

Dangerous Play

'Reckless disregard for the safety of fellow players is considered dangerous play and is to be treated as a foul, regardless of whether or when contact occurs. This rule is not superseded by any other rule. If uncontested this must be treated as the most relevant foul from Section 17.' (*WFDF Rules of Ultimate 17.1.*)

Introduction

The WFDF Rules of Ultimate outline dangerous play and aggressive behaviour as a clear violation of SOTG (7.6.) The UK Ultimate Spirit of the Game Committee has created this document to support players, teams and coaches to understand and avoid situations that may lead to dangerous play, to help players understand how to address and resolve dangerous play calls, and to help set the tone for safe and competitive play.

Why is this a priority?

The onus is on players to take care of one another. All players are responsible for upholding the rules and keeping the game safe.

- Players can be seriously injured - in the worst cases stopping their sporting career and affecting their daily lives.
- Injury can affect ability to work, education, family life and mental health.
- Dangerous play can change how an individual or team approaches certain players or teams.
- Players may feel uncomfortable or fear for their safety in certain circumstances.

What is dangerous play?

1. Causing contact in order to make a play on a disc

This refers to contact caused by a play on a disc that a player doesn't have a right to make. Ultimate is non-contact and as such wherever possible players must avoid initiating contact with others. Where there is a 'trailing' or reacting player (often with greater vision of the situation), the onus is on this player to avoid contact, 'there is no situation where a player may justify initiating contact. "Making a play for the disc" is

not a valid excuse for initiating contact with other players.' (12.8.) If players are moving to a single point simultaneously they should prioritise safety, avoiding dangerous contact.

[Here is an example of a player avoiding contact.](#)

2. Running or jumping into an occupied space

Players must show reasonable control of their bodies and decision-making based on the positioning of other players. An outside player should not jump into one or more players already occupying a space, 'A player in an established position is entitled to remain in that position and should not be contacted by an opposing player.' 12.6.)

3. Blindsided players (coming in on an unknowing player)

Players should aim to have good field awareness, however there are times when this is compromised based on the context of play, the disc and field position. Any player with greater visibility or more information, must recognise the situation and avoid contact with an unknowing player.

4. Up-the-line cuts

Contact between a receiver cutting up the line and a defender who has come off their match to make a play on the disc is a common example where a dangerous collision may occur. While the receiver should not initiate their movement blindly or move into an occupied space, once moving it is likely they'll have a considerable blind side (looking back at the disc). A defender who makes a play on any such disc will likely either blindside the receiver, or run / dive into the pathway of a sprinting player unable to stop in time. The angles of the players' movements will often result in contact, moreover the speed and angle of any collision in this context can cause a dangerous impact and serious injury.

Any player who bids or dives for a disc (especially if the disc is overthrown) must consider whether they have a right that space or to make a play on the disc based on the field position of others.

Some non-exhaustive examples of dangerous play

- [A poaching defender, or a defender who peels off their match, makes a play on an up-the-line throw to a receiver moving up-the-line.](#)

**it's worth noting from this example that commentators may not always have the best perspective to make the right call on a play*

- [Attempting to bid around or through a player from behind resulting in pushing the player over, possibly landing on the player's back or legs.](#)
- [Bumping into a player or running up the back of a player's legs as they catch or slow down.](#)
- Using feet or knees to trip a player - often a player making tight reset type movements.
- [Taking a running jump that will carry torso, hips or legs into the head of a non-jumping player who is stationary or moving in the opposite direction.](#)
- [Scrum going up for a floaty disc and an outside player comes crashing in.](#)
- [Running into or running in front of the path of a receiver with knowledge that the receiver is unaware of the defender's position \(i.e. "blindsiding" a receiver\).](#)
- Jumping, diving or stepping in right in front of a sprinting cutter in a manner where contact is unavoidable.
- Wild, uncontrolled throwing or faking motions (e.g. thrower following through into marker's face or body).

The Rule

Dangerous play can be called before or after an incident occurs. This is what it might sound like:

Before an incident

If called by the Offence:

"Dangerous play! I had positioning on the field to make a play on the disc but recognised you were coming into my space on a late play on the disc. I had no choice but to give up the space to avoid a dangerous play."

If called by the Defence:

"Dangerous play! I had entered the space safely where I could make a play on the disc, but noticed that you were unaware that I was already in that space, so I made the call to avoid a dangerous play."

After an incident

If called by Offence or Defence:

"Dangerous play! I had positioning on the field to make a safe play on the disc but then you came into that space after me."

OR

"Dangerous play! I didn't know you were coming into the space I had already occupied and I don't feel you did everything possible to avoid contact."

Players should use the [BE CALM](#) strategy.

Contested:

- You don't believe the play would have resulted in contact had you continued.
- You believe both players were vying for the same unoccupied space and your opponent did not get to the space first.
- You feel you had a safe route to the disc.

Result: *The disc goes back to the thrower*

Uncontested:

- You agree there could have been more than incidental contact had play continued and your opponent was occupying the space to make a safe play on the disc.
- You agree that your play on the disc resulted in contact with a player already in that space.

Result: *The disc goes to the player who made the call*

Players should never use any call to gain advantage. In order to make a dangerous play call in this context a player must have occupied a space, for example, this rule cannot be used if a player would have had to go through a player to get to the disc. The priority is to recognise whether you could get to a disc without making contact with another player.

Change the focus

The dangerous play call is designed to protect players and prevent collision (similar to the pick call). If contact does occur it is an opportunity to address the situation. Players, teams and coaches have an on-going responsibility to learn and apply the rules, and to reflect and learn from on-pitch experiences where the rules are tested.



Updated December 2021

Calls should never be personal, or used to gain advantage, but to uphold the rules and keep the game safe.

Highly competitive play is encouraged but never at the expense of mutual respect between players, adherence to the agreed-upon rules and the basic joy of play.

Thanks to HUC (Hamilton Ultimate) for their brilliant prez on [Dangerous Play](#) which we found helpful in creating this document for UK Ultimate. We have also collected some further resources listed below:

https://www.usultimate.org/assets/1/Page/DangerousPlayClarification_5.10.18.pdf

https://www.reddit.com/r/ultimate/comments/avnq3z/dangerous_play_dispute/

<https://understandingultimate.wordpress.com/2018/10/15/on-re-framing-dangerous-play/>

<https://ultiworld.com/2016/07/27/ultimate-bad-bid-problem/>