



GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

FOR COMMUNITY LEVEL RUGBY

IN AUSTRALIA

2009

GMG Working Party

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GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES 2009

The Game Management Guidelines are an amalgam of:

- The outcomes of the IRB's Conference on the Game, held in Auckland, January 2004
- The IRB's Referee Aide Memoire (September 2007) which is a record of the outcomes of the IRB Referee and Referee Assessor Workshops in 2003 and Elite Referee Seminars in 2004-2007
- The IRB Communication Protocols for match officials, and
- The agreed outcomes from the SANZAR Super 14 Workshop in December 2008

The outcomes of the above conferences and workshops have been adapted to reflect the playing, coaching and refereeing of the game at community levels in Australia for 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 which require more specific coaching and/or consistent refereeing. It is also reinforced that the Law Book is the only on-field Game Management Document.

Further information or clarification can be obtained from the ARU through Warren Robilliard or from the State Coaching and Referee Managers.

Changes from the 2008 GMG and **important issues are written in Red**. **Comments or statements in blue** provide for an explanation of the circumstance. As a minimum, these points should be drawn to the attention of referees and coaches.

A PowerPoint presentation is available to assist in delivering this 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 ready to throw the ball in
- The referee should make the mark and when the two teams are assembled at the mark call **CROUCH**
- The referee will then call **TOUCH** once both teams are crouched
- Immediately following the completion of the TOUCH, the referee will call **PAUSE**
- The referee will call **ENGAGE** when satisfied that the gap between the front rows is within the required distance
- Referees should avoid holding the teams in the crouch position too long as this causes instability and leads to further engagement problems
- *Zero tolerance* applies on early engagements and pulling out. Free Kick sanction

Post engagement

- Front rows must bind on engagement on the body. Props placing hands on the ground is not acceptable when using it as lever to drive up. Stability may be sought momentarily
- Scrums are to be square and steady (no wheeling) before the ball is thrown in
- The feed should be "Credible" throughout the game. Free Kick for non-compliance

Binding

- Props are to maintain binds. **Incorrect binding in the front row is a Free Kick offence**
- Boring, twisting or dipping is dangerous play and warrants a Penalty Kick
- Back rows must be correctly bound until the ball is out. **Breaking away early is to be treated as Offside and as such is a Penalty Kick offence**
- Flankers must be bound on locks and not on their props

Collapsed scrums & Illegal Wheeling

- Coaches and Referees should ensure players are aware of the Mayday procedures and their application. Refer to the SmartRugby documentation for clarification
- "Whip" wheels (pulling back by a tight head) are illegal and should be dealt with as they are extremely dangerous. These are identifiable as the scrum will wheel with the right hand side of the infringing team's front row moving back and around at pace

Other

- Flankers, No. 8 and No. 9 cannot obstruct at the back of the scrum
 - **Introduction of an offside line five metres behind the hindmost feet of the Scrum**
- Comment: This new offside line applies to both teams. Designed to offer more time and space to utilise possession, the teams must maintain their distance of 5 metres from their last man's foot until the completion of the scrum.

- **Scrum Half Offside Lines**

Comment: Ball-winning scrum-half:

- Once the ball winning scrum-half has fed the ball (and the ball is won by his team) he is allowed to 'leave' the scrum in any direction, permitting him to stand within the 5 metre area so long as at least one foot stays behind the ball at all times

Non-feeding scrum-half:

- This player has two options as the defensive scrum half. Either he decides not to be a participant in the scrum in which case he may stand the full 5 metres back, or if he chooses to participate he must stand next to the feeding scrum half as the ball is fed. If he decides to participate, then his options (assuming that his team does in fact lose 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, and remains within 1 metre of the scrum
- If he chooses to 'leave' the scrum after the feed, he must retire to his hindmost foot of the scrum and is then allowed to move in any direction so long as both feet stay behind that hindmost foot

LINEOUTS

The line-out is one of the major areas that have undergone change for this year. Below, the Law changes are outlined along with commentary on how they intend to have a positive impact.

Line-out and Throw

- **If a team puts the ball back into their own 22 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.**

Comment: This is to ensure that the ball remains in play longer by ensuring that teams cannot kick directly into touch in these circumstances and are forced to either carry or pass the ball to advance it or to kick the ball in general play. This law is applied in the following circumstances:

- Passing, kicking or running the ball into the 22 metre area
- A quick throw-in taken in the 22 metre area after a player gathers it from outside the 22 metre line and takes it behind the 22
- A quick throw-in which is passed from outside the 22, across the 22 into the 22 metre area
- Winning possession of a ball from a scrum, ruck, maul or lineout whose point of origin is outside of the 22 metre area, even though the rear participants may have their feet within the 22

The exceptions to this is 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, when the team who put the ball into their 22 gains possession of the ball from one of these phases of play, that team can then kick directly into touch and gain ground.

A tackled player with some part of their body inside the 22 metre area is considered to have been tackled inside the 22 metre area.

- **A quick throw may be thrown in straight or towards the throwing team's own goal line**

Comment: Again to increase the ball in play time, allowing the quick throw to be thrown back towards their goal line enables the team in possession to attack and keep up the intensity as well as allowing them to utilise what time and space might be on offer.

- Players over the touch line must give up the ball to opposition players – Penalty Kick.
- Players standing inside the 5 metre area attempting to negate the quick throw in are to be managed, and if they have an effect a Free Kick is applicable

- **There is no restriction on the number of players who can participate in the Lineout from either side**

Comment: Given that the attacking team will be required to send enough numbers into the line-out to secure their own ball, this Law should see fewer short line-outs and create more space in the midfield for the backs to exploit. The minimum remains two from each team.

- **The receiver at the Lineout must be at least 2 metres back away from the Lineout**

Comment: This is required as the referee needs to be able to identify which players are acting as the receiver for each team. Having those players standing two metres away from the lineout allows for them to be clearly identified as the lineout forms.

It should be noted that it is still optional for a team to have a receiver. A receiver may join the line-out as per current law.

- **It is mandatory for a team to have a player who is in opposition to the player throwing in the ball to stand in the tram tracks. That player must be positioned two metres away from the Lineout.**

Comment: The reason for this change is two-fold. Firstly, this player may **not** act as the front lifter from inside the 5 metre line as they have done in the past. This provided the defensive team an unfair advantage as their forward jumper could jump in front of the throwing teams.

Secondly, given that the non-throwing hooker **must** stand inside the 5 metre line, the defending side does not get the extra number elsewhere on the field.

- Lineout players may pre-grip a jumper before the ball is thrown in

Comment: Both teams are allowed to pre-grip, maintaining the consistency of the contest.

- The lifting of Lineout jumpers is permitted

Comment: This legitimizes lifting in the line-out replacing the notion of supporting the jumper.

Lineout Management

- Referees should avoid slowing down every lineout to set gaps.
- If a team forms a line away from the line-of-touch and then move or run towards the line-of-touch the referee will ask them to stop so that the metre gap is set and maintained
- Manage early jumping by both teams, particularly early jumping caused by a delayed throw
- Sacking is legal and can only be done by one opponent and only after the ball carrier has returned to the ground. (NOTE: Sacking is the act of bringing the ball carrier (jumper) to the ground by the upper body)
- Referees should monitor and sanction the defending lineout that drives in on the jumper and/or support players while the jumper is off the ground
- Regardless of whether there is a contest or not, the throw in to the line-out must be straight.

TACKLE

Tackle protocol for Referees

The order of priority at every tackle situation is:

- Tackler
- Tackled player
- Arriving players

Sanctions at the Tackle

- All infringements at the tackle are Free Kicks except for incorrect entry (not 'through the gate') and foul play which are deemed as Penalty Kick offences. Foul play includes deliberate, cynical or repeated infringements
- If the ball becomes unplayable at the Tackle the team not in possession is awarded a Free Kick

Tackler

- Referees must ensure the tackler releases the tackled player and then either rolls away or gets to their feet
- "Rolling Away" Definition – to roll away and not interfere with the 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.
- Be strict on tacklers who prevent the ball from being played. Tacklers must at all times be positive in their movements once they have completed the tackle. This includes their responsibility to release the tackled player before they themselves get to their feet

Unplayables – Role of Tackler

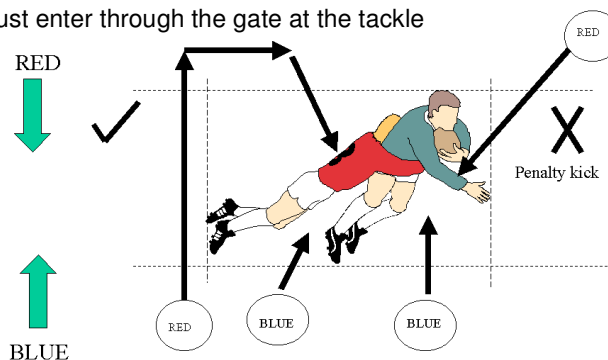
- If the tackle/ruck becomes unplayable due to the tackler becoming trapped and not being able to roll away, a Free Kick is awarded immediately to the ball carriers team.
- If the tackle/ruck becomes unplayable due to no fault of the tackling team, the referee should award a turnover Free Kick to the tackling team.

Tackled Player

- The tackled player cannot change their body position (e.g. squeeze ball) to delay the release of the ball when isolated or under pressure

Arriving Players

- Players who play the ball after a tackle must do so from the direction indicated in the diagram below i.e. from the direction of their own goal line and directly behind the tackled player or tackler nearest to their goal line – "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 - coffee table approach, i.e. 1 metre width either side of the ball.

Post-Tackle

- After a tackle when a player is on his feet and attempts to pick up the ball and is then joined by an opposing player:
 - If the player has the ball off the ground when the opposition player makes contact, there is no ruck and play would continue according to Law
 - If the ball is still on the ground when the opposing player makes contact, then we do have a ruck and play should continue in accordance to the Law
 - It is vital that referees are not pre-empting the formation of a ruck by calling ‘Ruck’ when in fact there is no ruck and therefore denying the defensive team a turnover

Safety

- Dangerous tackles include tackles that are above the arm pits, use no arms or use the collar of the jersey
- Referees should use the term “dangerous tackle” not “high” or “spear” etc.
- Any player who positions a player in 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
 - If a player is lifted up, tipped and driven into the ground, a red card is mandatory
 - If a player is lifted up, tipped and then dropped to the ground, at least a yellow card is mandatory
 - If a player is lifted up, tipped but is then placed back on the ground safely by the tackler, the referee is allowed discretion as to whether or not a penalty would be appropriate.
- If contact is made with the neck or head after initial contact below the line of the shoulders then it is still a dangerous tackle

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, 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. A red card may be appropriate
- 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 the attacking players 1 or 2 wide of the Ruck who act as pillars. They are in front of their offside line and must be managed back onside

Sanctions at Ruck/Maul

- There are two Penalty Kicks awarded at the Ruck – offside and foul play
- If the ball becomes unplayable at the Ruck the team not in possession at the commencement of the ruck is awarded a Free Kick
- If the ball becomes unplayable at the Maul a Free Kick is awarded to the team not in possession at the commencement of the maul

Maul

- Remove reference to heads and shoulders not to be lower than hips
- Comment: This legitimizes a common practice of low body height in the maul and facilitates the next variation.

- **Players are able to defend a Maul by pulling it down**

Comment: The acceptable method is similar to sacking at the lineout.

- The defender must only grip between the shoulders and the hips of any participant who is part of the maul
- If defending players attempt to attack the legs, neck or head, or attempt such ploys as 'speed humping', penalty sanctions will be applicable

It must be noted that in U19 fixtures, the collapsing of a maul is illegal and will be a Penalty Kick sanction.

Obstruction

- 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")

Ball out

- The ball is 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 should go to the scrum half
- Once the scrum half puts his hands on the ball he must play it
- "Ball out" may be called if it is unclear

Other

- Defending players who are offside and who run between an attacking half and the ball receiver (lazy runners) are subject to penalty.
- A Maul moving sideways is considered stationary.

RESTARTS

Kick off and drop out

- At Kick offs and drop outs 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
 - receivers running obstruction

Penalty & Free Kicks

- All Penalty Kicks and Free Kicks taken quickly at scrums/ rucks/ mauls and tackles must be taken either on or behind the mark – the mark will normally be in the centre of the scrum, ruck, maul or tackle
- Penalty Kicks and Free Kicks can be taken quickly following a scrum collapse providing the kick is taken as above and there are no safety issues to be dealt with
- **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 may result in the Free Kick or Penalty Kick being advanced 10 meters**
- **Referees must make the mark for the Free Kick or Penalty Kick as quickly as possible to facilitate bringing the ball back into play quickly. If the non offending team takes the Free Kick or Penalty Kick from or behind the mark before the referee has made the mark, the referee should allow play to continue**
- Beware of players "milking" the 10 metres by simply running into 'offside' players who are retreating back onside and not attempting to play the ball. Play on in these instances

ADVANTAGE

Advantage has to be real and clear rather than an opportunity. Some guidance for playing advantage is as follows:

- When an infringement is observed, decide whether it has a "material effect"
 - If YES, assess whether advantage can be gained, and if so play it, or otherwise whistle for a stoppage in play and apply the appropriate sanctions
 - Communicate Advantage by "Signal & Talk", e.g. the Red team has knocked the ball forward, signal the infringement and verbally communicate - "Knock-on Red", then, if there is the opportunity to do so, play Advantage and communicate "Advantage Blue"
 - If, after advising of the infringement it becomes apparent that Advantage is not going to accrue, the Referee would whistle for the infringement
- Knock on Advantage
 - For 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
- Free Kick Advantage
 - There are three elements that are required for Free Kick advantage to be gained. They include time and space, quick possession and players to use the ball
- Penalty Advantage
 - Penalty 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
- Both Scrum and Free Kick advantages are to be signalled with a straight and horizontal arm and the verbal call of "Advantage".
- As for Penalty Kick advantage, the arm is to be straight at a 45 degree angle pointing upwards, with the verbal call of "Penalty Advantage"
- If 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

Obstruction

- If an attacking player runs in front of the ball carrier before the pass he is off-side and liable to penalty if he obstructs opposition players
- After the ball carrier has passed the ball option runners must not obstruct opposition players

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)
- Referees should be consistent in tolerance levels and this should be linked to the nature of the offence. The referee should look at the intent of the player and the effect of the action when deciding on the severity of the penalty
- A referee must warn a team through the captain about repeated infringements prior to taking yellow card action, yet immediate escalation to a Penalty Kick without warning is acceptable
- 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
 - Repeated infringements by an individual without a time limit
- Deliberate infringements can result in either an immediate escalation to a Penalty Kick or a Penalty Kick and a caution (Yellow Card) 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 ordering off must follow

Dangerous Play

- 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 red card
- In U19 matches, punching and stomping are an automatic RED card
- When dealing in 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

PLAYERS DISPUTING REFEREES DECISIONS

- Player questioning of Referee decisions, particularly bordering on abuse should not be tolerated and referees should take strong action (e.g. Penalty Kick and Yellow Card)
- During play, Referees should deal only with the captain
- **Swearing directed at a Referee or an Assistant Referee is a red card offence**

OTHER

- 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. Make sure that if the injured player is not in the way of the game, play on
- Referees should be pro-active in ensuring players with bleeding wounds leave the field for treatment

ROLE OF ASSISTANT REFEREE

Qualified Touch Judges will now be referred to as Assistant Referees (AR's), and as such certain Law changes have been made:

- **Assistant Referees are able to assist Referees in any way which the Referee requires**
Comment: Assistant Referees can be asked to assist the referee in any or all game elements in addition to their tasks of running touch and reporting foul play.
- **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.**
Comment: A player carrying the ball can touch the corner post without being touch in goal. A ball can touch the corner post and rebound back into the field of play or the in-goal without it being touch in goal, as the ball is still in play.
- Assistant Referees should focus on their primary and secondary roles
 - Primary – Touch/Touch-in-Goal/Kicks at Goal
 - Secondary – Foul Play
- The tertiary role of the AR is to assist the referee with the management of the game. In this regard, AR's should only call "clear and obvious" incidents to assist the referee. Referees should be clear in their briefing to the AR's prior to the game