

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** 18 December 2009  
**TO:** State/Territory Unions and ARU Affiliates  
**FROM:** Ian Alker  
**SUBJECT:** 2010 Law Variations

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Dear all,

In a Memo dated 19 August 2009, the ARU announced its intent to re-formalise the process to address matters relating to the Laws of the Game, and the formal re-establishment of a Laws Advisory Group (LAG). As mentioned in the previous correspondence, as part of this process the ARU intends to address the issue of Domestic Law Variations.

This Memo covers two major topics:

1. The decisions made by the ARU on the optional IRB Law Variations for 2010;
2. A request for Unions and Affiliates to submit any local Law Variations they may seek to play in 2010 to the LAG.

### **DOMESTIC LAW VARIATIONS FOR 2010**

#### **1. Nomination of 23 Players**

Member Unions and Affiliates may implement IRB Law 3.15(b) in 2010 at their discretion.

This new Law says that when 22 or 23 players are nominated in a team there must be sufficient front row players to play at hooker, tight-head prop and loose-head prop who are suitably trained and experienced to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement in any front row position is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums.

#### **2. Mechanisms to Discourage Uncontested Scrums**

Member Unions and Affiliates may implement IRB Law 3.15(c) in 2010 at their discretion. Any Union or Affiliate planning to implement this Law must use in their Competition Rules the approved language found in Appendix A.

#### **3. Rolling Substitutions**

The IRB have approved National Unions implementing rolling substitutions at defined levels of the game domestically, as an alternative to the arrangements in Law 3.4.

Law 3.4 allows for only a maximum of seven (7) tactical substitutions (eight [8] where there is a squad of 23 players), with substituted players not able to return (except for blood or to replace a front-row player).

In a memo dated 2 November 2009, the ARU requested comment on recommendations from the LAG as to how rolling substitutions should be implemented in 2010. On the basis of feedback received from various stakeholders, the ARU advises the following arrangements will be Law across all domestic rugby played in Australia in 2010:



- a) Unlimited rolling substitutions will be implemented for all rugby aged U14s and below;
- b) Rolling substitutions, with a maximum of 12 movements will be implemented for all U19 rugby aged U15 and above.
- c) Rolling substitutions, with a maximum of eight (8) movements will be implemented for all senior rugby, except the lowest grade of any division/competition where the maximum number may, at the discretion of the local Union, be 12.

*Note:* Unions may submit a request to the LAG to play Law 3.4 (at any level of the game), or 12 movements in U14s and below.

Rationales for the decisions above can be found in Appendix B.

Guidelines covering the implementation of Rolling Substitutions will be distributed to all Unions early in 2010.

### **REQUEST FOR LOCAL LAW VARIATIONS IN 2010**

As notified in previous correspondence, ARU requests any local Law variations be submitted to LAG for approval to play any variation to current Law. In considering submissions from Member Unions and Affiliates, the LAG will focus on matters such as the following:

- The needs of the local Union in meeting its obligations to players, coaches and parents;
- The consistency of playing experience across states and nationally;
- The availability of other Law Variations which may achieve the same or similar goals using either different language or existing Laws;
- The potential impact upon insurance cover, i.e. the change in risk to a player's safety by implementing the Law Variation.

### **Insurance Considerations**

ARU's Insurer has offered insurance under the ARU's Sports Injury or Sports Liability policies. Our insurer's coverage is based on the understanding that all rugby will be played in accordance with the laws, policies and/or rules set down by the ARU, as the governing body of Rugby. It is a further assumption that the laws, policies and rules have been set down with consideration given to the safety of all players.

Although the ARU's Sports Injury or Sports Liability policies do not contain specific exclusions regarding playing outside the Laws of Rugby Union, in certain circumstances where a player is exposed to an increased chance of injury due to non compliance with a Law, policy and/or rules the Insurer may reject or reduce a claim payment due to increased player risk that may arise.

It is the ARU's wish to avoid the situation where an insurance issue arises because a Union has been playing a Law Variation that has not been endorsed by the ARU and which potentially alters the risk assessments inherent in the ARU's National Insurance Scheme.

### **Competition Rules**

Please note that the LAG does **not** wish to approve competition rules that affect the conduct of various competitions. These arrangements remain localised. Rather this request is for any variation that affects the conduct of the on-field game in a way that adds to or alters any existing IRB International, U19 or 7-per-side Law, or any existing ARU U19 Law Variation.



### Submissions for Law Variations

The ARU hereby requests Member Unions and Affiliates submit their requests for local Law Variations.

Please note ARU **does not** require notification of any Union adopting the Law Variations outlined in this memo regarding 23 player squads or uncontested scrums. The ARU **does** require a submission to be made to the LAG if a Union wishes to play Law 3.4 at any level of the game, or 12 movements in U14s and below.

Please provide all submissions on the Law Variation Submission Form Template (see attached) by either fax to (02) 8005 5681 or e-mail [communityrugby@rugby.com.au](mailto:communityrugby@rugby.com.au) by **COB Wednesday 20 January, 2010**.

If you require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,



**Ian Alker**  
General Manager, Community Rugby

## Appendix A

Any Union or Affiliate planning to implement IRB Law 3.15(c) in 2010 must use in their Competition Rules the following approved language:

### **For adult competitions where teams are allowed to nominate 22 players**

There must be five players who can play in the front row to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement hooker is required, and on the first occasion that a replacement prop forward is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums.

Should a team not be able to meet this obligation for any reason during a game, then at the point in the match when the front row replacement is required, this team must play with one player fewer than would otherwise be allowed.

Should a team not have three suitably trained front row players to commence a game with contested scrums, this team must play with one player fewer than would otherwise be allowed.

If, subsequently, a qualified front rower becomes available (or returns from either blood-bin or temporary suspension) so that scrums can be contested then that player will be allowed onto the field and the team may return to the appropriate complement of players.

If neither team has suitably trained front row players to start a game with contested scrums, the above arrangements do not apply to the game, even if qualified front rowers subsequently become available.

### **For competitions where teams are allowed to nominate 23 players, and for U19 competitions where teams are allowed to nominate 22 or more players**

There must be sufficient front row players to play at hooker, tight-head prop and loose-head prop who are suitably trained and experienced to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement in any front row position is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums.

Should a team not be able to meet this obligation for any reason during a game, then at the point in the match when the front row replacement is required, this team must play with one player fewer than would otherwise be allowed.

Should a team not have three suitably trained front row players to commence a game with contested scrums, then this team must play with one player fewer than would otherwise be allowed.

If, subsequently, a qualified front rower becomes available (or returns from either blood-bin or temporary suspension) so that scrums can be contested then that player will be allowed onto the field and the team may return to the appropriate complement of players.

If neither team has suitably trained front row players to start a game with contested scrums, the above arrangements do not apply to the game, even if qualified front rowers subsequently become available.

## Appendix B

The following are the rationales provided in the 2 November memo from the ARU outlining recommendations for rolling substitutions.

**a. Unlimited rolling substitutions will be implemented for all rugby aged U14s and below.**

*Rationale:* This legalises common practice and allows for maximum participation of as many players as possible at young age groups.

*Note:* Unions may submit a request to LAG to implement at or below U14s level rolling substitutions with a maximum of 12 movements, or to play Law 3.4 should they wish.

**b. Rolling substitutions, with a maximum of 12 movements will be implemented for all U19 rugby aged U15 and above.**

*Rationale:* This allows for maximum participation of players where squads are large to ensure game time for all players. It is also simpler to administer than current Law. However, by capping at 12 movements, we guard against coaches restricting some players to only minimal game time, using players excessively as 'impact' players, or running multiple replacements of an entire front row, in opposition to the spirit and ethos of the Game.

*Note:* Unions may submit a request to the LAG to play Law 3.4 should they wish.

**c. Rolling substitutions, with a maximum of 8 movements will be implemented for all senior rugby, except the lowest grade of any division/competition where the maximum number may, at the discretion of the local Union, be 12.**

*Rationale:* This allows for teams with smaller team squads to compete on a more equal basis and ensure adequate game time for all participants, which is of particular interest for the community game. It is also simpler to administer than current Law. However, by capping at 8 movements, we guard against changing the nature of the game, for example the role of stamina and the ethos of Rugby being a game for all shapes and sizes.

*Note:* Unions may submit a request to the LAG to play Law 3.4 should they wish.