



# Experimental Law Variations Australian Domestic Competitions 2008 (Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra, Perth)

## **Purpose:**

To provide clarification for players, coaches and referees on the approach to be taken to the management of the game under the Experimental Law Variations (ELV's) in regards to the following key areas and to allow where possible for consistency in the approach to game management:

1. Match Officials (Touch Judges and Assistant Referees)
2. Offside and Onside in General Play
3. Kick Off and Restart Kicks
4. Tackle – Ball carrier brought to ground
5. Ruck
6. Maul
7. Touch and Lineout
8. Scrum
9. Ball Dead in In-goal (Posts & Flags around the Field)
10. Sanctions/Penalty Provisions
11. Advantage
12. iRB Clarifications

This document should be read in conjunction with the Laws of the Game (as adapted for the ELV's) which is the primary on-field management document and the iRB ELV Summary List.

Where appropriate, this document is consistent with the application of the relevant ELV's in the SANZAR Super 14 competition.

## ***Working document:***

This document is a working document. Given the environment of "experimentation" should referees / coaches feel something is not working then the issue should be referred to the State Union contact will consult with the ARU contacts (Kim Lees or Warren Robilliard). Outcomes will be circulated to all participating unions. This process will ensure consistency across all unions.

It is the responsibility of all parties involved – players, referees and coaches to play their part in ensuring that the ELV's are a success.

## Match Officials

The ELV's provide for Assistant Referees and Touch Judges.

### ***Assistant Referees***

For the purposes of the ELV's Assistant Referees are those referees officially appointed by Match Organiser (or their delegate) and who shall carry out the functions of the Assistant Referee as outlined in the ELV's (touch, foul play and assistance to the referee).

To assist in ruling offside at the tackle, Assistant Referees (AR's) should both be positioned on the "defending" team's offside line. They may verbally communicate relevant information to the Referee in accordance with normal communication protocols. AR's are also encouraged to assist match management by communicating such information to the nearest player. AR's may also assist with scrum offside by indicating the 5 metre offside line for backs. One AR should be positioned on each team's offside line, generally the AR on the "open side" would be positioned on the "defending" team's offside line.

AR's should not signal offsides.

The referee is not obliged to act on information received and retains sole discretion for determining if there has been an offence.

### ***Touch Judges***

Touch Judges are those individuals supplied by Clubs to officiate in this role. These officials will carry out the functions of the touch judges as outlined in the ELV's (touch, touch-in-goal and kicks at goal).

### ***Match Officials***

Abuse / backchat - will not be tolerated – **ZERO TOLERANCE**

## Offside and Onside

Once a tackle is made, the offside line extends right across the field. Retiring players can only be put onside once the player in possession runs 5m or kicks the ball. Passing the ball does not put the player onside. Once the retiring player has returned to the offside line, he can rejoin play. Once another tackle is made by an onside player there is a new offside line.

## Kick Off and Restart Kicks

- For all Kick-Off, Restart Kicks and Drop Outs, the sanction for infringements, except ball kicked out on the full, is a free kick to the non offending team at the centre of the half-way or 22m line.
- For the ball kicked out on the full the receiving team has two choices:
  - Be awarded a Free Kick; or
  - Accept the kick (lineout).
- Referees should use the normal management practices to ensure that players comply with the requirements of the Law.

## Tackle

### *Checklist for referees -*

- Tackler not rolling away – **FK offence**
- Tackled player not making the ball available – **FK offence**
- Entry of arriving players – through the gate – **PK offence**
- Arriving players must remain on their feet – **FK offence**
- Player on his feet have all rights to the ball
- Offside lines – **PK offence**

### *Player Compliance - Guide for referees –* **Referees will strictly enforce the Tackle Laws.**

- The requirement for players to join the tackle through the gate **MUST** be **RIGIDLY APPLIED**.
- In order to ensure a positive and consistent application of the Laws, the benefit of doubt, in all situations must go to the team and/or players taking a positive action to use the ball – not to players preventing such action taking place.
- A hard approach should be taken on tackler rolling away and must be first on referee's "checklist". "Rolling Away" Definition - towards the sideline and if possible not interfering with attacking team's driving out of opponents. If player is "caught" he must show clear intention to "open up" such that he is lying flat to the ground. The "Foetal" position should not be tolerated.
- Referees should not be required to manage players to comply with the Law, the onus is on the players not to put themselves in a position where they may be liable to penalty – see below regarding sanctions

### *Sanction – Tackle Phase – Intentional/Deliberate Offending*

Referees will deem players not rolling away and players making no attempt to remain on their feet to have **deliberately committed an infringement** and a PK will prevail on most occasions.

## Ruck

The requirement for players to join the Ruck from behind their own players in the Ruck (through the gate) **MUST** be **RIGIDLY APPLIED**.

Players can use their hands to win or keep possession of the ball. In this regard there must be a clear upward action (of lifting the ball).

- Only players on their feet may contest for the ball. Players off their feet who contest the ball or interfere with players contesting the ball should be deemed as deliberately infringing and a PK should be awarded.
- Players supporting themselves by leaning on other players in the Ruck are not regarded as being on their feet.
- Players cannot lean on/over the Ruck and play the ball or interfere with the scrum half.
- If a player on his feet is caught in the Ruck he can play (lift) the ball with both hands or move the ball backwards with one or both hands.

- If the ball is being dug out (after being won), the scrum half cannot be touched until the ball is clearly out of the Ruck. The benefit of any doubt should go to the scrum half.

A prolonged contest for the ball should not occur. If the ball does not emerge quickly, the referee will determine this as an unsuccessful Ruck and award a FK in accordance with the Law.

## Maul

The requirement for players to join the Maul from behind their own players in the Maul (through the gate) **MUST be RIGIDLY APPLIED.**

“Truck and Trailer” is no longer an offence, provided the ball carrier is correctly bound to the players in front on him. If the ball carrier is not correctly bound the players in front of him are obstructing and are liable to penalty.

Players can only collapse a Maul by pulling another player down from between the shoulder and the hips. Other actions (e.g. jumping on the Maul, pulling players out of the Maul, diving at players legs) are dangerous play for which the penalty is a PK.

A player who is at the front of the “truck and trailer” cannot fend off opponents who are trying to pull down or stop the “truck and trailer” – this is obstruction (PK)

A defender who grasps an opponent in a Maul in order to collapse the Maul has joined the Maul and the collapsing action is therefore legal.

When the ball in a Maul becomes unplayable the team not in possession at the start of the Maul receives a FK.

**Note:** When a player catches the ball direct from a kick by an opponent is immediately held by an opponent and a Maul is formed and the ball becomes unplayable the team of the ball carrier is awarded a FK.

## Touch and Lineout

For a team to gain ground by kicking directly into touch after they have put the ball into their own 22 metre area, the ball must first be played by an opponent or a tackle takes place or a Ruck or Maul has formed.

### ***Inside the 22 Metre Line***

- Where the mark for a Scrum or Lineout is on or inside the 22 metre line, the ball is inside the 22m area and the defenders may kick the ball directly into touch and gain ground.
- Where the mark for a Scrum or Lineout is outside the 22 metre line, if the defenders are pushed back into the 22 or they put the ball back into the 22, they are deemed to have taken the ball back into the 22 and cannot gain ground by kicking directly into touch.
- If a team is awarded a FK outside the 22m area and elect to take the kick inside their 22m area, the kick will result in no gain in ground.

### ***Quick Throw In***

- A player taking the ball across the touch line must not prevent a quick throw in taking place – P/K 15m on line of touch - **ZERO TOLERANCE**

- A player standing in touch outside the 22m line takes a quick throw-in to a player inside the 22 – the catching player cannot gain ground by kicking the ball out on the full (unless other criteria is satisfied).
- A player gathers the ball in touch outside the 22m line, runs back beyond the 22m line and takes a quick throw-in – the catching player cannot gain ground by kicking the ball out on the full (unless other criteria is satisfied).

### ***Lineout***

A player standing between the touch line and the 5m line cannot pre-grip (defending hooker). This player must be a minimum of 2 metres from the lineout so as to be identifiable.

The sanction for an incorrect throw at a formed lineout or a quick throw-in is a FK on the 15m line.

## **Scrum**

### **Players not in the scrum**

The offside line for players not in the scrum is 5 metres behind the hindmost foot of that player's team in the scrum

Players of both teams must remain behind these offside lines until the scrum is over (ball emerges).

If a team advances the scrum towards their opponent's goal line, the offside lines move accordingly.

Assistant Referees should assist with scrum offside by indicating the 5 metre offside line for backs. One AR should be positioned on each team's offside line, generally the AR on the "open side" would be positioned on the "defending" team's offside line.

### **Scrum half**

If the scrum half of the team that does not win the ball moves to the back of the scrum, the offside line is the hindmost foot of that player's team in the scrum. That scrum half may position himself on either side or behind the No. 8 but must remain in close proximity (1 metre) to the scrum.

The sanction for players who unbind from the scrum before the ball is out is a PK for offside at the back of the scrum.

## **Ball Dead in In-goal - Posts & Flags around the Field**

Corner posts and posts at corner of touch-in-goal and dead ball line.

- If a player is in possession of the ball and touches a corner post he will not be in touch unless he touches the touch line or the ground beyond the touch line.
- If the ball is not being carried by a player and it touches the corner post and goes into the field-of-play or the in-goal area (without touching the ground outside the touch/touch-in-goal line), the ball will be deemed to be still in play.
- The same principles apply to the post at the corner of the touch-in-goal line and the dead ball line.

## Sanctions

The changes to sanctions relates to **ALL** Laws of the Game, not just those Laws amended as part of the ELV's. A summary of the PK/FK sanctions is provided as part of the ELV Law changes.

Given most infringements are now FK's the referee has discretion to decide when an infringement is deliberate and thereby escalate the penalty to a PK and/or PK + YC.

### ***Distinction between PK and PK/Yellow Card –in regards to deliberate infringements.***

Yellow Card should be considered when:

- An infringement in the red zone when a try may be scored
- An infringement is clearly cynical in nature.

Repeated infringements can result in a Yellow Card anywhere on the field. It is a matter of fact, not interpretation that an infringement has been repeated and the escalated penalty sanctions should be automatic.

Whether or not an offence is deliberate or not is open to interpretation by the referee as to player's intent given the nature of the offence and the circumstances in which it occurred.

Cynical and clear and obvious offences should be penalised.

### **Quick taps**

- The offending team must immediately place the ball on the ground. The sanction for non-compliance is a FK 10m up field – **ZERO TOLERANCE**
- The offending players must retire 10m (referee to attempt to manage) – FK mark advanced 10m could be escalated to PK and Yellow Card depending on circumstances.
- Players taking a quick tap must acknowledge that retiring players will create traffic (referee to manage)
- Tap kick must be taken correctly and on the mark or a line through the mark. A team should not gain an advantage by taking a tap kick a distance from the correct mark or by taking it using an incorrect kick.

### **Scrum**

Front row infringements should be held by the referee in similar light to tackle offences. i.e. Should a prop clearly and obviously angle in to the scrum "deliberately" the referee should lean towards PK rather than FK.

## Advantage

### ***Application***

One of the concepts of the ELV's is to increase ball in play time and to achieve greater continuity. In this regard, the application of advantage should occur whenever an infringement occurs, be it scrum, PK or FK advantage. It is for the referee to decide whether advantage should be played in individual situations and the decision to do so should be made with regard to the play at the time.

For **FK/Scrum advantage** a decision should be made quickly as to whether advantage has accrued or not.

For **PK advantage** play should be allowed to continue for a longer period of time than a FK or Scrum, while the referee determines if advantage has accrued. Similar to what is currently the case for a PK – albeit make the decision sooner rather than later do not let play meander along going nowhere.

### ***Signaling***

- Scrum or FK advantage = Arm out straight.
- PK advantage = Arm 45°out + verbal call "Penalty advantage"

## Clarifications from IRB on In-goal

**Note: In-goal Law interpretations remain as per current IRB.**

### ***Ruck – 16.6 Successful end to a ruck***

A ruck ends successfully when the ball leaves the ruck, or **when the ball is on or over the goal line.**

If the ruck goes over the goal line and a try is not scored or the ball does not emerge a scrum should be awarded 5m from the defending teams goal line opposite where the ruck was situated, when the referee's whistle was blown. The attacking team throws in the ball.

### ***Maul – 17.5 Successful end to a Maul***

A maul ends successfully if the ball or a player with the ball leaves the maul. A maul ends successfully when the ball is on the ground or **over the goal line.**

If the maul goes over the goal line and a try is not scored or a player with the ball does not leave the maul - a scrum should be awarded 5m from the defending team's goal line opposite where the maul was situated, when the referee's whistle was blown. The attacking team throws in the ball.

### ***Player Held up in in-goal***

If a player is held up while attempting to score a try, play should restart with a scrum being awarded 5m from the defending team's goal line opposite where the player was held up, with the attacking team throws in the ball.

### ***Ball carried back into own in goal***

If a defending player threw or took the ball back into his in goal, and a defending player grounded it, and there is no infringement play should be restarted with a 5m scrum. The position of the scrum is in line with where the ball has been touched down. The attacking team throws in the ball.