

# Tackle Height

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LAW TRIALS

Below  
Sternum



Season 2023/24  
Community Rugby

# Tackle Height Law Trials 2023/24

Following on from consultation with community rugby stakeholders in February 2023, Scottish Rugby's Club Rugby Board (CRB) has approved a lower maximum tackle height law trial of below the sternum for implementation across the community game, beginning in the 2023/24 season.

Scottish Rugby has engaged with World Rugby throughout the duration of the consultation period, utilising World Rugby endorsed research during the decision-making process.

## Why are these laws being trialled?

**74%**

of concussions derive from the tackle area

Lowering the tackle height protects both players

Approximately

**70%**

of concussions at the tackle area relate to the tackler

The risk of a concussion is

**4.2 times higher**

when the tackler's head is above the ball carrier's sternum in the tackle

Research shows that by lowering the tackle height there will be a significant reduction in concussions

Trials in France resulted in a

**64% reduction**

in head-on-head contacts

and a **23% reduction**

on concussions.

# The intended impact of lowering the tackle height is...

To reduce the volume of head-to-head contacts

To reduce the volume of concussions

It is anticipated that the rate of offloads will increase as well as line breaks.

## The law trials will be implemented at...

All levels of the male and female, adult and youth community rugby, up to and including the men's and women's Premiership.

All levels of youth representative rugby including Player Development Hubs, Regional Academy and Regional Age Grade.

All alternative formats including 7s and 10s.





# Tackle Height

LAW TRIALS

**Below  
Sternum**

**Tackle the belly  
Below the ball**

**The risk of concussion  
is 4.2 times higher  
when the tackler's  
head is above the ball  
carrier's sternum in  
the tackle\***

\*Data from 878 HIAs, ongoing World  
Rugby Research Studies as in Tucker  
et al/2017



The maximum tackle height will be 'below sternum' for season 2023/24, lowered from the shoulder. This will also be known as 'belly tackle'.



**Head contact  
process**

**Penalty**

**Max height  
=  
Below Sternum**

**Sanctions**

Contacts which start or end above the legal line will face a possible sanction:

An initial contact above  
the line of the shoulder

=

application of current head contact  
process (e.g. yellow or red cards).



An initial contact from the bottom  
of the sternum to shoulders

=

penalty (repeated infringements  
could lead to further sanctions).





# Further Detail

## Tackler

Must tackle below the line of the sternum.

Contacts which start or end above the legal line will face a possible sanction.



## Second Tackler & Arriving Players

A second tackler is permitted (below sternum height).

Arriving players can attempt to compete or rip for the ball.



## Ball Carrier

Players must not do anything that is reckless or dangerous to others.

Ball carrier encouraged to evade.



## Pick & Go

The ball carrier can 'pick and go' from the back of the ruck whilst remaining in a low position.

It is acknowledged that tackles may be higher due to body position of ball carrier = lower concussion risk area.



# Effective Tackle Technique

## Key Coaching Points



# Next Steps

**May  
& June  
2023**

Tackle height regional roadshows  
for players, coaches, match officials

**June  
& July  
2023**

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

Tackle champion programme launched

**August  
2023  
Onwards**

Research study starts to measure impact  
Regular updates with players,  
coaches and match officials on trial  
implementation and progress

Find out more about the Tackle Height law trials, including FAQs, by visiting  
<https://scottishrugby.org/clubs-and-schools/tackle-height-hub/>  
or using this QR code.

Follow @Scotrugbycoach for regular updates.





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**IF IN  
DOUBT,  
SIT  
THEM  
OUT.**

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