



**RUGBY  
FOOTBALL  
LEAGUE**

**U6-U18**

**RUGBY LEAGUE**

**SAFE PLAY CODE**

**2026**

# SAFE PLAY CODE

## SAFE PLAY CODE

This Safe Play Code has been written in order to promote safety and good conduct within the Primary Rugby League versions of the game. It will provide the best possible on-field environment for the development of young Rugby League players, particularly in the areas of actively controlling undesirable actions and behaviour.

### Section 1 - The Tackle Zone

#### **The Code: Tackles above the armpits**

When a ball carrier is advancing in an upright posture, any tackle by the defender in which contact is made above the armpits is deemed to be an infringement.

### Section 2 - Dangerous Tackles

#### **The Code: Tripping or throwing an opponent**

It is an infringement if the tackler trips or uses his or her legs in anyway during a tackle. This applies even if the defender already has a hand on the ball carrier (i.e. the Cumberland throw).

#### **The Code: Lifting 1**

Adopting a crotch hold is not permitted. Placing either the hand or arm in the crotch region at any time is an infringement.

#### **The Code: Lifting 2**

Vertical lifting is an infringement. Should a referee anticipate this is going to happen in a tackle he or she should blow the whistle immediately to prevent it from occurring.

#### **The Code: Lifting 3**

The ball carrier cannot be lifted and driven. A tackle in which the ball carrier is lifted and remains off the ground for two or more steps is an infringement. However, this should not be confused with a driving tackle when the ball carrier is knocked off his or her feet.

#### **The Code: Shoulder Charge**

Defenders are not allowed to shoulder charge the ball carrier in order to effect a tackle. A defender who runs at a ball carrier and makes no attempt to tackle, grab or hold the ball carrier, but merely makes an attempt to effect the tackle by the use of the shoulder shall be deemed to have committed an infringement.

#### **The Code: Flopping**

A defender cannot drop or fall on a prone player. If the ball carrier is prone or stationary on the ground it is an infringement to drop, dive or fall on that player. The tackle will be deemed complete by the defender simply putting a hand on the ball carrier.

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### The Code: Slinging

The use of the ball carrier's arm or jersey to sling a player to the ground is not permitted. Any defender who uses the arm or jersey of the ball carrier to complete a tackle is committing an infringement.

### Section 3 - Hand-off or Fend

#### The Code: Dangerous use of the hand

An attacking player cannot thrust out his or her arm and contact a defender above the shoulder. Any player that hands off or fends above the shoulder will be deemed to have infringed.

In Tag formats at U6 – U8 attackers cannot hand off/fend or protect their tag from defenders, they should use evasion skills to beat players.

### Section 4 - Verbal abuse and foul language

#### The Code: Unacceptable language

The use of obscene, threatening, racist, denigrating and abusive language is not permitted. There is a zero tolerance approach to unacceptable language and behaviour based on individual's gender identity, race, age, disability, faith or sexual orientation. Any form of verbal abuse, threatening language or sledging will be deemed an infringement.

### Section 5 - Tackle shields and tackle bags

Under no circumstance must a coach, volunteer or parent hold a tackle shield for a child to tackle. An adult can hold the top of a tackle bag for a child to tackle, please see the diagrams below for more detail.



INCORRECT | TACKLE SHIELD

Coaches and volunteers **CAN NOT** hold a tackle shield for a child. This can result in injury to the child as well as a compliance complaint with the RFL.



CORRECT | TACKLE SHIELD

A child **CAN** hold a tackle shield for another child as long as they are in the same age group and are of similar size and build.



CORRECT | TACKLE BAG

Coaches and volunteers **CAN** hold the top of a tackle bag. This is done by holding the top of the bag with one hand which should be released on impact. This is to avoid injury to the child.