**Army Rugby Union Referees Society Law Trails for 2017**

If you have any question or comments, please contact ARURS TDO

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| **For immediate release: Friday 18 November 2016** |
| **Issued on behalf of World Rugby** |
| **Global law trials set for 2017** |
| Five changes to law will be trialled globally next year after they were approved by World Rugby Council in London this week.The amendments, which deal in aspects of law including front-row replacements, advantage, touch, penalty tries and time-keeping, were first proposed by member unions and then considered by the Law Review Group and Rugby Committee before being trialled on a closed basis in various competitions around the world. Having achieved positive results from those trials, LRG and Rugby Committee recommended to Council that the trials be expanded globally.In line with the law review timelines, the trial will begin on 1 January 2017 in the southern hemisphere and 1 August 2017 in the north and will last for an initial period of one year. The 2017 British and Irish Lions tour and June window internationals will be played under the global law trials.In addition, a package of law changes, specific to rugby sevens, will also be trialled (commencing at the start of the men's and women's HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series 2016-17).Some proposed law amendments did not win approval for global trial at this stage but will be examined further under closed domestic trial conditions to provide extensive data, player, coach and match official feedback for evaluation.World Rugby Chairman Bill Beaumont said: "World Rugby continually reviews the laws to ensure that the game is as enjoyable, simple and safe as possible at all levels. I would like to thank our unions for their full support throughout the process, the experts who evaluated the closed trial data and look forward to seeing the results of the global trial.” Rugby Committee Chairman John Jeffrey added: "These law amendments, which will go to global trial next year, are designed to improve the experience of those playing and watching the game at all levels and to avoid negative play where possible. We will gather all the data from the trial and then present it to the LRG and Rugby Committee for further consideration.”The law changes set to be trialled globally are:Law 3 Number of Players – The Team3.6 (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 TimeAdd 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.**Reasoning:**To discourage teams from infringing in the dying moments of the game.Law 8 AdvantageAdd 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 Scoring9.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 LineoutAdd 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 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.**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.For more information about the laws of rugby, click [HERE](http://worldrugby.matchdaymail.com/lt.php?c=483&m=497&nl=5&s=8b7f78c452039f731d1fdaaa5de16c27&lid=4170&l=-http--laws.worldrugby.org/).The full list and wording of the laws proceeding with closed trial can be found below. |
| **Editors' notes:** |
| **Law amendments approved for closed trials only**Law 20.1 (g) – Forming the scrumWhile the 'crouch, bind, set' engagement sequence has achieved its objective of reducing scrum injuries by reducing forces on engagement by 25 per cent and reducing front row injuries by 50 per cent, the rate of completions remains low at the elite level of the game. The following law amendment trial is designed to promote stability and speed of ball availability, reducing the number of collapses and resets.• The referee will call "crouch” and then "bind”.• In the "crouch” position the front rows will be shoulder to shoulder with their opponents, stable and supporting their own weight without pushing.• On the "bind” call, the props will position their arms in the correct 'bind' position.  [The correct 'bind' is as outlined in current Law 20.1 (g)]• The front rows (+ back five players) will tighten binds and set themselves for the throw-in.• The ball is then thrown-in without delay, Law 20.5.Law 20.5 and 20.5 (d) – Throwing the ball into the scrumNo signal from referee. The rationale is that the scrum-half (number nine) may receive a signal from his or her own hooker (number two) that the hooker is ready. This may encourage the hooker to prepare to strike for the ball. The proposal is intended to give the advantage to the team throwing in the ball. The scrum must be stable prior to feed, and the ball fed without delay in accordance with current law. The scrum-half must throw the ball in straight, but is allowed to align his shoulder on the middle line of the scrum, therefore allowing him to stand a shoulder width towards his side of the middle line. This is designed to further promote scrum stability and enhance player welfare by reducing the pressure on the hooker striking the ball. Law 20 – Scrum • Striking after the throw-in. Once the ball touches the ground in the tunnel, any front-row player may use either foot to try to win possession of the ball. One player from the team who put the ball in must strike for the ball. Sanction: Free-kick.• Continue throw-in closed trial (inside shoulder and no referee communication). Feed must be credible. Sanction: Free-kick.• U19 Law – 1.5m limit to push everywhere on pitch apart from 5m scrum. Sanction: Free-kick• Allow number eight to pick out of second row feet at a 5m scrum only.Law 15.4 (c) – TackleThe tackler must get up before playing the ball and then can only play from his or her side of the tackle gate.Law 16 – Ruck 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. A player on their feet may use his hands to pick up the ball as long as this is immediate.  As soon as an opposition player arrives no hands can be used.Every four years, rugby's governing body undertakes a complete health-check of the game's playing trends across the Rugby World Cup cycle to ensure that the sport continues to develop at all levels around the world. This extensive process is undertaken with full union consultation and has player welfare, game simplification and fan experience at its core. Law review proposals are considered against the following agreed principles:1. Player welfare, especially concussion, is the number-one priority.2. The laws must allow for a fair contest for possession, especially in the contact area, in general play and when play is restarted at scrums, lineouts and kick-offs.3. The game remains a sport for all shapes and sizes, for men and women, and for boys and girls.4. The unique identities of the game must be maintained, including the scrum, lineout, ruck, maul, tackle, kick-off and restarts.5. Any changes must promote enjoyment for participants and entertainment for spectators and must be in line with World Rugby's core values of passion, respect, integrity, discipline and solidarity.6. The laws must be applicable by match officials.7. The game should be as easy to understand as possible for players, coaches, match officials and spectators.Currently mid-way through the law review cycle, substantive law changes must be in place at least one year out from a Rugby World Cup, except those implemented for safety reasons. Law review cycle 2015-18:1. Early 2015: Call for suggested amendments.2. Mid-2015: LRG reviews suggestions made by unions/regional associations.3. September 2015: Rugby Committee meets to discuss proposals.4. Early 2016: Initial trials are conducted in relevant competitions.5. Mid-2016: Initial trials are reviewed by LRG.6. October 2016: Initial trials are reviewed by Rugby Committee.7. November 2016: Global trials (if appropriate) are approved by World Rugby Council.8. January 2017: Any such global trials start in southern hemisphere and August 2017 in northern hemisphere.9. June 2018: Any global trials are reviewed by LRG.10. October 2018: Recommendations are made to Rugby Committee.11. November 2018: Council confirms law amendments (if appropriate) at a special meeting and the law is changed accordingly. |

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