



To: Secretaries / Chief Executive Officers of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership of World Rugby

**From: David Carrigy
Director of Development & International Relations**

Date: March 10, 2021

Re: Law Application Guideline – Head Contact Process

The World Rugby Executive Committee, acting in accordance with the World Rugby Bye-Laws, agreed to approve a Law Application Guideline for an expanded Head Contact Process (HCP) to assist the sanctioning process for contact with the head and neck, underscoring the sport's commitment to head injury prevention.

The Head Contact Process Law Application Guideline is effective from March 10, 2021. The full Law Application Guideline is detailed on the World Rugby Website: <https://www.world.rugby/the-game/laws/guidelines/17>.

An overview of the Head Contact Process is set out in **ANNEX ONE**.

If you have any queries on this matter, then please do not hesitate to contact Mark Harrington (Director of Technical Services): mark.harrington@worldrugby.org.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Carrigy".

**David Carrigy
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ANNEX ONE

World Rugby furthers head injury prevention commitment with expanded Head Contact Process

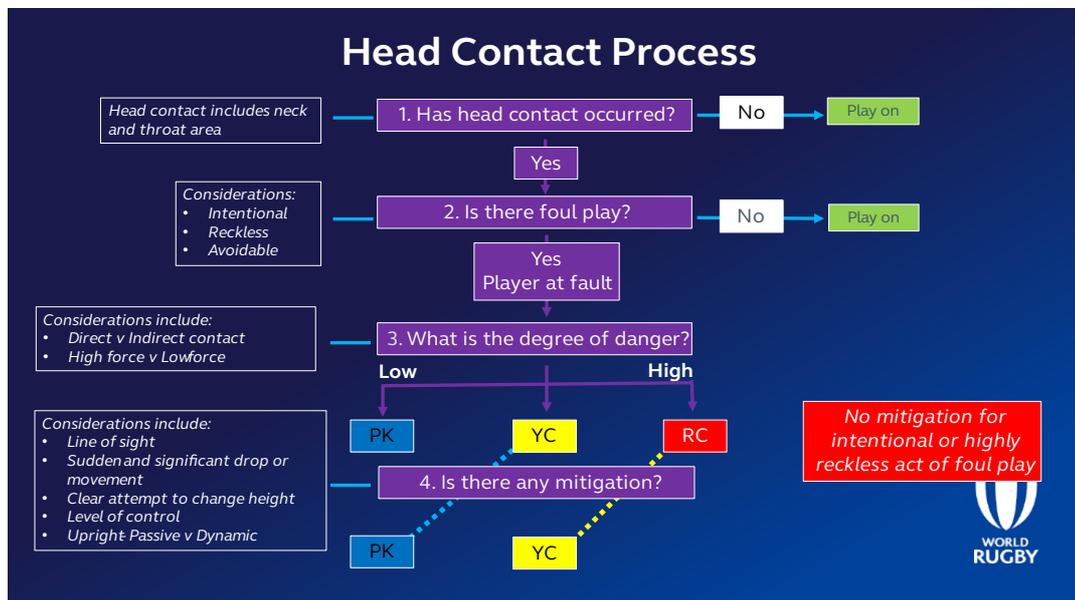
World Rugby has launched the Head Contact Process (HCP) to assist the sanctioning process for contact with the head and neck, underscoring the sport's commitment to head injury prevention.

The HCP is an evolution of the High Tackle Sanction Framework, which supported rugby's ambition of reducing the risk of head injury through stronger and more consistent on and off field sanctioning of high-risk tackle actions, in turn encouraging a positive change in player behaviour.

The scope for sanction consideration has been broadened within the HCP to include all illegal head and neck contact, including dangerous clean-outs, head-on-head collisions and head contact which arises from ball carriers leading with an elbow or forearm, in addition to high tackles and shoulder charges.

The HCP will come into effect from March 10, 2021 in the form of a Law Application Guideline <https://www.world.rugby/the-game/laws/guidelines/17>

As well as the broader scope the HCP provides a clear 4 step process for on-field sanctioning



and a series of trigger words to help Match Officials determine and explain sanctions.

Trigger words for match officials

Match Officials may wish to use the non-exhaustive list of trigger words below to help them identify whether a player is at fault, the degree of danger involved and whether any mitigation should be applied.

PLAY ON	PK YC	RC
No Fault	Low danger	High danger
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sudden and significant drop in height by the ball carrier Player had no time to readjust Passive action Involuntary collision No leading arm when close to the body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indirect contact Low force Low speed Passive No leading head/shoulder/forearm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct contact Lack of control High speed Upright & dynamic Leading head/shoulder/elbow/forearm Swinging arm No mitigation for intentional or highly reckless act of foul play
<p>Mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sudden/significant drop in height or change in direction from ball carrier A late change in dynamics due to another player in the contact An effort to wrap/bind and having no time to adjust 		



With the game united in its commitment to protecting players, the HCP is the result of a comprehensive, collaborative and scheduled review of the High Tackle Sanction Framework actioned at the Player Welfare Symposium in Paris in March 2020. It was undertaken by a multi-disciplinary review group featuring players, coaches, referees, medics and disciplinary representatives*.

While the on-field sanctions have been approved for EXCO for immediate implementation, an exciting proposal regarding off-field sanctions will be voted on by Council in May.

***The High Tackle Sanction Framework Review Group:** Bernard Laporte (Chair), Conrad Smith and David Quinlan (IRP), Richie Gray, Dave Rennie and Gregor Townsend (coaches), Wayne Barnes and Jaco Peyper (referees), Christopher Quinlan QC and David Barnes (judicial and citing), Dr Martin Raftery and Professor Ross Tucker (medical and research), Alan Gilpin, Joe Schmidt, Mark Harrington, Dr Éanna Falvey, Joël Jutge, Paddy O'Brien, Yvonne Nolan, Steve Hinds, Rhys Jones and Dominic Rumbles (World Rugby).