

LAW CHANGES – 1 JULY 2022

Following the World Rugby Council meeting in May 2022, a number of law changes have been made. These all come into force for the whole game on 1 July 2022.

The five current Global Law Trials – Goal Line Drop-out, 50:22, jackler protection, banning pre-bound pods in open play (flying wedge) and approving a single latcher – will become full law.

There are two new Global Law Trials

- Brake foot - At the scrum, hookers must have a brake foot in place **during “Crouch” and “Bind” phases, and is removed on “Set”**. This is to reduce the axial loading on the hookers
- Water carriers - New restrictions on medics and water carriers have been introduced as well as formalising technical zones into law. This is primarily related to the elite game, but the principles apply to all levels of the game.

These will become Global Law Trials until at least the end of 2023. There are also a number of minor amends to law that have arisen from previous clarifications.

Global Law Trials

Law	Summary area	Summary of change	Rational for change
Law 19	Adding brake foot to scrum engagement	Hookers will be required to have one foot forward as the scrum sets up (19.10c), which acts as a brake on the scrum until the call of ‘Set’ in the engagement sequence (19.12)	Remove axial loading on the necks and heads of front row players
Law 6	New restrictions on water carriers and medics including an on field penalty sanction	Water carriers restricted to two per team who must stay in technical area when not on the field. In elite rugby, two water breaks will be introduced per half, determined by the referee Medics can be on either side of pitch and may roam Penalty sanction introduced for medics/water carriers who interfere with live play	Reduce stoppages and sanctioning poor behaviour

Summary amends – Law Clarifications/Law application Guidelines

Law	Summary area	Summary of change	Rational for change
Law 8	Opposition players charging a conversion	Chargers must not do so until the kicker moves in any direction to begin their approach to kick	Bring Clarification 2020-1 into law
Law 9	Jumping into/over a tackle	Explicit addition to law 9.11	Bring Clarification 2022-3 into law
Law 12	GLDO outcomes for other scenarios	Making clear that attackers taking ball into in-goal and defenders make it dead are GLDOs	Consistency with existing GLDO outcomes for same sequence.
Law 15	Diving on ball as leaving a ruck	Adding the defined word 'near' to diving onto a ball as it is coming out of ruck (i.e. within 1m)	Bring Clarification 2022-1 into law
Law 16	Sanction for ball carrier sliding back in a maul	Introduction of penalty sanction	Bringing Law Application Guideline 2016 into law
Law 16	Sanction for ripper not being bound in a maul when formed after lineout	Introduction of penalty sanction	Bringing Law Application Guideline 2016 into law
Law 21.16	Ball held up in goal	Adding a 5m scrum restart if a ball is held up (after a defender takes ball into in-goal), rather than just a GLDO as currently reads	Bringing Clarification 2022-1 into law

Minor Amends

Law	Summary area	Summary of change	Rational for change
Law 3.16	Uncontested scrums – timing of referee-to-captain conversation	A conversation about uncontested scrums, and subsequent player impact does not need to happen when a front row player is temporarily or permanently suspended, but should happen at the next scrum.	Logical process
Law 3.34 – 7s	Rolling replacements for 7s	Allowing Unions/organisers to determine if rolling replacements can be used in 7s as well as 15s	Currently an unnecessary exclusion for 7s
Law 4	Padded leggings	4.5 A player may not wear: shorts or leggings with padding sewn into them.	Subsequential amend following law change in 2021
Law 4	Players clothing amends	Amends to headscarves/coverings, permitted chest pads and player monitoring devices to permitted clothing list	Player representation request

Law 13.3	Players on the ground in open play - in-goal implications	Making clearer that players on the ground in in-goal can play the ball for a touchdown or try even if they are on the ground	Bringing long standing practice into clarity, and updating a simplification amend
Law 18.25	Sanction for a lineout throw being prevented from travelling 5m	Making clear the Free Kick sanction covers all players, not just the non-throwing-in team	2018 simplification oversight
Law 21.10	Knocking the ball from an opponent's grasp in in-goal	Making clear that a defender can knock the ball from the grasp of an opponent in the act of scoring	Clarity over defenders actions in in-goal law

The Detail - Law changes 2022

New Global Law Trials

1) Scrum Brake foot

Addition to Definitions

Brake foot – Where a hooker has one foot positioned forward in the middle of the tunnel to help stability and to avoid axial loading. This position is **adopted throughout the “Crouch and bind elements of the engagement sequence. The foot can only be withdrawn after the “set” and before the strike for the ball**

Law 19 – Scrum Engagement

10. When both sides are square, stable and stationary, the referee calls “crouch”.
- The front-rows then adopt a crouched position if they have not already done so. Their heads and shoulders are no lower than their hips, a position that is maintained for the duration of the scrum.
 - The front-rows crouch with their heads to the left of their immediate opponents’, so that no player’s head is touching the neck or shoulders of an opponent.
 - Hookers must have a brake foot positioned to help stability and to avoid axial loading.

Sanction: Free-kick.

11. Bind sequence is unchanged

12. When both sides are square, stable and stationary with the hooker still applying the brake foot, the referee calls “set”.
- Only then ~~may~~ must the hooker remove the brake foot and the teams engage, completing the formation of the scrum and creating a tunnel into which the ball will be thrown.
 - All players must be in position and ready to push forward.
 - Each front-row player must have both their feet on the ground, with their weight firmly on at least one foot.
 - Each hooker’s feet must be in line with, or behind, the foremost foot of that team’s props.

Sanction: Free-kick.

2) Water carriers and medics

Definitions

Technical Zone/Area: A designated area shown in Law 1, where replacements, water carriers and coaches must remain until required. In matches with a squad size of 23, only water carriers are allowed in the Technical zone.

Misconduct: an offence under World Rugby Regulation 18 or Match organiser's equivalent.

Law 6 – Match Officials

Duties of the referee during the match

7. The referee gives permission for players to leave the playing area. However, a player may access water from their technical area, or from behind the dead ball line without needing permission.

Additional persons

An additional person who fails to adhere to the Laws may be cautioned or sent off in which case Misconduct charges may be issued by the Match organiser.

28. Appropriately trained and accredited first-aid or immediate (pitch-side) care persons may enter the playing area to attend to injured players at any time it is safe to do so
- There may be up to two medics, one on either side of the pitch, who may follow play.
 - These medics can only carry and provide water to a player that they are treating.
 - Medics cannot field, or touch a ball while it is in live play
- Sanction: Penalty where play would restart
29. **At the relevant times**, the following may enter the playing area ~~without the referee's permission~~, provided they do not interfere with play:
- Two nominated water carriers during a stoppage in play for an injury to a player or when a try has been scored.
 - In matches with a squad size of 23, they may only enter during the approved water times, and no more than twice per half with the approval of the sideline managers/4th official. A water carrier must not be a Head Coach or Director of Rugby. Note: the hot weather guidelines may warrant one further break per half.
 - A person carrying **only** a kicking tee and **one water bottle**, (solely for the kicker's use) after a team has indicated they intend to kick at goal, or a try has been scored.
 - The coaches attending to their teams at half-time.
 - These additional persons must remain in their technical area at all times before entering the field of play as permitted above. They must not field or touch the ball while it is in live play, including while in the technical area.
- Sanction: Penalty where play would restart

30. No additional persons should approach, address or aim comments at the match officials, except for medics in relation to the treatment of a player.

Current law 6.30 is renumbered to 6.31.

“Technical Zone” and “Misconduct” will be added to the Law definitions

Law changes following Clarification or Law Application Guidelines

Law 8.14 – Opposition players at a Conversion

Law 8.14 amended to read “All opposing players retire to their goal line and do not overstep that line until the kicker ~~begins the~~ moves in any direction to begin their approach to kick. When the kicker does this, they may charge or jump to prevent a goal but must not be physically supported by other players in these actions”.

Rationale - To bring Clarification 2020-1 into law

Law 9 – Foul play

Law 9.11 Players must not do anything that is reckless or dangerous to others including leading with the elbow or forearm, ~~or jumping into, or over, a tackler.~~

Rationale - Bring Clarification 2022-3 into law

Law 12 – Kick-off and restart kicks

Global Law Trial law 12.12. Play is restarted with a goal line drop-out when:

- a. The ball is played or taken into in-goal by an attacking player and is ~~then~~ held up, grounded or otherwise made legally dead by an opponent.
- b. An attacking kick, other than a kick-off, restart kick following a score, drop goal, drop-out or penalty attempt, is grounded or made dead in in-goal by the defending team.
- c. An attacking player knocks on in the opponents’ in-goal.

Rationale - Clarifying inconsistency around in-goal outcomes. Currently if the ball is kicked into in-goal by the attack and grounded by a defender, it’s a GLDO. If it’s carried into in-goal, and then ripped by a defender and then grounded it would be a 22 drop out as that scenario isn’t covered in the current GLDO reasons. This also covers a charge down from the field of play which goes into in goal and is then made dead.

Law 15 – Ruck

15.16 Players must not:

- d. Fall onto or over the emerging ball ~~as it is coming out of a ruck,~~ while it is on the ground near to the ruck.

Rationale - Bring Clarification 2022-2 into law

Law 16 - Maul

Forming a maul

16.2. It consists of a ball carrier and at least one player from each team, bound together and on their feet. **A player ripping the ball from the ball carrier must stay in contact with that player until they have transferred the ball. Sanction: Penalty**

During a maul

16.10. All players in a maul must be caught in or bound to it and not just alongside it. **A player in possession of the ball must not slide or move backwards in the maul. Sanction: Penalty**

Rationale - Bring into law, the 2016 Law Application Guideline. This brought new maul sanctions that have been refereed since, but were never been placed into full law.

Law 21 – In-Goal: Ball Held up in-goal (Global Law Trial)

21.16 When a player carrying the ball is held up in-goal, so that the player cannot ground the ball or play the ball, the ball is dead. Play restarts with a goal-line drop out **or a 5m scrum, depending on how the ball entered in-goal. (law 12.12a, and law 19.1 row 5)**

Rationale - Consistency with pre-existing outcomes in Law 19.1 and 12.12. A defending player carrying/playing the ball into in-goal and then being held up, results in a 5m scrum (existing law). Bringing Clarification 2022-1 into law

Other Minor Amends

Law 3.16 – Uncontested Scrums

When a front-row player leaves the playing area, whether through injury or temporary or permanent suspension, the referee enquires at **that time the next scrum** whether the team can continue with contested scrums. If the referee is informed that the team will not be able to contest the scrum, then the referee orders uncontested scrums. If the player returns or another front-row player comes on, then contested scrums may resume.

Rationale - At a YC or RC the restart could be a kicked penalty, or a tap and go. The conversation about uncontested scrums, and any subsequent player changes/removals, does not need to happen unless and until there is a scrum.

Law 3.34 – Rolling Replacements

A match organiser may implement rolling tactical replacements at defined levels of the game within its jurisdiction. The number of interchanges must not exceed 12. The administration and rules relating to rolling replacements are the responsibility of the match organiser.

Remove “3.34 Deleted” from *Sevens law variations*, and so allowing Unions to determine whether to implement them in their jurisdiction. .

Rationale - Allowing match organisers to determine whether rolling replacements can be implemented in 7s tournaments. The number of interchanges is currently part of a law trial for the World Rugby 7s series. Therefore Local Unions can determine the number required for their own tournaments.

Law 4 – Permitted clothing

Law 4.3 Additional items are permitted. These are:

- e. shoulder pads or approved chest pads
- l. headscarves or coverings, providing they do not cause a danger to the wearer or other players.
- m. Player monitoring devices

Subsequent deletion of 4.4

4.4 ~~In addition, women may wear:~~

~~Chest pads~~

~~Headscarves, providing they do not cause a danger to the wearer or other players.~~

4.5. A player may not wear:

- f. shorts or leggings with padding sewn into them.

4.5-4.8 will be renumbered as 4.4-4.7

Rationale - To de-gender the law book, open up the law to male players' religious/cultural dress, bring into law the use of player monitoring devices, and to add a consequential addition following the 2021 law change which allows leggings for all players.

Law 13 – Players on the ground in open play

13.3 A player on the ground, **in the field of play**, without the ball is out of the game and must:

- a) Allow opponents who are not on the ground to play or gain possession of the ball
- b) Not play the ball
- c) Not tackle or attempt to tackle an opponent

Rationale – Bringing a 2018 simplification issue, and refereeing practice into law. Pre-2018, this law was grouped with a series of other laws under a heading “In the field of play”. Those headings were removed in 2018.

In game and refereeing practice, this law has generally not translated into in-goal and players are permitted to touch the ball down in in-goal (for a try, or a defensive touch down), even if they are already on the ground. This change makes clear that Law 13.3 only applies to the field of play, and therefore not in-goal.

Law 18 - Lineout – ball being prevented from going 5m

18.25 **No player** can block the throw **or prevent the ball from travelling five metres**. Sanction: Free-kick.

Rationale - In pre-2018 law it stated: “No player may block the throw-in or prevent the ball from travelling 5 metres. Sanction: Free Kick on the 15-metre line.”

This was inadvertently removed as a sanction in the simplification process and changed to “opponents” rather than “no player”. If it happens in a Quick Throw, the law currently states “no player”, but the wording was not translated to the full lineout.

This brings consistency to the same actions at a Quick throw in and full lineout, and reinstates the pre-2017 sanction.

Law 21 – In-Goal

- In goal: 21.10: If a tackled player is in the act of reaching out to ground the ball for a try or touch down, **defending players may knock the ball backwards, or** pull the ball from the player’s possession but must not kick or attempt to kick the ball. Sanction: Penalty.

Rationale - Current law is unclear if a defensive player can knock a ball from the hands of a ball carrier who is in the act of scoring. Law 11.5b expressly legitimises the action of knocking the ball from an opponent’s hands, but the specific actions currently in 21.10 mean it is unclear what happens if this action occurs in in-goal.