



# Spirit of the Laws 2010



THE PHILOSOPHIES DRIVING  
THE LAWS OF THE GAME



## ∨ INTRODUCTION

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In an effort to achieve consistency 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.

### FAIRNESS & SAFETY

It is the spirit and intention of the laws to ensure that a match is played in a fair manner and to protect players from sustaining injury.

All breaches of the laws shall be penalised.

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

## ∨ CONTEST FOR THE BALL

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### GENERAL PLAY

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

- A player may be fairly met by use of the hip, shoulder, chest, arms and open hand and be pushed or bumped in the chest or side.
- Solid but legal bumps are permitted.

### CONTACT TO THE HEAD

- Contact to the head is considered to be illegal.

### HEAD OVER THE BALL

- A free kick will be awarded against a player who bumps or makes forceful contact to an opponent from front-on when that player has their head down over the ball.

#### **Note:**

- A player can bump an opponent's body from side-on but any contact forward of side-on will be deemed to be front-on;
- A player with their head down in anticipation of winning possession of the ball or after contesting the ball will be deemed to have had their head down over the ball for the purposes of this law.



## ∨ DIVING ON THE BALL

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*“The ball shall be kept in motion.”*

- Where a player elects to dive on the ball or, when on the ground, elects to drag the ball underneath his or her body and is correctly tackled, the player is to be penalised for holding the ball if he or she fails to immediately knock the ball clear or correctly dispose of it.

## ∨ MARKING CONTESTS

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

- 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. he/she must be able to touch the ball).

## ∨ TACKLING

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*“A player who is tackled illegally while in possession of the ball will be awarded a free kick.”*

### NO PRIOR OPPORTUNITY — REASONABLE TIME

*“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 the ball or attempt to kick or handball the ball.”*

- If the tackle pins 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 — IMMEDIATE DISPOSAL

*“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.”*

- 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.



## ∨ RUCK CONTESTS

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

- Where there is incidental contact in a ruck contest when the ball is the sole objective (eyes on the ball), play on will result.

## ∨ ADVANTAGE PLAYS

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*“The ball shall be kept in motion by permitting the team offended against to take advantage, provided play is continuous.”*

- Advantage can apply only to a free kick. It cannot apply to a mark.
- A guide as to whether play is continuous is that the outcome of the play would have been the same had the whistle not been blown.

## ∨ 50-METRE PENALTY

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*“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:

- Going over the mark before the umpire calls play on.
- Not returning the ball directly to a player after he or she has 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.





LEARNING  
UMPIRES

WEAR

GREEN

SO PLEASE DON'T

SEE **RED!**

“Umpiring is Everyone’s Business”



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

umpire 



**Spirit  
of the  
Laws**

## UMPIRING CONTACTS

### ACT

Kevin Tingey — (02) 6228 0366  
kevin.tingey@aflnswact.com.au

### NORTHERN TERRITORY

Mark Noonan — (08) 8980 4811  
mnoonan@aflnt.com.au

### NSW

Graham Glassford — (02) 8333 8023  
graham.glassford@aflnswact.com.au

### QUEENSLAND

Greg Howell — (07) 3394 2433  
ghowell@aflq.com.au

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mark Hardham — (08) 8161 3204  
markh@sanfl.com.au

### TASMANIA

Wayne Povey — 0417 322612  
wpovey@footballtas.com.au

### VICTORIA

Neville Nash (metropolitan) — (03) 8663 3067  
neville.nash@aflvic.com.au

Gerard Ryan (country) — (03) 8663 3040  
gerard.ryan@aflvic.com.au

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Darryl Sinclair — (08) 9381 5599  
dsinclair@wafc.com.au

### AFL

Jim Cail — (03) 9643 1930  
jim.cail@afl.com.au