

## SMJFL Dangerous Tackle Guidelines

### **Introduction**

The overall objective of these guidelines and information is to reduce the number of players getting injured due to dangerous tackles.

The SMJFL is a firm believer that the Umpiring Department and all clubs can play a substantial role in reducing the number of unnecessary player injuries.

This can be done by adhering to the following key points:

1. Clubs educating players how to tackle and be tackled in a safe manner; and
2. The Umpire Academy continually educating umpires regarding constitutes a dangerous tackle and ensuring they are penalised in an appropriate manner.

### **Clubs and Officials**

The SMJFL strongly urges clubs to continue to reinforce correct tackling techniques to all players at training. Pure tackling technique is by no means limited to girls, but feedback has been that it can be more of an issue given so many of the players are still relatively new to the game and have often not grown up being taught the basics of the game.

### SMJFL Dangerous Tackle Initiative

This initiative was developed by one of the SMJFL Clubs and was unanimously supported by all clubs and, when applied correctly by Club Coaches, can help improve the safety of all players within the competition.

For the full information about the initiative and how it can be applied, please click this link: <http://smjfl.com.au/dangerous-tackle-initiative/>

It is suggested that the following procedure is followed by the Coach and Team Manager on match days:

1. Meet and greet your opposition Coach and Team Manager before the game.
2. Initiate the conversation that in recent games we have witnessed an increase in dangerous tackles by both our players and opposition. Players have been removed from the field due to injury/concussion.
3. Suggest that the teams work collaboratively to monitor and manage this behaviour under the SMJFL Dangerous Tackle Initiative
4. Let them know that if one of your players applies a dangerous tackle without adjudication, you will remove the player from the field – ask them to do the same.

To assist with what constitutes a dangerous tackle, please go to the SMJFL Coaches' Box page and view the examples available on the bottom of the page:

<http://smjfl.com.au/coaches-box/>

### Reports

Several players have been reported this year for dangerous tackles and/or unduly rough play. To reaffirm our position, as the tackler, you have a responsibility to ensure that you

tackle in a safe manner. Even if a player applies an otherwise legal tackle, if the player with the ball head hits the ground, then the player may be reported and suspended.

A more comprehensive overview on the adjudicating of the dangerous tackle can be found below.

## Umpires

There are a few key indicators in the tackling action that the SMJFL Umpire Academy are instructing the Umpires to be aware of when ruling a dangerous tackle or a legal tackle, they are the following:

- Overall “type” of tackle: sling, drive, dump
- Two motions to the tackle
- Transfer of weight from one side of the body to the other
- The player being tackled having their legs in the air
- The player being tackled being parallel to the ground (in the air)
- The player being tackled being lifted off the ground
- The tackler pins the arms of the ball player
- The player has their head hit the ground in an unsafe manner

This is how the Umpire Academy is instructing Umpires to adjudicate the dangerous tackles:

- Dangerous tackle - LOW impact/severity head does NOT hit the ground – FREE KICK.
- Dangerous tackle - LOW impact/severity head DOES hit the ground – YELLOW CARD
- Dangerous tackle - HIGH impact/severity head does NOT hit the ground – YELLOW CARD
- Dangerous tackle - HIGH impact/severity head DOES hit the ground – RED CARD

\*\* Other circumstances which may warrant an instant Red Card – Slinging motion where the ball player does not have control to brace themselves for landing. When a player is lifted off the ground and not returned to ground with reasonable care. When the tackler pins the arms of the ball player and they have no way to brace themselves for landing. \*\*

Umpires look at the action, not the result as the game needs to restart as soon as possible. Therefore, there are occasions when an incident is upgraded to a red card by the league if, after the fact, a player is found to have been injured in the tackle.

## Conclusion

Please remember, the vast majority of our umpires are learning, and this particular part of the game is the most difficult to adjudicate. Regardless of any decision or non-decision, it is vitally important that our umpires are not subjected to abusive behaviour or negative comments as all this has the potential to do is dent the confidence of the umpire which can only have a detrimental impact on their decision making.

Let's all work together to decrease unnecessary injuries in the game.