



MEMO 21-2023

DATE: Friday 3rd March
TO: NPL 1st Grade Clubs & Coaches
FROM: General Manager Football Operations & Referees Manager
SUBJECT: Referee Directives relating to Player Safety

For Information or Action	Action required	Action completed by	NNSWF Contact	Total Pages
Information	N/A	N/A	Liam Bentley	1

Dear All,

Northern NSW Football encourages entertaining football in our top tier competitions, but more importantly we value player safety. In the interests of transparency and ensuring that clubs, players, coaches and referees are on the same page going into round one, I would like to share with you **communication given to our first grade NPL Men’s and NPL Women’s referee Panel prior to the start of the seasons.**

“I would ask you all to remember what we focused on topic wise at the Preseason Seminar around serious foul play and protecting player safety... It is essential that we as match officials play our part in facilitating and encouraging entertaining football. To be clear entertaining football is attacking, skilful, flowing football. It is critical that we as a match official team ensure we facilitate this by identifying and punishing challenges which represent reckless and excessive force.

While nobody comes to watch the match officials punish players, we can also comfortably assume nobody comes to watch skilful players be on the receiving end of unfair and dangerous challenges which risk and or cause injury. If teams or players choose to play a physical style of football instead of an attacking style of football, it is critical we ensure this remains within the Laws of the Game and expectations of modern football around player safety.

A reminder of key considerations we need to focus on from the preseason seminar:

- 1. Tackles which endanger the safety of an opponent must be sanctioned as serious foul play - a red card.*
- 2. Reckless challenges that involve stomping/stamping to the top of the foot during a challenge*
- 3. Tactical fouls where it is obvious the intention of the challenge is to stop a promising attack*

We know both players and officials won’t get it right all of the time, and we value constructive feedback throughout this process.

Kind regards,

Liam Bentley
General Manager Football Operations
Northern NSW Football

Brad Carlin
Referees Manager
Northern NSW Football