

WORLD RUGBY & RUGBY AU LAW CHANGES FOR 2018

RUGBY REFEREES

World Rugby has continued its Law review process in-between World Cups. Below find the various changes that will apply in 2018 – some continue from 2017, some are new for 2018.

2017 WORLD RUGBY LAW VARIATION TRIALS WHICH STILL APPLY

MAUL

Ripper must be in contact with jumper (no 'long transfer'); ball carrier can't slide back in a maul. (PK)

HIGH TACKLES

Referees should be considering: **Contact point** (where start/finish), **Action** (accidental, reckless or deliberate), **Degree of force** (speed, severity of impact, does the tackler 'carry on').

ADVANTAGE

Referee can consult captain for place of mark when there are multiple infringements.

TOUCH LINE LAW

Player can jump from inside the playing area, and before landing in touch, can knock (or catch and throw) the ball from across plane of touch back into the playing area (previously this was in touch). The process used to decide who has taken the ball into touch/in-goal/dead/22m changes. The question now is: did the ball reach the respective plane? If not, then catcher has taken the ball across the line.

TIMING AT THE END OF EITHER HALF

If a penalty kick is kicked into touch after time has elapsed, play continues with a lineout.

PENALTY TRY

No conversion is attempted and 7 points are awarded automatically.

SCRUM

Uncontested scrums as a result of a sending off, temporary suspension or injury must be played with eight players per side. (*Applies in U13s and older. This would not apply if uncontested scrums are caused by a team starting a match short of a trained front row. Competition rules would apply.*)

LAW VARIATIONS TO SEVENS

- Finals should last no longer than seven minutes each half (previously, they could be 10min).
- Teams must form a lineout within 15 seconds / be ready to form a scrum within 15 seconds.
- A PK or FK must be taken within 30 seconds of being awarded, a restart after a kick at goal also within 30 seconds.

2018 BLUE CARD IMPLEMENTATION – from 1st March

When a player leaves the field due to signs and symptoms of suspected concussion, the referee will show them a Blue Card. This triggers an off-field process. (*Blue Card applies in U13s and older.*)

A tactically replaced player may return to play to replace a player who has been shown a Blue Card.

2018 WORLD RUGBY LAW VARIATION TRIALS

TACKLE

Laws 14.5(b) and 14.6

The tackler must get up before playing the ball and then can only play from their side of the tackle 'gate'. (PK)

Note: A tackler who ends up on their opponents' side of the tackle must roll away immediately. Previously a tackler (player who goes to ground in the act of making a tackle) could play the ball from any direction after getting up.

RUCK

Law 15.2

A ruck commences when at least one player is on their feet and over the ball which is on the ground (tackled player, tackler). At this point the offside line is created. An arriving player can either create an offside line by being on feet and over the ball, or they may use their hands to pick up the ball as long as this is immediate.

Note: There is **NO CHANGE** to the 2017 approach regarding when arriving players may play for the ball. Even if an attacking player gets over the ball first (forming a one person 'ruck'), a defensive jackal player can still go for the ball with their hands if they are the first arriving player from their team. As in 2017, if two opponents make physical contact over the ball first, no hands can be used.

Law 15.14

A player must not kick the ball out of a ruck. The player can only hook it in a backwards motion. (PK)

SCRUM

Law 19.15

There will be no signal from the referee to the scrum-half to feed the ball. However, the scrum must be stable before the ball is fed, and there must be no delay of feed from the scrum-half once the ball has been presented to the scrum. (FK)

Law 19.16(f)

The scrum-half must throw the ball in straight, but is allowed to align their shoulder on the middle line of the scrum, therefore allowing them to stand a shoulder width towards their side of the middle line.

Laws 19.21 and 19.24

One front-row player from the team who put the ball in must strike for the ball. (FK)
The Number 8 can reach into the scrum and pick up the ball from under the feet of the second-rows.

Australian U19 Law Variation

Crutch-binding by locks is illegal in age groups U15 and below (previously U19 and below). (PK)

MARK

Law 17.1(a)

To make a Mark, a player must catch a ball that has reached the plane of the 22-metre line.