



Using existing law to make game safer

Promote fair contact – Eliminate illegal collisions

Objective

Putting a renewed focus on current foul play law to remove **illegal** dangerous collision based contact from the domestic game in Ireland, thus producing safer contact situations.

How

Using existing law to generate stringent zero tolerance of foul play offences in three frequent contact areas:

- **Tackle**
 - **Breakdown**
 - **Off the ball contact**
- **Penalty** - Zero tolerance of minor, low impact foul play.
- **Yellow / Red Card** - For forceful / serious foul play.

Benefits to player safety

- Soften the impact of the tackle and entry into the ruck and maul by removing shoulder first / only contact.
- Protects players in a vulnerable or defenceless position.

Strategic Benefits

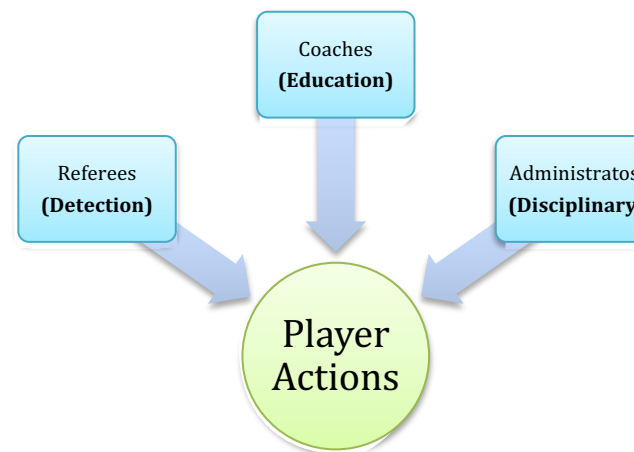
- Using existing law allows for resource efficient and consistent education of referees, players, coaches and administrators.
- There is no fear of unintended consequences as all changes take place within current World Rugby Law.

Delivery

- **Stage 1** – Education drive pre season
- **Stage 2** – Implementation beginning 2016/17 Season
- **Stage 3** – Ongoing reiteration (Ensure no slippage during season)
- **Stage 4** – End of season review

A coordinated approach is needed to assist players in understanding the parameters required in operating in the new environment. Education drives will be required across 4 key stakeholders:

- Players
- Coach
- Referee
- Game Administrators



Foul Play – New Focus

Law	Wording	Proposed Application	Desired Aim
9.12	Punching or striking. A player must not physically or verbally abuse anyone. Physical abuse includes, biting, punching, contact with the eye / eye area, striking, stiff arm tackles, shoulder, head, knee(s), stamping, tripping or kicking.	Focus to also apply to ball carrier. Hand off must only be a push with hand. Guide: Any strike action or forceful bounce into/against the tackler(s) is to be sanctioned. Head first strike contact when carrying ball to be sanctioned.	Protect tackler(s) from strike to head and/or whiplash action.
9.12	A 'stiff-arm tackle' is dangerous play. A player makes a stiff-arm tackle when using a stiff- arm to strike an opponent.	Zero tolerance: The tackler must attempt to grasp an opponent. Guide: Forceful strike to head = Red / Yellow. Forceful no arms / shoulder / head first tackle = Red / Yellow Card.	Remove / reduce the collision of the tackle attempt by ensuring tackler grasps ball carrier, thus protecting both ball carrier and tackler.
9.13	A player must not tackle an opponent early, late or dangerously.	Applied as before with renewed focus.	Further protect player who may be in prone or vulnerable position.
9.13	A player must not tackle (or try to tackle) an opponent above the line of the shoulders even if the tackle starts below the line of the shoulders. A tackle around the opponent's neck or head is dangerous play.	Zero tolerance of high tackles or contact above shoulder height when making or attempting to make a tackle, this requires the tackler to ensure all contact is below the line of the shoulder (I.E. a horizontal line drawn from the top of one arm pit to the other). Guide: Forceful contact to head and neck (including neck roll) = Red / Yellow Card A legal tackle that ends high due actions of the ball carrier may not be deemed illegal (Mitigation).	Further protect ball carrier and tackler from contact to head and neck area.
9.14	Playing an opponent without the ball. A player must tackle an opponent who is in possession of the ball.	Must protect prone players without the ball. Zero tolerance. Guide: Forceful tackle / shoulder charge / high hit on prone player = Red / Yellow Card	Further protect player who may be in prone or vulnerable position.
9.16	Dangerous charging. A player must not charge or knock down an opponent carrying the ball without attempting to grasp that player.	"No arm tackle" Must be a legitimate attempt evident prior to and at the point of contact to grasp ball carrier. Guide: Forceful initial contact (without grasp) by head / point of shoulder / chest / hip / leg = Red / Yellow Card.	Remove / reduce the collision of the tackle by ensuring tackler attempts to grasp ball carrier, thus protecting both ball carrier and tackler.
9.17	A player must not tackle, charge, pull, push or grasp an opponent whose feet are off the ground.	Guide: If players upper body and or head forcefully makes contact with the ground due to or as part of that action = Red / Yellow Card.	Further reduce situations where players head and upper body come dangerously in contact with the ground.
9.18	A player must not lift an opponent off the ground and drop or drive that player so that their head / upper body make contact with the ground.	Tackler: Refereed as before with zero tolerance. Guide: If ball carrier is forcefully swung, driven, dropped or pulled to ground the minimum sanction is a penalty. If players upper body and or head forcefully makes contact with the ground due to or as part of that action = Red / Yellow Card. Ball carrier: Can only push an opposition player. Ball carrier cannot lift defender off the ground and drop or drive defender to ground. If players upper body and or head forcefully makes contact with the ground due to or as part of that action = Red / Yellow Card.	Further reduce situations where player's head and upper body come dangerously in contact with the ground.

9.20 (a & b)	<p>A player must not charge into a ruck or maul. A: Charging includes any contact made without binding onto another player</p> <p>B: A player must not make contact above the line of the shoulders.</p>	<p>Player joining ruck or maul must make effort to bind on a teammate or opponent. Guide: Forceful initial contact (without grasp) by head / point of shoulder / chest / hip / leg = Red / Yellow Card.</p>	<p>Remove / reduce the collision element at the point of entry into a ruck or maul, thus protecting prone players in the ruck or maul and the joining players.</p>
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