

‘To ensure the game is played in a fair manner and a spirit of true sportsmanship

Where possible in a contact sport, prevent injuries to players participating in the match’



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SPIRIT OF THE LAWS

THE PHILOSOPHIES DRIVING THE LAWS OF THE GAME





SPIRIT OF THE LAWS

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE LAWS

- a) to ensure the game is played in a fair manner and a spirit of true sportsmanship, and
- b) where possible in a contact sport, prevent injuries to players participating in the match

In an effort to achieve consistency and accuracy in decision making, there is an emphasis on understanding the “spirit of the laws” (i.e. the philosophies underlying the laws) and officiating according to the spirit of the laws.

SPIRIT OF THE LAWS

For coaching purposes, five main areas (spirit of the laws) have been identified.



1 CONTEST FOR THE BALL

“The player who is making the ball their sole objective will be protected against any form of illegal contact”, such as:

- Contact to the head.
- Contact below the knees.
- Held when not in possession of the ball.
- Push in the back.
- Kicking in a manner likely to cause injury.
- Or any conduct which is deemed unreasonable or unnecessary in the circumstances.

2 MARKING CONTESTS

“The player whose sole objective is to contest a mark shall be permitted to do so.”

- Illegal contact includes players who unduly (excessively or unreasonable) push, bump, block, hold, interfere with the arms or make high contact.
- Where there is incidental contact in a marking contest when the ball is the sole objective (eyes on the ball), play on will result.
- When a player leaps early, the attempt must be realistic (i.e. they must be able to touch the ball).

3 RUCK CONTESTS

“The player whose sole objective is to contest the ruck shall be permitted to do so.”

- Illegal contact includes players who push, bump, block, hold or make high contact.
- Where there is incidental contact in a ruck contest when the ball is the sole objective (eyes on the ball), play on will result.

4 TACKLING – HOLDING THE BALL

“For a holding the ball free kick to be awarded, the tackle must be legal.”

DIVING ON THE BALL

“The ball shall be kept in motion.”

- Where a player elects to dive on the ball or elects to drag the ball underneath their body and is correctly tackled, the player is to be penalised for holding the ball if they fail to knock the ball clear or correctly dispose of it immediately.

NO PRIOR OPPORTUNITY

— GENUINE ATTEMPT

“The player who has possession of the ball and has not had prior opportunity, and is tackled correctly by an opponent, shall be given a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate a genuine attempt to kick or handball the ball.”

- If the tackle pins the ball and a genuine attempt is made to dispose of the ball, a field bounce will result.
- If a correct tackle or bump causes the player with the ball to lose possession, play on will result.

PRIOR OPPORTUNITY

— MUST LEGALLY DISPOSE IMMEDIATELY

“Where a player has had possession of the ball and has had a prior opportunity to dispose and is then correctly tackled by an opponent they must immediately and successfully kick or handball the ball.”

- If a correct tackle pins the ball or causes the player with the ball to lose possession, a free kick will result.
- If a bump or knock to the arm causes the player with the ball to lose possession, play on will result.

ILLEGAL DISPOSAL

“The player who has possession of the ball and drops, throws or places the ball on the ground without making a genuine attempt to handball or kick will be penalized”.

5 50-METRE PENALTY

“After a mark or free kick has been awarded, a 50-metre penalty will be awarded against the opposing team which unduly delays the play or abuses an umpire.”

An undue delay of the play includes:

- Cribbing the mark.
- Not returning the ball directly to a player after they have been awarded a mark or free kick.
- Unduly holding up an opponent after that player has marked the ball.
- A player not involved in a marking contest holds a player who has marked the ball or has been awarded a free kick.
- Remaining in or entering the protected area.