



# New Laws for Fall 2024



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# Agenda



- What are the law changes?
  - Offside In Front of Kicker
  - Crocodile Roll
  - Scrum option removal at Free Kick
  - Tackle Height
- What are the law clarifications?
- When do they go into effect?
- Q&A



Offside In Front of Kicker

# Offside In Front of Kicker





# Offside In Front of Kicker

**Rationale:** Teams and players have recognised that in a kick battle with opponents, the kicking team - providing they are more than 10m away from the ball alighting [where the ball will land or be caught] - can be put onside by the actions of the catcher who runs 5m, passes or kicks.

This has created freedom for players to loiter in the middle and wait for a kick tennis battle to conclude.

The new wording makes clear that **any player who is offside in open play needs to take action to put themselves onside and not just remain stationary**. The clauses relating to the catcher running 5m and passing the ball to put an opponent onside, will be removed.



# Lawbook Changes

## Law 10 - Offside and onside in open play

10.1: A player is offside in open play if that player is in front of a team-mate who is carrying the ball or who last played it. An offside player must not interfere with play. This includes:

- a. Playing the ball.
- b. Tackling the ball-carrier.
- c. Preventing the opposition from playing as they wish.
- d. Loitering in an offside position

10.4: An offside player may be penalised, if that player:

- a. Does not make an effort to retreat and interferes with play; or
- b. Moves forwards towards the ball; or
- c. [unchanged]

10.7 Other than under Law 10.4c, an offside player can be put onside when:

- a. An onside team-mate of that player moves past the offside player and is within or has re-entered the playing area.
- b. An opponent of that player:
  - i. Carries the ball five metres; or
  - ii. Passes the ball; or
- i. Kicks the ball; or
- ii. Intentionally touches the ball without gaining possession of it.

New definition:

**Loiter/Loitering:** A player who remains in an offside position is loitering. A loiterer who prevents the opposing team from playing the ball as they wish is taking part in the game, and is liable to sanction. A loiterer must not benefit from being put onside by the opposing team's action.



# Crocodile Roll

# Crocodile Roll



- Rationale: Player safety. While low in number, these actions continue to cause long-term injuries in many players. The Shape of Game meeting showed clear support for removing the specific action in law.







# Lawbook Changes

## Law 9.20d

Replace: A player may lever the jackler out of the contest at the ruck but must not drop their weight onto them or target the lower limbs.

with:

A player may remove the jackler from the tackle area by pushing/driving them backwards (including by grabbing the knee/leg), but must not roll, pull or twist an opponent. (Sanction: Penalty)

## New 9.20e

A player must not drop their weight onto an opponent or target the lower limbs. (Sanction: Penalty)

**New clause in 14.8 (Tackle Law).** Other players must:

e: Not roll, pull or twist an opponent, who is involved in the tackle, to the ground

New definition:

Crocodile roll: A prohibited action where a player laterally rolls/twists or pulls a player, who is on their feet in the tackle area, to ground. The action often lands on the player's lower limbs



# Scrum Option Removal at a Free Kick



# Scrum Option Removal at a Free Kick

**Rationale:** Speeding up restarts after technical offences. Currently many scrums result in long periods of dead time with resets, leading to more FKs, penalties and then kicks to touch. Shape of Game recommendation was to remove the scrum from a FK option. It remains an option for penalty offences.



# Lawbook Changes

## Law 20: Options at a penalty or free-kick

**20.3** A team awarded a penalty ~~or a free-kick~~ may instead choose a scrum.

**20.4 i.** A team awarded a penalty ~~or free-kick~~ at a lineout may instead choose a lineout or a scrum at the same mark.

**ii.** A team awarded a free-kick at a lineout may instead choose a lineout at the same mark.

**Scrum options table in Law 19.1 (row 4)** would also be amended “Scrum option from a ~~FK~~/Penalty”

## Consequential change: Law 17: Mark

**17.6** If the player is injured in the act of claiming a Mark, and is unable to take the free-kick within one minute, ~~a scrum is awarded to the team in possession.~~ a team-mate may take the FK



# Tackle Height

# Tackle Height

## WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE LAW?

To avoid head-to-head and head-to-shoulder contact occurring between the tackler and ball-carrier during execution of the tackle.

## THE NEW LAW

### TACKLER: 9.13

A player must not tackle an opponent early, late or dangerously. Dangerous tackling includes, but is not limited to, tackling or attempting to tackle an opponent above the line of the shoulders even if the tackle starts below the line of the shoulders, **or tackling or attempting to tackle an opponent above the base of the sternum while either player is running in open field play. PK**

### BALL CARRIER: 9.11

Players must not do anything that is reckless or dangerous to others including leading with the elbow or forearm, or jumping into, or over, a tackler, **or leading with the head into an opponent while running in open field play. PK**



# Tackle Height

## HEAD CONTACT PROCESS

Where there is head or neck contact, in any scenario, use of World Rugby's existing Head Contact Process has not changed. This tackle height law should not result in any more, or any less, penalties, yellow cards, or red cards through use of this Process.

## OPEN FIELD PLAY - NEW

The term "open field play" is used in the new law in recognition of the fact that the body positions of players in the immediate vicinity of a ruck or in a maul may not be compatible with the new law.

Collisions in this aspect of the game (i.e. 'pick and drive') are not at high speed and are rarely dangerous, so the new law does not apply to those situations. It also recognizes that players attempting to ground the ball in-goal are often diving downward.

## BALL CARRIER LOWERING HEIGHT - NEW

If the ball carrier lowers their body position immediately prior to contact, and the tackler makes contact above the sternum, the tackler will not be penalized. There is no sanction against a ball-carrier in this scenario (unless dangerous).

## DANGEROUS ACTIONS BY THE BALL CARRIER - NEW

If the ball carrier attempts to prevent the tackler from making a legal tackle by bending at the waist and leading with the head into contact in open field play, this is considered dangerous play per amended Law 9.11. **PK**

## TWO TACKLERS - NEW

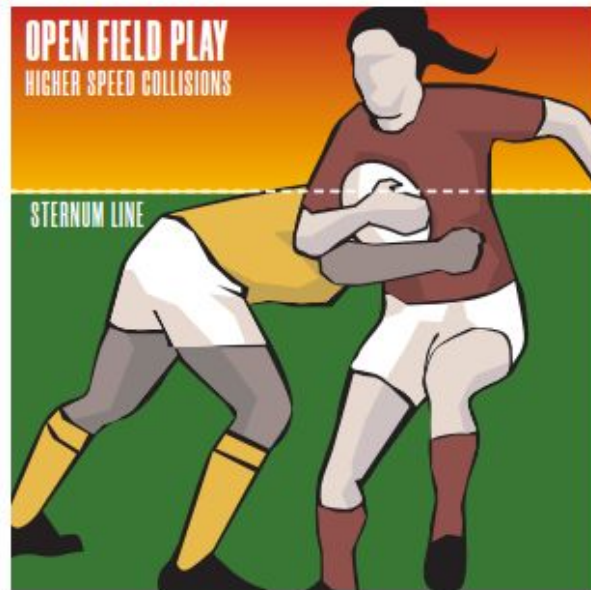
A secondary tackler must also tackle below the ball carrier's sternum. Players may compete for the ball, and may form a maul.



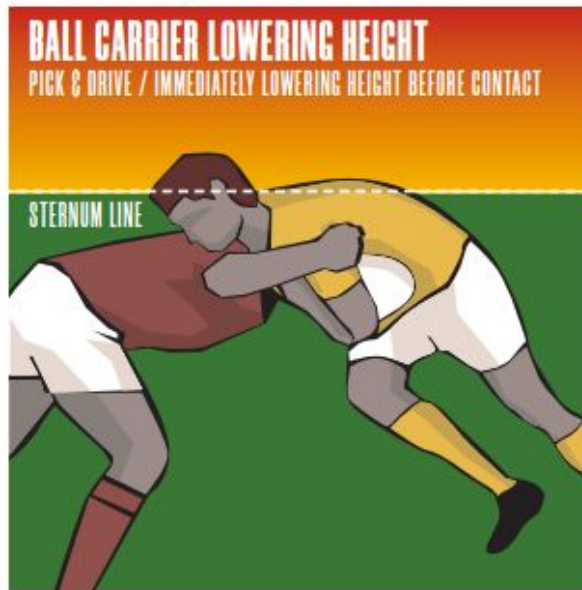
# Tackle Height

## PLAY ON SITUATIONS

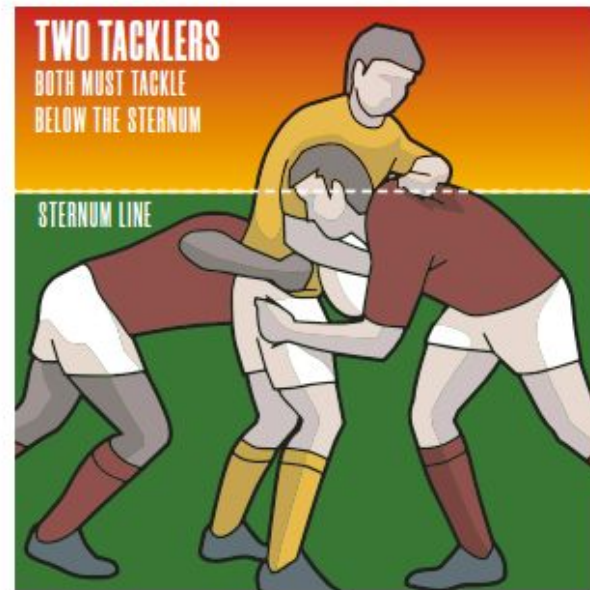
### OPEN FIELD PLAY HIGHER SPEED COLLISIONS



### BALL CARRIER LOWERING HEIGHT PICK & DRIVE / IMMEDIATELY LOWERING HEIGHT BEFORE CONTACT



### TWO TACKLERS BOTH MUST TACKLE BELOW THE STERNUM







# Law Clarifications



# Law Clarifications

- At scrummage, some hookers have used a “semi/half brake foot”. The brake foot must be in position to serve as a brake taking pressure off the head and necks of the front row until the call of “set”.
  - The Global Law Trial on the brake foot was introduced following player representation around the welfare of front row forwards. The brake foot ensures axial loading (pressure on heads and necks) is removed or reduced during the scrum engagement process.
  - In line with the definition in the Laws, during the “Crouch” and “Bind” phase of the engagement sequence, match officials must be able to see both hookers’ brake foot in the middle of the tunnel. This should ensure stability and avoid axial loading. It is permissible to adjust the position of the brake foot but it must still be fulfilling the act of a brake before being fully withdrawn on the “Set” call.
  - If any adjustment creates instability, pre-engagement or axial loading, then the brake is not acting as law intends and would be liable to sanction.



# Law Clarifications

- On conversion kicks, once a kicker is “finally settled”, that indicates to everyone that the next time the player steps, or lifts a foot off the ground to step, that will be the start of their “approach to kick” as per law 8.14.
  - Q - Once a kicker has completed their pre-kick routine (stationary/no movement), their next movement in any direction begins the “approach to kick”, and so the defenders can attempt to block the kick?
    - Yes – we agree.
  - Q - Does that 'movement in any direction' refer specifically to foot movement - it does not relate to upper body, arm or leg movement?
    - Yes, the movement of the feet in any direction from their settled position is the indicator, not a movement of any other body part.
  - Kickers have developed a range of different preparation steps and movements when setting themselves to kick at goal. When they set and a re-adjustment is needed, it must be done immediately. Once finally settled, that indicates to everyone that the next time the player steps, or lifts a foot off the ground to step, that will be the start of their “approach to kick” as per law 8.14.
  - When the conversion kicker next steps in any direction - as per Law 8.14 - the opposing team may begin their attempt to block the kick.



Effective Date  
September 1

# Resources



- [USAR Announcement of Law Changes and Clarifications](#)
- [Tackle Height](#) Video by Jamie McGregor, USAR
- [Tackle Height Infographic](#)
  - [Head Contact Protocol](#)
- Clarifications
  - [Brake Foot](#)
  - [Kicker "set"](#)
- [Game Management Guidelines](#)
- [USA Rugby Law Resources](#)