



# Safeplay Code For Junior Rugby League

## Philosophy

The SAFEPLAY CODE was developed to emphasise SAFETY and good conduct within the Game of Rugby League.

The Code is designed to provide the best on-the-field environment possible for the 'junior' game of Rugby League by actively controlling undesirable actions.

It has been introduced for players up to and including the Under 15 years age group. The ARL trusts that players, coaches, parents and supporters will wholeheartedly embrace the Code for the benefit of the players and the Game.

## **IMPORTANT NOTE**

IT IS MANDATORY THAT A PENALTY KICK FOLLOW ANY ACT THAT TRANSGRESSES THE CODE OF SAFE PLAY.

ACTION, IN ADDITION TO A PENALTY FOR A BREACH, i.e. SIN BIN (REPLACEMENT FOR MINI MOD) DISMISSAL IS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE REFEREE.

Refer International Laws. Section 13, 1(a) and Section 15 - Players Misconduct

## **The Code and its Application**

### **1. Tackle Zone**

The Code: TACKLES ABOVE THE ARMPITS ARE NOT PERMITTED

Application:

a) When a ball-carrier is running with an upright posture, any tackle in which the defender's arms makes contact ABOVE an armpit, constitutes an infringement.

b) It is an infringement for a defender/tackler to set upon the head or neck region of a ball-carrier.

c) A ball-carrier who is diving or running with a "burrowing" or "stooped" posture can be "blocked" and tackled provided there is no contact by the defenders arm(s) with the head or neck of the ball-carrier. Defenders must tackle below the line of the shoulders.

Law Book Reference: Section 15, Law 1(b), Page 3

## 2. Dangerous Tackles

The Code: 2.1(Use of legs) THE TACKLER'S LEGS CANNOT BE USED TO TRIP OR THROW.

Application: The use of the legs in a tackle is not permissible. Using the LEGS (even if the defender has a hand hold on the ball-carrier) to TRIP or THROW constitutes an infringement.

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

The Code: 2.2(Lifting) 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 .

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

The Code: 2.3(Lifting) NO VERTICAL LIFT IN A TACKLE IS PERMITTED

Application: VERTICAL LIFTING in a tackle is an infringement. No defenders, during the course of a tackle, are permitted to vertically lift the ball- carrier. If a vertical lift is anticipated (by the referee) or is obvious i.e. both feet of the ball-carrier have left the ground, the referee must immediately blow his/her whistle to prevent the tackle from continuing.(This is not to be confused with a tackle that in the same motion "knocks" a player off his feet).A BALL-RUNNER CANNOT BE LIFTED AND DRIVEN

Application: A tackle that results in the ball-runner being lifted and remaining off the ground while the tackler takes two (2) or more steps to drive the player, in any direction (while the ball-carrier's feet are off the ground) is an infringement.

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

## 3. Shoulder Charge

The Code: A DEFENDER CANNOT "SHOULDER CHARGE". A BALL-CARRIER TO EFFECT A TACKLE.

Application: The defender who RUNS at a ball-carrier and without attempting to tackle, grab or hold the ball-carrier charges him to make contact with the shoulder or with the upper arm (tucked into his side) is guilty of an infringement.

Law Book Reference: Section 15, Considered "Misconduct" or "Dangerous Play"

#### **4. Vicious Palm**

The Code: AN ATTACKING PLAYER CANNOT "THRUST" OUT AN ARM AND CONTACT THE DEFENDER ABOVE THE SHOULDER

Application: Any attacking player who violently PUNCHES or THRUSTS out an arm or uses an outstretched stiff arm so that hand or fist contacts the neck, face or head of a defender commits an infringement. (This section does not state that a player cannot legitimately 'PALM' the head, neck or face).

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

#### **5. Slinging**

The Code: THE USE OF THE BALL-CARRIER'S ARM, OR GUERNSEY TO SLING OR SWING THAT PLAYER IS PROHIBITED

Application: A defender who uses the arm or jersey of the ball carrier to SLING or SWING that player commits an infringement.

Law Book Reference: Section II, Note to Law 1, Page 23.

#### **6. Sandbagging (Flopping)**

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

Application: It is an infringement for a defender to drop, dive or fall on a player in possession of the ball who is prone or stationary on the ground and not attempting to play-on. (A simple hand-on completes the tackle).

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

#### **7. SURRENDER (in the tackle) RULE**

The Code: BALL-CARRIERS MAY SURRENDER IN THE TACKLE. WHEN SMALL AND/OR INEXPERIENCED PLAYERS ARE INVOLVED IN A "SURRENDER" DEFENDERS MUST NOT COMPLETE THE TACKLE

Application: This rule is designed to protect beginners and small players by minimising risk and eliminating excessively robust play. The referee, NOT the player, calls 'held'. Players who are at an obvious disadvantage because of low levels of experience, are of small stature or show a lack of skill are to be protected when in possession of the ball and being tackled. A halt to play is to be called (BY THE REFEREE) when these players submit to the tackle or are held, subdued or their progress is halted by bigger or more experienced players. Failure by a tackler to respond to the referee's call is guilty of an infringement.

Law Book Reference: Section II, Law 2 (c), Note to 2 (c), Page 23.

#### **8. Verbal Abuse Foul Language**

The Code: THE USE OF OBSCENE EXPLETIVES, THREATENING OR DENIGRATING WORDS IS NOT PERMITTED

Application: Verbal abuse, obscene language and sledging -inclusive of comments or words that THREATEN or DENIGRATE an opponent, referee or supporter is an infringement.(If the individual cannot be identified, then the team should be cautioned through the captain).

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

## 9. **Scrum**

The Code: NO PUSHING, PULLING OR ROTATING A SCRUM IS PERMITTED.

Application: All scrums are to be DE-POWERED. Scrums will form as per the following instruction FORM, ENGAGE & HOLD.A team that deliberately pushes, pulls or rotates a scrum is guilty of an infringement. Once the ball has been fed into the scrum, hookers may strike for the ball. Second row players can LIFT a foot to rake the ball out of the scrum BUT cannot step forward over the ball to cause the ball to come out of the scrum.

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

It should be noted that every penalty under the Code should be accompanied by a caution and instruction to the player responsible for the infringement.

## **Advantage Play & the Code**

A penalty kick must follow any infringement.

1. IF NO ADVANTAGE OCCURS, the penalty is to be awarded immediately.
2. IF AN ADVANTAGE OCCURS, the penalty is to be awarded at the breakdown in play immediately after the misconduct occurred, (unless a try is imminent) or where the act of misconduct occurred, whichever is to the greater advantage to the non-offending team..
3. WHEN A TRY HAS BEEN SCORED in the same play in which the act of misconduct occurred OR in the immediate play thereafter (the imminent factor), the penalty kick. additional to the conversion, will be awarded in front of the goal posts. A kick at goal must be taken from the penalty kick (place or drop) and play restarted from the centre on the half-way line irrespective of the outcome of the kick.

## **A Note On Modified Games**

(Laws of Modified Games, Corcoran 2002.)

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

A player's captain may be directed to replace the player for the remainder of the game should that player's misconduct warrant such action. In this case the offending player cannot take any further part in the match.

A player - replaced for a period (Mini) or half (Mod) who resumes playing in a later period/half AND is guilty of further misconduct MUST be dismissed WITHOUT REPLACEMENT. (International laws apply here)

## **Implementing The Safe play Code**

Advertising the Code

All parents, players, coaches and referees should familiarise themselves with the "Safeplay Code" before the commencement of the season and subsequent matches.

A copy of the "Code" should be available, upon request, to all present at match venues and training sessions.

## **Referees**

Referees are the key to the successful application of the "Safeplay Code".

Referees must be fully briefed on the detailed workings of the "Safeplay Code".

The most suitable personnel to do this are State appointed Coaching and Development staff or Referees Co-ordinators.

## **The Coaches**

Coaches are the other vital factor in ensuring that the Code is successful.

All coaches must ensure that their players are aware of, and fully understand the "Safeplay Code".

## **All Matches**

To ensure that all parties fully understand the Safeplay Code a pre-match meeting should be held between the match referee, coaches and where possible team captains for International Law games.

It may take a few matches for referees and players to become accustomed to the Code. During this period there may well be a little "under enforcement". However, the right balance will soon be achieved as long as all concerned work together and realise that the Code will benefit all players and the Game.

The original Safeplay Code was written by Graham Chaffey - NSWRL - and trialled by the NSWCR in 1995. This brochure has been reviewed by ARL National Coaching & Development Conference members with the advice of Graham Chaffey. - February 2002.