

NRL  
**Safe Play**



# 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 encouraging the core values of Rugby League, and a healthy respect for all participants. It applies to all players up to and including the Under 15 years age group.

(“Law Book” references – Rugby League Laws of the Game, International Level).

### 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, a defender makes contact above the armpits intentionally, recklessly or carelessly.
- (b) A defender, in front of a ball-carrier who is diving or falling, 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) THE BALL-CARRIER CANNOT BE LIFTED.

Application: No defender(s), during the course of a tackle, are permitted to lift the ball-carrier (this is not to be confused with a tackle that, in the same motion, “knocks” a player off their feet). If a lift occurs, the Referee must penalise the offending player(s). If a defender(s) lift one foot/leg of the ball-carrier the Referee must immediately call “held” to prevent the tackle from continuing. If the tackle continues, or the ball-carrier is placed in a dangerous position, the Referee must penalise the offending player.

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

The Code: (2.4) ANKLE TAPS ARE NOT PERMITTED.

Application: It is an infringement to ankle tap the ball-carrier. This is not to be confused with a defender who makes a genuine attempt to wrap his arms around the legs of the player.

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

The Code: (2.5) 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.

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



The Code: (2.6) IT IS AN OFFENCE TO SLING OR SWING THE BALL-CARRIER.

Application: A defender who uses any part of the ball-carrier's body, clothing, or equipment to sling or swing the player in a tackle, commits an infringement.

Reference: Law Book - Section 11, Notes 1 (a). Page 23.

### **3. AGGRESSIVE PALM**

The Code: THE BALL-CARRIER CANNOT "THRUST" OUT AN ARM TO CONTACT THE DEFENDER ON THE HEAD OR NECK.

Application: It is an infringement for the ball-carrier to thrust out an arm or use an outstretched stiff arm so as to make contact to the defending player's head or neck. Regardless of point of contact, the palm must not be high, dangerous, or unnecessary.

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

### **4. PUSHING**

The Code: A PLAYER CANNOT "PUSH" AN OPPONENT.

Application: A player who pushes an opponent is guilty of an infringement.

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

### **5. DANGEROUS FLOP**

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

Application: A player cannot make dangerous, aggressive or unnecessary contact on a player in a prone position on the ground (a simple hand-on can complete the tackle).

Reference: Law Book - Section 11, Law 1 (d), Page 23.

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

The Code: THE BALL-CARRIER MAY SURRENDER IN THE TACKLE.

Application: The Referee (not the player) is to call "held" if the ball-carrier surrenders prior to, or in, the tackle, or is held or subdued so their progress is halted.

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

### **7. 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 (j), Page 38.

### **8. SCRUMS**

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

Application: All scrums are to be de-powered. 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, and the second rowers may rake the ball out of the scrum with their foot.

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

**It should be noted that a penalty under the Safepay Code should be clearly communicated to the offending player. Where possible, this should be kept brief, and it does not necessarily have to be a stoppage in play or a formal meeting.**

## 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 13 – 15 YEARS ONLY)
- DISMISS THE OFFENDING PLAYER FROM THE FIELD OF PLAY (INTERNATIONAL GAME 13 – 15 YEARS ONLY)  
Refer Rugby League Laws of the Game, Section 13, 1 (a) and Section 15- Player's Misconduct
- REPLACEMENT IN 6 – 12 YEAR GAME MODELS  
Refer 6 – 12 Year Junior Rugby League Laws Page 14 Law 3 (b), Page 19 Law 17, and Page 30 Law 17

## 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, 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, 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 of the half-way line irrespective of the outcome of the kick. (refer to Page 27 of the 6 - 12 Year Junior Rugby League Laws for application in games where conversion attempts do not exist).

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

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