



Oxley College Tackle Policy & Concussion Procedure

Tackle Policy: Rationale

In 2017, World Rugby announced a 'zero-tolerance' approach to both reckless and accidental head contact in rugby. This was driven by the development of evidence-based strategies that reduce the incidents of head injuries, rather than an increase in injuries. The measures included new sanctions for where a player makes contact with the head of an opponent and a global educational programme.

World Rugby produced new guidance to referees regarding high tackles that are 'reckless' (minimum Yellow Card) and 'accidental' (minimum Penalty Kick). A 'reckless' tackle is defined as one where the player knew or should have known that there was a risk of contact with the head. Stricter enforcement is encouraged, in which 'contact with the head' should result in a Penalty Kick as a minimum in most cases. Referees also received guidance on factors to consider in deciding on the level of the sanction. A tackle may still be illegal even if the initial impact is below the line of the shoulders, but the tackler slips upwards and makes contact with the neck/head. World Rugby has also issued guidelines to referees to eliminate the practice of 'neck grab and rolls' during the cleanout. More information about the measures can be found at www.worldrugby.org.

Oxley College intends to support the promotion of safe tackling in rugby through player education, coach development and the appointment of qualified referees to ensure the consistent application of the laws of the game.

The ISA rules stipulate that where a red card is issued, the student will not play in the following fixture. Oxley reserves the right to impose additional sanctions when it is deemed necessary. The school also reserves the right to apply sanctions where a student accumulates multiple yellow cards during a season.

Coaching Tackle Technique

The Oxley College Tackle Policy has been developed from guidelines issued by World Rugby and coaching guidelines issued by Rugby AU. It will apply at all levels from U13 to Opens.

The policy is grounded in a **low tackle focus**. The aim of a tackle is to get the ball carrier to ground as soon as possible, so that the ball can be contested.

The tackler should aim to make a tackle using the shoulder to make the initial contact, aiming between the middle of the ball carrier's thigh and the waist. This can be achieved by the tackler following this 'ABC' process:

1. Approach

- **'Off-set' alignment** – the tackler aligns slightly to one side of the approaching ball carrier; knees bent, head and hands up.
- **'Eyes to thighs'** – the tackler looks to make contact with the ball carrier's thigh, using the shoulder.



2. Balance

- **'Leading foot close'** – the tackler should get their leading foot as close as possible to the ball carrier's feet. Doing so significantly reduces the likelihood of a lifting tackle.
- **'Cheek to cheek'** – safe head positioning by the tackler can be achieved when the tackler aims to have their head on the buttock of the ball carrier.

3. Contact

- **'Hit and stick'**– the most effective tackles involve the tackler's shoulder making the initial contact. The arms are then used to envelop the tackler to bring them to the ground. A legal tackle requires the use of arms.
- **'Release and roll'** – the tackler releases the ball carrier and where possible immediately rolls away.

Concussion Procedure & Blue Card

From 2018, when a player leaves the field due to signs and symptoms of suspected concussion, the referee will show them a Blue Card. This triggers an off-field process. A tactically replaced player may return to play to replace a player who has been shown a Blue Card.

The ISA Concussion Policy should be followed in all matches.

In summary:

- All players with a suspected or recognised concussion must be referred to a medical doctor/hospital as soon as possible, irrespective of whether initial symptoms or signs are still present.
- If the student does not receive a medical examination, or if the student is diagnosed with a concussion injury, the student must be stood down from all ISA events and must not play at least until the 21st day after the date of the incident.
- The student will then be required to follow the 'Graduated Return to Play' procedure (GRTP), as outlined in the ISA Concussion Policy document. The GRTP may start after a 14 day period without playing/training and only if the student has no signs or symptoms of concussion. A Medical Certificate clearance must be submitted to the school before the student can return to play.

In addition, the following procedure will also apply, developed from concussion management guidance issued by Rugby AU:

- A student with a recognised concussion *must not attend school until all symptoms and signs of concussion have disappeared.*
- If the concussion injury occurred on a Saturday, the student must not attend school on the following Monday, regardless of whether or not they still have signs or symptoms.
- If the concussion injury occurred in training during the week, the student must not attend school for 2 days.