

# COMMUNITY RUGBY TACKLE HEIGHT DOMESTIC LAW VARIATION INFORMATION

SEASON 2023/24



England  
Rugby

# COMMUNITY RUGBY - 2023/24

The RFU is focused on making the game as safe and enjoyable as possible. Following a consultation process in March 2023 and engagement with World Rugby and other unions the legal tackle height will be lowered across the community game to below the base of the sternum targeting the tummy/belly area. Under the new laws, both the ball carrier and the tackler have a responsibility to avoid head-to-head contact. The tackle law comes into force from the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2023 and will apply to adult and age grade rugby.

## WHY ARE THESE LAWS BEING INTRODUCED?

**70% of concussions occur in the tackle**

**Reduce head injury and risk of concussion for the tackler and ball carrier**

**The risk of a concussion is 4.2 times higher when the tacklers head is above the ball carriers sternum in the tackle**

**Research shows that lowering the tackle height protects both the ball carrier and tackler from head-to-head contact**

More information [www.englandrugby.com/news/article/rfu-statement-tackle-height](https://www.englandrugby.com/news/article/rfu-statement-tackle-height)

## INTENDED AND POSSIBLE IMPACT OF LOWERING TACKLE HEIGHT IS..

- Reduce the height of contact on the ball carrier and
- Minimise the number of tackles where players heads are in the same 'air space'
- To reduce head injury and the risk of concussion
- Increases in the number of offloads and line breaks

## LAW VARIATION WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AT...

### All levels of the community game.

- Adult male (Level 3 and below)
- Adult female (Level 2 and below)
- University rugby
- All age grade club, school and college rugby

### All levels of age grade representative rugby, including:

- England Rugby Developing Player Programme
- Girls' Centres of Excellence
- Regional Academy Rugby
- CB Age Grade Representative Rugby

### All alternative formats including 7s, 10s





# COMMUNITY GAME: TACKLE HEIGHT

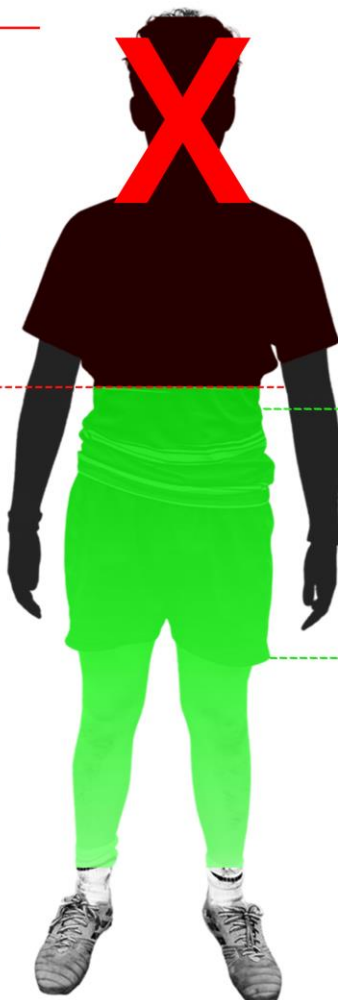


Any tackles above the  
base of the sternum may  
be liable for sanction

**BELOW THE BASE  
OF THE STERNUM**

## RESPECT

We respect our match officials  
and accept their decision



**TARGET THE  
BELLY**

OR

**TARGET THE  
THIGHS**



SCAN ME

Find more support online  
[englandrugby.com/tackleheight](http://englandrugby.com/tackleheight)

# TACKLE HEIGHT

The legal tackle height will be **'BELOW THE BASE OF THE STERNUM'** for season 2023/24, lowered from the shoulder in the adult game and armpit in the age grade game.



**BELOW THE BASE OF  
THE STERNUM**

Contact which starts or ends above the base of the sternum may be liable to sanction.

## SANCTIONS

- An initial contact from the base of the sternum to shoulders may be liable to sanction (repeated infringements could lead to an escalation of sanctions).
- An initial contact above the line of the shoulder will be managed through 'Head Contact Process' <https://www.world.rugby/the-game/laws/guidelines/26> will apply (e.g. yellow or red cards).

# TACKLE HEIGHT

The legal tackle height will be **'BELOW THE BASE OF THE STERNUM'** for season 2023/24, lowered from the shoulder in the adult game and armpit in the age grade game.



## HEAD CONTACT PROCESS

If head contact occurs this may result in a red card

A tackle above the base of the sternum and below the line of the shoulder may be liable to sanction

The maximum tackle height is **BELOW THE BASE OF THE STERNUM**

An initial contact above the line of the shoulder will be managed through 'Head Contact Process'

Repeated infringements could lead to an escalation of sanctions

Find out more about the law application guidance and sanctions framework  
[englandrugby.com/tackleheight](https://englandrugby.com/tackleheight)



SCAN ME





Adjust body height  
to make contact in  
safe & legal tackle  
areas

Head behind/to the  
side of the ball  
carrier

Shoulder contact  
with ball carrier

Grip and hold ball  
carrier tightly



# **EFFECTIVE TACKLE TECHNIQUE**

## **KEY COACHING POINTS**

# COMMUNITY GAME: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BALL CARRIER



To minimise the risk of head-to-head contact a ball carrier must not lower their body height or dip down just before contact with an opponent.

## RESPECT

We respect our match officials and accept their decision.

This might be described as  
**“LATE AND LOW”**  
and may be liable for sanction.



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# RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BALL CARRIER

Both the ball carrier and their opponent have responsibilities to avoid head-to-head contact. A ball carrier must not lower their body height or dip down just before contact with an opponent as this will risk their head being in contact with the tacklers head. This might be described as **“LATE AND LOW”**.



## SANCTIONS

A ball carrier may be liable to sanction if they lower their head below their hips or dip down just before contact as this will risk their head being in contact with the opponent's head.



Use evasion

Head and  
shoulders above hips

Drive through the  
contact

Assess how best to  
maintain continuity

# **EFFECTIVE BALL CARRYING TECHNIQUES**

## **KEY COACHING POINTS**



# FURTHER DETAIL



## TACKLER

- Must tackle/attempt to tackle below the base of the sternum.
- Tackles above the base of the sternum may be liable to sanction



## SECOND TACKLER AND RIPPING THE BALL

- A second tackler is permitted (below the base of the sternum).
- Players can attempt to compete or rip for the ball providing they are not reckless or dangerous



## BALL CARRIER

- Ball carriers must not lower their height significantly before making contact with an opponent in open play
- Ball carrier encouraged to evade.
- Ball carrier must not lower their head below their hips



## PICK AND DRIVE

- The ball carrier can 'pick and drive' whilst remaining in a low position.
- It is acknowledged that tackles may be above the base of the sternum due to body position of ball carrier = lower concussion risk area.



# NEXT STEPS

## MAY & JUNE

- TackleSafe workshops, webinars, resources for players, coaches, match officials and spectators
- Tackle Champion programme

## JULY & AUGUST

- TackleSafe workshops, webinars, courses and resources for players, coaches, match officials and spectators

## SEPTEMBER ONWARDS

- Community Rugby Injury Surveillance
- Game analysis
- Kids First Contact Courses
- England Rugby Coaching Award
- England Rugby Refereeing Award

Find out more about the Tackle Height law variations, including FAQs, by visiting [englandrugby.com/tackleheight](https://englandrugby.com/tackleheight)





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