

Key Areas



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Breakdown

All areas of the tackle law need to be strictly enforced.

Tackler(s)

- Must roll away **immediately**.
- Assist tacklers who do not go to ground must release the tackled player prior to attempting to win the ball.

Tackled Player(s)

- Must release the ball after being tackled

Arriving player(s)

- Must enter through the gate (both the attackers and the defenders)
- Must remain on their feet when attempting to win ball
- Players going off their feet unintentionally must immediately roll away
- Players deliberately going to ground must be penalised
- A trend has developed where players are clearing out ahead of the ball and then intentionally holding the cleared out player preventing him from defending. Referees and ARs are asked to be particularly vigilant in this area of the game

If at a tackle situation a **clear and obvious** Maul develops the Referee should call 'Maul' and referee this phase accordingly. Once he has called maul neither team may deliberately collapse the maul. If however the Maul goes to ground and the Referee is undecided regarding which team caused it to go to ground, he should whistle a turnover if the ball isn't immediately available from the collapse.

Scrum

- 4 clear and precise calls each followed by 4 clear actions.
- Zero tolerance to early engagement and failing to engage on referees call.
- Loose heads to be hitting up and tight heads to be square on engagement.
- Binding of props to be on body not on arms.

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- Loose heads who end up putting a hand on the ground to prevent a collapse at engagement occasionally may be able to rebound. This should be an exception rather than a norm and a loose head who continually puts a hand on ground needs to be sanctioned.

Offsides

Referees and Assistant Referees need to be strict on applying the offside law to both teams at the breakdown. Players close in at the breakdown must be policed strictly to ensure that they remain onside to allow the ball winning team the legal space they are entitled to.

Offsides both in general play and from kicks where offside players are within ten metres of the receiver are to be strictly enforced.

Maul

Players supporting the ball winner at kickoffs and lineouts must do so from alongside or behind the ball winner. Players doing so from in front of the ball winner are to be penalised for obstruction.

Both the ball carrying side and the defenders are to be refereed equally at the Maul. A player who is caught up in the Maul and makes his way through the middle of the formation is not obliged to leave the Maul.

Foul Play

Referees are reminded of recent circulars from the IRB regarding actions to be taken for Dangerous tackles including the lifting tackle where a player is not brought to the ground safely and tackles around the head/neck region.

A trend is also developing across all competitions where cleanouts at the breakdown involving a player being grabbed around the neck/head region and his neck/head being twisted as part of the clearout. This trend needs to be stopped immediately as it is extremely dangerous play.

Match Officials are to make Foul play a player issue not a Match Official issue.