

LAW 15 – TACKLE: BALL-CARRIER BROUGHT TO THE GROUND

DEFINITION

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.



Tackle

15.1 WHERE CAN A TACKLE TAKE PLACE

A tackle can only take place in the field of play.

15.2 WHEN A TACKLE CANNOT TAKE PLACE

When the ball-carrier is held by one opponent and a team-mate binds on to that ball-carrier, a maul has been formed and a tackle cannot take place.

15.3 BROUGHT TO THE GROUND DEFINED

- (a) If the ball-carrier has one knee or both knees on the ground, that player has been 'brought to ground'.
- (b) If the ball-carrier is sitting on the ground, or on top of another player on the ground the ball-carrier has been 'brought to ground'.

15.4 LIFTING A BALL-CARRIER FROM THE GROUND

A ball-carrier who is lifted off the ground by an opponent is not tackled and play continues.

15.5 THE TACKLER

- (a) When a player tackles an opponent and they both go to ground, the tackler must immediately release the tackled player.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (b) The tackler must immediately get up or move away from the tackled player and from the ball at once.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (c) The tackler must get up before playing the ball.
Penalty: Penalty Kick

15.6 THE TACKLED PLAYER

- (a) A tackled player must not lie on, over, or near the ball to prevent opponents from gaining possession of it, and must try to make the ball available immediately so that play can continue.
Penalty: Penalty Kick

- (b) A tackled player must immediately pass the ball or release it. That player must also get up or move away from it at once.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (c) A tackled player may release the ball by putting it on the ground in any direction, provided this is done immediately.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (d) A tackled player may release the ball by pushing it along the ground in any direction except forward, provided this is done immediately.
Penalty: Penalty Kick



Tackled player must release the ball immediately



Tackled player must release the ball immediately

- (e) If opposition players who are on their feet attempt to play the ball, the tackled player must release the ball.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (f) If a tackled player's momentum carries the player into the in-goal, the player can score a try or make a touch down.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (g) The tackled player must not intentionally place the ball in touch. The tackled player must not intentionally push the ball into touch.
Penalty: Penalty Kick on the 15 metre line.



A player tackled near the goal-line can reach out and ground the ball to score a try

- (h) If players are tackled near to the goal-line, these players may immediately reach out and ground the ball on or over the goal-line to score a try or make a touch down.

15.7 OTHER PLAYERS

- (a) After a tackle, all other players must be on their feet when they play the ball. Players are on their feet if no other part of their body is supported by the ground or players on the ground.
Penalty: Penalty Kick



✓ *After a tackle all of the players must be on their feet when they play the ball.*



✗ *Player off his feet and playing the ball at the tackle.*



✗ *Players off their feet and playing the ball at the tackle.*

- (b) After a tackle any players on their feet may attempt to gain possession by taking the ball from the ball-carriers possession.
- (c) At a tackle or near to a tackle, other players who play the ball must do so from behind the ball and from directly behind the tackled player or the tackler closest to those players' goal-line.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (d) Any player who gains possession of the ball at the tackle must play the ball immediately by moving away or passing or kicking the ball.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (e) Any player who first gains possession of the ball must not go to the ground at the tackle or near to it unless tackled by an opposition player.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (f) Any player who first gains possession of the ball at the tackle or near to it may be tackled by an opposition player providing that player does so from behind the ball and from directly behind the tackled player or the tackler closest to that player's goal-line.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (g) After a tackle, any player lying on the ground must not prevent an opponent from getting possession of the ball.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (h) After a tackle, any player on the ground must not tackle an opponent or try to tackle an opponent
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (i) When a tackled player reaches out to ground the ball on or over the goal-line to score a try, an opponent may pull the ball from the players possession, but must not kick the ball.
Penalty: Penalty Kick

Exception: Ball goes into the in-goal. After a tackle near the goal-line, if the ball has been released and has gone into the in-goal any player, including a player on the ground, may ground the ball.

15.8 FORBIDDEN PRACTICES

- (a) No player may prevent the tackled player from passing the ball.
Penalty: Penalty Kick

- (b) No player may prevent the tackled player from releasing the ball and getting up or moving away from it.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (c) No player may fall on or over the tackled player.
Penalty: Penalty Kick



X *No player may fall on or over a tackled player.*

- (d) No player may fall on or over the players lying on the ground after a tackle with the ball between or near to them.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (e) Players on their feet must not charge or obstruct an opponent who is not near the ball.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- (f) Danger may arise if a tackled player fails to release the ball or move away from it immediately, or if that player is prevented from so doing. If either of these happens the referee awards a penalty kick immediately.
Penalty: Penalty Kick

15.9 DOUBT ABOUT FAILURE TO COMPLY

If the ball becomes unplayable at a tackle and there is doubt about which player did not conform to Law, the referee orders a scrum immediately with the throw-in by the team that was moving forward prior to the stoppage or, if no team was moving forward, by the attacking team.