



## Coaching the tackle

A tackle is used by the defending team to stop the attacking team moving forward and is an opportunity for the defending team to contest for possession of the ball. Competence in tackling and taking a tackle is critical in developing a safer and more enjoyable game. Recent studies from Australia and the UK have shown that 58% of injuries result from tackle situations, so it's essential that this aspect of the game must be performed, coached and refereed with due care and attention, with good technique and safe, appropriate practice paramount. This will enable players to become confident and competent in the tackle.

Law definition - Law 15 Tackle: Ball carrier brought to ground.

*A tackle occurs when the ball carrier is held by one or more opponents and is brought to ground.*

*A ball carrier who is not held is not a tackled player and a tackle has not taken place. Opposition players who hold the ball carrier and bring that player to ground, and who also go to ground, are known as tacklers. Opposition players who hold the ball carrier and do not go to ground are not tacklers.*

### Coaching points/Key factors:

#### Tackler - contact with opponent(s)

1. Track the movement of the ball carrier and get the feet close enough to make the tackle
2. Prepare for contact \_ adopt a body position that is strong, stable and low.
3. Keeping the eyes open, position the head behind or to one side of the ball carrier \_ never position the head in front of the ball carrier.
4. Release the tackled player, get back to your feet immediately and contest for possession.

#### Shoulder tackle - front-on

1. Maintain strong, stable and low body position.
2. Target and make contact with the shoulder on the ball carrier's thighs.
3. Squeeze the arms tight around the ball carrier's legs while driving with the legs.
4. Continue the leg drive to bring the ball carrier to ground.
5. Release the ball carrier.
6. Get back to feet quickly.
7. Contest for possession.

#### Arriving players

- All arriving players must enter the tackle area through the gate.
- Only players on their feet may compete for the ball.
- Players arriving at an attempted but incomplete tackle:
  - Maintain a strong, stable and low body position
  - Use the arms to grasp ball carrier
  - Avoid contact with other players' heads and necks
  - Bring the ball carrier safely to the ground.
- If clearing or driving out defenders:
  - Maintain a strong, stable and low body position
  - Chin off the chest, head up, hands up
  - Sight the target
  - Keep the spine in line with the direction of drive
  - Start the drive from a low body position
  - Make contact with defender using the shoulder and arms, not the head
  - Close arms around opponent
  - Drive the player away and clear the ball
  - Bind with a team-mate to improve stability.

#### Ball carrier - contact with ground

1. Carry the ball in both hands.
2. Protect the ball \_ hold it tight to your chest with elbows in to your sides.
3. Make contact with the ground with the buttocks and then shoulder.
4. Don't break your fall with your hand or the ball.
5. Turn towards your team and pass, place or present the ball.
6. Get back to your feet as soon as possible.
7. For specific key points, see the individual tackle types below.

#### Shoulder tackle - side-on

1. Maintain strong, stable and low body position.
2. Target and make contact with the shoulder on the ball carrier's thighs.
3. Squeeze the arms tight around the ball carrier's legs, drive with the legs and bring the ball carrier to ground.
4. Roll to finish on top.
5. Release the ball carrier and get back to feet quickly.
6. Contest for possession.

#### Jersey Tackle

1. Chase the ball carrier until within grabbing distance.
2. Grab the ball carrier's jersey and pull towards you.
3. With head to the side, make contact with the shoulder and arms around the ball carrier's waist.
4. Squeeze arms tight and slide down the ball carrier's body to finish on top.

#### Tap tackle

1. Chase the ball carrier until within diving distance.
2. Dive and make contact with the ball carrier's feet / ankles with an outstretched arm.
3. Keep the head away from the ball carrier's feet.

Note: Unless the ball carrier is held after being brought to ground, then in Law, a tackle has not been made and the referee will allow open play to continue.

***Once a player's tackle technique has developed to the point in which it is safe and effective, coaches should progress to introducing team defensive skills, such as moving forward together in a defensive line with effective communication.***