



GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

FOR COMMUNITY LEVEL RUGBY

IN AUSTRALIA

2010

GMG Working Party
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GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES 2010

The Game Management Guidelines are an amalgam of outcomes of various conferences and workshops held over the past 5 years. They have been adapted to reflect the playing, coaching and refereeing of the game at community levels in Australia for 2010. **Comments in red indicate a major change in Law or emphasis from 2009.**

These Guidelines are also consistent with the ARU SmartRugby program which is mandatory for all referees and coaches at all levels of the game.

The purpose of this document is to ensure that all participants at the community level are aware of the areas of the game that require more specific coaching and/or consistent refereeing. It is also reinforced that the Law Book is the only on-field Game Management Document.

SCRUM

The scrum engagement sequence is the same for all players and referees at all levels of the game across Australia and is as follows:

CROUCH, TOUCH, PAUSE, ENGAGE.

Safety at the scrum is paramount, and as such an explanation of the requirements for players at each of these stages is covered in both the Laws of the Game and in the ARU SmartRugby program.

Pre-engagement

- Scrum engagement process should not commence until the scrum-half is at the scrum and ready to throw the ball in.
- The referee should make the mark and when the two teams are assembled at the mark (but not before) call **CROUCH**.
- Double crutch binding by locks, and crutch binding on props by flankers is illegal (PK).
- Referees should avoid holding the teams in the crouch position too long as this causes instability and leads to further engagement problems.
- Once both teams are crouched, the referee will then call **TOUCH**. The touch must be to the point of the shoulder, and arms must be withdrawn after touching.
- Immediately following the completion of the TOUCH, the referee will call **PAUSE**. This allows time for front rowers to sight their target for engagement.
- The referee will then call **ENGAGE**.
- Zero tolerance applies on early engagements (FK).

Post-engagement

- **Front rows must bind on engagement on the body. Incorrect binding in the front row returns to being a Penalty Kick.**
- Props placing hands on the ground is not acceptable when using it as lever to drive up (PK).
- Scrums are to be square and steady (no wheeling) before the ball is thrown in (FK).
- The feed should be “credible” throughout the game (FK).
- Flankers must remain bound to locks and must not ride up onto their props (PK).
- Flankers, No. 8 and No. 9 cannot obstruct at the back of the scrum (PK).

Collapsed scrums and illegal wheeling

- Coaches and referees should ensure players are aware of the “Mayday” Procedure and its application. Refer to the SmartRugby documentation for clarification.
- A legal wheel goes forward and through the opposition scrum. A wheel that goes back and around at pace is illegal and should be penalised. This is known as a ‘whip wheel’ and will usually involve a tight head pulling back (PK).

Offside Lines

- The offside line for players not in the scrum remains 5 metres behind the hindmost feet of the scrum.
- Once the ball winning scrum-half has fed the ball (and if the ball is won by his team) he is allowed to leave the scrum in any direction so long as at least one foot stays behind the ball at all times.
- The non-feeding scrum-half has two options at the formation of the scrum:
 - Stand the full 5 metres back, or
 - Stand next to the feeding scrum-half when the ball is fed. If he decides to stand here, then his options (if his team loses the ball) are as follows:
 - He may follow the ball through the scrum provided that he keeps both feet behind the ball at all times, remains within 1 metre of the scrum, does not touch players in the scrum, and keeps out of the space between the opposing flanker and No.8.
 - If he chooses to 'leave' the scrum after the feed, he must first retire to his hindmost foot of the scrum and is then allowed to move in any direction across the field so long as both feet stay behind that hindmost foot.

QUICK THROW AND LINEOUT

Put back into own 22m

- If a team puts the ball back into their own 22m area and the ball is subsequently kicked directly into touch there is no gain in ground. Note that the actual 22m line (chalk) is part of the 22m area. This law is applied in the following circumstances:
 - Passing, kicking or running the ball into the 22m area
 - Winning possession of a ball from a scrum, ruck, maul or lineout whose point of origin is outside of the 22m area, even though the rear participants may have their feet within the 22m area
 - A quick throw-in which is passed from in front of the 22m line, across the 22m line and into the 22m area
 - A quick throw-in taken within the 22m area after a player gathers it from in touch but in front of the 22 metre line and then takes it behind the 22m line to throw.
- When a ball is passed into the 22 metre and is touched by an opposing player, or a tackle, ruck, scrum, maul or lineout is formed, then that team can now kick directly into touch and gain ground.
- A tackled player with some part of his body inside the 22 metre area is considered to have been tackled inside the 22 metre area.

Quick Throw

- A quick throw may be thrown in straight or towards the throwing team's own goal line. The ball must travel across the 5m line before it touches another player or the ground.
- Quick throws may only be taken from between where the ball crosses the touch line and the throwing team's own goal line.
- Players who end up over the touch line must give up the ball to opposition players and must not throw the ball away such as to prevent a quick throw (PK, 15m in from touch).
- Players standing within 5m of the touch line attempting to block a quick throw-in should be managed away. These players may not block the ball from travelling 5m (FK, 15m in from touch).

Numbers and Lineout Players

- **The Law has reverted back to the team throwing in the ball determining the maximum number of players in the lineout. The minimum number of players remains two from each team.**
- A receiver at the lineout must be at least 2 metres back away from the Lineout when formed. It is optional for a team to have a receiver. A receiver may run into the lineout once the ball is thrown.
- It is mandatory for a team to have a player in opposition to the player throwing in the ball. This player must be positioned two metres away from the 5m line **AND** two metres away from the line-of-touch.
- Lineout players may pre-grip a jumper before the ball is thrown in.

Lineout Management

- The throwing team must not delay the formation of a lineout by forming a line or huddle away from the line-of-touch.
- The throwing team must set their numbers clearly and give the defending team time to match.

- Referees should manage early jumping by both teams (FK). Referees should be aware that early jumping can be caused by a baulked throw (FK).
- Sacking the jumper is legal but can only be done by one opponent and only after the ball carrier has returned to the ground. Sacking is the act of bringing the ball carrier (jumper) to the ground by the upper body.
- Referees should penalise the defending lineout that drives in on the jumper and/or support players while the jumper is off the ground.
- *Note: A comment on obstruction at mauls from lineouts can be found under 'Maul'.*

TACKLE

Tackle protocol for Referees

- The order of priority at a tackle situation is almost always:
1. Tackler 2. Tackled player 3. Arriving players

Sanctions at the Tackle

- **The sanction for all infringements at the tackle has reverted back to Penalty Kicks.**
- **If the ball becomes unplayable at a tackle, the referee orders a scrum with the throw-in to the team that was moving forward prior to the stoppage or, if neither team was moving forward, to the attacking team.**

Tackler

- **Referees must ensure the tackler first releases the tackled player and then either rolls away or gets to his feet **before** attempting to play the ball. The tackler must not hold onto the tackled player as he gets to his feet.**
- A tackler is defined as a player who makes a tackle and in the action of making that tackle goes to ground. 'Going to ground' means a minimum of one knee on the ground.
- A tackler may play the ball from any direction at the tackle and does not need to worry about a gate.
- 'Rolling Away' means to **get out of the way** and not interfere with either team's drive-out of opponents. If the player is 'caught' he must show clear intention to open up such that he is lying flat to the ground.
- Referees should be strict on the tackler and unplayables should be rare. Zero tolerance on tacklers who slow up the ball and stop the attacking team gaining quick possession.

Tackle made with no tackler

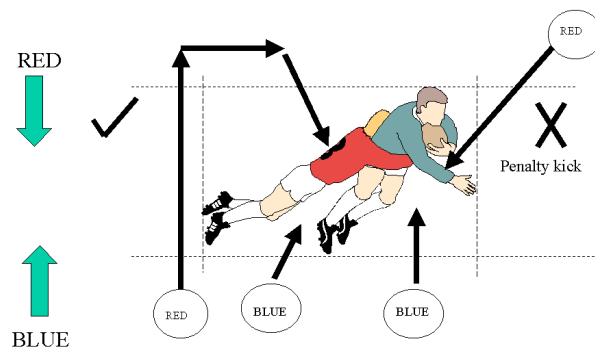
- **Players who make a tackle but remain on their feet and do not go to ground are **not tacklers**. In order to play the ball, they must first release both the ball and the ball carrier. If they are not standing in their gate, they **MUST** then come back and around through their gate before playing the ball.**

Tackled Player

- The tackled player must not position their body (eg. 'squeeze ball') to delay the release of the ball when isolated or under pressure. The issue here is the immediate availability of the ball.

Arriving Players

- Players who play the ball after a tackle must do so from the direction of their own goal line and directly behind the tackled player or tackler nearest to their goal line (ie. 'through the gate').
- Both defensive *and attacking* players must enter 'through the gate' at the tackle.
- The following analogies apply to arriving players:
 - 'Plane taking off' is acceptable.
 - 'Plane landing' is not acceptable.
 - 'Fork Lift truck' when moving players is acceptable.
- Zero tolerance on wide hits and shoulder charges. 'Driving out' at the tackle must be near the ball – ie. 1 metre width either side of the ball.



Post-Tackle

- Any player on their feet who has their hands on the ball immediately after a tackle and before a ruck forms is allowed to keep contesting for the ball even if a ruck forms around them. No arriving player at this point may play the ball with their hands.
- These poaching players have one shot at the ball. If such a player is driven off the ball by the opposition then his opportunity to play the ball with his hands has ceased.

RUCK / MAUL

Joining Ruck/Maul

- Players must join the ruck by taking a full arm bind onto their hindmost teammate in the ruck.
- Zero tolerance to players who charge into the side of rucks and mauls without binding (shoulder charge), or 'drive out' opponents not involved in the ruck or maul.

Safety

- Rucking is the act of a player using their boots in a backwards motion towards their goal line whilst playing at the ball.
- Feet on bodies in a vertical motion (stamping) is not acceptable and should be dealt with severely.
- Feet on players (trampling) either near to or away from the ball is not acceptable.
- Players must clearly roll away at the back of a ruck to allow the halfback access.

Offside

- Zero tolerance on defending players at the ruck who target the scrum half before he has the ball, even if the ball is out of the ruck. Any onside player must play the ball and not the man.
- Zero tolerance on attacking players 1 or 2 wide of the ruck who are in front of their offside line and act as pillars. Such players must be managed back onside or penalised.

Ball out

- The ball is only out of a ruck or scrum when it is totally exposed or it is clear of bodies.
- If the ball is being dug out (after being won) or is under the feet of players at the back of the ruck, the half **cannot be touched until the ball is clearly out of the ruck**. The benefit of any doubt must go to the scrum half.

Sanctions at Ruck/Maul

- The sanction for most infringements at the ruck and maul has reverted back to Penalty Kicks.
- If the ball becomes unplayable at a ruck, the referee orders a scrum with the throw-in to the team that was moving forward immediately before the ball became unplayable or, if neither team was moving forward, to the attacking team.
- If the ball becomes unplayable at a maul, the referee orders a scrum with the throw-in to the team that was not in possession when the maul began.
- If a player catches the ball direct from an opponent's kick (except from a kick-off or a drop-out), and the player is immediately held by an opponent and a maul forms and the ball becomes unplayable, a scrum is ordered and the team of the ball catcher throws in the ball.

Maul

- Players are no longer able to defend a Maul by pulling it down. It is once again illegal to try to cause a maul to collapse in any fashion whatsoever.
- Players who join the maul legally and are either caught up in the maul or have remained bound are legally entitled to be in the maul and contest the ball carrier. The referee should **not** call out such players even though they may appear to be on the 'wrong' side.
- A maul moving sideways is considered stationary.

Obstruction

- When a maul is formed at a lineout or after a kick:
 - Defenders must have access to the ball carrier at the formation of the maul.

- It is obstruction if before the maul is formed the ball is transferred to a player behind the ball carrier and the two remain bound to each other and/or if blockers move in front of the ball carrier. Referees should penalise this or where appropriate award a scrum for accidental offside.
- Players detaching from a maul with the ball being carried by a player behind the lead player and who engage the opposition are liable to penalty for obstruction (commonly referred to as 'Truck and Trailer').

KICKS

Kick off and drop out

- At kick offs and drop outs referees will be vigilant and deal with:
 - the kick being taken from behind the line,
 - players staying behind the kicker,
 - the receiver being taken in the air, and
 - receivers running obstruction.

Penalty Kick and Free Kicks

- All Penalty Kicks and Free Kicks taken quickly at tackles, rucks, mauls, and scrums must be taken either on or behind the mark – the mark is normally in the centre of the tackle, ruck, maul or scrum.
- Zero tolerance on the ball being thrown away, not releasing or preventing a Free Kick or Penalty Kick being taken quickly. On the awarding of Free Kicks or Penalty Kicks, if a member of the infringing team is in possession, that player must put the ball on the ground where he is standing or give the ball to an opponent who tries to take it from him. Any other action should result in the Free Kick or Penalty Kick being advanced 10 metres.
- Beware of players 'milking' an extra 10 metres by intentionally running into 'offside' players who are retreating back onside and not taking part in play. Referees should play on in these instances.
- When a Free Kick or Penalty Kick is taken quickly, defending players who are not back 10m are not put onside until a teammate who was back 10m runs past them. No action of the team taking the penalty kick can put them onside (including running 5m).

Offside in General Play

- When the ball is kicked in general play, any player of the kicking team in front of the kicker is offside.
- If offside players are within 10m of where an opponent is waiting to play the ball or where the ball may land, they **must immediately retreat outside this 10m zone**. This 10m line stretches across the field (it is no longer a circle).
- Offside players within the 10m who are retreating can only be put onside when an onside teammate runs them on. No action of the team catching the ball puts such an offside player onside.
- Offside players who are not within 10m **must not move forward or towards the ball**. These offside players who are standing still can be put onside when an onside teammate runs them on, or when an opponent runs 5m, kicks, passes or touches but does not catch the ball.
- Offside players **cannot** be run onside unless they are either standing still, or retreating out of the 10m zone as applicable.
- **Offside players who are advancing are cutting down options for counter attack and forcing the receiving team to kick as their first option. Referees must penalise offside and should no longer rely on continually verbally managing these players as by advancing they have already had an impact on play.**
- Offside players must be dealt with even when the ball looks like it will go into touch because a quick throw may be an option. Once the ball is in touch, offside no longer applies and offside players may move forward toward a lineout or where a quick throw is being attempted.

ADVANTAGE

- For a 'knock on advantage' to accrue, the non-offending team needs to have gained clear and real possession equivalent to that of which they would get from a scrum.
- A 'Penalty Kick advantage' calls for a greater level of reward than for a knock-on or Free Kick. The non-offending team must gain either tactical or territorial advantage equivalent to that of receiving the Penalty Kick in the first instance.
- On the rare occasions that advantage is played after foul play, the very least that should happen is an admonishment. The player involved needs to understand that the referee was playing advantage for their offence.

FOUL PLAY

Unfair play (including repeated and deliberate infringements)

- When simply admonishing a player the word 'caution' should not be used. A 'caution' must be accompanied by a temporary suspension (yellow card).
- A referee **must** warn a team through the captain about repeated infringements prior to taking yellow card action.
- Repeated team infringements can be:
 - A number of different offences in a short period of time,
 - A pattern of similar offences without a time limit (eg. regular offences close to the defending team's goal line), or
 - Repeated infringements by an individual without a time limit.
- Deliberate infringements can result in a Penalty Kick and a caution (yellow card) without any warning, depending on the cynical nature of the infringement.
- If a Penalty Try is awarded and the offender can be identified, then a caution (yellow card) or send off (red card) must follow.

Dangerous Play

- Dangerous tackles include tackles that are above the arm pits, use no arms or use the collar of the jersey
- If contact is made with the neck or head after initial contact below the line of the shoulders then the tackle is still considered a dangerous tackle.
- Any tackler who lifts a player into the air or causes a player to be put in the air has a responsibility to ensure that the player is brought back to the ground safely.
- Tackles where a player is lifted, tipped and 'speared' into the ground or dropped from a height must result in a send off (red card).
- When a player returns to the field of play after a temporary suspension that player should be reminded that they have now been cautioned and another yellow card will result in an automatic send off (red card).
- In U19 matches, punching and stamping are an automatic send off (red card).
- When dealing with situations where two players are involved in Foul Play offences, referees are required to be firm in dealings with both the retaliator and the instigator.

OTHER

- Player questioning of Referee decisions will not be tolerated and referees should take strong action.
- Swearing directed at a Referee or an Assistant Referee is a red card offence.
- Referees should manage unnecessary injury stoppages and be pro-active in playing on, e.g. front row players going down with injury at line outs. If the injured player is not in the way of the game, play on. If play approaches an injured player on the ground, the referee should stop the game immediately.
- Referees should be pro-active in ensuring players with bleeding wounds leave the field for treatment.
- The corner posts are no longer considered to be in touch in-goal. However, if a player grounds the ball against the corner post it is considered touch-in-goal.
- If a player carrying the ball touches the corner post without otherwise being touch-in-goal, then it is play on.
- If the ball hits the corner post and rebounds into the field of play or the in-goal, it is play on. If the ball subsequently bounces into touch then play should restart with a lineout.