ANYONE HAVE A PROBLEM?"
- **Certainly do not try and move the player. Leave them exactly where they are.**
- If there is no reply the referee asks the players to number off; 1, 2, 3, 4, etc
- The props should release their bind on the opposition



- **On the referees instruction:-**
 - The number 8 then moves back and away.
 - The flankers then release their binds and move outwards and away.
 - The locks then release their binds and move outwards and away.
 - The prop forwards then release their bind on the hooker and move outwards and away.
- As the hooker is in the centre of the scrum, this will leave the two hookers on the ground.
- This leaves everyone released and free.
- If everybody moves free of another player, then there will be no further injury to any player in trouble.
- The player left on the ground is then left in that stable and still position, until medical assistance arrives.
- **Certainly do not try and move the player. Leave them exactly where they are.**

NECKSAFE®: SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SPINAL CORD INJURY

Whilst Rugby is fundamentally a safe game, accidents and injuries can happen as with any contact sport.

In rare circumstances, the player's bony vertebral column (the spine) and/or the spinal cord (which carries the nerves to the body) may be involved: Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)

Several situations should alert you to the potential for SCI:

1. Player unconscious for any reason
2. Head-on tackle where either player's head is struck by the ground or another player
3. "Head High" tackle
4. "Spear" tackle where player's legs are lifted above waist level
5. Multiple player ("gang") tackles
6. Player bent over in awkward position
7. Scrum, ruck or maul collapse
8. Call of "Mayday" from player/s involved in scrum, lineout, maul, ruck or tackle
9. Heavy scrum engagement or twisting or "popping" of front row
10. Player falling from a height (i.e. jumping for possession in line-out or contested kick)
11. Player striking goal post

Once a player is suspected of having sustained a SCI, the game should be halted and assessment by a qualified person made.

Ideally a doctor, physiotherapist, referee or sports trainer who has completed the NECKSAFE® Training Programme in the Acute Management of Spinal Injuries should make the assessment. Where this is not possible, the player should be advised to remain still and should not be moved until an ambulance arrives, and the most senior first aid attendant should position himself with both hands on the sides of the player's head to prevent movement in any direction.

If there is any doubt, DO NOT MOVE THE PLAYER: treat as a Spinal Cord Injury.

Keep the player warm and offer reassurance that help is on the way. Remove mouthguard and loosen headgear, but do not move the players' neck to remove it.

Signs and Symptoms of a potential Spinal Cord Injury include one or more of the following:

1. Player unconscious for any reason
2. Unusual body position
3. Deformity of the spine or unusual appearance
4. Pain and tenderness over the spine
5. Numbness of the limb/s
6. Loss of sensation over any body part
7. Weakness or heaviness in the limb/s
8. Inability to move face, neck, back, arms or legs

These findings may change over time and it is important to note any alterations from the time of injury till qualified help arrives.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE NECKSAFE® TRAINING PROGRAMME CONTACT:

Immediate Assistants

Phone/Fax 0500 888 020

www.ias.com.au



LINEOUT

LAW 19 – TOUCH AND LINE-OUT

DEFINITION

'Kicked directly into touch' means that the ball was kicked into touch without landing on the playing area, and without touching a player or the referee.

'The 22' is the area between the goal-line and the 22-metre line, including the 22-metre line, but excluding the goal-line.

The line of touch is an imaginary line in the field of play at right angles to the touch-line through the place where the ball is thrown in.

The ball is in touch when it is not being carried by a player and it touches the touch-line or anything or anyone on or beyond the touch-line.

The ball is in touch when a player is carrying it and the ball and the ball-carrier (or the ball) touches the touch-line or the ground beyond the touch-line.

The place where the ball-carrier (or the ball) touched or crossed the touch-line is where it went into touch.

The ball is in touch if a player catches the ball and that player has a foot on the touch-line or the ground beyond the touch-line.

If a player has one foot in the field of play and one foot into touch and holds the ball, the ball is in touch.

If the ball crosses the touch-line or touch-in-goal line, and is caught by a player who has both feet in the playing area, the ball is not in-touch or touch-in-goal. Such a player may knock the ball into the playing area. If a player jumps and catches the ball, both feet must land in the playing area otherwise the ball is in-touch or touch-in-goal.

A player in touch may kick or knock the ball, but not hold it, provided it has not crossed the plane of the touch-line. The plane of the touch-line is the vertical space rising immediately above the touch-line.

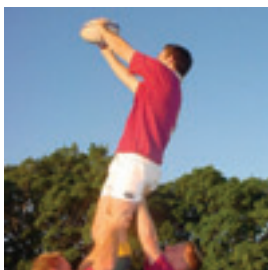
LINE-OUT PRACTICE (UNDER 19)

- For U19 players support with **hands on the shorts**. Make sure that the knuckles are pointing upwards to create effective support.



(SENIOR)

- For senior players front support with both hands on the thigh of inside leg of the jumper.



- For both methods stability is enhanced by the support players compressing towards the jumper. Lifting of the jumper by the support players must initially come from their leg drive and then progress to the locking out of their arms. The practice should also cover the actions of the support player until the jumper has been **safely** returned to the ground.

CATCHING RESTARTS

- A player catching a restart is frequently standing still, whereas the chasers have considerable momentum. It is advisable to provide the catcher with protection in the form of support.
- Usually support for a contested catch will be similar to that provided in a lineout. Because of the open-field skill involved, it is advisable for the support players not to make contact with a catcher until immediately after the ball has been caught.
- If catchers are taught to attack the ball at the last moment, creating momentum, instead of waiting under the target area, they will be better able to contest the ball in the air. At the same time, this makes the provision of support more difficult.

CATCHING RESTARTS PRACTICE

- Demonstrate and practice support for the catcher with the support players attaching to the catcher after the ball has been secured.

FOUL PLAY

LAW 10 – FOUL PLAY

DEFINITION

Foul Play is anything the player does within the playing enclosure that is against the letter and spirit of the Laws of the Game. It includes obstruction, unfair play, repeated infringements, dangerous play and misconduct which is prejudicial to the game.

Players should be aware that foul play will not be tolerated in the game of Rugby.

This includes, but not restricted to:

- Stomping/Punching – automatic red card offense at U19
- High tackles
- Sledging – a breach of code of conduct
- Bad language
- Professional fouls

CONCLUSION

The Telstra SmartRugby program is designed to promote both the use of safe techniques and to create a mindset of providing for the wellbeing of all participants. It is intended to function in a similar way to occupational health and safety regulations which apply in the workplace. The pre-season technical program is a minimum introduction to the area and should be revisited frequently during practice sessions. This is not an area in which we can ever become complacent.

ARU CODE OF CONDUCT

1. INTERPRETATION

In these By-Laws:

“**ARU**” means the Australian Rugby Union Limited;

“**Bookmaker**” means a person or organisation in the business of receiving, negotiating, or settling bets;

“**Competition**” means any match played as part of a structured competition or series, a trial match, a friendly match, a match against a visiting team from another union or matches, trials or any other competitions involving a Rugby Body;

“**game**” means rugby football;

“**Laws of the Game**” means the Laws of the Game of the International Rugby Board;

“**match**” means a rugby football match;

“**Member Union**” means a union in membership of the ARU;

“**officer**” means a director, other officer or employee of the Rugby Body;

“**participant**” means a player (including an amateur or non-contract player), a referee, touch judge or other match official, a selector, coach, trainer, manager or other team official, or an individual involved in the organisation, administration or promotion of Rugby Football including a director, other officer or employee of a Rugby Body;

“**Rugby Body**” means the ARU, any Member Union or Affiliated Union of the ARU, or any Rugby Union, Club or other body in membership with or affiliated to a Member Union or Affiliated Union;

“**Rugby-related conduct**” includes behaviour which occurs outside the playing enclosure that may damage the image of the game or which may impair public confidence in the integrity and good character of participants, including, but not limited to, conduct during travel to or from either matches or authorised tours (whether within Australia or overseas), conduct when on tour, conduct at rugby functions and promotional events and other conduct where a participant is involved in activities connected with the ARU or its sponsors; words in the singular include the plural and vice versa; and a reference to a gender includes the other genders.



2. OBJECT OF THESE BY-LAWS

The ARU is committed to promoting and strengthening the positive image of the game and its participants in Australia. In light of this commitment, the Code of Conduct seeks to establish standards of performance and behaviour to ensure that participants act in a professional and proper manner and to ensure that the game is played and conducted with disciplined and sporting behaviour. The Code of Conduct also seeks to deter all on-field and rugby-related conduct that could damage the game by impairing public confidence in the honest and orderly conduct of matches and competitions or in the integrity and good character of participants. In addition, these By-Laws seek to ensure that every participant is liable to effective sanctions if they are found to have breached the Code of Conduct.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

All participants in the game are bound:

- a) not to bet or otherwise financially speculate, directly or indirectly, on the outcome or on any other aspect of a match or Competition which he or she is either involved in (whether as a player, official or in any other capacity) or connected to;
- b) not to throw or fix a match, try to achieve a contrived outcome to a match or a Competition, or otherwise influence improperly the outcome or any other aspect of a match or a Competition;
- c) not to provide information to a Bookmaker about a match or any aspect of a match which he or she is either involved in (whether as a player, official or in any other capacity) or connected to;
- d) not to seek or accept a bribe or other benefit to do anything mentioned in subparagraphs (b) and (c);
- e) to report immediately to the Managing Director and Chief Executive Office of the ARU in writing any offer of a bribe or other benefit to do anything mentioned in paragraph (b) and (c) or any attempt by any other person to do anything mentioned in paragraphs (a) or (d);
- f) to promote the reputation of the game and to take all reasonable steps to prevent the game from being brought into disrepute;
- g) not to engage in any Doping Practice as defined in the ARU's Doping By-Laws;
- h) to comply with the ARU's Safety Directives for Referees, Coaches and Players;
- i) not to repeatedly breach the Laws of the Game, including but not limited to, the Laws of the Game relating to Foul Play or Misconduct;
- j) to accept and observe the authority of a referee, touch judge or other match official;
- k) not to abuse, threaten or intimidate a referee, touch judge or other match official, whether on or off the field, or a selector, coach, manager or other team official;

- l) not to show unnecessary obvious dissension, displeasure or disapproval, whether on or off the field, towards a referee, touch judge or other match official, his or her decision or generally following a decision of a match official;
- m) not to use crude or abusive language or gestures towards referees, touch judges or other match officials or spectators;
- n) not to do anything which is likely to intimidate, offend, insult or humiliate another participant on the ground of the religion, sexual orientation, disability, race, colour or national or ethnic origin of the person;
- o) not to conduct themselves in any manner, or engage in any activity, whether on or off the field, that would impair public confidence in the honest and orderly conduct of matches and competitions or in the integrity and good character of participants; and
- p) not to do anything which adversely affects or reflects on or discredits the game, the ARU, any Member Union or Affiliated Union of the ARU, or any squad, team, Competition, tournament, sponsor, official supplier or licensee, including, but not limited to, any illegal act or any act of dishonesty or fraud.

4. OFFICERS OF A RUGBY BODY

An officer must, in relation to the Rugby Body of which he or she is an officer:

- a) act in good faith and in the best interests of the Rugby Body;
- b) avoid all conflicts of interest between:
 - (i) the interests of the Rugby Body;
 - (ii) and his or her own interests or the interests of any other person, including another Rugby Body; and
- c) not disclose to any person or use for his or her own purposes confidential information obtained as a result of the officer's relationship with the Rugby Body, including but not limited to deliberations of the board of directors or other governing organ of the Rugby Body.

5. DUTY TO COMPLY

Each Member Union and each Affiliated Union is obliged:

- a) to comply with, and to require Rugby Unions, Clubs and other bodies and persons in membership with it or affiliated to it to comply with, these By-Laws; and
- b) to adopt procedures for monitoring and disciplining breaches of the Code of Conduct approved by the ARU and notified to the Member Union and Affiliated Union from time to time for monitoring compliance with, and imposing sanctions for breaches of, these By-laws by participants under its jurisdiction or the jurisdiction of Rugby Unions, Clubs and other bodies in membership with it or affiliated to it.

A person may be an officer of more than one Rugby Body, in which case it is important for the person to distinguish the separate capacities in which he or she acts as an officer; for example, a director of the ARU, when acting in that capacity, must act in the best interests of the ARU in preference to the interests of any other Rugby Body of which he or she is an officer.



AUSTRALIAN RUGBY UNION SAFETY DIRECTIVES

FOR PLAYERS, COACHES, ADMINISTRATORS AND MATCH OFFICIALS

The Australian Rugby Union (ARU) and the International Rugby Board (IRB) encourages Clubs and Schools to take recommended measures to ensure that the game is both safe and enjoyable to play. Following are directives and recommendations in the interest of safety.

TACKLING

Statistics indicate that the majority of serious injuries are now occurring during or consequent to the tackle, many of the serious injuries being to the tackler through hitting an opponent headfirst.

Correct head positioning is an essential component of a safe tackle.

Illegal and dangerous tackling should be discouraged, such as crash tackling the defenceless, tackling player's without the ball, early, late, 'stiff arm' tackling and tackling around the head and neck.

Referees are to be particularly severe in dealing with offenders.

SCRUMMAGING

SCRUM ENGAGEMENT SEQUENCE (ALL LEVELS 19 YEARS AND OVER)

The 'phased sequence of engagement' is to be strictly observed and it has been directed that referees verbally manage each step in the sequence **CROUCH & HOLD** and then **ENGAGE** when both front rows are ready.

Front row players must adopt the **CROUCH** position before the engagement. Head and shoulders must remain above the level of the hips with knees bent sufficiently to make a simple forward movement into engagement.

Players should keep their chin up and head straight in order to maintain the normal and safe alignment of the cervical spine.

The **HOLD** then is to give players time to see that this safe alignment has been made before they **ENGAGE**.

SCRUM ENGAGEMENT SEQUENCE (UNDER 19)

All levels Under 19 will continue to observe the sequence:

Front row players must adopt the **CROUCH** position before the engagement. Head and shoulders must remain above the level of the hips with knees bent sufficiently to make a simple forward movement into engagement.

Players should keep their chin up and head straight in order to maintain the normal and safe alignment of the cervical spine.

CROUCH-TOUCH-HOLD-ENGAGE

Following the **CROUCH** a light **TOUCH** on the upper arm will establish a safe distance for engagement. **HOLD** means to pause prior to the **ENGAGE** call from the referee. **NOT** to hold or grip the jersey of your opposition. The referee will manage the entire sequence of events in the engagement process.

SCRUMMAGE COLLAPSE

In the event of a scrummage collapse the referee must whistle immediately so that players stop pushing.

FRONT ROW REPLACEMENT

In the event of a front row forward being ordered off, or temporarily suspended, the referee will confer with the captain of the players team to determine whether another player is suitably trained/experienced to take their position; if not the captain shall nominate one other forward to leave the playing area and the referee will permit a substitute front row forward to replace that player.

This substitution may take place immediately prior to the next scrum, or after another player has been tried in the front row. In U19 matches the replacement of players ordered off or temporarily suspended, should occur at the time of ordering off or temporary suspension.

When no other front row forwards are available due to a sequence of players ordered off or injured or both, the game will continue with non-contested scrummages defined as:

A normal scrummage except: there is no contest for the ball, neither team is permitted to push, the team putting in must win it, and the referee must take additional care to ensure a soft engagement.



ELIMINATION OF ILLEGAL AND FOUL PLAY

PILE UP, FOUL PLAY AND RETALIATION

Correct body position in Scrummage, Ruck and Maul is critical.

Players should join in a safe manner, ensuring that their head and shoulders are above the hips at all times.

The IRB has reiterated its position that the game can only be played by players who are on their feet. Referees are directed to be strict with players not observing this requirement.

Referees are also reminded of the recommendation relating to body position in scrummage, ruck and maul and to be particularly harsh when dealing with players who engage in foul play or engage in any form of retaliation.

PUNCH OR STOMP SEND OFFS

For all competitions U19 and downwards it is mandatory for referees to send off players who punch or stomp opponents. The ARU believes this is an appropriate measure to assist in the elimination / reduction of foul play and to send a clear message to the community that Rugby is serious about countering this sort of behaviour.

TEAM SELECTION

Coaches are requested not to select players who have been found guilty of repeated illegal or foul play. Touch judges shall report incidents of foul play under Law 10.4.

FLYING WEDGE AND CAVALRY CHARGE

The formations generally described, as the 'flying wedge' and 'cavalry charge' are to be regarded as dangerous play and accordingly shall be penalised under Law 10.4.

JUDICIARY COMMITTEES

Judiciary Committees have been requested to take stern action with players found guilty of illegal or foul play.

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PLAYER CARE

The following are the minimum recommended requirements for Unions and Clubs and it is a directive of this union that each be closely observed.

Each Union or Club should have a medically trained person in attendance at each match.

At least one stretcher is required that is suitable for the transfer of suspected spinal injuries, preferably a scoop stretcher. A set of cervical collars of varying sizes must also be available.

Each Union or Club should have access to a medical room, which is regularly cleaned, equipped with adequate lighting (angle poise light), running water, first aid equipment and a telephone.

A sign should be erected noting the emergency telephone numbers of your Union or Club doctor, ambulance and nearest hospital.

Each Union or Club Medical Officer should ensure that appropriate items of first aid equipment are available.

Your Union or Club is encouraged to provide appropriate safety instruction for match officials, coaches, administrators and first aid attendants.

Further details on medical requirements for player care can be found at the Australian Rugby Union web site www.rugby.com.au/communityrugby

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Players should be selected for positions appropriate to their physical build and stature. Players should be physically fit to play Rugby when selected and those unfit should not be selected.

All players should be encouraged to regularly carry out special exercises that strengthen their neck, limbs and body. This is especially applicable to those in the scrum who should build their neck and back muscles as well as upper body strength. Players should not be selected to play in the front row unless they have recent experience or have been coached and supervised in a training environment.

All players are to be in-serviced in the ARU's Telstra SmartRugby Program by their team coach. Telstra SmartRugby is designed to inform coaches and match officials of best practice techniques, to minimise the risk of injury to players, and increase the level of confidence that participants and families can gain from their association with the game. The three main areas that the Telstra SmartRugby Program focuses on are the Tackle, Scrum and Preparation for Contact.

Coaching manuals are available which provide details of exercises specific to these requirements.



PREVENTING INJURY

MOUTH GUARD

Players should be encouraged to wear a specially made and fitted mouth guard during both matches and training sessions.

HYDRATION

Coaches should ensure that an adequate supply of fluid, preferably water, is consumed by players before, during and after training sessions and the match, so that appropriate levels of hydration are maintained.

MANAGEMENT OF INJURIES

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Prompt medical advice (usually at an Emergency and Accident Department of a local hospital) should be obtained if:

1. Unconsciousness, persistent headache, vomiting or nausea occurs after a blow to the head, or a concussion injury
2. Breathing difficulties occur after an injury to the head, neck or chest
3. Severe pains in the neck occur, particularly if radiating to the arms
4. Abdominal pains occur, particularly if associated with shoulder tip pain
5. Blood is present in the urine
6. An eye injury occurs
7. If a player collapses separate to any trauma
8. There is any concern over a player's injury or health following training or a match

TREATMENT OF INJURED PLAYERS WHO ARE BLEEDING

A player who has an open or bleeding wound must leave the playing area until such time as the bleeding is controlled and the wound is covered or dressed. Such a player may be replaced on a temporary basis but if unable to resume playing within 15 minutes the replacement becomes permanent.

CONCUSSION

ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO REGULATION 10.1 (CONCUSSION) OF THE IRB

10.1.1 A Player who has suffered concussion shall not participate in any Match or training session for a minimum period of three weeks from the time of injury, and may then only do so when symptom free and declared fit after proper medical examination. Such declaration must be recorded in a written report prepared by the person who carried out the medical examination of the Player.

10.1.2 Subject to sub-clause 10.1.3 below, the three-week period may be reduced only if the Player is symptom free and declared fit to play after appropriate assessment by a properly qualified and recognised neurological specialist. Such declaration must be recorded in a written report prepared by the properly qualified and recognised neurological specialist who carried out the assessment of the Player.

10.1.3 In age grade rugby the three-week minimum period shall be mandatory.

“Guidelines and Procedures for the Management of Concussion” as approved by the IRB, are separately available from your controlling Union. It is the responsibility of coaches and club administrators, in conjunction with medical practitioners to ensure that these requirements are closely observed.

If referees are doubtful as to the ability of a player to continue in the game they should exercise their prerogative under Law 3.9, which requires that player to leave the field.



MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION

Concussion Guidelines are regularly reviewed. The following guidelines for the management of concussion were adopted, as guided by the IRB.

Please note that it is a directive of this Union that the procedures as outlined be strictly observed.

Concussion occurs when the brain is injured following a blow to the head or face. Concussion may occur without an apparent period of unconsciousness. The signs and symptoms of concussion include any of the following:

- VOMITING
- HEADACHE
- LOSS OF MEMORY
- DOUBLE OR BLURRED VISION
- GIDDINESS OR UNSTEADINESS
- CONFUSION AND DISORIENTATION
- LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Being unaware of what happened, even for a few moments at the time of the injury is the most consistent sign that the player is or has been concussed.

A player showing any of these signs or symptoms should be removed from the field and referred for medical attention.

Prolonged loss of consciousness as a result of a blow to the head may be indicative of a more serious injury, so the player should be immediately referred to a hospital for further attention.

With a brief loss of consciousness, the player should be removed from the game for immediate medical assessment.

Loss of consciousness for a period exceeding 4 or 5 minutes as a result of a blow to the head may be indicative of a more serious injury so the player should be immediately referred to a hospital for further attention.

All concussion episodes should be reviewed by a medical practitioner.

WARNING

COMPLICATIONS, POTENTIALLY SERIOUS, MAY OCCUR IN THE 24 HOURS AFTER A SEEMINGLY SLIGHT HEAD INJURY. ACCORDINGLY, DETERIORATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS AFTER APPARENT RECOVERY OR THE ONSET OF SYMPTOMS SUCH AS HEADACHES, INCREASING DROWSINESS, BLURRED VISION AND VOMITING, REQUIRE IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ASSESSMENT.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS AND EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Ensure that ambulance and other emergency vehicles have clear access to playing and training fields at all times.

It is recommended that all clubs and schools have an updated emergency contact list available at all times (eg: Hospital, Dentist, Physiotherapist, Radiology, ARU Hotline etc).

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

IF A TOOTH IS KNOCKED OUT

It should be replaced immediately in its socket (if dirty, wash it first with milk if available) and mould aluminium foil over the replaced tooth and its adjacent teeth. The player should then seek immediate dental advice.

IF A FRACTURE OR DISLOCATION IS SUSPECTED

- The injured limb should be supported, ideally with a splint, while the player is lifted onto a stretcher or helped from the field.
- X-rays to confirm the diagnosis (or exclude injury) are essential and should be performed as soon as possible.
- If the fracture is found to be compound (bony fragments protruding through the skin) the area should be covered with a clean towel while waiting for the ambulance.
- The player should not consume food or drink until cleared by a doctor (in case a general anaesthetic is required).

IF THE PLAYER IS UNCONSCIOUS

- Always suspect an associated spinal fracture.
- If respiratory arrest occurs, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) should be commenced.
- RING THE AMBULANCE.



- Determine the manner in which it happened and determine if there is sensory or power loss.
- If there is no one experienced in the management of this problem.
- The PLAYER SHOULD NOT BE MOVED but given emotional support while awaiting the ambulance.
- Ensure the player is sufficiently warm.

CLUBS RESPONSIBILITY

- Send a team or club official with the ambulance and notify parents/spouse.
- Call the **ARU Serious Injury Hotline on 1800 036 156**.
- Complete the Serious Injury Incident Report available from your Club Administrator or at www.rugby.com.au
- Fax the Serious Injury Incident Report to the ARU on (02) 8354 3399
- The ARU, in conjunction with the club, will proceed with the Serious Injury Management Protocol.

The importance of these Directives as safety factors within the game cannot be overstated.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Smartplay Program – Facts and Safety Tips for Rugby Union; Finch C, Best J, McIntosh A, Chalmers D, Eime R. Research Report: preventing Rugby Union Injuries. Department of Epidemiology and Preventative Medicine, Monash University, June 2002

University of NSW – Rugby Union Injury Surveillance Study Report (2000 to 2002 Seasons); McIntosh A, Best J, Orchard J, Savage T, November 2003

University of NSW – Rugby Union Injury Surveillance Study Preliminary Report (2002 to 2004 Seasons); McIntosh A, Best J, Orchard J, Savage T, 2004

New South Wales Rugby Union – NSW Coach Education Series 2003, NSWRU Community Rugby – Coach Education Staff, 2003

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For more information on Telstra SmartRugby, visit www.rugby.com.au/communityrugby

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