



MEMORANDUM

To: **AFL NSW/ACT Community Football Leagues, Football Operations Staff & Umpiring Development Coordinators**

Cc: **Sam Chadwick; State Manager - Football Operations, Governance & Policy**
Simon Laughton; State League & International Manager

From: **Damian Anderson, State Umpiring & Elite Programs Manager** Date: **6 February 2017**

Re: **Laws of the Game 2017**

Good afternoon

In line with the AFL Commission, AFL NSW/ACT has considered a number of matters around the Laws of the Game and has approved the following Laws of the Game changes for the 2017 season:

1) 3rd Man Up In Ruck Contests

A law has been added to prohibit 3rd man up at ball ups and throw ins, with stoppage restarts to be contested by two nominated rucks.

After an AFL analysis of third-man up contests over the past two seasons, it was determined there was no discernible advantage to the game when this tactic was used. Additionally, the extra player(s) contesting the ruck can create difficulties with umpiring at stoppages.

The Law change also supports the recruitment of tall players with a specific skill set, with injury to ruckmen another factor considered.

2) Deliberate Rushed Behinds

A stricter interpretation to deliberate rushed behinds has been endorsed.

The following factors will be considered by the umpire when determining whether to pay a free kick:

- Whether the player had prior opportunity to dispose of the ball
- The distance of the player from the Goal or Behind Line
- The degree of pressure being applied to the player

For clarification of interpretation, across NSW/ACT Community Football competitions, if there is any doubt in the above-mentioned circumstances, the benefit of doubt should always be given to the player on possession of the football and no free kick should be awarded (and a behind will apply).

3) High Tackles

The AFL has endorsed simplifying the interpretation of player actions that draw high contact as follows:

- In the opinion of the Umpire where a tackle is reasonably applied and the ball carrier is responsible for the high contact via a shrug, duck, arm lift or similar action, play on should be called.
- In these instances, the primary assessment will be the reasonableness of the tackling action, where the following considerations will apply:
 - The starting point of the tackle (ie. Contact around the arms/torso then slips)
 - The degree of force
 - The nature of the tackle

Note, there has been no change to the assessment of actions where a player drives head first into a tackle. This will continue to be deemed as prior opportunity.

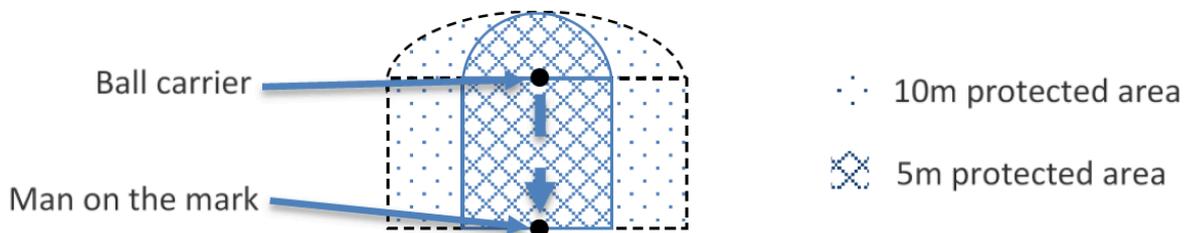
For clarification of interpretation, across NSW/ACT Community Football competitions, if there is any doubt in the above-mentioned circumstances, the benefit, the benefit of doubt should always be given to the player in possession of the football and a free kick for a high tackle should be awarded.

4) 10m Protected Area

While this rule was introduced for the AFL Competition at the commencement of the 2016 season, it was not implemented at across AFL NSW/ACT Community Leagues in 2016.

In 2017, in line with a majority of community competitions nationally, this law will be adopted in 2017.

The size of the protected area: The protected area described in Law 16.1.2 will be modified by increasing the lateral width to 10m as per the diagram below.



A clarification to the operation of the 10m protected area for 2017, where players should avoid entering the protected area in a manner which impacts or may impact the kicker, particularly once the kicker has established a set position.

5) Other Matters

The following other Laws of the Game have been endorsed:

- An amendment to the wording of the Deliberate Out of Bounds rule (Law 15.6.1), to better reflect the changes made for the 2016 season, has also been endorsed.

Please ensure this information is distributed to your respective clubs, coaches, umpires and umpire coaches.

The updated Laws of the Game will be included in League Operations Manuals for 2017.

Yours sincerely,

Damian Anderson
State Umpiring & Elite Programs Manager - NSW/ACT