



MEMORANDUM

To: Referees
Citing Commissioners
Judicial Officers
Non-legal Judicial Committee Members

From: Paddy O'Brien, IRB Referee Manager
Tim Gresson, IRB Judicial Panel Chairman

Date: 8 June 2009

Subject: Dangerous Tackles

In 2007, the IRB Council approved a Laws Designated Members Ruling which essentially made it clear that tackles involving a player being lifted off the ground and tipped horizontally and were then either forced or dropped to the ground are illegal and constitute dangerous play.

At a subsequent IRB High Performance Referee Seminar at Lensbury referees were advised that for these types of tackles they were to start at red card as a sanction and work backwards.

Unfortunately these types of tackles are still being made and the purpose of this memorandum is to emphasize that they must be dealt with severely by referees and all those involved in the off-field disciplinary process.

Attached is a recent decision of the Judicial Officer Jannie Lubbe SC, in which the differences between the application of the red card test by referees and judicial personnel is highlighted.

In our view, this decision correctly highlights that the lifting of players in the tackle and then either forcing or dropping them to the ground is dangerous and must be dealt with severely.

To summarise, the possible scenarios when a tackler horizontally lifts a player off the ground:

- ∞ The player is lifted and then forced or "speared" into the ground. A red card should be issued for this type of tackle.
- ∞ The lifted player is dropped to the ground from a height with no regard to the player's safety. A red card should be issued for this type of tackle.
- ∞ For all other types of dangerous lifting tackles, it may be considered a penalty or yellow card is sufficient.

Referees and Citing Commissioners should not make their decisions based on what they consider was the intention of the offending player. Their decision should be based on an objective assessment (as per Law 10.4 (e)) of the circumstances of the tackle.