

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 18 December 2013
TO: State/Territory Unions; ARU Affiliates
FROM: Ben Whitaker
SUBJECT: 2014 Law Variations

Dear All,

This Memo covers four topics:

- A. Confirmation that the new scrum engagement sequence will apply in Australia in 2014 from 1st March.
- B. Notification of changes to lineout Law in the U16s to U19s.
- C. A reminder of the Law Variations adopted in 2010 which will continue in 2014.
- D. A request for Unions and Affiliates to submit any local Law Variations they may seek to play in 2014 to the Laws Advisory Group (LAG).

A. ENGAGEMENT SEQUENCE GLOBAL TRIAL

The IRB Council has approved a new engagement sequence for global trial in 2014. This sequence will apply in all games played in Australia at all levels **from 1 March, 2014**.

Competitions and tournament organisers may choose to use the new sequence in matches played prior to 1 March 2014, only if due diligence is exercised in ensuring all players and referees have been made aware of the Law amendments, and how to safely apply them.

A one-page outline of the new scrum engagement sequence is attached to this email, which must be provided to all front-row players and referees before taking part in their first match played under the global trial.

It is recommended that State Unions distribute this document immediately to all stakeholders to ensure all participants in the game are aware of the changes.

Please note that ARU's updated SmartRugby resources for 2014 covering the new scrum engagement sequence will not be available for distribution until 1 February at the earliest.

B. U19 LINEOUT LIFTING LAW CHANGE IN U16s AND ABOVE

Over the past few years, the ARU has received feedback from both community stakeholders and its own talent development staff regarding the effectiveness of restricting lineout lifting by the front lifter in the older U19 age groups to the shorts. These concerns arise from both a safety and player development point of view.

A review group was commissioned to discuss the issue, conduct a trial if relevant, and make recommendations to the Laws Advisory Group (LAG) as to whether the current ARU U19 Law Variation at lineout should remain or be modified.

The Review Group's report is attached for State Unions to distribute to stakeholders. The review included an extensive trial at the National U16 Championships.

The LAG has accepted the Review Group's recommendation that lineout lifting Laws for U16s and above be brought into line with senior Law for 2014. The existing Law will remain for U15s and below.

C. DOMESTIC LAW VARIATIONS FOR 2014

The IRB Laws of the Game provide three (3) Law variations for use at the community level. These variations have been implemented by ARU since 2010. The first is a mandatory change to substitution Law across all forms of the Game in Australia. The other two law variations are optional and may be implemented at the discretion of the local competition.

1. Rolling Substitutions

The following Union Specific Variation IRB Law 3.14(a) is mandatory across all domestic Rugby played in Australia:

- a) Unlimited rolling substitutions will be implemented for all rugby aged U14s and below.
- b) Rolling substitutions, with a maximum of 12 movements will be implemented for all U19 rugby aged U15 and above.
- c) Rolling substitutions, with a maximum of 8 movements will be implemented for all senior rugby, except the lowest grade of any division/competition where the maximum number may, at the discretion of the local Union, be 12.

Note: Unions may submit a request to the LAG to play Law 3.4 (at any level of the game). Law 3.4 allows for only a maximum of 7 tactical substitutions (8 where there is a squad of 23 players), with substituted players not able to return (except for blood or to replace a front-row player).

2. Nomination of 23 Players

The ARU will allow any Member Union or Affiliate to implement IRB Law 3.14(b) at their discretion.

3. Mechanisms to Discourage Uncontested Scrums

The ARU will allow any Member Union or Affiliate to implement IRB Law 3.14(d) at their discretion. **Any Union or Affiliate planning to implement this Law must use in their Competition Rules the approved language found in Appendix A to this Memo.**

D. REQUEST FOR LOCAL LAW VARIATIONS IN 2014

In 2010, ARU began a process of managing applications for Local Law Variations. It is highly important that a thorough process be undertaken by ARU to ensure we have an understanding of local issues, can cover off on any insurance matters and ensure the Law variations are consistent with the ethos and principles of Rugby.

Those Unions that have been granted formal dispensations will be allowed to continue those arrangements into 2014. All other Unions seeking Law Variations must submit a request to LAG using the attached form.

Competition Rules

Please note that the LAG does **not** wish to consider competition rules that affect the conduct of various competitions. These arrangements remain localised. Rather this request is for any variation that affects the conduct of the on-field game in a way that adds to or alters any existing IRB International, U19 or 7-per-side Law, or any existing ARU U19 Law Variation or approved ARU Pathway Laws at ages U6 to U12 (including substitutions and replacement rules).

Request for submissions

The ARU hereby requests Member Unions and Affiliates with competitions beginning before 1 April, 2014, to submit their requests for local Law Variations by **COB Friday 7th February, 2014**.

If you require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact either Jamie McGregor (jamie.mcgregor@rugby.com.au) or myself.

Kind regards,



Andrew Larratt
General Manager, Rugby Participation



Ben Whitaker
General Manager, Development Pathways

Appendix A

Any Union or Affiliate planning to implement IRB Law 3.14(d) in 2013 must use in their Competition Rules the following approved language:

For competitions where teams are allowed to nominate 22 players

When 22 players are nominated in a team there must be five players who can play in the front row to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement hooker is required, and on the first occasion that a replacement prop forward is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums.

Should a team not be able to meet this obligation for any reason during a game, or should a team not have three suitably trained front row players to commence a game with contested scrums, then the team concerned must play with one player fewer than would otherwise be allowed.

If, subsequently, a qualified front rower becomes available so that scrums can be contested then that player will be allowed onto the field and the team may return to the appropriate complement of players.

If neither team has suitably trained front row players to start a game with contested scrums, the above arrangements do not apply to the game, even if qualified front rowers subsequently become available.

For competitions where teams are allowed to nominate 23 players (NB: Please note minor change in language since 2010)

When 23 players are nominated in a team there must be sufficient front row players to play at hooker, tight-head prop and loose-head prop who are suitably trained and experienced to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement in each front row position is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums.

Should a team not be able to meet this obligation for any reason during a game, or should a team not have three suitably trained front row players to commence a game with contested scrums, then the team concerned must play with one player fewer than would otherwise be allowed.

If, subsequently, a qualified front rower becomes available so that scrums can be contested then that player will be allowed onto the field and the team may return to the appropriate complement of players.

If neither team has suitably trained front row players to start a game with contested scrums, the above arrangements do not apply to the game, even if qualified front rowers subsequently become available.