

## Tackling the player in possession

### Spirit of the Law

- *A player in possession of the ball and tackled illegally will be awarded a free kick*
- *The player who has possession of the ball and is tackled correctly by an opponent shall be given a reasonable time to kick or handball or attempt to kick or handball the ball*
- *The player who has possession of the ball and has had an opportunity to dispose of it and is then tackled correctly by an opponent, must immediately kick or handball the ball*
- *The ball shall be kept in motion*

### Laws & Interpretations

#### **DIVING ON THE BALL** (Law 15.2.5)

- Did the player DIVE ON THE BALL or DRAG THE BALL IN?
- Was he tackled legally?
- Did he knock it clear immediately? If not, holding the ball should be paid

#### **RUCK CONTESTS** (Law 15.2.3 c)

- Did the player take the ball out of the ruck?
- Was he tackled legally?
- Did he kick or handball immediately after being tackled? If not, holding the ball

#### **PRIOR OPPORTUNITY** (Law 15.2.3 a)

- Did the player take 3 steps?
- Was the player swung 360 degrees?
- Did the player bounce the ball?
- Did the player already beat one tackle?
- Was the player tackled legally?
- Did he actually kick or handball?

#### **NO PRIOR OPPORTUNITY** (Law 15.2.3 b)

- Was the player claimed immediately?
- Was it a legal tackle?
- Did the player attempt to kick or handball?
- If the player has one arm free, he has to make an effort to kick or handball

For holding the ball to be paid in any of the above circumstances, there must be a legal tackle. When a player dives on the ball, hovering over him with one arm on his body is NOT a tackle. A tackle is something like grabbing a jumper or grabbing the player around the waist. Holding the ball cannot be paid if players are bumped and the ball spills out even if the player has run the full length of the field bouncing the ball every 15 metres.

## Deliberate out of bounds

### Laws

- 15.6.1 A free kick shall be awarded against a player who:
- c. intentionally kicks, handballs or forces the football over the boundary line without the football being touched by another player
  - f. hits the football out of bounds on the full from a boundary throw or a field bounce or throw by a field umpire

### Interpretations

The primary consideration is:

- **What is the player's intention?**

The secondary considerations are:

- **What is the level of force?**
- **What pressure is the player under?**
- **Is there a team mate in the vicinity?**

The distance that a player kicks the ball is irrelevant. If a player is running out of half back and has an opponent coming towards him, turns 90 degrees and kicks the ball forcefully across the ground 50 metres, it might be deemed as deliberate.

Generally, if there are team mates near where the ball is kicked or handballed, a player should not be penalized for deliberate out of bounds. In other words, if it could be deemed that the ball was intended for the team mate, only a throw in should result.

If the ball is handballed or knocked into the behind post and a player is under little pressure, deliberate out of bounds would be the correct decision.

If a player is under very little pressure and kicks or knocks the ball towards the boundary but the ball doesn't go in a direct line or with much force or bobbles over the boundary line, he should not be penalized.

If a player is being tackled and handballs the ball over the boundary line, it could be paid as deliberate. You have to judge whether the force of the tackle affected where the handball ended up.

A defensive knock over the boundary line should never be penalized for deliberate out of bounds. This of course implies that the player has an opponent close to him.

At field bounces close to the boundary line, be proactive, warn players that it is deliberate if they knock the ball out on the full. If you're not sure whose hands the ball has come off, don't guess.

**If you believe the player's prime objective is to put the ball out of bounds, he should be penalized every time. If his prime objective is to stop his opponent from getting the ball, then he should not be penalized.**

## Twenty Five Metre Penalties

### Spirit of the Law

*After a mark or free kick has been awarded, a 25 metre penalty will be awarded against the opposing team if a player unduly delays the play or abuses an umpire.*

### Laws

18.1 encroaching the mark, *engaging in time wasting*, using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards an umpire, *behaving in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards an umpire or disputing the decision of an umpire*, entering the protected area, except when accompanying or following within 5 metres of his opponent, *not returning the football directly and on the full*, engaging in any other conduct for which a free kick would ordinarily be awarded, *when not in the immediate contest, holding a player after that player has marked the football or who has been awarded a free kick*, a player in the contest who unreasonably holds a player after that player has marked the football or who has been awarded a free kick

### Interpretations

Umpires must signal time on when they impose a 25 metre penalty. The mark is advanced towards the centre of the goal line.

If the recipient of the 25 metre penalty is less than 25 metres from the goal line, the mark shall become the centre of the goal line.

If a team mate of a player with the ball is infringed less than 25 metres away from a set play, then a 25 metre penalty is awarded rather than a downfield free kick. (16.7 b)

If an umpire needs to impose three 25 metre penalties, the offending player should be reported for time wasting.

If a player runs more than 5 metres over the mark in his pursuit of a player who has marked the football, a 25 metre penalty should be imposed automatically.

When a player tackles, tackles high or holds the player who has just disposed of the ball AND you believe that action prevents that player participating in the next contest, it is a 25 metre penalty.

Umpires must be proactive with their setting of the mark by using effective communication and observation skills. Many 25 metre penalties could be avoided if umpires were more diligent in their set kick control.

Players are not entitled to a free hit if their opponent takes a mark.

## Ruck Contests

### Spirit of the Law

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

### Free kicks specifically related to ruck contests

- 15.4.5(g) pushes, bumps, holds or blocks an opposition player who is contesting a bounce or throw by a field umpire or boundary throw in.
- 15.2.3(c) a player who takes possession of the football while contesting at a bounce or throw by a field umpire or at a boundary throw in shall be regarded as having had prior opportunity except in the instance of a poor bounce or throw
- 15.6.1(f) hits the football out of bounds on the full from a boundary throw or a field bounce or throw by a field umpire

Of course, there are lots of other laws related to infringements such as high tackles, low tackles, rough conduct, charging etc.

### Interpretations

If there is a high or early leap, it is permitted if the ball is touched and the leap is all in one action.

If one ruckman throws another ruckman out of the contest, it is a free kick every time.

If the jumper is slightly held but it doesn't affect the contest, it should be play on.

If one ruckman puts out an arm and prevents the other ruckman from getting to the contest, it is a free kick.

If high contact is made which is coincidental and doesn't affect the contest, it should be play on.

When a ruckman takes the ball out of the ruck, it is holding the ball ONLY if he is tackled legally and FAILS to kick or handball immediately.

At CENTRE BOUNCES, one player from each team must have both feet in the outer circle. If the ruckman's foot touches the circle or steps outside, it is a free kick to the nearest opposition player.

If there is no ruckman in the circle, then that team cannot contest the ruck. It is only a free kick if a player from his team steps inside the circle.

The ruckmen may cross the line as soon as the ball leaves the umpire's hand.

At FIELD BOUNCES & BOUNDARY THROW INS, any number of players may contest the ruck.

## Marking Contests

### Spirit of the Law

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

### Free kicks

15.4.5 (d) A player makes prohibited contact with an opposition player if he:  
Pushes, bumps, blocks, holds an opposition player or deliberately interferes with the arms of an opposition player who is in the act of marking or attempting to mark the football.

There are many other free kick offences in general play which also apply in marking contests.

### Interpretations

“Chopping of the arms” should NOT be paid if contact is also made with the ball.

If there is a high or early leap, it is permitted if the ball is touched and the leap is all in one action. If a player pushes his opponent and then attempts the mark, it should be a free kick for in the back.

The AFL/VFL interpretation of “hands in the back” is only an interpretation. If a player has his hands in his opponent’s back but it is not affecting the contest, it should be Play On. For a free kick to be paid in these circumstances, there needs to be two actions, i.e. push and then contest the mark.

If the jumper is slightly held but it doesn’t affect the contest, it should be play on.

If high contact is made which is coincidental and doesn’t affect the contest, it should be play on.

Just because a player coming from behind charges at the ball, knocks it away and in the process knocks over the man in front, he should not be penalised provided his objective was the ball.



## Deliberate rushed behinds

### Laws

#### 15.7.1

A free kick shall be awarded against a player from the defending team who intentionally kicks, handballs or forces the football over the attacking team's goal line or behind line or onto one of the attacking team's goal posts. In assessing whether a free kick should be awarded under this Law, the field umpire shall give the benefit of doubt to the defender.

#### 15.7.2

A free kick awarded under Law 15.7.1 shall be taken at the point where the football crossed the goal line or behind line or from the relevant goal post.

### Interpretations

This free kick can only be paid against a player from the defending team.

This free kick should NOT be paid if the defender is under pressure.

This free kick should NOT be paid if there are team mates in the vicinity.

One cue for all umpires is RUCK CONTESTS.

If the ball is clearly punched over the scoring line or onto one of the goal posts, a free kick should be paid. A common example is when ball ups occur at the top of the goal square after defending players do not complete the kick in correctly.

At a kick in, if you call "play on" because the defender is taking too long to bring the ball into play, umpires need to be alert.

If the defender runs back over the goal line or kicks or handballs the ball through the scoring area, a free kick should be paid. Although this player might be under pressure, it is because of his actions in taking too long to bring the football into play that has caused this pressure.

No score is recorded as the all clear is not given.

The resultant free kick is taken where the ball crossed the scoring line or hit the goal posts.

If the ball hits the goal posts or goes over the goal line, the free kick is taken directly in front in the centre of the goal line.

If the ball goes over the behind line, the free is taken from the behind line on the appropriate angle.