

NRL VICTORIA

2025 TOUGH LOVE POLICY



1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This document outlines Regulations and Penalties under NRL VIC's Tough Love Policy for any match played under the auspices of NRL Victoria.
- 1.2 The procedures outlined in this document do not limit action processed through other NRL VIC policies, including but not limited to, the NRL VIC Code of Conduct, and NRL VIC Judiciary Procedures and Penalties.
- 1.3 The objectives of these Regulations are:
- To reduce the amount of violence in games played in NRL VIC.
 - To take pressure off young and inexperienced referees and match officials.
 - To make the Rugby League experience safe, fair and fun for all.
 - To encourage increased participation in the game.

With the desired outcomes to be:

- Reduced on field violence.
- Elimination of unsavoury behaviour towards referees.
- Stop "all in" melees.
- Remove repeat offenders from the game (both teams and individuals).
- Reduce the number of matches being threatened with abandonment due to poor behaviour.
- Stop spectators from entering the field.
- Educate players at a young age that violence in our game will not be tolerated.

2. Laws of the Game

- 2.1 The Laws of the Game state the following regarding Misconduct:

"SECTION 15 - PLAYER'S MISCONDUCT - 1. A player is guilty of misconduct if he: a) Trips, kicks or strikes another player."

Note: Offences under Section 15, 1.a) of the Laws of the Game as per above are considered to be Foul Play and may warrant instant dismissal.

The Sin Bin is NOT to be used for these offences.



3. Zero Tolerance of Striking and Kicking

- 3.1 NRL VIC adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards Striking and Kicking.
- 3.2 Any player who kicks or strikes another player during a match will be automatically dismissed from the field. If that player is subsequently found guilty of either Striking or Kicking, **the MINIMUM penalty will be a Grade 1 Striking or Kicking Offence under NRL Victoria's Judiciary Penalties and Procedures.**
- 3.3 Any player who attempts to kick or strike another player without making connection with the player will be automatically dismissed from the field and charged with Contrary Conduct. If that player is subsequently found guilty, **the MINIMUM penalty will be a Grade 1 Contrary Conduct Offence under NRL Victoria's Judiciary Penalties and Procedures.**
- 3.3 Any player found guilty of breaching 3.2 and/or 3.3 for the third time in a season will incur an automatic **MINIMUM twelve month suspension** from the game.

4. Zero Tolerance of Fighting and Melees

- 4.1 NRL VIC adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards Fighting and Melees.
- 4.2 A Melee is considered to be Misconduct involving more than two players at any one time.
- 4.3 A **"TIME OUT"** system will be introduced whenever a severe "Melee" occurs as follows:
- (a) The referee will signal a "TIME OUT" period and call for the ground manager to bring both coaches' onto the field.
 - (b) Teams are to be taken to opposite ends of the field and spoken to by their respective coaches.
 - (c) The referee will then dismiss from the field offending players under these regulations (3.2).
 - (d) The ground manager and referees will decide when play will resume.
- 4.4 A repeat "Melee" will result in the match automatically being abandoned.
- 4.5 If a match is abandoned after a time out period, the respective coaches from the offending teams will be charged under the NRL VIC Code of Conduct.
- 4.6 Additional Code of Conduct charges and Penalties applied to teams, players, coaches and/or clubs for abandoned games will be at the discretion of NRL VIC.
- 4.7 Any matches abandoned as a result of these regulations will not be replayed and the result of the match shall be determined at the discretion of NRL VIC.
- 4.8 Any team that has had more than two abandoned matches in a season will be automatically disqualified from that competition for that season.

NRL VICTORIA

2025 TOUGH LOVE POLICY



4.9 Any player or official who runs onto the field of play from the team “bench” area (including “Sin Bin”) during a match, irrespective of making physical contact with another player or official, will be automatically sent from the field and incur a **MINIMUM six match suspension** if found guilty.

5. Zero Tolerance of Match Official Abuse

5.1 NRL VIC adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards the abuse of match officials.

5.2 Any player or official found guilty of touching a referee, touch judge or appointed match official in an aggressive or inappropriate manner will be **disqualified from the game for a MINIMUM period of twelve months**.

5.3 Any player or official found guilty of contact with a referee, touch judge or appointed match official whereby the aggressive contact was directed at:

- head and/or
- neck area and/or
- groin,

OR contact was made with significant force resulting in:

- injury, or
- risk of injury, and/or
- placing person in a vulnerable position

they will be **disqualified from the game for a MINIMUM period of five (5) years**.

5.4 Any player or official who verbally abuses or intimidates a referee or match official will be dismissed from the field. If that person is subsequently determined to be guilty of the offence, **the MINIMUM penalty will be a one match suspension**.

5.5 Any spectator who verbally abuses or intimidates a referee or match official will be dismissed from the venue. If that person is subsequently determined to be guilty of the offence, **the MINIMUM penalty will be a one match suspension**.

5.6 Any player or official found guilty of verbally abusing or intimidating a referee or match official for the third time in a season will incur an **automatic MINIMUM twelve month’s suspension**.

6. Trainers, Coaches and Managers

6.1 If a Trainer, Coach or Manager touches any player or official during a Melee (as defined in 4) an **automatic MINIMUM six match suspension** will apply if that person is found guilty of such an offence.

7. Spectators

7.1 Any spectator who is found guilty of entering the Playing Area with intent will automatically be banned from attending any Match Day Venue (as defined in Scope of Sanctions Policy) for a **MINIMUM period of twelve months** and will be liable to pay a fine under the NRL VIC Code of Conduct.

NRL VICTORIA

2025 TOUGH LOVE POLICY



7.2 In addition, the team and/or club that the person offending under 7.1 is associated with will be charged under the NRL VIC Code of Conduct.

8. Exceptions for Dismissals

8.1 Exceptions for Dismissals shall only apply to Players in Mini and Mod matches (i.e., matches for age groups Under 12s and below where players shall be “replaced” for the remainder of the match). These players are reported under the NRLVIC Code of Conduct Process. All other participants such as coaches, trainers, spectators, etc. dismissals shall apply. All other aspects of these regulations shall still apply to Mini and Mod matches.