

NEW WORLD RUGBY GLOBAL TACKLE HEIGHT LAW TRIAL READY TO BE LAUNCHED IN WALES

The Welsh Rugby Union has formally voted to opt into World Rugby's global trial to lower the tackle height in the community game to below the base of the sternum next season.

It follows an earlier vote by the WRU to adopt the trial and an extensive community consultation process with Welsh rugby stakeholders. It also follows a process of engagement with over 1000 people actively involved in the Community Game actively which included 5 informative webinar sessions.

The trial will apply to all community games at age-grade (from U12) to Premiership (Women's and Girls) and Championship (Male) in the community game for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 seasons. This will include rugby in schools, colleges and universities. For avoidance of doubt at U12's the existing pathway tackle law of waist height and below will remain and not adhere to introduction of the new tackle height trial.

The Indigo Premiership sides will join the regional teams in being excluded from the trial at this stage.

"As the guardian of the game in Wales, the WRU bears the responsibility to make it as safe and as fun as possible," said Geraint John, the WRU's Community Rugby director.

"Since World Rugby recommended that the tackle height in rugby should be lowered, the WRU has engaged with more than 1,000 administrators, coaches, players and referees across the country to go through the reasoning behind the change and how it will be implemented.

"As a result, from 1 July 2023 the legal tackle height for the game at large in Wales will be below the base of the sternum.

"This will apply from under 12s to Premiership (Women's and Girls) and Championship (Male) in the community game."

World Rugby and laboratory studies have shown that head injury risk is at its highest when tackles are made to the head and shoulder and lowest when tackles are made to the belly area.

The purpose of this trial is to ultimately reduce incidents of head-on-head impact in the tackle and to incentivise greater use of the belly tackle. It is interesting to note the following:

- 70% of concussions occur in the tackle
- Trials in France resulted in a 64% reduction in head-on-head contacts and a 23% reduction on concussions.
- The risk of concussion is 4.2 times higher when the tackler's head is above the ball carrier's sternum
- Research shows that lowering the tackle height protects both the ball carrier and the tackler from head-to-head contact
- The player that has most of the risk is the tackler
- It is a small adjustment for the tackler and still gives him / her a large target area to aim at.

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“As well as having a big impact on player safety, reducing concussions and head-on-head contact, this change is also expected to have positive technical and tactical implications for the game,” added John.

“There is likely to be an increase in the rate of offloads and a rise in line breaks, making the game more enjoyable. With more passes, offloads and potentially tries in a game, it should be more fun to play and watch. This has proven to be the case in French rugby.

“The continuity within the game is likely to increase through a decrease in the number of rucks.”

For the purposes of the trial World Rugby Law 9.13 will read as follows:

WRU Tackle Height Law Trial – 2023-24 and 2024-25

“Dangerous tackling includes, but is not limited to, tackling or attempting to tackle an opponent above the line of the sternum* even if the tackle starts below the line of the sternum.”

*Previously: Shoulder (a horizontal line drawn from top of one armpit to the other)

Rucks and Mauls will not be affected by this law trial as they are covered under Law 9.20 (Dangerous Play In A Ruck Or Maul).

Nearly half of all tackles involve more than one tackler and so for the purpose of clarity, the legal tackle height of below the sternum will apply to all tacklers.

The law trial will not change the ability of an attacking team to carry out a “pick-and-go” play, but law application guidelines may apply where any player has initiated shoulder-to-head/neck or head-to-head/neck contact.

Rugby Union Law 9.11 currently states that: “Players must not do anything that is reckless or dangerous to others including leading with the elbow or forearm, or jumping into, or over, a tackler.” As always, a strict approach will be applied to reckless or dangerous play by a ball carrier.

This will include a ball carrier leading with their head or initiating contact with their head.

There are also implications for the **SECOND TACKLER**. A second tackler is permitted (below the base of the sternum) and arriving players can attempt to compete or rip for the ball, providing the attempted rip is below the sternum.

With regards to the **BALL CARRIER**, they must not lower their height significantly before making contact with an opponent in open play. They are encouraged to evade and will be liable to a sanction if they lower their head below their hips or lead with their head.

As far as the **PICK & GO** is concerned, the ball carrier can ‘pick and drive’ whilst remaining in a low position. It’s acknowledged that tackles may be above the base of the sternum due to the body position of ball carrier, but that is a lower concussion risk area due to the velocity of the carry.

Observations from around the world made by other governing bodies who will be embracing the law from this summer make for interesting reading:

- Expect disruption in the first 12 weeks as players and referees get used to the new policy. It could take three years to fully embed (World Rugby)

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- It will result in more penalties initially, but the number will decrease significantly (FFR)
- It highlights a blatant lack of tackling technique (NZRFU)
- Player security will be enhanced (RFU)
- More people will play the game (FFR)

“We have already done a lot of work with coaches across the country, and this will continue in order to embed not only the new law, but also the technical aspects of tackle technique,” said John.

“We have been hammering home the ‘4Ls’ to our coaches -

Low – Adjust body height to make a safe and legal tackle

Look – Locate where contact is going to be made

Lock – Head firmly behind or to the side and arms held tightly around ball carrier

Land – Complete the tackle by taking the ball carrier to the floor

“We are doing whatever we can to educate coaches and teachers on how best to tackle safely with correct technique and our hope is that pre-season training ahead of the 2023-24 campaign will allow players to make the necessary changes to their technique.

“The referees have also been working hard on their interpretation of the new law and we hope that fans will also understand the changes that are taking place and give players, referees and coaches a chance to adapt to these alterations.”

For more information please visit the WRU Game Locker:

<https://bit.ly/WRUTackleHeight>

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UNDEB RYGBI CYMRU YN TREIALU UCHDER TACLO NEWYDD YN Y G×M GYMUNEDOL.

Mae Undeb Rygbi Cymru wedi penderfynu dilyn canllawiau World Rugby a threialu i ostwng uchder y dacl yn y g×m gymunedol i islaw gwaelod y sternwm y tymor nesaf.

Mae'n dilyn pleidlais flaenorol gan URC a phroses ymgynghori gymunedol helaeth gyda rhanddeiliaid rygbi Cymru hefyd. Ymgysylltwyd × dros 1000 o bobl - sy'n cymryd rhan ymarferol yn y g×m gymunedol - ar ffurf 5 sesiwn addysgiadol ar-lein.

Bydd y treial yn berthnasol i bob g×m gymunedol ar radd oedran (o dan 12) i Uwch Gynghrair (Menywod a Merched) a Phencampwriaeth (Dynion) yn y g×m gymunedol ar gyfer tymhorau 2023-24 a 2024-25. Bydd hyn yn cynnwys rygbi mewn ysgolion, colegau a phrifysgolion. O dan 12 bydd y drefn o daclo o'r wast ac oddi-tano yn parhau yn hytrach na gweithredu rheolau'r arbrawf newydd. Bydd timau Uwch Gynghrair Indigo a'r timau rhanbarthol yn cael eu heithrio o'r arbrawf hwn ar hyn o bryd.

"Fel gwarcheidwad y g×m yng Nghymru, mae URC yn ysgwyddo'r cyfrifoldeb i'w gwneud mor ddiogel a hwyliog × phosib," meddai Geraint John, Cyfarwyddwr Rygbi Cymunedol Undeb Rygbi Cymru.

"Ers i World Rugby argymhell y dylid gostwng uchder y dacl, mae URC wedi trafod y pwnc × mwy na 1,000 o weinyddwyr, hyfforddwyr, chwaraewyr a dyfarnwyr ledled y wlad. Rydyn ni wedi trafod y rhesymeg y tu ×l i'r newid a sut y bydd yn cael ei weithredu.

"O ganlyniad, o'r 1af o Orffennaf 2023 bydd uchder cyfreithiol y dacl ar gyfer y g×m yn gyffredinol yng Nghymru yn is na gwaelod y sternwm.

"Bydd hyn yn berthnasol o dan 12 oed hyd at Uwch Gynghrair (Menywod a Merched) a Phencampwriaeth (Dynion) yn y g×m gymunedol."

Mae profion a threialon World Rugby wedi dangos bod risg anafiadau i'r pen ar eu huchaf pan fydd taclau'n cael eu gwneud i'r pen a'r ysgwydd. Mae'r perygl ar ei isaf pan fydd taclau'n cael eu gwneud i ardal y bol.

Pwrpas y treial hwn yn y pen draw yw lleihau achosion o effaith pen-ar-ben yn y dacl a chymhell mwy o ddefnydd o'r dacl bol. Mae'n ddi-ddorol nodi'r canlynol:

- 70% o gyfergydion yn digwydd yn y dacl
- Arweiniodd treialon yn Ffrainc at ostyngiad o 64% mewn cysylltiadau pen-i-ben a gostyngiad o 23% ar gyfergydion.
- Mae'r risg o gyfergyd 4.2 gwaith yn uwch pan fydd pen y taclwr uwchben sternwm cludwr y b×l.
- Mae ymchwil yn dangos bod gostwng uchder y dacl yn amddiffyn cariwr y b×l a'r taclwr rhag cyswllt pen-i-ben
- Y taclwr yw'r chwaraewr sy'n wynebu'r risg uchaf o gael ei anafu.
- Mae'r drefn newydd yn golygu addasiad bach i dechneg y taclwr ond mae'n dal i gynnig ardal darged fawr i anelu ato.

"Yn ogystal × chael effaith gadarnhaol ar ddiogelwch chwaraewyr, lleihau cyfergyd a chyswllt pen-yn-ben - mae disgwyl i'r newid hwn gael effaith bositif ar elfennau technegol a thactegol y g×m," ychwanegodd John.

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"Mae'n debygol y gwelwn ni fwy o ddad-lwytho a bylchu fydd yn gwneud y g×m yn fwy pleserus all arwain at fwy o geisiau hefyd. Dylai llif y chwarae barhau'n fwy cyson gan y bydd llai o sgarmesi'n cael eu ffurfio yn ystod yr 80 munud. Dylai fod yn fwy o hwyl i chwarae a gwyllo. Mae hyn wedi profi i fod yn wir yn rygbi Ffrainc".

At ddibenion yr arbrawf bydd Rheol 9.13 World Rugby yn darllen fel a ganlyn:

Mynd i'r afael × Threial y Rheol Uchder – 2023-24 a 2024-25

"Mae tacllo peryglus yn cynnwys, ond nid yw'n gyfyngedig i, mynd i'r afael × neu geisio mynd i'r afael × gwrthwynebydd uwchben llinell y sternwm* hyd yn oed os yw'r dacl yn dechrau o dan linell y sternwm."

*Ynghynt: Ysgwydd (llinell wedi'i thynnu o ben un cesail i'r llall)

Ni fydd yr arbrawf hwn yn effeithio ar Sgarmesi a Sgarmesi Rhydd gan eu bod yn dod o dan Reol 9.20 (Chwarae Peryglus Mewn Sgarmesi).

Mae bron i hanner yr holl daclau'n cynnwys mwy nag un taclwr ac felly at ddibenion eglurder, bydd uchder y dacl gyfreithlon o dan y sternwm i bob taclwr.

Ni fydd y rheol newydd yn newid hawl y t×m ymosodol i gymryd cic gosb yn sydyn (cyffwrdd a mynd) ond gall cosb ddilyn os bydd chwaraewr yn fwriadol yn creu cyswllt ysgwydd-i-ben / gwddf neu gyswllt pen-i-ben / gwddf.

Ar hyn o bryd mae Rheol 9.11 yn nodi: "Ni ddylai chwaraewyr wneud unrhyw beth sy'n ddi-hid neu'n beryglus i eraill gan gynnwys arwain gyda'r penelin neu'r blaenfraich, neu neidio i mewn i daclwr neu drosto/drostri. Fel pob amser, bydd cosbau llym yn cael eu gweithredu am chwarae di-hid neu beryglus gan gludwr y b×l. Bydd hyn yn cynnwys cludwr p×l sy'n arwain gyda'u pen neu'n creu sefyllfa o gyswllt ×'i ben.

Mae goblygiadau hefyd i'r AIL DACLWR. Caniateir ail daclwr (o dan waelod y sternwm) a gall chwaraewyr sy'n cyrraedd y dacl wreiddiol geisio cystadlu neu rwygo am y b×l, ar yr amod bod yr ymgais i rwygo yn digwydd o dan y sternwm.

Ni ddylai'r CLUDWR P×L, ostwng ei daldra yn sylweddol cyn cysylltu × gwrthwynebydd mewn chwarae agored. Fe'u hanogir i osgoi'r cyswllt - a gallent gael eu cosbi os ydynt yn gostwng eu pen o dan eu cluniau neu'n arwain gyda'u pen.

Cyn belled ag y mae CYFFWRDD & MYND yn y cwestiwn, gall y cludwr b×l 'bigor' b×l a hyrddio tra'n cadw'r corff mewn safle isel. Cydnabyddir y gall taclau fod yn uwch na gwaelod y sternwm oherwydd safle corff cludwr p×l, ond mae honno'n ardal risg cyfergyd is oherwydd cyflymder y cario.

Mae sylwadadau cyrff llywodraethu eraill yn ddiddorol:

- Mae disgwyl i'r Rheol newydd darfu ar y chwarae yn ystod y 12 wythnos gyntaf wrth i chwaraewyr a dyfarnwyr ddod i arfer ×'r polisi newydd. Gallai gymryd tair blynedd i gael ei dderbyn yn llawn (World Rugby)
- Bydd hyn yn arwain at fwy o droseddau i ddechrau, ond bydd hynny'n gostwng yn sylweddol (FFR)
- Mae'n tynnu sylw at ddiffyg amlwg o dechnegau tacllo (NZRFU)
- Bydd diogelwch chwaraewyr yn cael ei wella (RFU)
- Bydd mwy o bobl yn chwarae'r g×m (FFR)

Ychwanegodd Geraint John: "Rydym eisoes wedi gwneud llawer o waith gyda hyfforddwyr ar draws y wlad, a bydd hyn yn parhau er mwyn egluro a gweithredu'r

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drefn newydd. Bydd cymorth hefyd ar gael i gynorthwyo'r agweddau technegol a'r dechneg o dactlo.

"Mae pedair elfen yr ydym wedi bod yn pwysleisio i'n hyfforddwy -

Isel - Addasu uchder y corff i wneud taelo diogel a chyfreithiol

Edrych - Gweld ble mae cyswllt yn mynd i gael ei wneud

Cloi - Gosod y pen y tu $\times 1$ neu i'r ochr gan glymu'r breichiau'n dynn o amgylch cludwr y $b \times 1$

Llawr - Cwblhewch y dacl trwy fynd \times chlodwr $b \times 1$ i'r llawr

"Rydyn ni'n gwneud popeth o fewn ein gallu i addysgu hyfforddwy ac athrawon am y ffordd orau o fynd i'r afael yn ddiogel gyda thechneg gywir a'n gobaith yw y bydd hyfforddiant hwnnw yn ei le cyn tymor 2023-24. Bydd hyn yn galluogi chwaraewyr i wneud y newidiadau angenrheidiol i'w techneg".

DIWEDD.

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