



Key Messages from the RFU & NLD — 2015

Accurate — Decisions that are seen as correct in law — e.g. penalising the first offence

Credible — Decisions that are seen as believable e.g. penalising the clear and obvious

Fair — Decisions that are seen as even-handed e.g. penalising consistently

Acceptable — Decisions that are satisfactory

RFU MESSAGES

1. BREAKDOWN **Illegal action + affected ball = PK**

All areas of the tackle law need to be strictly enforced. Referees are to reward positive play and ensure a fair contest for possession

• TACKLER(S)

- » Must roll away immediately and Referees should be aware of those players who roll into the pathway of attacking players
- » Assist tacklers who do not go to ground must release the tackled player prior to attempting to win the ball and enter through gate
- » Tacklers who go to ground need to be identified and allowed to play the ball immediately but need to be on their feet
- » A trend has developed where tacklers who go to ground regain their feet but do not go for the ball and intentionally hold or clear out defending players. They therefore obstruct & prevent a contest. Referees are asked to be vigilant in this area of the game
- » Tacklers who go to ground regain their feet but do not go for the ball immediately can become offside as the ruck forms behind them i.e “beaten by the ruck” and therefore cannot play the ball legally

• 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

- **TACKLE DEVELOPED INTO MAUL**

- » If at tackle situation a clear and obvious maul develops the Referee shall Referee this phase accordingly
- » It is an offence to deliberately collapse the maul
- » A turnover scrum should be awarded If the maul goes to ground with the ball not immediately available and if the Referee is undecided regarding which team caused it to go to ground

2. SCRUM — Invest Time at the 1st Scrum

- a. Engagement Process — “Crouch — Bind — Set”
- b. Binding
- c. Ball in Straight
- d. Use it or lose it — immediate — ball to be moved away

3. OFFSIDES

- **Ruck/Maul**

- » 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

- **General Play/Kicks**

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

4. MAUL (OBSTRUCTION)

- Players supporting the ball winner (carrier) at kickoffs and lineouts must do so from alongside or behind the ball carrier
- Players doing so from in front of the ball winner (carrier) should 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

5. FOUL PLAY

- Referees are reminded of recent circulars from the IRB regarding actions to be taken for dangerous tackles; these include the lifting tackle where a player is not brought to the ground safely and tackles around the head/neck region
- There is a trend of 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 needs to be stopped immediately and penalised as dangerous foul play

Additional Note — YELLOW CARDS

A reminder — there were three types of incidents:

- **Cynical play** (usually by defenders in their 22m area — slowing down possession)
- **Repeated infringements** (Individual or Team)
- **Foul Play** — A yellow card is NOT to be used as a cop—out for serious Foul Play (Punching/Striking/Kicking/etc.)

NLD MESSAGES

- **Positioning** — Too many Referees taking up square & infield position — as a result missing offsides — and are slow to next breakdown
- **Breakdown** (because of positioning & fitness) Referees are missing the 1st offence — there's too much “white noise” — no consistent calls of “Colour/Number/Action”
- **Line—outs** —either make a mark for defenders & instruct throwing—in team to set their gap — OR make a mark for both — police the gap — don't allow “huddles”
- **Yellow Cards** — are being “awarded” far too late for team persistent offences & Referees are missing clear & cynical offences (usually in the defending 22m)
- **Management of Captains** — Not shutting—out “gobby” Captains (sometimes players) — bring this into your Captains briefing at the toss—up — remind them (once) on the park.

RED CARDS

- Any player who is red carded — including for a 2nd yellow — IS AUTOMATICALLY BANNED until after their hearing.
- Onus on Referees to complete the report within 48 hrs of the Red Card
- Don't be shy to ask for help (Trevor/Paul/Steve will help) — better to get it right from outset
- Reports must be:
 - » Clear
 - » Factual
 - » Accurate
 - » Paint a full picture
 - » No supposition or conjecture
 - » Send completed reports to Tom Murrie & Trevor Sharpe