



NSWRL MELEE ESCALATION POLICY

AGENDA

- Why the Policy has been Introduced
- How the Policy Works
- Understanding the Escalation Tiers
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Real Life Scenarios
- What Needs to be Done Next

WHY THE POLICY HAS BEEN INTRODUCED?

Following a continued increase of on-field brawls and spectator invasions across Community Rugby League, NSWRL has introduced a **zero-tolerance policy** to melee escalation and associated crowd encroachment.

The background of the image is a dark blue field filled with a repeating pattern of the NSW Rugby League logo. Each logo is a shield-shaped crest containing a stylized white 'C' and the words 'NSW RUGBY LEAGUE' in white capital letters.

IF YOU'RE NOT INVOLVED...
DON'T GET INVOLVED!

HOW THE POLICY WORKS

INITIAL INCIDENT

EVERYONE ELSE
STAYS AWAY

**INCIDENT
RESOLVES**

**MATCH OFFICIAL
INTERVENES
(WHISTLE
BLOWN)**



ENGAGEMENT – NOT INTENTION

- ❌ Break up the fight
- ❌ Protect your teammate
- ❌ Be the peacemaker

All are considered forms of **Engagement**,
and therefore a **breach** of the Policy.

THE ESCALATION TIERS

TIER	TRIGGER	INDICATIVE TEAM PENALTY
1	Additional Player(s) or Team Official(s) engage in the Initial Incident (passive presence).	Minimum 1 match stand-down (forfeit of next fixture).
2	Additional Player(s) engagement is active (e.g. throwing punches, grappling, dragging).	2–3 match stand-down + Club placed on a \$1,000 bond for the remainder of the season.
3	Tier 2 conditions PLUS Associated Crowd Invasion (one or more spectators enter the Playing Area).	3+ match stand-down + competition points deduction equivalent to a win for each spectator + Club \$1,000 fine + \$2,000 team bond .
4	Match abandoned due to foul play (whole-of-team or whole-of-bench involvement, or serious injury arising from the melee).	Match deemed forfeit by the instigating Team; both Teams issued Adjudicated Breach Notice ; finals disqualification possible.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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What does “team stand-down” actually mean?

It means your team **forfeits** its next scheduled fixture.

The opposition is awarded 2 competition points and a +60 points differential in accordance with the RLCC Competition By-Laws.

Your team receives 0 points and -60 against.

For Finals fixtures, the offending team will be **eliminated** from the competition.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if my player is only trying to break it up?

The Policy still applies.

The Policy says engagement, not intention, is the test. Any Player who walks, jogs or runs toward a melee — even to separate teammates, restrain a player or act as a peacemaker — is in breach.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if a Player is just standing nearby?

If a Player has moved from their position toward the Incident, **that counts as Engagement**, even if they don't throw a punch.

Passive presence in the vicinity, once a player has moved, is enough to breach the Policy.

If a player remains in their position, or moves away from the incident, they will not be in breach of the Policy.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can the Team contest an Adjudicated Breach Notice?

If the **Club** accepts the breach, no — the matter is concluded.

If the Club pleads not guilty, the matter goes to a Tribunal Hearing. A Club Executive member and Coach of the Team are both required to attend the hearing.

Once a Tribunal hearing has determined the outcome, there is no further avenue of Appeal.



REAL LIFE SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 1

INCIDENT

During an Under 15s game, two opposition players exchange punches after a tackle. A third player from your team jogs in from 15 metres to stand between them. He doesn't throw a punch. He just stands there with his hands up.

OUTCOME

Tier 1 Adjudicated Breach Notice issued. Minimum 1-match team stand-down.

The third player engaged the Initial Incident by moving toward it. **His intention to be a peacemaker is not a defence** — the Policy is clear that engagement is the test, not intention.

SCENARIO 2

INCIDENT

During an Under 17s match. After a heavy tackle, two players exchange punches. Four players from the bench of one team run onto the field. Two of these bench players grapple with opposition players, one drags a teammate away, and one acts only as a peacemaker.

OUTCOME

Tier 2 Adjudicated Breach Notice issued to the team — **2 to 3 match team stand-down** PLUS **\$1,000 Club bond** for the remainder of the season.

All four players also be individually charged as per regular Judiciary procedure.

SCENARIO 3

INCIDENT

During an Under 17s match. After a heavy tackle, two players exchange punches. Four players from the bench of one team run onto the field. Two of these bench players grapple with opposition players, one drags a teammate away, and one acts only as a peacemaker.

Two parents of the bench players also jump the rope and run onto the field.

OUTCOME

This is a **Tier 3 Associated Crowd Invasion** on top of the Tier 2 melee.

- The offending team **forfeits the match** and is **suspended for 2-3 matches**.
- The identified spectators are **banned for 12 months** minimum.
- The Club is **fined \$1,000** and placed on a **\$2,000 team bond**, with **competition points deductions** under Tough Love in League.
- All persons involved are individually charged as per regular Judiciary procedure.

SCENARIO 4

INCIDENT

During an Under 17s match. After a heavy tackle, two players exchange punches. Both teams hold their position – they don't move from where they were, they don't move toward the incident, they let the Match Officials handle it. The Referee sends off both players involved.

OUTCOME

No Adjudicated Breach Notice issued to the team.

The two individual players still face their judiciary charges, but the team is not penalised.

SCENARIO 5

INCIDENT

Final round of the regular season. Team A is no longer in finals contention. Team B sits 4th and needs the win to make finals. An Initial Incident occurs between one Team A player and one Team B player. The Team B players step back or stays in a neutral position. Four Team A players then move in on the Team B player, creating a genuine wellbeing concern. Two Team B players move passively toward their teammate to protect him. They do not engage any of the Team A players, they only escort their teammate away from the incident.

OUTCOME

Team A receives an escalated Adjudicated Breach Notice (Tier 2 or higher) and their players are individually charged.

The two Team B players who engaged passively to protect their teammate are excused from the team-level breach. **Team B does not receive an Adjudicated Breach Notice.**

SCENARIO 6

INCIDENT

A confrontation escalates into a full-team brawl. The Referee abandons the match. The Match Officials determine both teams are equally responsible.

OUTCOME

This is a **Tier 4 outcome**.

- Neither team is awarded competition points. The match is not replayed.
- **Both teams are issued an Adjudicated Breach Notice.**
- If the match was a Finals Series fixture, both teams may be disqualified from the competition.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

www.clubhub.nswrl.com.au

Knowledge base

[View all articles](#)



Registratio
ns &...



Club
Administr...



Team Staff



Ground
Manager



Match
Officials



Policies and
Documents



Child Safety



Judiciary &
Code of...



Concussion



Insurance



Areas

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO?

- **EDUCATE PLAYERS**
- **EDUCATE COACHES**
- **EDUCATE TEAM OFFICIALS**
- **EDUCATE PARENTS**
- **SHARE THE POLICY**
- **REINFORCE THE MESSAGE...**

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