

**BCRRS OFFICIAL'S GAME MANAGEMENT DOCUMENT**  
**2016-17**

This document contains notes on officiating the game of Rugby. These notes are not intended as a complete description of the Laws of the Game, but rather functional hints to referees on effective refereeing... including interpretations adopted by World Rugby and the BCRRS.

New Law interpretations implemented in September 2016 are highlighted.

Law Trials that have come into use in January 2017. These are highlighted.

World Rugby has published a directive that deals with high tackles. It creates categories of high tackles and sets sanctions for each. These are highlighted.

An edited version the BCRU Rules of Competition, which are pertinent to the role of the referee, is included at the end of this document. The complete version can be found on the BCRU web site.

Law 3 – Number of Players –the team

- 1) Team rosters may now include up to 23 players. If this is so, there must be 3 front row players as replacements and 1 replacement for each front row position. (Note: this rule was in place for the 2016-16 CDI Premier Men's League.
- 2) World Rugby has approved a Law Amendment Trial regarding temporary replacement of players who are suspected of having a head injury. This Law Amendment (Concussion Trial) applies ONLY in matches given approval by the Union with jurisdiction and when trained healthcare professions are in attendance.

Note: Rugby Canada has **NOT** given their approval for this Law Amendment Trial in community level games.

With respect to community level and school games in BC, the key policy is: **In all situations, if there are ANY indications of concussion, a player MUST be removed from play. This is known as Recognize and Remove.**

- 3) Law 3.14 now allows a substituted player (ie. tactical) to return to the game to replace a player who has been injured as the result of foul play.

Law 4 - Players' Clothing

- 1) Law 4.2 has been altered to allow **FEMALE** players to wear cotton blend long tights with single inside leg seam under their shorts and socks. Note: male players may not wear such tights under their shorts.
- 2) The section in Law 4.4 banning a single stud at the toe of the player's boots has been removed.

Law 5 - Time

- 1) Injury stoppages should be confined to serious injuries, **or** when the location of the injured player may interfere with play, **or** when a hooker or prop is unable to take their place in the front row at a scrum.
- 2) 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.
- 3) If the time runs out after a conversion or penalty kick was kicked, the referee will let play restart. The half or the game will end the next time the ball goes dead.
- 4) If the referee allows the re-start, the kick-off must allow the opponents to play the ball. The kick-off cannot go directly into touch or out the back of the opponent's goal area or not travel over the 10m line.

### Law 6 - Match Officials

- 1) Player's repeated questioning of match officials' decisions is not to be tolerated. Referees should make efforts to clarify their decisions for the players BUT any discussion should not delay play.

While referees should strive for a good working relationship with the captains of the teams, there is no entitlement for captains to be continually "in the referee's ear".

Likewise, team coaches or personnel are not to dispute the referee's decisions.

- 2) Where possible, certified referees will be appointed as Assistant Referees {AR} (especially for the Premier men's games).
  - these AR's will signal; touch, touch-in-goal, the success of kicks at goal **and** foul play.
  - they may also provide other assistance to the referee as directed by the referee
  - the primary responsibility for decisions during play remains the referee's
- 3) Where qualified referees are not appointed to be an ARs, each club will appoint a person to be a Touch Judge {TJ}. These people should be experienced and competent and are responsible for signalling touch, touch-in-goal, the success of kicks at goal.... but **NOT** foul play.

### Law 8 - Advantage

- 1) The fullest possible use of both territorial and tactical advantage is essential to maintain continuity of play.
- 2) Advantage **must** be real and clear and not just an opportunity for advantage.
  - while waiting for an advantage the referee must not allow excessive pressure to be put on the players.
- 3) It is acceptable for referees to play advantages of different durations.
  - ie. for infractions that would result in penalty or free-kick (longer) or scrum (shorter).
  - Referees may take into account a number of general conditions when assessing advantage.
    - ie. safety, temper of game, weather, options available or denied to the non-offending team, and the effect of the offense on the game.
  - it is acceptable to allow the non-offending team to choose not to gain advantage... either verbally or by "knocking the ball on"
- 4) When playing advantage, the referee must communicate this with:
  - the arm signal (hold sign for approx. 5 seconds) and
  - verbally... the standard phrase is "advantage" + team colour/name.
  - referees may verbally indicate if the advantage is "penalty advantage" or "scrum advantage"
    - the referee can also show this with an arm signal similar to the arm signal for a penalty or free kick
  - When the referee decides that advantage is over, they should verbalize that decision ie. "advantage over".
- 5) In cases of foul play, advantage can be played BUT it must be clear and of great benefit...
  - ie. there is a definite chance that a try will be scored.
  - If advantage is played after foul play, the referee should, at the next opportunity, give an admonishment to the player/s concerned or apply a yellow or red card.
- 6) Referees should be vigilant for the offending team committing a 2<sup>nd</sup> offense to prevent the 1<sup>st</sup> advantage.
  - such cynical play should be dealt with as unfair play
- 7) 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.

### Law 9 - Goal Kicks after a Try

- 1) Law 9.B.1 states the kicker may put the ball on the ground, sawdust or a tee only. Also the kickers must take the kick within 90 seconds following the scoring of a try. If not taken within the time limit the kick will be disallowed.
- 2) Law 9.B.2 states that try scorers may decline the conversion kick. They must notify the referee by saying "no kick" after the awarding of the try and before time runs out in the half or game (ie. clock to 00:00). Once the decision is made to decline the conversion, the referee will award the restart kick.

- 3) **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

#### Law 10 - Foul Play

- 1) Along with the awarding of a penalty kick to their opponents, a player who breaches Law 10 is to be:
  - admonished
  - OR**
  - cautioned and temporarily suspended (yellow card + sin bin)
  - OR**
  - sent off (red card)
  - Referees have discretion when choosing which of these actions to take but must choose a sanction in keeping with the severity of the foul play. In no way should referees appear to condone or minimize foul play.
  - Referees are to focus on the actual dangerous acts without considering the intent of the offender. ie. though accidental or clumsy dangerous play should still be penalized.
- 2) Match officials need to recognize the need for extreme accuracy when adjudging foul play.
  - ie. get the right players for the right acts
- 3) Dangerous tackles (some examples: swinging arm [clothes line], late, early, above the line of the shoulders, tackling an opponent who is in the air, tackling with no arms, charging into players, spear tackles) are to be dealt with very severely.
- 4) Referees are to take severe action with acts of stamping and trampling. For deliberate stamping/trampling on an opponent's leg or arm joints or (especially!) head, a red card is likely the correct sanction .
- 5) Referees need to deal firmly with retaliators while also dealing with the initial offender.
  - this can be difficult if the 1<sup>st</sup>, initiating offense was not seen by the referee
  - the referee may only deal with observed offenses BUT good game management would require that the referee talk to a suspected initiator, with the intent of preventing any possible re-occurrence.
- 6) The lifting of players in the tackle and then either driving or dropping them to the ground so that their upper body or head hits the ground while their feet are still off of the ground is dangerous and must be dealt with severely.
  - in cases of a clear "spear tackle", the appropriate sanction would be a yellow or red card
  - referees need to distinguish a "spear tackle" (card) from a clumsy or unskilled tackle (penalty)
- 7) Dangerous acts committed on ball catchers who are in the air must be dealt with strictly and harshly
  - players from opposing sides may contest the ball in the air and the inevitable contact with each other is permissible.. ie. everyone is playing the ball
- 8) "handing off" is defined as the action of fending off an opponent with the palm of a hand
  - this means it is legal for a ball carrier to hold, push or otherwise obstruct an opponent who is attempting to tackle them
  - referees need to be vigilant on instances where the ball carrier contacts the tackler's face while fending off
  - this action could be dangerous play (especially in age grade or school games)
- 9) The grasping and twisting of the neck and/or head area of an opponent during a tackle or a ruck or maul should be regarded as serious dangerous foul play. ie. while attempting a "gator roll"
  - in clear cases, the appropriate sanction would be a yellow or red card

#### **10) High Tackles are now to seen in 2 types: accidental and reckless.**

##### **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**

### 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 (for moderate force and impact)

Maximum sanction: Red card (for severe force and impact)

### Law 10.2 - Unfair Play

- 1) Match officials must judge the unfair actions of players in relationship to their effects on their opponents.
  - ie. slowing down quick ball, intentional knocking on, stopping quick taps, throwing the ball away, etc.
- 2) Consistency in the tolerance levels of referees is required. Referees must differentiate between offenses that are cynical and those that are clumsy or unskilled.
- 3) Serious or repeated cynical offenses require a caution and temporary suspension (sin bin)
  - these offenses could include:
    - One cynical offense by a player that prevents a score... even without previous warnings
    - A player who re-offends repeatedly (guideline for top matches is 3 offenses)
    - Several members of a team who commit similar offenses. (the guideline for top matches is 4 offenses)
- 4) Repeated team infringements can be:
  - A number of similar offenses in a short period of time
  - A pattern of play ... without time limit... ie. offenses just occurring close to the goal line.
- 5) Repeated infringements by an individual are without time limit.
- 6) Law 10.2 (d) now makes it illegal for a player to "simulate" that they have been subjected to any infringement by an opponent... Note: not limited to foul play. (Sanction Penalty Kick)

### Law 10.2 - Penalty Try

- 1) If a player commits an offense that "prevents a try that would probably otherwise have been scored" [Law 10.2 (a)], the referee may award the non-offending team a penalty try.
- 2) If the offense triggering the penalty try was foul play, the offending player must also be temporarily suspended {yellow card}.

### Law 10.6 - Cards

- 1) A Red Card will be used to signify that a player has been "sent off".
- 2) A Yellow Card will be used to signify that a player has been "cautioned and temporarily suspended".
  - "sin binned" for ten minutes playing time (not to include half-time, stoppages for injury etc.).
  - the player must stand alone behind their opponents' dead-ball line, or with a designated fourth official.
  - they must not re-enter play until they are permitted to do so by the referee
  - they should report to the referee before resuming play to be remind them of that 2<sup>nd</sup> yellow = red
- 3) If a player is temporarily suspended, the referee must send (within 48 hours after the match) a report to the BCRU. An on-line form is available on the BCRU web site.
  - the ejection report must give the name of the player, their team's name and the reason for the temporary suspension (ie Law reference)
- 4) If a player is sent off, the referee must send (within 48 hours after the match) an ejection report to the BCRU. An on-line form is available on the BCRU web site.
  - the ejection report must give the name of the player sent off, their team's name, a clear, factual description of the incident, the reasons the player was sent off, any previous warnings give to the player (or their team) and the player's response to being sent off

- 5) If a player is sent off on the recommendation of an AR, both the referee and the AR must send (within 48 hours after the match) an ejection report to the BCRU. An on-line form is [available on the BCRU web site](#).

#### Law 11 - Off-side in Open Play

- 1) When a ball is kicked in open play, referees are to be strict with members of the kicker's team who are offside because they are in front of the kicker
  - these off-side players must not be allowed to move up the field until put on side by the actions of a teammate or an opponent
  - these off-side players must not be allowed to interfere with an opponent wishing to take a quick throw-in. The mere presence of off-side players in field from the opponent can be considered interference with the throw-in. NOTE: off-side players are not put on-side by the ball being in touch.
- 2) Players who are off-side and in front of a line 10m from the opponent catching the ball (or where the ball lands) MUST retreat toward their goal line. While retreating they may be put on-side by a teammate. While retreating the off-side players must not obstruct an opponent or interfere with play.
- 3) When a player is penalised for being offside in general play, the non-offending team chooses either a penalty kick where the player was off-side or a scrum at the place where the offending team last played the ball. If it was last played in that team's in-goal, the scrum is formed 5 metres from the goal line.

#### Law 12 - Ball Ripped from Ball Carrier

- 1) It is **NOT** a knock-on if a defender deliberately rips the ball or knocks the ball from an opponent's hands and the ball goes forward from the ball carrier's hands. However, it **IS** a knock on if a player in tackling an opponent makes contact with the ball and the ball goes forward from the ball carriers hands.
- 2) If a team knocks-on or throws forward and the ball goes directly into touch, the non-offending team has options: scrum where the knock-on or throw forward occurred OR lineout (including quick throw-in) where the ball crossed the touchline.

#### Law 15 - Tackle: Ball Carrier Brought to Ground

- NOTE: the following Laws apply to the tackle and not to a ruck that may form afterwards
- 1) Playing the ball as a "squeeze or turtle ball" is legal in senior rugby (but NOT in U-19 and younger). However, the ball must be played immediately and not delayed under the ball carrier's body.
  - 2) Accuracy in the referee's decision-making is vital as this is an area of high penalty count and can affect the outcome of matches.
    - referees need to use appropriate pace, positioning and running lines so they have a clear view of the tackle
  - 3) Sequence of priorities:
    - 1st: The "tacklers"
      - players who cause the ball carrier to go to ground:
        - ie. the tackler {off their feet} or assisting tackler {on their feet}
        - demonstrate release of the ball and ball carrier and movement away from the ball. ie. show "daylight"
        - the referee may verbalize "tackle".
        - the standard phrases are "tackler release" or "tackler away" or team colour and/or player number(s).
      - 2nd: the tackled player
        - play (pass, release, place, push, roll) the ball and move away from the ball.
        - the standard phrase is "play the ball" or team colour and/or player number.
      - 3rd: arriving players
        - enter the tackle "phase" through the gate and remain on their feet.
        - note: this restriction also applies to the "assisting tacklers"
  - 4) A key principle is that the ball carrier must be given an opportunity to play the ball
  - 5) Referees are to have zero tolerance for tacklers who do not release the ball carrier and then move away.
  - 6) A tackler who regains their feet is obliged to release the tackled player and ball before he attempts to play the ball.

- 7) The tackler must release the ball carrier before any other teammates try to gain possession of the ball
- 8) Where there is a “double tackle”; the role of the “assisting tackler” (who remains on their feet) is important, as that player is likely to impede the playing of the ball.
- they are also required to release the tackled player before playing the ball.
  - "assisting tackler/s" must move around so that they come through the gate before playing the ball
  - if they loiter in their opponent's side of the tackle area they are to be penalized.
- 9) The ball must be available immediately irrespective of body position of the tackled ball carrier.
- referees must not allow a ball carrier in an isolated or poor body position to prevent defenders from legally competing for the ball
  - referee are to be strict with a ball carrier who continues to lie in a “C” position with their backs to the opposition after they have released the ball and a ruck has formed... they often prevent a counter-rucking team from getting possession of the ball
- 10) To create the “not release” penalty the defender must have firm grip on the ball, remain on their feet and survive the collision with the opponents.
- 11) Players must not intentionally go to ground over the ball or onto ball carriers and seal off the ball.
- If they accidentally fall over the ball, they must immediately move away from the ball and tackled player.
  - Players attempting to gain possession of the ball must do so while supporting their body weight
    - they may not put their hands on the ground, lean on players on the ground... aka “bridging”
  - Players must not “tractor”; cleaning out by moving over the ball on all fours
    - they are guilty of obstructing opposition players from getting to the ball.
  - attacking players must not grasp the tackled ball carrier’s uniform for support
    - this prevents the tackled player from moving away from the ball and making them liable to penalty

Referees are required to be vigilant to ensure that both teams are treated equally in the contest for possession.

- 12) Arriving players of either team are allowed to “drive out” or “forklift” opponents with their arms and upper bodies.
- they must arrive through the “gate”
  - no shoulder charge
  - if a player, having driven out the opponent, ends up on the ground, they should not be penalized as they were taking a positive action to free up the ball and did not deliberately fall on the ball.
    - ie a player affecting a low clean out is not sealing off – provided they remove the opponent and roll away.
  - the clearing player must be on their feet when they make contact and seek to drive upwards.
  - attacking players who move beyond the ball must not obstruct defenders beyond 1m of the tackle.
    - ie. must not block defenders who are moving toward the tackle zone.
- 13) When the ball is no longer in close proximity (1m) to a tackle, any player is allowed to play the ball from any direction.
- in practical terms, if the ball is within a full arms length of the tackled player, it is still deemed to be within close proximity and players must enter the tackle zone through their gates. Conversely if the ball bounces away from the tackle area, any player may play the ball... there is no “off-side’ line at the tackle.
- 14) The tackle has finished when an arriving player (coming through the gate) gains possession of the ball
- that player can then go to ground (intentionally or accidentally), providing they do so outside of close proximity (1m) to the tackle. It is a penalty offense to go ground in close proximity to the tackle.

#### Law 16 - Ruck

- 1) Where possible the referee is to give a verbal indication that a ruck has been formed so that players, who do not have their hands on the ball after a tackle in a legal manner, can release the ball.
- the standard phrase is “ruck” with possible addition of “hands off” or “hands away”.
- 2) It has been ruled that, any player after a tackle who has complied with all aspects of tackle Law, and has the ball in their hands (while it is still on the ground) PRIOR to a ruck being formed, may continue to keep their hands on the ball and attempt to win it even after the ruck has formed.
- 3) Referees need to be aware of which team won the initial collision as the ruck was formed... ie. if there is a strong defender presence, the ball carrier is more likely to offend to prevent lose of the ball (and vice versa).

- 4) Unplayable rucks are acceptable if there is no offense or the referee is in doubt as to the offender.
- unplayable rucks should be whistled quickly.
  - a large number of unplayable rucks indicate there likely undetected infractions
- 5) At a ruck the referee must ensure:
- the tackled players and tacklers comply with law so that a rucking platform can be established.
    - This will encourage both teams to enter into a contest.
  - an indiscriminate pile-up is to be stopped as soon as it develops.
  - the standard phrase is "stay on your feet" + team colour and/or player number.
  - any player who wilfully falls to the ground in a ruck is liable for penalty.
- 6) Players bound in the ruck are not to handle the ball in a way that prevents a contest for possession.
- Referees may allow the tackled player to stabilize the ball in the ruck.
    - they may not prevent the opponents from getting possession or touch the ball again after releasing it.
  - Referees may allow players to use their hands to re-possession the ball in a situation where it is clearly won.
- 7) Players joining in front of the ruck offside line (the hindmost foot of the last player) or who enter into a ruck without binding onto a player already in the ruck, are liable to penalty.
- 8) Ruck offside lines can change frequently depending on how long the ruck lasts:
- ruck offside lines are to be monitored closely for BOTH attackers (as pillars) and defenders
- 9) All players in a ruck must be genuinely bound.
- using the whole arm... from shoulder to hand
  - the standard phrases are "binding" and "back foot" + team colour and/or player number.
- 10) Ruck "loiterers" who reduce options or deliberately infringe are to be dealt with firmly.
- 11) Referees are to have **zero tolerance** for players who charge into rucks without binding or clear out opponents not involved in the ruck.
- 12) The definition of rucking states that rucking is the using of the feet to try to win or keep possession of the ball.
- players' safety is of primary importance and players are to ruck for the ball without committing foul play.
  - any rucking action is to be both horizontal and backwards movement of the sole of the boot... NOT vertical
  - While incidental contact of boots to bodies during rucking is acceptable, referees are to take more severe action with acts of stamping and trampling... especially on legs, arms or the head
    - in cases of a clear stamping and trampling the appropriate sanction would be a yellow or red card
- 13) Once the ball has been clearly won and available to be played, the referee will say "use it".
- The team in possession of the ball has 5 seconds to play the ball.
  - If the ball is not played in that time, there will be a scrum with the opponents having the put-in.
- 14) The ball is out once it is clear of all the arms or legs of the players in the ruck OR when a player (usually the #9) **lifts** the ball to pass it.
- In situations where it is not clear, the referee may give a verbal indication, "still in", "not out" OR "play on" or "ball is out" when the ball can be played.
- 15) Players who interfere with the opponent acting in the ball winning scrumhalf position is to be dealt with severely.
- 16) Referees are reminded that the sequence of tackle → ruck will happen very quickly and many times in a short time.
- if the ball is still contestable (ie 50:50 ball) the referee is to be quite demanding of players conforming to the laws.

## Law 17 - Maul

- 1) The referee should, where possible, communicate when a maul has actually been formed.
- 2) At the beginning of a maul, the defenders must be able to “attack” the ball carrier. They must not be blocked out by the ball carrier’s teammates. The defenders can “tackle” the ball carrier during a small window of time at the beginning of the maul.
  - This situation often occurs at the lineout when the catcher of the ball can be “pancaked” immediately.
  - Once the maul is properly formed, tackling the ball carrier is actually collapsing the maul.
- 3) **Once a maul is formed, the ball can only be moved backwards “hand-to-hand”**
  - ie the ball carrier may not slide to the back of the maul (sanction penalty kick).
- 4) **Referees are to be vigilant with ANY players who do not join a maul from behind or alongside their hind-most teammate in the maul.**
  - ie attacking players as well as defending players.
- 5) An unintentionally collapsed maul (the ball becomes unplayable without any infractions) is not to be officiated as a ruck unless the ball is clearly released on the ground.
  - a scrum is called and the put-in is awarded to the team that did NOT have possession of the ball prior to the formation of the maul...ie apply the “use or loose it... turn over” NOTE: the exception in Law 17.6 (h)
- 6) All players in a maul must be genuinely bound (by at least one whole arm) or caught up between bodies.
  - it is common for players to wriggle “through the middle” of a maul and end up on their opponent’s side of the ball. This is legal and such players do not have to leave the maul and re-enter from the back
  - players who become detached from the maul must move behind their offside line before rejoining
  - the standard phrase is “back around” + team colour and/or player number
  - players are not be allowed to slide along the side of the maul, ie by slipping their binding
- 7) A ball carrier at the back of a maul must remain bound correctly (one whole arm), otherwise the ball is out and the maul is over.
  - if the ball carrier becomes detached and then re-binds to the maul, the players in front of the ball carrier are be guilty of obstructing defenders... this is a “truck and trailer” situation.
- 8) It is considered dangerous play to intentionally collapse a maul.
  - If the ball carrier in a maul goes to ground, including being on one or both knees or sitting and the ball is not immediately available, the referee will order a scrum .
  - Once the ball carrier has gone to ground, if the ball is available to be played the referee will call “use it”. The team in possession will have 5 seconds to play the ball. If the ball is not played, the referee will call for a scrum. The team not in possession in the maul will have the put-in.
- 9) When a maul has stopped from going forward (ie. moves backwards or sideways) it may be restarted once, providing this happens within 5 seconds of the 1<sup>st</sup> stoppage.
  - the standard phrases are “that’s 1”.
  - After 5 seconds of the maul still being stationary, the referee will say “play it” or “use it” + team colour to signal the ball must be played from the maul.
  - if the ball is not played from the maul, the referee will order a scrum with the put-in going to the team who did not take the ball into the maul.
  - if (during the 5 second time period) the maul moves forward again, it may continue until it stops moving forward (for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time) the referee will stop play and award a scrum to the team who did not take the ball into the original maul.
- 10) Maul offside lines are to be monitored closely for **both** the defenders and the team in possession of the ball
  - attackers can be in front of their off-side line when creating a blocking barrier
  - Maul “loiterers” who reduce options or deliberately infringe are to be dealt with firmly.
  - the standard phrase is “backfoot” + team colour and/or player number.
- 11) Referees are to have **zero tolerance** for players who charge into mauls, without binding (shoulder charge) or who clear out opponents not involved in maul.
- 12) If the players of the defending team in a maul **voluntarily** withdraw from the maul, the maul is still in effect and all relevant Laws apply.... ie offside Laws

- 13) If defending players originally engaged in a maul are removed by the attacking team so no defending players remain attached to the maul, then the maul is over.
- the ball carrier can be tackled.
  - in this case, the attacking players are liable to penalty if they are preventing opponents in the maul from tackling the ball carrier... it's a "truck and trailer" situation
  - to lessen the likelihood of an obstruction penalty referees are encouraged to say "maul over" OR "use it" and cause the team with the ball to play it.
- 14) Players who interfere with the player acting in scrumhalf position of the team winning the ball, are to be dealt with severely.

#### Law 19 - Lineout

- 1) If a team passes or plays the ball back into their own 22m area and then kicks directly to touch there is no gain in ground. ie. the lineout will take place opposite where the player kicked the ball.
- this includes teams who are awarded a free kick outside the 22m area and move behind the mark into their 22m area.
  - this is cancelled if a tackle, ruck or maul takes place inside the 22m area.
  - referees are encouraged to communicate "taken back" if ball is played back into a team's own 22m area.
- 2) If the ball goes into touch as a result of a knock-on or forward pass, the non-offending team may choose to restart play with a scrum or a lineout. They can elect to take a quick throw-in as their lineout.
- 3) The team throwing in the ball decides the maximum number of players in the lineout.
- 4) If players do not form a lineout when the opposition players are at the line of touch they render themselves liable to free kick for voluntarily not forming the lineout.
- referees are to manage this situation and attempt to get teams to form lineout without delay.
  - referees are encouraged to have the defending players set in their proper positions first... the attacking team is then more likely to set a proper gap.
- 5) Lineouts are to be clearly set on the line of touch and with a clear gap before the ball is thrown in.
- Referees are to deal with a team that forms up away from the line of touch and then move towards the line of touch with the ball thrown in as soon as they reach the line of touch... ie lineout is not set.
  - Referees must not slow down every lineout in order to set the gap, line of touch, etc.
  - set expectations early and manage compliance
- 6) If a team chooses to have a receiver at a lineout, that player must be at least 2 metres away from the lineout towards that player's goal line and be between 5 and 15 metres from the touchline when the lineout begins (ie ball leaves the thrower's hands).
- Law 19.8 (i) has been re-written to state that the once the lineout begins, the receiver may move into the lineout and do any action that the players in the lineout can do.
  - if the receiver enters into the lineout **before** the ball is thrown in, a player from the lineout must move into the receiver's position before the ball is thrown... ie get 2m back from the lineout. (Law 19.8[k])
- 7) The team not throwing in at a lineout must have a player standing between the touchline and the 5-metre line on that team's side of the line of touch when the lineout is formed... "hooker position"
- that player must stand at least two metres from the five metres line and 2 metres from the line of touch.
- 8) Player movement in the lineout prior to the throw-in is allowed, but must not result in closing of the gap.
- the standard phrase is "keep the gap".
- 9) If players move in-field beyond the 15m line and the ball does not go beyond the 15m line, these players are liable to penalty for offside.

- 10) At the lineout throw-in, the ball is to be thrown-in without delay, from behind the touchline, and straight along the line of touch
- the throw-in must be straight enough to allow a fair contest for the ball.
  - it is sufficient that the ball is thrown within a band two ball widths wide along the line-of-touch
  - if the defenders do not contest the throw-in, the referee may consider materiality to the straightness of the throw-in. However, the throw-in must still be credible.
  - the thrower must not "balk" the throw.
- 11) Players may pre-grip their teammate before the ball is thrown in
- 12) Players are able to lift team-mates in the lineout.
- players must wait until the ball has left the hands of the player throwing it in before lifting their team-mate.
  - the lifting (and/or supporting) players may not support the jumping team-mate below the shorts from behind or below the thighs from the front.
- 13) Referees are to be aware of early jumping by the defenders and the effects this has on the throwing team... ie. if the throwing team has to change the target or path of the throw-in.
- if the team throwing in wins the ball, advantage will be played and the offending team will be spoken to at the next available opportunity
  - materiality and management are the keys to dealing with this issue.
- 14) A player must not jump or be lifted or supported before the ball has left the hands of the player throwing in.
- ie referees are not to allow "dart boarding" : throwing to a jumper already boosted.
- 15) Dangerous acts committed on jumpers in the air are to be dealt with strictly and harshly.
- an early tackle of a player in the air is a foul play offense that can result in the usual range of sanctions
  - players from opposing sides may contest the ball in the air but must not interfere with their opponents
  - the defending lineout must not drive or barge the jumper and/or their supports until the jumper returns to ground.
  - Law 19.10 (k) clarifies defending at a lineout. A player who gains possession of the ball (by either; jumping and returning to ground OR without jumping), may be tackled as long as the tackle occurs before a maul is formed.
- 16) If the team in possession of the ball groups together with the intention of forming a maul and their opponents do **not** make contact with them, no maul is formed.
- World Rugby has provided the following clarification and instructions to referees in relation to situations where the defending team decides not to contest the ball in the air, nor on the ground. This is to clarify the obligations for both defenders/attackers.
- a) Defending team must not step off the lineout before lineout is over. This is a penalizable offence.
  - b) The (designated) defending player who wishes to enter the opposition's side cannot overstep the line of touch until the receiver has passed the ball back, or when ball goes through line of touch.
  - c) If the ball is moved to a position behind the front player with the lineout not yet over, and access to the ball carrier is blocked, the referee will award a scrum for "accidental offside" rather than a penalty kick of obstruction.
  - d) If the ball is moved to a position behind the front player with the lineout over, and access to the ball carrier is blocked, this is a penalizable offence for obstruction.
  - e) If or when a maul is formed by a (designated) defender, their teammates must join the maul from their own side and not come in from the sides.
  - f) If the ball transferred or not, only the ball carrier can be tackled but it must be a legal tackle.
  - g) It is not permitted for the ball carrier's teammates to pull in the opposition players in order to form a maul. Only the ball carrier can set up a maul by grabbing an opponent.

- 17) If a team is awarded a penalty kick or a free kick at a lineout, they may choose to:
- take the kick (on 15m line)
- OR**
- have a scrum (on 15m line)
- OR**
- have a lineout (at the original line of touch, their throw-in)
- 18) A player who is attempting to bring the ball under control is deemed to be in possession of the ball.
- 19) 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.
- 20) If the ball-carrier reaches the plane of touch but returns the ball to the playing area without first landing in touch, play continues.
- 21) 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.
- 22) The Law Trials mentioned in 18) to 21) also apply to the goal line, dead-ball line, touch-in-goal line and the 22m line.

#### Law 19.2 - Quick Throw-in

- 1) When taking a quick throw-in, a player is required to throw the ball straight along the line of touch OR toward their own goal line.
- the ball must travel in the air beyond the 5m line
  - a quick throw-in can only take place between the line of touch (where the full lineout would be taken) and the player's goal line.
- 2) Quick throw-in requirements:
- the same ball that went into touch must be used,
  - thrown in before a lineout is formed... ie there are 2 players from each team in the lineout.
  - thrown in without being touched by a non-player ... ie. the player throwing it in must be the only one to have touched it.
  - if any of these situations are breached, play begins with a full lineout with the same team throwing in.
- 3) An incorrect quick throw-in occurs if:
- The ball is thrown towards the opponents goal line, or
  - The ball is thrown in ahead of the line of touch, or
  - The ball is thrown in on or behind the goal line, or
  - The ball touches the ground or a player before reaching the 5 metre line, or
  - The thrower steps into the field-of-play when throwing the ball.
- If any of the conditions occur the non-offending team has options of: lineout OR scrum on 15m line where the quick throw-in was attempted.
- 4) Quick throw-ins are to be encouraged and referees are to be vigilant with actions by players that prevent them
- ie. by throwing the ball away, handing it to a spectator, standing within the 5m line or holding on to the ball.
  - These actions are to be penalized by means of a PK on the 15m line.

## Law 20 - Scrum

- 1) Before the game's kick off, the referee is to meet with all front row players and the scrumhalves and the substitutes (from both teams) and explain the scrum management process, engagement cadence and expectations of the players.
- 2) The current Law Amendment Trial for scrums continues for 2016-17..."Crouch, Bind, Set"

The procedure for creating a scrum is:

- a) Referee makes a clear the mark where the scrum is to form

- scrums assemble at the mark.
  - both hookers should place their right foot just to their left of the mark
    - this creates proper spacing and an off-set (ie front rows will not be head to head)
  - players must be assembled and ready for the referee to call "crouch" within 30 seconds from the time the referee makes the mark. (Sanction: free kick)

- b) referee says "CROUCH" (loudly and clearly)

- when the front rows crouch the players must be at the same height and with their shoulders above their hips
- the front row players must have their heads beside the heads of their opponents (ie. be "ear to ear")
  - there is to be space between the opposing front row's shoulders
- the shoulders of the front row must be clearly visible (ie. not covered by the arm of a teammate)
- referees are to insist on the binding requirements for loose forwards, including no.8's prior to engagement (ie no #8 must have their shoulders engaged with the 2<sup>nd</sup> row and not "slingshot").
- the players must be stable, stationary before the referee proceeds
- if the teams are not correctly ready... the referee is to blow their whistle

- c) referee says "BIND" (loudly and clearly)

- using their outside arm, each prop binds to their opposing prop
  - the usual pattern of binding is to be used [see 4), 5) and 6) below]
- the players must be stable, stationary before the referee proceeds
- if the teams are not correctly ready... the referee is to blow their whistle

- d) referee says "SET" (loudly and clearly)

- the scrums come together
- zero tolerance on early engagement.
- the angle of engagement of the players is to be square and forward. Shoulders must be above hips.
- props must maintain the proper binding
- scrum to be square with no twisting or lateral movement before the ball is put in
- scrum half must stand on mid-line of the scrum ready to put ball in
- if the teams are not correctly ready... the referee is to blow their whistle
- ONLY when they are satisfied that the scrum is stable, square and stationary, the referee will give an indication that the ball may be put into the scrum.
  - the indication that the ball may be put into the scrum will be:
    - when the referee is on the non-put in side of the scrum, referees are to make eye contact and point to the scrum half .
    - when the referee is on the put-in side of the scrum, referees are to make eye contact and point towards the tunnel.
  - it is recommended by Rugby Canada that referees NOT initiate any physical contact with the scrum half as an indication for the ball to be put in the scrum.

KEY: Players required to perform an action with each of the steps in the three-call sequence. Scrums must be square and stable before the referee makes the next call in the three-call sequence.

- 3) Referees are to remind the scrumhalf (early and often) of their obligations at the put-in.

- the ball is put-in with its major axis parallel to the ground and to the touch-line,
- the ball is put-in straight and without undue delay along a middle line between the two front rows
  - some scrumhalves tap the arm of their hooker before putting the ball in... this is not undue delay
- there must be a fair contest for the ball (ie. the feed must be credible)
  - referees must both manage or penalize as necessary.
    - sanction is free kick for crooked put-in
    - repeated infringement can increase sanction to penalty kick and/or yellow card

- referees to check for continued binding and proper angle of front row
- referees to check for continued back row binding (no early release or binding on front row)
- non-feeding scrum half is not to disrupt ball clearance unfairly.

4) Props are to be "square", pushing straight and level, and binding correctly according to Law.

5) The loose-head prop MUST:

- bind with their left arm inside the right arm of their opponent (tight head prop).
- grip the back or side of their opponent's jersey with their left hand.
- not grip the opponent's arm, jersey sleeve or collar.
- not exert any downward pressure.

6) The tight head prop MUST:

- bind with their right arm outside the left arm of their opponent (loose head prop).
- grip the back or side of their opponent's jersey with their right hand.
- not grip the opponent's arm, jersey sleeve or collar.
- not exert any downward pressure.

7) Props that bind with their elbow pointing at the ground, their hand on the ground, or the loosehead prop with their hand or arm on their thigh are liable for penalty.

8) When a scrum collapses or a player stands up in a scrum (and their feet are on the ground)... advantage may now be played (if it is safe to do so)

- ie advantage cannot be played if a player in a scrum is forced upwards and their feet are off the ground.
- if there is a safety issue, play must be stopped immediately
- if there is no advantage or if it is unsafe to play-on:
  - a new scrum is formed at the place of the stoppage.
  - the team who originally threw in the ball shall do so again.

9) Wheeling the scrum IS legal in senior rugby (but not in U-19 and younger). However players are NOT allowed to pull on opponents to achieve the wheel.

- After ball in, scrum must go forward first before initiating any wheel. Wheels need to come from dominance
- If the scrum wheels quickly, it is most likely that scrummers are pulling on, stepping back from or "walking around" their opponents and should be penalized.
- Once the middle line (between the front rows) of the scrum has gone through 90 degrees, play must be stopped and a new scrum ordered.
  - the team who put the ball into the original scrum shall put in the ball. ie there is to be no turn-over
- to reduce the number of resets, as the scrum approaches 90 degrees, the referee is encouraged to say "use it" or "play it".

10) If the scrum becomes stationary and does not start moving again without delay, and the ball is at the #8's feet, the referee will call "use it". The ball must be played immediately. (sanction: re-set scrum, opponent's put-in)

11) All players in the scrum must stay bound until the scrum ends.

- the standard phrase is "back rows stay bound" + team colour and/or player number.
- the No. 8 may lift their head provided that one arm up to the shoulder is completely bound to a lock.

12) At the scrum, players who are not in the scrum and not the team's scrumhalf, must be back 5 metres from the hindmost feet of the scrum.

13) Scrumhalf position at scrum:

a) As the scrum is forming:

- the scrumhalf putting in the ball must be close to the tunnel prepared to put the ball in
- the scrum half who is not throwing the ball into the scrum must either take up a position:
  - at the same side of the scrum as the scrum half putting in the ball,

**OR**

- 5 metres back from the hindmost player in that player's scrum.
  - they must remain behind this offside line until the scrum is over

b) once the ball has been won by a team:

- the scrum half of the team that won possession
  - must move so that one foot is behind a line through the ball
  - must remain close to the scrum (1m) , except to receive a pass during a “pick up”
- the scrum half of the team that does not win possession (if they started beside the scrum)
  - may follow the ball in the scrum providing they do not put either foot in front of the ball
  - they must remain within 1m of the scrum
  - they may not move into the space between the attacking flanker and the #8

**OR**

- may move behind the scrum
  - an offside line runs through the hindmost foot of that scrumhalf’s scrum.
  - the scrumhalf may not cross in front of that off-side line on either side of the scrum
  - they then can move across the field while remaining behind that offside line

- 14) The scrum half (or other player performing this role) is to be allowed to handle the ball while the scrum is taking place in order to clear the ball (from feet or legs), as long as they do so without delay.
- once the scrum half is lifted the ball in 2 hands to pass it, the scrum is over.
  - otherwise, the ball is out of the scrum when it is clear of the feet/legs (ie. if the ball had eyes and could “see” the sky), or the last player in the scrum (ie. #8) has the ball at their feet and unbinds from the scrum.
- 15) For penalties given following a scrum collapse, the mark is at the centre of scrum at the middle line. Quick taps can be taken providing the kick is taken either through the mark or in a line through and behind the mark.
- referee may delay the taking of the penalty kick for safety reasons.
    - such as: an injury to a player, or a situation where the referee believes an injury may have occurred.
- 16) Uncontested scrums as a result of a sending off, temporary suspension or injury must be played with eight players per side

#### Law 21 – Penalty and Free Kicks

- 1) If a quick penalty kick or free kick is taken from the wrong place, the referee will order the kick taken again.
- 2) There are restrictions to scoring a drop goal following a free kick. See Law 21.6 (b)
- 3) If any penalty kick or free kick is awarded within 5m of a goal line, the mark will be 5m from the goal line...
  - ie PK or FK for defenders as well as attackers.

#### Law 22 - In-Goal Infractions

- 1) The mark for scrums, penalty kicks or free kicks awarded for an infringement that took place in the in-goal area, is in the field of play
  - 5m from the goal line in line with where the infringement took place.
  - players may move into their in-goal area to take the kick

Excerpts from the **BC Rugby Rules of Competition** (September 24, 2012)

**Note: these are currently under review**

### Kick Off times

- 1) Matches are to start at the scheduled time.
  - a) these are usually 10:00am, 11:30am , 1:00pm, 2:30pm
  - b) When daylight savings is in effect CDI Premier Men's games will kick-off at 2:45pm (Div 1 game at 1:00pm)  
When standard time is in effect CDI Premier Men's games will kick-off at 2:30pm (Div 1 game at 12:45pm)
  - c) teams are to give the referee allocators ample notice of changes to the scheduled kick off time
  - d) in the case of unforeseen delays (ie weather, travel delays), referees may delay the kick off.
- e) if there is a delay in starting (or during) a game AND there is a later game scheduled game on the same pitch, the first game is to be reduced in length for each half of the match, so that it can end 90 minutes after its scheduled kick off time OR end 5 minutes before the second games scheduled kick off time.

This requirement may be waived IF both teams in the later game agree.

- 2) If a team does not have at least 12 players ready to play at the scheduled (or delayed) kick off time, it will default the game. Exception: in Div 3 men and Div 2 women, the team will be charged with a loss. If agreed to by the referee and teams, the game can still be played (with reduced numbers or lending of players) as an exhibition.

### Field Set up

- 1) The home Club is responsible for the lining and flagging of the field in accordance with the Laws.
- 2) The goal posts are to be padded to a height of not less than 1.5 meters.
- 3) At **all games**, appropriate spectator restraints must be in place on both sides of the field. The minimum standard for this is roping placed a safe distance (3m) back from the touchline and from dead-ball line to dead-ball line on both sides of the pitch.
  - The match referee has the discretion to waive this requirement.
- 4) The field must have the risks from obvious dangers reduced and appropriately dealt with.
  - ie pads on drainage grates.
- 5) In the event that, the facilities are deemed by the match referee to be clearly unsatisfactory, the game cannot start {by BCRU Rule of Competition and also by World Rugby Law 1.6 [b]}. If the deficiencies are corrected no later than 15 minutes after the scheduled kickoff time, the match may proceed. If not corrected, the game will be abandoned and defaulted to the visiting side.

### Team Personnel

- 1) Teams may have up to 2 physios/trainers/doctors the ropes during the game. The physios/trainers/doctors may both be on one side of the pitch or one on each side.

The team's physios/trainers/doctors may enter the field of play to assist injured players at any time as long as they do not interfere with play. If it is safe to do, so the referee may allow play to continue.

- 2) All other personnel (coaches, water carriers, substitutes/replacement players) must be outside the ropes OR behind the dead ball line at the back of their opponent's in-goal area.
  - coaches may enter the field of play at halftime.
  - if required to warm-up, substitutes/replacement players are to do so either in a designated area well outside the playing enclosure or behind the opposition in-goal area.
  - The water carriers may enter the field of play only when the referee signals a stoppage in play or after a try is scored. ie. NOT during penalty kicks at goal.
    - It is permissible for a person to bring in the kicking tee.
    - at any time, players may go to the touchlines to receive fluids
    - if weather conditions are exceptionally hot/humid, the referee may allow a 1 minute water break, half way through each half. These breaks are usually taken following a score or if the ball is dead near half way
- 5) Players with bleeding or open wounds must leave the field for treatment

- the referee are to wait for temporary replacement to take up position provided this is done quickly.

#### Half-time Interval

- 1) The length of the half-time interval can be up to 15 minutes at the discretion of the organizing body for the match.

#### Number of players – substitutions/replacements

**(Note: these Rules will need to be changed to match the new World Rugby rules)**

- 1) Match officials are to check with team management pre-game to take note of the team's replacements and substitutions especially for front row.
- 2) All games are subject to WORLD RUGBY law 3.4 regarding the number of substitute/replacement players **(max. of 7)**  
[Note: some games may have the number of substitutes altered by the BCRU or clubs]
- 3) However, regular season games in Men's Division 3 and the lowest competitive division of Women's play may be played with unlimited substitutions pending mutual agreement of the coaches/captains of both teams and communication with the referee prior to kick-off.
- 4) In all playoff games in Premier Men and Women and in Division 1 Men, the list of substitutes must be made available to the referee and the opposing team prior to kick-off and **the number of substitutes on the list cannot exceed 7.**
- 5) The number of nominated, suitably trained and experienced front row players in all games, in all divisions is **subject to WORLD RUGBY Law 3.5(a).**  
Exception: For games in the Premier Men, Premier Women or Men's First Division: if the scrums must be depowered because a team did not nominate 5 suitably trained and experienced players available for the front row, the game is forfeited by that team.
- 6) For games in all other divisions: if the scrums must be depowered because a team did not nominate the number of suitably trained and experienced players available for the front row [see Law 3.5(a)], the game may only continue as a non-forfeit with that team playing 14 players. This restriction may be waived at the request of the non-offending team.

#### Abandoning of a Game

- 1) The referee has the power to abandon a game at any time if, in their opinion, the game should not continue to full time. The referee must report (within 72 hours) the reasons for making this decision to the appropriate Organizing Committee.
- 2) a) If weather conditions prevent a game from being played, or a game is abandoned because of poor weather conditions with less than 60 minutes having been played, the game shall be played or replayed as a make-up game.  
b) If a game is abandoned because of weather conditions after 60 minutes or more have been played, then the score at that time shall be deemed to be the final score of the game. The referee's decision regarding the need to abandon the game and the time played shall be final.
- 3) a) If the referee decides that a game must be abandoned for any reason other than weather conditions, both team captains shall be informed that the game is being abandoned and of the reason for taking that action.  
b) Where a game is abandoned for any reason other than weather conditions, the referee and Club executive members representing both Clubs shall submit (within 72 hours) a written report detailing the reasons for abandoning the game to the BCRU.
- 4) a) If a team captain decides to abandon a match he or she shall inform the referee of the reasons for that decision.  
b) The procedure for reporting and adjudicating the abandonment of a game by a team captain shall be the same as that described above.