

# GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES



**SEASON 2025**

*Discipline. Respect. Integrity. Passion. Teamwork..*

# THE 5 KEY AREAS

Rugby AU have defined 5 KEY AREAS of the game which have greatest impact on the quality of experience for all participants. Within these areas, we highlight changes to Law or areas of focus for the 2025 Community Rugby Season.

Each aspect is summarised below and detailed within the document.

All changes or key points to emphasise for season 2025 are clearly marked in red.

## 1.SAFETY

TACKLE HEIGHT GLOBAL LAW TRIAL  
HEAD CONTACT PROCESS  
CROC ROLL

## 2.SPEED

SPEED OF BREAKDOWN  
JACKLER POSITIVE ACTION  
“USE IT” CALL  
CONVERSION CLOCK  
TIMING FOR SET-PIECE

## 3.SPACE

TACKLE, TACKLE CONTEST & RUCK OFFSIDE  
KICK IN GENERAL PLAY - PLAYERS MUST  
RETREAT

## 4.SET-PIECE

SCRUM SET UP  
DEFENSIVE #9 OFFSIDE LAW  
MAUL FORMATION  
FK - NO SCRUM OPTION  
LINEOUT NOT STRAIGHT - CONTEST

## 5.INTERACTIONS

COACH/REFEREE RELATIONSHIP  
CAPTAIN/REFEREE RELATIONSHIP  
FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITY

## OTHER

RUGBY AUSTRALIA  
3 STRIKES POLICY

The implementation of the GMG and the Game Focus Areas is the responsibility of all participants. A collaborative approach and willingness to engage in proactive discussions will allow a greater understanding of the different roles and practical implementation. This will drive a more enjoyable environment.

# 1.SAFETY

## TACKLE HEIGHT

### TACKLE HEIGHT GLOBAL LAW TRIAL

New law - 9.13

“A player must not tackle an opponent early, late or dangerous. Dangerous tackling includes, but is not limited to, tackling or attempting to tackle an opponent above the line of the sternum even if the tackle starts below the line of the sternum.”

The primary aim of the Tackle Height GLT is to decrease the instances of direct head-to-head collisions and concussions.

Coaches should ensure that proper techniques are taught in both controlled and game-like training environments. Referees should enforce the laws based on the principle that violations must be “clear and obvious”, otherwise they should “Play ON” and allow play to continue.

## CROC ROLL

### DEFINITION OF CROC ROLL:

**Croc Roll:** A prohibited action where a player laterally rolls/twists or pulls a player on their feet in the tackle area to the ground. The action often lands on the player’s lower limbs.

**PLAY ON** - The arriving player pulls the jackler backwards or immediately to the side

**FOUL PLAY** - A cleaner pulls or rolls jackler past the point of initial contact forward (risk of dropping on limbs or hyper extension). The level of sanction is based on the danger of the action and the proximity to limbs.

**PK or YC** - Croc roll with a drop near or onto lower limb – Low/Medium danger

**RC** - Croc roll with a drop onto a lower limb or causing hyperextension of leg – High danger

## HEAD CONTACT PROCESS

FOUL PLAY

SANCTION FRAMEWORK

RC

YC

PK

HEAD/NECK  
CONTACT

DIRECT  
HIGH FORCE

INDIRECT  
HIGH FORCE  
DIRECT  
LOW FORCE

INDIRECT  
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

Please be aware the ruck will be officiated under the Head Contact Process and not the Tackle Height Trial.

## 2.SPEED

### 1.TACKLER

#### Tackle Height

No impact on ball delivery - roll east/west immediately

### 2.TACKLE ASSIST

#### Clear Release

Supporting Body Weight - hands on ground allowing winning the ball or slowing the delivery should be penalised.

### 3.TACKLED PLAYER

'Extra roll' and 'squeeze ball' to delay the release of the ball when under pressure.

The ball must be available immediately for play.

### 4.JACKLER

#### Must support bodyweight

Go straight onto the ball **CLEAR LIFT. POSITIVE ACTION.**

Player who shows clear lift and doesn't win the ball should be rewarded.

Where possible proactive management and advantage should be played to create continuity. If this is not possible the **SANCTION is a PK**

The referee will call **"Use it!"** when the ball has been clearly won by a team at the ruck, and the ball is available. The team in possession then has 5 seconds to play the ball. **SANCTION- SCRUM**

### 5.CONVERSION ATTEMPTS

Conversions to take place within **60 seconds (playing time) from the time the try is awarded**, down from the original 90 seconds.

This aligns with penalty kicks at goal and is being trialled in order to improve game pace.

### 6.SET PIECE TIMING

#### **30 SECOND SET UP FOR SET-PIECE**

To align with scrum set up, lineouts will now be required to be setup without delay when forming a lineout or scrum (Sanction: FK).

The **30 seconds** begins when either referee/AR makes the mark for the lineout, or referee for scrum.

## 2.SPEED

### NO SCRUM OPTION FROM A FK

#### World Rugby Global Law Trial

#### Law 20: OPTIONS AT A PENALTY OR FREE-KICK

**Law 20.3** A team awarded a penalty ~~or a free-kick~~ may instead choose a scrum

**Law 20.4 i.** A team awarded a penalty ~~or a free-kick~~ at a lineout may instead choose a lineout or a scrum at the same mark.

**Law 20.4 ii.** A team awarded a free-kick at a lineout may instead choose a lineout at the same mark.

#### Rationale:

Speeding up restarts after technical offences. Currently many scrums result in long periods of dead time with resets, leading to more FKs, penalties and then kicks to touch. Shape of Game recommendation was to remove the scrum from a FK option.

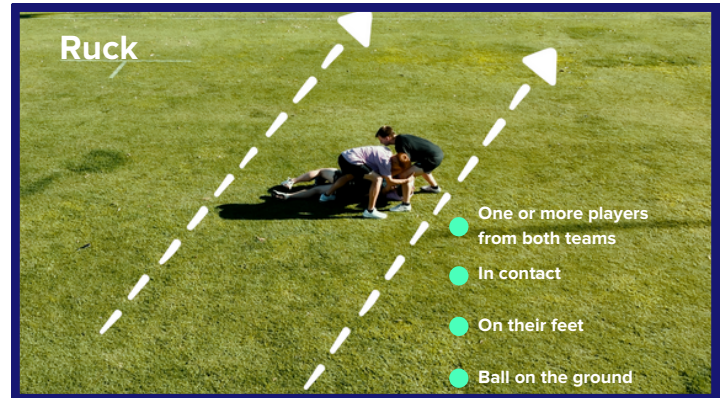
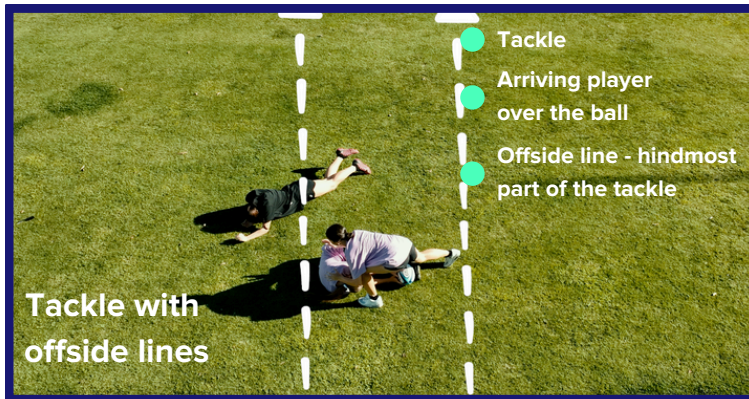
**A SCRUM REMAINS AN OPTION FOR ALL PENALTY OFFENCES.**

# 3.SPACE

## BREAKDOWN/MAUL

Players clearly onside.

Players should be encouraged to provide space between hindmost part of the breakdown/maul and their defensive line.



## OFFSIDE IN FRONT OF KICKER

### Rationale:

- Teams and players have recognised that in a kick battle with opponents, the kicking team - providing they are more than 10m away from the ball alighting - can be put onside by the actions of the catcher who runs 5m, passes or kicks.
- This has created freedom for players to loiter in the middle and wait for a kick tennis battle to conclude.
- The new wording makes clear that any player who is offside in open play needs to take action to put themselves onside and not just remain stationary. The clauses relating to the catcher running 5m and passing the ball to put an opponent onside, will be removed.

Players are liable for sanction as per the normal Offside in front of Kicker laws if they do not make an effort to retreat or continue moving towards the ball.

LAW 10.7 An Offside player can be put onside when:

10.7 Other than under Law 10.4c, an offside player can be put onside when:

- a. An onside team-mate of that player moves past the offside player and is within or has re-entered the playing area.
- b. An opponent of that player:
  - ~~i. Carries the ball five metres; or~~
  - ~~ii. Passes the ball; or~~
  - i. Kicks the ball; or
  - ii. Intentionally touches the ball without gaining possession of it.

Maintaining space within the game is integral to **CONTINUITY OF PLAY**.

**PLAYERS** - Space allows time and opportunity to make better decisions.

**MATCH OFFICIALS** - Space creates time between each contest which provides greater opportunity for clearer decision making.

# 4.SET PIECE

## SCRUM

### CROUCH

Stability  
Square  
Height  
Brake Foot

### BIND

Balance-FK  
Space on bind-FK  
Brake Foot-FK  
Stability-FK

### SET

Hit and hold-FK  
Feed to hook-FK  
No delay feed-FK

#### POST FEED CONTEST

Push straight - to be rewarded, a team needs to push straight and through the mark. **Note - a team going backwards while staying square should not be penalised.**

Tight Head - bind on the body, not on the arm. Loose Head - elbow pointing to the sideline. **Note - these are not penalisable offences if the scrum is stable but will be considered if the scrum collapses.**

Defensive Scrum Half - Is not permitted past the mid-line of the scrum. Defend at the mid-line (within 1m), at the hindmost foot (#8), or 5m back (with the backline).

**FK - NO SCRUM OPTION ALLOWED. PLAYERS NEED TO TAP OR KICK**

## LINEOUT AND MAUL

### SET UP

Hooker on the mark  
Gap - 1m  
Receiver and non-throwing  
hooker (2x2m)  
No Walk-ins (clear stop)  
**SANCTION -FK**

### CONTEST

Contested throw = inside  
shoulder  
Non-contested throw = above  
head  
**SANCTION- OPTION**  
No throwing player across -PK  
No playing a player in the air-PK

### MAUL

**DEFENCE**  
No Early Drive -PK  
No sacking lifter-PK  
Side Entry/Collapse-PK  
**ATTACK**  
Lifters Obstructing-PK  
Ripper in contact with jumper - no  
slide back-PK

Where a defensive infringement has occurred, proactive management and advantage should be played to create continuity. If this is not possible, sanction appropriately.

An attacking infringement should be penalised immediately to avoid confusion.

**FK - NO SCRUM OPTION ALLOWED. PLAYERS NEED TO TAP OR KICK**

## TOUCH LAW



# LINEOUT

Not Straight Lineout = PLAY ON (If no contest)

## WORLD RUGBY GLOBAL LAW TRIAL

If a lineout isn't straight, and if the defending team are not lifted to compete for the ball, then play shall continue.

Rationale - removes an unnecessary stoppage and scrum when no material effect on non-throwing team

### Practical Implementation:

- A jumper needs to be lifted (by 1 or 2 lifters) to compete for the ball
- If the ball is thrown not straight to the back and there is a lift at the front, it is not straight as there is a contest from the opposition
- The throw must still be attempted to be thrown straight to a player in the lineout - deliberately throwing the ball not straight is not allowed and liable for sanction.
- Quick/short throws to the front player and throws beyond 15m still need to be straight, regardless of contest
- if the defending team lift a teammate to compete for the ball, and the ball is not straight =  
Sanction: Free Kick

**SANCTION: FREE KICK (ON THE 15 METRE LINE ALONG THE LINE OF TOUCH)**



# 5.INTERACTIONS

## PRE MATCH

Dialogue between coaches, captain and referees prior to the match. Reasons for this;

- Front row chat
- Captain and Referee to establish working relationship.
- Provide clarity in Law
- Provide understanding of how the team may want to play and allow the referee the opportunity to facilitate this within the Laws.

Proactive and meaningful discussion will see greater clarity and better working relationships between all participants.

## DURING MATCH

**2025 will see a firmer on field stance to;**

- back chat,
- protesting decisions and
- non-sportsperson like conduct amongst players.

Referees will be encouraged to manage each scenario with context but have the following management tools at their disposal depending on severity.

- Warning - quiet word with player or captain
- PK
- PK & YC - repeat behaviour or severity
- RC - abuse, discrimination etc.

## POST MATCH

**Referees are not to be approached immediately after the match for comment on the game. Please allow at least 15 minutes before any discussion takes place.**

2025 will see Premier Rugby Competitions have the ability to provide post match feedback via a formal link provided by the competition.

The feedback will be aligned to the 5 Key Areas outlined in this document.

The purpose;

- feedback opportunity
- development opportunity
- build better relationships between coaches, players and referees.

If positive, this will be rolled out to other grades.

### 3 STRIKES POLICY

The Three Strike Policy in community rugby is designed to promote a positive and respectful environment within the sport. Its primary goal is to eliminate poor or abusive behaviour, especially targeting match officials, players, coaches, and spectators, that undermines the spirit of the game. The policy holds clubs accountable for the conduct of their members and supporters both on and off the field.

The determination of if/when to apply the Three Strike Policy is at the absolute discretion of the Member Union, or their delegate, and is summarised as follows:

#### Strike 1:

- The offending club receives a Show Cause Notice outlining the allegations.
- The club has 14 days to respond and demonstrate measures that will be taken to address the issue.
- If the response is inadequate, the Member Union may issue a strike.
- In addition to the strike, the specific team(s) involved may face a points deduction penalty.
- The club remains on Strike 1 for 12 months, unless Strike 2 is issued within that period.

#### Strike 2:

- This is a similar process to Strike 1 but with more severe penalties, including fines (up to \$5,000) and additional point deductions for each competitive team at the club.
- The club may face further oversight and requirements as part of the process.
- The club remains on Strike 2 for 12 months, unless Strike 3 is issued within that period.

#### Strike 3:

- This is a similar process to Strike 2 but with even more severe penalties, including possible termination of affiliation with the Member Union/Association/Rugby Australia.
- The club/teams may face removal from competitions, fines (up to \$10,000), and other penalties.
- The club remains on Strike 3 for 12 months, unless further instances of poor or abusive behaviour require to be addressed.

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