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

**Notes on U-19 and High School Games**

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 gives a outline of how laws are applied with specific reference to U-19 variations and is intended for coaches and players.

The Full Laws and Variations for U-19 players are found in the Laws of the Game. (<http://laws.worldrugby.org>)

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.

**Application of the Laws**

Player safety is to be paramount in the application of the Laws of the game. Even if legal, referees are not to allow play to continue if doing so puts players in peril. Referees should apply this principle when playing advantage.

Players in U-19 and high school games are, in general, not as skilled, strong, mature or restrained as senior players. If appropriate, referees are to apply player management techniques more often than Law sanctions. Referees should take into account the ability of the players to abide by the Laws

**Injury and Risk Management**

Wearing of mouth guards is mandatory. No player will be permitted to participate in a game without one.

Compliance Protocol (approved by the BC Rugby Referees Society):

- Referees will ask to see mouth guards during the pre-game boot check.
- If, during a game, a player is seen to be not wearing their mouth guard, the referee will send them off the field to get one. The game will be restarted, and the player (or replacement) is **NOT** permitted to re-enter the game until the next stoppage and only if the player (or replacement) is now wearing a mouth guard, ie. that player's team will only have 14 players on the pitch until the next stoppage.
- **NO** other sanction will be applied

**In all situations, if there are ANY indications of concussion, a player MUST be removed from play. This is known as Recognize and Remove. There is no option for HIA (Head Injury Assessment) at the U19 or High School Level.**

### Field Set up

- 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.
  - While this rule of competition applies to all BCRU U-19 games, high schools should also comply, especially if the number of people on the sidelines is likely to interfere with the game.

### Team Personnel

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

In high school games a team coach can take on the role as one of the physios/trainers/doctors or water carriers. It is expected that the coach taking on this role (especially as physio/trainer/doctor) focus on that role rather than coaching. **NOTE: the BCRU has not made this ruling**

### Number of players – substitutions/replacements

- 1) Tournament organizers will dictate team numbers & substitution rules.

### Number of Players

- 1) If the number of players in the game for a team is reduced because of a lack of suitably trained and experienced **forwards** (ie “starters”) or because of injury or a red or yellow card issued **to a forward**, the number of players in subsequent set scrums will be affected as described in Law. So, if the number of **forwards** is reduced the scrums will be set as:

- 1 player... the scrum will be 3-4... ie no #8
- 2 players... the scrum will be 3-2-1... ie no flankers
- 3 players... the scrum will be 3-2... ie. no flankers or #8

#### Notes:

- If a team is short a **forward** due to injury or card, but have a player on the field who is suitably trained and experienced to cover the forward's position, they can opt to play a back short and bring the “new” forward in to form a 8-player scrum. If the team is without a “new” forward then the 3-4 rule applies.
  - the least number of players per team in a scrum is 5
  - the number of players for each team in a scrum must be the same
  - the opponent's forwards removed from the scrums must be 5m back during the scrum
- 2) If the number of players for a team is reduced because of a red or yellow card **to a back**, there is no affect on the number of players in a scrum... ie all 8 players can take part.

### 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} .
  - 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 team will appoint a person to be a Touch Judge {TJ}. These people should be experienced and competent and are responsible for *signaling 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.
- 3) It is acceptable for referees to play advantages of different durations.
- 4) When playing advantage, the referee will 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...
- 6) Referees should be vigilant for the offending team committing a 2<sup>nd</sup> offense to prevent the 1<sup>st</sup> advantage.
- 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). 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

- 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 .
- 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 be 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

- 3) 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)

NOTE: There may be instances where the referee may ask a coach to remove a player from the game voluntarily if they feel the player is apt to commit an act of foul play during future play. It is expected that the coach would comply and use the opportunity to coach and advise the player against such acts.

## 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.

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

- 1) The use of the "turtle" or "squeeze ball" by a tackled ball carrier is NOT permitted... ball carriers must NOT lay face down and push the ball back under their body and between their legs.
  - If the referee believes that the ball carrier plays the ball in this way:
    - inadvertently, they should call for a scrum (non-offending team has the put in).
    - intentionally, they should penalize the ball carrier.

### Law 17 – 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.

### Law 19 - Lineout

- 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 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"*
- 8) Player movement in the lineout prior to the throw-in is allowed, but must not result in closing of 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.
- 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.
- 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 20 – Scrum

- 1) If at any time a team does not have trained players for the positions in the front row **or locks**, scrums will be played as uncontested scrums. (see Variations Law 20.1)
- 2) The #8 must be bound with their head between the hips of the 2 locks (ie NOT lock and flanker)
- 4) Once the middle line (between the opposing front rows) of the scrum has gone through 45 degrees, play must be stopped and a new scrum ordered.
  - the team who put the ball in at the original scrum shall put in the ball at the new scrum.
  - to reduce the number of resets, as the scrum approaches 45 degrees, the referee is encouraged to verbalize “use it” or “play it”.
  - Teams must not intentionally wheel the scrum.
- 5) Once a team has pushed the scrum 1.5m from the original mark, it must stop pushing.
  - referees are to instruct the team to stop pushing
  - the standard phrase is “{colour} hold the push”
- 6) All players in the scrum must stay bound until the scrum ends.
  - a player (ie. the #8) may not delay the ball from leaving the scrum once it is at their feet
- 2) **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)**
- 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.
  - Referees are to be very vigilant of safety issues when applying this Law application
- 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)**
- 13) 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

#### Law 21 – Penalty and Free Kicks

- 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.