

## State Union Contact Details



AUSTRALIAN RUGBY UNION



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SMART **RUGBY**

## Introduction

Player safety is the biggest single issue for rugby. All players, whether professional or recreational aspire to play free-flowing, running rugby, free of foul play and injury.

This booklet has been produced for all coaches so that they can teach the contact elements of rugby, concentrating on the technical aspects of these areas of play.

The major area of injury is now in the tackle, subsequently coaches should spend time on this at training sessions. Too often, teams practice with the ball 'in hand' and rarely work on the simple techniques of preparation for contact and the tackle.

Over 65% of rugby is now played at the breakdown phase so players must be skilled in the area of ball presentation prior to and after the tackle.

We hope that all players and coaches adopt the practices reproduced in this booklet. For more information contact your State Coaching Manager.

## Tackle - Law 15

### Definition

- "A tackle occurs when a ball-carrier is simultaneously held by one or more opponents and is brought to the ground and/or the ball touches the ground."
- "A tackle has not been effected if:
  - the ball carrier is not held by the opponent;
  - the ball carrier was brought to ground in the in-goals as the tackle law only applies to the field-of-play.
- or if an opponent lifts the ball carrier so that his/her feet are off the ground."

### Low Tackle

Defensive tackle  
- key points.

Ball carrier going to ground  
- key points.

1. Position the ball carrier to the side if possible.
2. Approach - in upright position.
3. Sight the target - above the knees.
4. Balance and dip (late)
5. Head to the side (ear against thigh), looking up
6. Lead foot in close.
7. Firm shoulder contact
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.

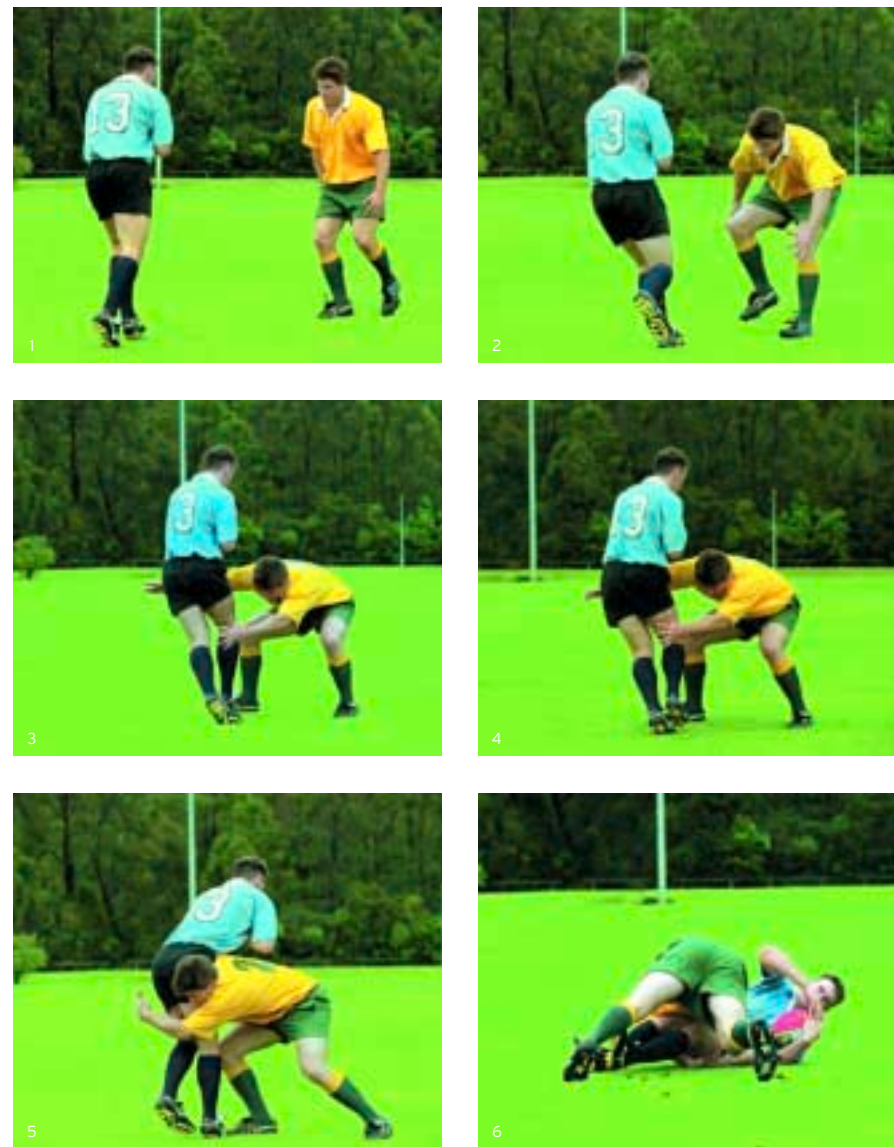
1. Hold ball in two hands.
2. Keep hips square.
3. Lower centre of gravity on contact.
4. Hug ball into chest when going to ground.
5. Exercise options immediately.

## 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.
On knees, indicates preferred shoulder. Makes contact. 3 on left 3 on right.	Walks towards tackler ( <b>holding ball in two hands</b> ) and stops upon firm shoulder contact. <b>Keep hips square.</b>	Sight the target, above the knees. Head to the side, looking up Firm shoulder contact.
On one knee, indicates preferred shoulder. Makes contact and affects arm clasp. 3 on left 3 on right.	Walks towards tackler ( <b>holding ball in two hands</b> ) but does not stop walking, if insufficient shoulder contact and arm squeeze <b>lower centre of gravity.</b>	Wrap arms and lock (hand to elbow), cheek to thigh (no gaps). Squeeze.
Standing upright, indicates preferred shoulder. Make tackle. 3 on left 3 on right.	Jogs towards tackler ( <b>holding ball in two hands</b> ) and maintains gait (if possible) after tackle ( <b>hug ball when going to ground</b> ).	Balance and dip (late). Lead foot in close. Fall (on top of) the ball carrier.
Standing upright, indicates preferred shoulder. Moves forward when ball carrier starts advance. Makes tackle. 3 on left 3 on right.	Jogs towards tackler and maintains gait (if possible) after tackle. Exercise options immediately.	Position the ball carrier to the side, if possible. Approach in upright position. Quickly regain feet.



## Tackling Practise by Photograph



## Tackle – Referee Management

- Referees will focus more 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: “let him/her go;” to the tackled player: “play it.”

## Options Available to the Ball Carrier

- 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 drop the ball away from him/her,  
or by pushing the ball away from him/her (but not in a forward direction).

## Arriving Players at the Tackle

- Arriving players on their feet have all rights to the ball at the tackle.
- Arriving players attempting to gain possession of the ball, must not have any part of their body supported by players on the ground (i.e 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 rights to the ball.

## Preparation for Contact

- The game of rugby is one that should be played on your feet. Players on the ground are out of play and serve no purpose to a team. Therefore, the importance of remaining on your feet, especially in the breakdown phase of play, is essential.
- For this to occur, players must have a stable base. There are a number of ‘Balance and Stability’ drills that can be practiced to improve this aspect of play.
- Good balance and stability enhances your ability to retain possession.

## Contact Options (on feet)

- Contact – Initial ‘Hit’.
- Concept of hitting through the contact.
- Step Close – drive from low to high.
- Attack weak spot eg. shoulder not sternum.
- Hit ‘square on’ in driving position.
- Initial contact – use opposition for balance and support.
- Leg drive – ‘tractor steps’.

## Introduce Ball – Ball Presentation

- Take ball away from contact ie. in arm that is not in contact with opponent.

## Buying Time

- Take a large step to push through contact after leg drive and use shoulder and forearm to buy time.

## Rip

- Open shoulder up, keep a low base, and prepare for hit.
- Hit, drive and rip.
- Ball carrier pivots as a result of the hit from ripper.
- "Drive the bus"

## Avoiding Contact

- 'Fixing' a defender in situation, then moving the ball, has many advantages for the ball carrying team. The major thrust is to slow and then turn prior to contact to create options for supporting players.
- These options include: 'hang ball', rip and spin, "gut ball" and shear.

## Practice for Balance and Stability

- Wrestling drills can be practised standing, on the knees, flat on the ground, 1 v 1 or 2 v 1.
- Rip and spin or hit and spin drills with ball.
- Action/Reaction drills. Ball carrier "bouncing" a defender.
- Opposed games in channels with more attackers than defenders (with hit shields or suits for protection).



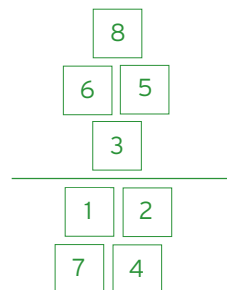
## Building a Scrum

- It is not necessary in the early stages to pack a full (8 man) scrum against a machine. Scrums always have some movement so it is important for forwards to get used to such movement by practicing with other players.
- Specific body positioning in engagement.



- 1 v 1, up and down, forwards and backwards or sideways.
- 3 v 3, front row v front row, practising off-set, engagement and binding.
- 4 v 4, LH Prop, Hooker, Lock, Flanker versus TH Prop, Lock, Flanker, No.8.

Eg.



## Scrum – Law 20

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

### Building a Front Row

#### Hooker (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.



## Scrum Engagement Sequence

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

### Crouch

- The front row are in a crouched position with the locks engaged. The hooker should not be sitting back on the locks.
- Front row should have their weight on the balls of their feet.

### Touch (U19 laws)

- The props 'touch' opponent on upper arm to judge distance. Heads up.

### Hold

- Locks lift their knees off the ground.
- Props focus on target area.

### Engage

- Engage the opposition firmly.
- Props take binds and 'draw with arms'.
- Abdominals 'on' and breathe.

## Mayday Scrum

- At some stage either during training or in a game a scrum will go 'down.' It is important for all players to understand the process when this occurs. The major emphasis is to keep "spines in line!"
- **If a player calls 'mayday' it means that he/she is going to ground.**  
The process to follow is:
  - Front row players lower to their knees in a controlled manner. This takes the weight off
  - Then there is a pause.
  - 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.' Nobody should look sideways as this is a dangerous action.
  - The referee will call to see if anyone has a problem.
  - The props should then release their bind with their opposition (outside arm).
  - The scrum will then disassemble from the back.
  - Each player will move outwards and away from any identified problem area.
  - Any player bound to a suspected injured player should remain where they are until specialist medical attention arrives.



1. Crouch



2. Touch



3. Hold



4. Engage

## Referee Signals



**Not releasing ball immediately**  
Both hands are close to the chest, as if holding an imaginary ball.



**Voluntarily falling over a player**  
Curved arm makes gesture to imitate action of falling player. Signal is made in direction in which offending player fell.



**Prop pulling opponent on**  
Clenched fist, and arm straight, at shoulder height. Gesture imitates pulling opponent on.



**Wheeling scrum more than 90°**  
Rotating index finger, at shoulder height.



**Diving to the ground near tackle**  
Straight arm gesture, pointing downwards to imitate diving action.



**Prop pulling down opponent**  
Clenched fist, and arm bent. Gesture imitates pulling opponent down.



**Voluntarily collapsing ruck or maul**  
Both arms at shoulder height as if bound around opponent. Upper body is lowered and twisted as if pulling down opponent who is on top.



**Handling ball in ruck or scrum**  
Hand at ground level, making sweeping action, as if handling the ball.