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Billy Slater not guilty verdict set a precedent for the future of the game, according to NRL 360 host Paul Kent

Andrew McMurtry, news.com.au

September 25, 2018 1:19pm



BILLY Slater is free to take his place in the Melbourne Storm's grand final side, his farewell game in the NRL.

Slater was allowed to take his place after a judiciary hearing which took just under three hours with almost 50 minutes of deliberation.

But former referee's boss Greg MacCallum was a guest on *NRL 360* and slammed the shoulder charge rule.

"I think there's too much emphasis on the potential outcome rather than what happens on the field," MacCallum said.

"When you look at tonight's one, you see there's no impact on the head, there is some flex of the neck but was there intent to really put a hit on him?"

"I don't think so and I think that's where the 200 points is probably the thing that's going to challenge the game after tonight."

Daily Telegraph journalist and *NRL 360* host Paul Kent argued the severity of the charge is what is needed to eradicate it from the game.

"In order to eliminate a tackle in the game that we don't want in the game for valid reasons you have to put in a penalty that is enough of a deterrent that people don't want to do it," he said.

"To suddenly put the rule in and then when we get the result we're seeking to achieve, and then say that's not fair, and bring down the penalty, you're actually removing the incentive for players not to do it."

Kent continued after the decision, slamming the NRL as the call has now established a new normal for the league.

"This now goes into the game as a precedent in a not guilty decision," Kent said.

"Next year when there are similar instances to this, there will be other people around the game championing that decision saying they got it right, but from



PK, 360 panel slam NRL Judiciary for clearing Billy Slater

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now on, as we go forward, this is a legal tackle in the game.”



monster croc



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Slater was stonefaced after the decision, but Storm coach Craig Bellamy was pleased.

Slater led an impassioned defence in the judiciary hearing, according to the *NRL.com*.

The Melbourne fullback stood in front of the panel to explain the move and why he had no choice but to tackle like he did.

“The whole time my intention was to make a tackle,” he said. “It happens earlier than I expected to do but I’m still attempting to wrap my right arm. Even with my left arm is trying to wrap underneath. I was still trying to get my body in a position to get between the ball and the try line.”

“I’ve got a duty to make a tackle, the duty of care is to myself and player Feki. To ensure I don’t make a high tackle is a duty to Feki. I feel the contact that was made was unavoidable once he veered back in. I think the decisions I made ensured the safest possible contact was made.”

It was a lengthy speech from Slater who fought for his fairy tale finish in the NRL with a grand final on the line.

Retiring Sharks star Luke Lewis was a key defender of Slater straight after the match.

He reiterated his defence of Slater and said the matter should have been dealt with during the match.

“I don’t condone shoulder charges but what do you do in that situation, he’s got to put his body on the line to stop a try so his team can get through to a grand final,” Lewis said.

“We’ve grown up playing football for a long time and we’ve been taught to stop tries. A try stopped is probably better than a try scored. I think they should have sent him off for 10 minutes and given us an advantage.”

Twitter exploded during and after the hearing with plenty of people wanting

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to put in their two cents.

 **Rhys O'Neill**  [@Rhys_O'Neill_](#) 

Reckon Slater will shoulder charge Cronk in the first minute of GF and end it for both players. #NRL

12:14 PM - Sep 25, 2018

  See Rhys O'Neill's other Tweets 

"The whole time my intention was to make a tackle. It happens earlier than I expected to do but I'm still attempting to wrap my right arm. Even with my left arm is trying to wrap underneath. I was still trying to get my body in a position to get between the ball and the try line," he says.

"I've got a duty to make a tackle, the duty of care is to myself and player Feki. To ensure I don't make a high tackle is a duty to Feki. I feel the contact that was made was unavoidable once he veered back in. I think the decisions I made ensured the safest possible contact was made."




 **brad esposito**   [@bradesposito](#) 

pretty wild argument from billy slater

12:13 PM - Sep 25, 2018



  See brad esposito 's other Tweets



 **Dave Donaghy**  [@DaveDonaghy11](#) 

As meticulous in his preparation for tonight as he is for games. Was key to the outcome. Lots of people played key roles in #freebilly - thank you, heading back home now @storm @nrl then eyes on the prize this Sunday #melbourneproud #purplepride

12:21 PM - Sep 25, 2018

 578  142 people are talking about this

 **Peter FitzSimons**  [@Peter_Fitz](#) · 8h 

To my eyes it was an absolute text book shoulder charge. That is all I can tell you. "A rose by any other name is still a rose." A shoulder charge is still a shoulder charge, however many lawyers, biomechanical experts and ticket-sellers say its not. twitter.com/benpobjie/stat...



Derryn Hinch 
@HumanHeadline

Peter. They were both at full speed. It was a brilliant try-stopper. And he was trying to get hands up. Billy Slater is not a thug.

12:28 PM - Sep 25, 2018

 27  16 people are talking about this 



Dan Anstey 
@Dan_Anstey 

Billy Slater to hit the line on Sunday straight from the kick-off with the biggest shoulder charge ever seen in rugby league, killing every Sydney player instantly. He then wails, "YOU NEVER SHOULD HAVE TRUSTED ME!" and disappears into the darkness, never to be seen again.

12:10 PM - Sep 25, 2018

 30  See Dan Anstey's other Tweets 



Leonie Ryan 
@LeonieFRyan 

Replying to @MarkBut27409455

No way. Take the sentiment of it being Billy Slater and it being his last game, it was a CLEAR shoulder charge. The rule needs to be debated yes, but the rules can't be bent now.

11:27 AM - Sep 25, 2018

 2  See Leonie Ryan's other Tweets 

Fans also reacted to the decision with mixed feelings.

Breaking news: Billy Slater is a new species of human that apparently has neither shoulders nor knees, and the judiciary an organisation with no spine. After 38 years of following league, next year will be my first membership with an AFL team, GWS Giants, I can't wait for it 😊

— Kayne (@KayneBrowne) [September 25, 2018](#)



Phil Lutton
@phillutton78 

The #NRL panel has absolutely embarrassed themselves there but I'm delighted Billy Slater can play in the GF. Bonkers decision, wonderful outcome.

11:48 AM - Sep 25, 2018

 31  16 people are talking about this 



Andrew Bogut  @andrewbogut · 10h 

Billy Slater suspension? Thoughts?



Jason
@Jason_Murphys

If it happens, it would be a huge miscarriage of justice. Rule is flawed, and should be judged on a case by case basis. Slater is a star, and the fans deserve to see him off one last time.

9:47 AM - Sep 25, 2018

 1  See Jason's other Tweets 





TAGSY
@tagsytake



Anyone defending #billyslater #nrlgf should consider why the rule exists, and whilst it would be disappointing for him to end his career missing the GF, atleast he can go home to his family, unlike James Ackerman who lost his life after a shoulder charge. Below is his funeral.

9:58 AM - Sep 25, 2018

120 65 people are talking about this

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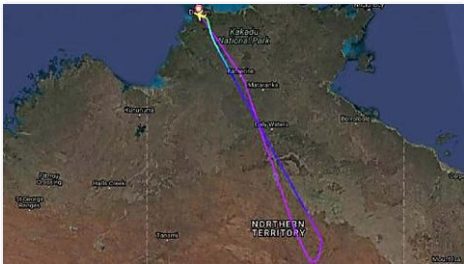
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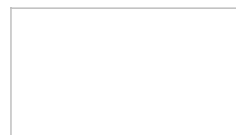
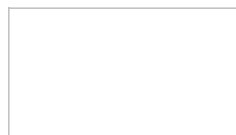
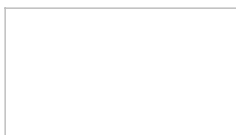
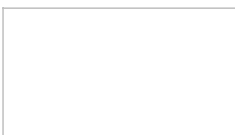
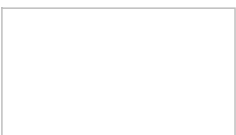


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