

Notes – 29 May 2019

Holding the Ball

Generally very good when players elect to dive on the football or drag it in whilst they are on the ground. Keep giving the player verbal commands to knock it out etc and move around the pack keeping an eye on the ball player and football before paying HTB.

Remember - even if player is on the ground, if a player slides in with their knees, lands or jumps on their back, contacts or tackles the player on the ground front on, over the shoulder or too high in any way - pay a free kick to the ball player.

Prior Opportunity – again – we are doing this pretty well.

Point to remember – what is prior opportunity – 1 or 2 steps is probably not prior opportunity if a player has just taken possession of the football at speed. Play moves quickly so don't be afraid to **hold your whistle momentarily** to see what happens next.

The ball may spill free (play on) or a dangerous tackle may happen (pay a free kick)

If you need to change your decision from HTB to a Dangerous Tackle don't be afraid to

Some other times when paying HTB would be the correct decision - after the player has had prior opportunity AND tackled legally.

- If they fend off
- drop or throw the ball
- holds the ball in the air with 2 free hands and does not make an attempt to handball
- tucks the ball underneath his/her arm without it being pinned and does not make an attempt to handball or kick
- has a chance to handball or kick but chooses to take the tackle and not make a genuine attempt to dispose of the football
- bounces the ball or puts the ball on the ground while being tackled
- plays on from a mark or free kick
- makes no genuine attempt to dispose of the ball (i.e. is happy to wait for the ball up)

No Prior Opportunity

We can probably get a bit better with this. Have noticed quite a few occasions in the first part of the season where the player has taken possession of the football, 1, maybe 2 steps and the ball has been knocked free in the tackle. A few of us have been a bit quick on the whistle. Again, delay your whistle momentarily; assess how much PO the player had.

If no PO – call play on, knocked out in the tackle no PO

If you are satisfied the tackle is legal and there was PO – pay HTB

Either way, by delaying your whistle slightly it will give you the opportunity to call play on, see how the tackle unfolds – it could end up being a sling or dangerous tackle which takes priority over HTB.

Something to consider and work on, delay your whistle and run through your mental checklist

I don't get contacted by many coaches which is a credit to you all – however, when I do it generally relates to one of the following -

Over Umpiring – which I can live with, I'd rather see the first obvious free kick free kick paid – particularly early in the game to set the standard, rather than having stoppage after stoppage, more payers around the contest and more potential for incidents to happen.

Concussions after Dangerous Tackles or Head Knocks

Dangerous Tackles

Something we can probably get better at, particularly in senior football.

I think we umpire dangerous tackles in junior football pretty well – if it looks dangerous – we pay a free kick and don't care or worry about the players or coaches calling it soft. In my opinion we are just trying to protect the players and create a safe environment. We can't stop the act, but hopefully if we penalise it the first time, it won't continue.

In senior footy we tend to let it go a little bit more, but we shouldn't. If a players arms are pinned and they are slung, swung, driven or forcefully taken to ground, they can't protect themselves or control their heads. If their head hits the ground, it should be a free kick.

The same should apply when a player drives another into the ground, lands on them or uses two actions to take the player to ground. I'll cop the telephone calls calling them soft. I'd rather that than taking phone calls that another player has been concussed and no free kick was paid.

Head Knocks / Clashes

Again - Something we can probably get better at, particularly in senior football. In junior footy if it looks like it hit the head we pay a free.

We have to change our thinking when it comes to 'accidental' head clashes / knocks. Times have changed.

Yes – there are still football collisions when two players attack the ball at the same time, head over the footy with the intention of winning the football, NOT bumping or tackling and clash heads, we can all live with that.

The area we need to be really vigilant on is when a player elects to bump or tackle a player with the football or just after they have disposed of the football.

Any time a player elects to bump or tackle – they cannot make contact to the head in any way. This includes accidental head clashes. The onus is on the player who elects to bump or tackle not to make contact to the head. A free kick at minimum **MUST** be paid in these incidents and if an injury occurs you should be considering a yellow or red card. There have been a few of these incidents this season so keep an eye out and react to what you see.

Another example of this is when the ball is in dispute on the ground, two players converging on the football, one elects to turn there body to protect themselves while the other is still head down for the footy. The onus is on the player who turns to instigate the bump to NOT make contact to the head. Yes the other player could have turned and protected themselves but just because they didn't, doesn't make the player who did immune from giving away a high contact free kick.

Bottom Line – if a player elects to bump or tackle a player with or without the football – they **CAN NOT** contact the head in any way