

Nathan Abdelnour
Manager, Match Official Development
Rugby Canada
Victoria Office Extension 302
Cell 250 217 2373
nabdelnour@rugbycanada.ca



TO / À: All Provincial Union Staff, Administrators, Club Executives, Coaches, Players, Match Officials, and Parents

FROM / DE: Nathan Abdelnour – Manager, Match Official Development

CC / CC: Dustin Hopkins – Manager, National Development
Paul Hunter – Manager, National Coach Development

DATE: Thursday, 19 January 2017

SUBJECT/OBJECT: January 1 Implementation of World Rugby 2017 Global Law Trials and New Directives on Contact to the Head

With the announcement from World Rugby of new Global Law Trials being implemented in 2017, Rugby Canada has obtained permission from World Rugby to begin using these law trials as of January 1, 2017. This is due to the fact that because of weather implications across the country, our domestic season is more aligned with the Southern Hemisphere than the Northern Hemisphere. Please find the World Rugby press release here: <http://www.worldrugby.org/news/205710>

Further to the Trials, there has also been a clarification in regards to Law 19 and the application of this law to the dead-ball line and the touch-in-goal line. Please find that clarification here: <http://laws.worldrugby.org/?domain=10&year=2016&clarification=1022>

Additionally, World Rugby has issued new measures in an effort to limit contact to the head. The application of these measures is imperative at all levels of the game, and will be strictly adhered to by Rugby Canada. Please find the World Rugby press release here: <http://www.worldrugby.org/news/213339>

Please see below for further information on each of these initiatives and links to video examples.

Please also find Rugby Canada's presentation on the 2017 Law Application Guideline here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/rdb9vasmo8wriy6/170105%20-%20RC%202017%20Law%20Implementation%20Guide.pptx?dl=0>

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact Nathan Abdelnour (nabdelnour@rugbycanada.ca).

RUGBY CANADA

Toronto Office / Bureau de Toronto
30 Rue East Beaver Creek Road, Suite 110
Richmond Hill, ON CANADA L4B 1J2
Tel / Tél : 905 707 8998
Fax / Téléc : 905 707 9707

Victoria Office / Bureau de Victoria
3024 Rue Glen Lake Road
Langford, BC CANADA V9B 4B4
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Measures to Limit Contact to the Head

Please find video example here: <http://laws.worldrugby.org/?domain=9&guideline=10>

Reckless Tackle

A player is deemed to have made reckless contact during a tackle or attempted tackle or during other phases of the game if in making contact, the player knew or should have known that there was a risk of making contact with the head of an opponent, but did so anyway. This sanction applies even if the tackle starts below the line of the shoulders. This type of contact also applies to grabbing and rolling/ twisting around the head/ neck area even if the contact starts below the line of the shoulders.

Minimum sanction: Yellow card

Maximum sanction: Red card

Accidental Tackle

When making contact with another player during a tackle or attempted tackle or during other phases of the game, if a player makes accidental contact with an opponent's head, either directly or where the tackle starts below the line of the shoulders, the player MAY be sanctioned. This includes situations where the ball carrier slips into the tackle.

Minimum sanction: Penalty

2017 World Rugby Global Law Trials

Please find video examples here: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLs-yAHn_bU7S5riaBxln1zFwuABmladx5

Law 3 Number of Players – The Team

3.6 (Uncontested Scrums)

Add (h) Uncontested scrums as a result of a sending off, temporary suspension or injury must be played with eight players per side.

Reasoning: To discourage teams from going to uncontested scrums.

Law 5 Time

Add to 5.7(e) If a penalty is kicked into touch after time has elapsed without touching another player, the referee allows the throw-in to be taken and play continues until the next time the ball becomes dead.

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Reasoning: To discourage teams from infringing in the dying moments of the game.

Law 8 Advantage

Add to 8.1(a) When there are multiple penalty infringements by the same team, the referee may allow the captain of the non-offending team to choose the most advantageous of the penalty marks.

Reasoning: To discourage repeat offending when advantage is already being played and to reward teams against whom repeat offending has taken place.

Law 9 Method of Scoring

9.A.1 (points values)

Penalty Try. If a player would probably have scored a try but for foul play by an opponent, a penalty try is awarded. No conversion is attempted.

Value: 7 points

Reasoning: To discourage teams from illegally preventing a probable try from being scored while also saving time on the clock by negating the need for a conversion.

Law 19 Touch and Lineout

Add to definitions on page 117:

- A player who is attempting to bring the ball under control is deemed to be in possession of the ball.

Reasoning: This brings into law something that is already applied in practice. It means that a player "juggling" the ball does not have to be in contact with it at the exact moment of touching the touchline or the ground beyond it for the ball to be deemed to be in touch. This makes it easier for the match officials to adjudicate.

Amend eighth definition on page 117:

- If a player jumps from the playing area and knocks the ball back into the playing area (or if that player catches the ball and throws it back into the playing area) before landing in touch or touch-in-goal, play continues regardless of whether the ball reaches the plane of touch.

Reasoning: To simplify law and to increase ball-in-play time.

Add to definitions on page 117:

- If the ball-carrier reaches the plane of touch but returns the ball to the playing area without first landing in touch, play continues.

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Reasoning: To simplify law and to increase ball-in-play time.

Add to sixth definition on page 117:

- In this case, if the ball has passed the plane of touch when it is caught, then the catcher is not deemed to have taken the ball into touch. If the ball has not passed the plane of touch when it is caught or picked up, then the catcher is deemed to have taken the ball into touch, regardless of whether the ball was in motion or stationary.

Reasoning: To simplify law and to increase ball-in-play time.

With the exception of the change to Law 3, which is only for 15s, all these trials apply equally to 15s and rugby sevens.

In addition, the following trials were approved for law changes in sevens only:

- Finals should last no longer than seven minutes each half (rationale is player welfare – the evidence shows that a disproportionate number of injuries take place in the second half of finals. Injuries per minute are higher in the second half of finals as opposed to the first half and throughout normal matches of seven minutes each way.)
- Referee Video Referral (RVR) to be taken out of on-field referees' hands with the ultimate decision being taken by the TMO – often difficult to see the screen and make a call. The RVR protocol remains unchanged. The TMO will be one of the pool of tournament referees
- The restart kick must be taken within 30 seconds of a penalty kick or dropped goal being attempted where the kick is successful or goes dead.
- Teams must form a lineout within 15 seconds from the time the referee indicates the place where the throw-in will take place.
- Teams must be ready to form a scrum within 15 seconds from the time the referee indicates the mark of the scrum.
- A penalty or free-kick must be taken within 30 seconds of being awarded.

Clarification of Law 19

Please find video examples here:

<http://laws.worldrugby.org/?domain=10&year=2016&clarification=1022>

The changes to the touch definitions (Law 19) will also apply to the dead ball line and to the goal line. Also, note that whether the ball is moving or stationary is no longer relevant.

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Three video examples maybe helpful:

<https://youtu.be/TSCC9iHV7cM> = Try

<https://youtu.be/Qh2ABCXf1Z8> = New decision - 22m drop out as kicking team took ball into in goal instead of scrum back to where ball originally kicked from

<http://laws.worldrugby.org/?law=22> see video at 22.9 (c). New Decision - scrum 5m attack instead of 22m drop out

To be applied from: As per global law trial implementation dates:
January 1, 2017 – Southern Hemisphere (**start date in Canada**)
July 1, 2017 – Northern Hemisphere

Sincerely,

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