

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 2 November 2009
TO: State and Territory Union CEO's; ARU Affiliates
FROM: Ian Alker
SUBJECT: Recommendations on Law Variations

Recommendations on Implementation of Law Variations for 2010

As advised recently, ARU has been considering issues of Law for implementation in 2010.

On the 29 July 2009, the IRB wrote into Law several optional provisions allowing for National Unions to employ Law variations at defined levels of the domestic game. These provisions were recently considered by the Laws Advisory Group (LAG) with regard to how they might be implemented across Australia in 2010.

1. NOMINATION OF 23 PLAYERS

The ARU will allow any Member Union or Affiliate to 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

The IRB have written Law 3.15(c) as a provision to discourage uncontested scrums by having a team that causes uncontested scrums drop to 14 players. The ARU is currently clarifying with the IRB some specifics on how this Law might be implemented. Further details about this will be disseminated to Member Unions and Affiliates as soon as a response is received from the IRB.

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 currently in Law 3.4.

Law 3.4 currently allows for only a maximum of 7 tactical substitutions, with substituted players not able to return (except for blood or to replace a front-row player).

After canvassing opinions on this issue from various stakeholders, the LAG has determined that the following recommendations be disseminated to Member Unions and Affiliates for comment, before the ARU makes a final decision for 2010:

1. Unlimited rolling substitutions to 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 as written should they wish.

2. Rolling substitutions, with a maximum of 12 movements to 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 as written should they wish.

3. Rolling substitutions, with a maximum of 8 movements to be implemented for all senior rugby.

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 as written should they wish.

4. Guidelines for how rolling substitutions would operate

At all levels where rolling substitutions are capped, blood bins and front row replacements following sin bin or send off would not count as a movement. Players coming on for injured players would count as a movement. A player who goes off injured would not be able to return to the field under any circumstances, as is the case under current Law.

Sequentially numbered cards would be provided electronically to all Unions. When a substitution is made, the player in question would hand a card to the ground marshal, touch judge or referee as appropriate before taking to the field of play. There would be no requirement to record or write anything on the card. The correct sequentially numbered card is simply handed over. A sheet of specific guidelines would be provided to all Unions in advance of the 2010 season.

The ARU seeks comment on the above recommendations regarding rolling substitutions. Please provide feedback by **COB Thursday 12 November, 2009** to Sally O'Hanlon at Sally.O'Hanlon@rugby.com.au

All feedback will be carefully considered before ARU makes a final decision.

Kind regards,



Ian Alker
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