

Stance and Body Shape prior to engagement. A participant in a scrum will have his feet astride about shoulder width. With the exception of the hooker, he should not have one foot back. His back will be straight with perhaps a small dip in the lower spine. He will be flexed at the knees and in the crouch his back will be parallel with the ground. His height above the ground will be controlled by the amount of bend in his knees and hips. He will have his head up, chest out with his eyes forward.

Front Row Alignment. The THP should be slightly in front of the Hooker who will be slightly in front of the LHP. The THP leads the scrum into the engagement. This helps to counteract the natural wheel of the scrum. If the THP doesn't lead in or worse, he is behind the Hooker and tries to avoid the impact of the engagement, the scrum will rotate clockwise on engagement and will continue to rotate if and when any pressure is applied by the opposing team.

Body position on engagement. The back should be straight maintaining a small dip, chest out and head up. The back should not be humped. The knees should be behind the hips, the legs still slightly bent and astride. If the legs are straight the player is unable to chase his feet if the scrum moves and will fall on his face. The shoulders should not be lower than the hips. All spines should be in line with everyone able to push in the same direction.

Binds. The LHP should be bound under the opposing THP with a bind on the midline of the jersey. His elbow should be up parallel to the ground and preferably locked out so that he cannot be twisted down by his opponent. He should not have a long bind on the shorts or leg of his opposing THP. The THP should have a bind over the opposing LHP and should bind on the mid line of the body. Under no circumstances should he bind on the shoulder or arm of the opposing LHP. An elbow pointing straight down to the ground may be an indicator of pulling down by the THP.

Causes of scrums wheeling. Scrums can be wheeled by one team driving up one side of the scrum. For this to be legal, the scrum will tend to rotate around the THP with the rest of the scrum driving through and forward. In an illegal wheel, the scrum will rotate around the LHP with the rest of the scrum giving way quickly. The players giving way will have their feet up under their hips rather than extended into a pushing position and will take little steps backward.

Scrums that collapse. The simplest reason for a scrum to collapse is that players in the front row have their shoulders below their hips and when the pressure is applied they are forced downward. Some players intentionally collapse the scrum to avoid pressure so that they can get another chance to engage and be more comfortable in the next scrum. The reason they are under pressure in the first place is that they have lost the "hit". This means they have not been able to get into a good strong position after the engagement. They are either twisted with one shoulder lower than the other or they have their feet too far under the hips with a humped back instead of a straight one. When a player intentionally goes to ground by releasing his bind or twisting away from pressure it results in that player ending up on his side or his back."