

Experimental Law Variations for the 2009 Canterbury Gold Coast Rugby Carnival

Following a submission made by the Carnival Chairman, Barry Honan, the IRB have sanctioned the use of selected "Experimental Law Variations" (ELVs) for the 2009 Canterbury Gold Coast Carnival.

Selected ELVs are currently being used in a range of competitions in different countries and in Scotland, all of the ELVs are being trailed in their domestic club competition.

The laws changes were devised under the auspices of the IRB by Rod Macqueen (coach of the 1999 World Cup Wallabies), Pierre Villepreux (France), Richie Dixon (Scotland) and Ian McIntosh (South Africa), working with former NZ Test referee Paddy O'Brien, now the IRB's referees manager.

The objective was to come up with a simpler, shorter and more effective set of laws while retaining the essential features of rugby. The experiment also aimed to quicken up the game and take the subjectiveness out of referees' decision making.

Rod Macqueen says many laws have been added to rugby over the years but few if any are ever taken out. The review examined every law from the ground up and came up with a number of proposed changes, including:

- Downgrading most penalty offences to free-kicks
- Backs must be 5m behind rear foot at scrum
- Ball cannot be passed back into 22 and kicked out on the full
- Allowing handling in the ruck
- Repositioning corner flags – back from the corners!
- Permitting defending teams to collapse rolling maul

The new laws have been introduced in various competitions predominantly in the Southern Hemisphere since the 2007 Rugby World Cup and their application especially in the 2008 S14 competition has lead to substantial more game time and some of the most exciting rugby seen in years

As has always been the case at the Carnival, the IRB U19 Law Variations and the Australian Safety Law Guidelines will also be used at the event.

Both Paddy O'Brien and Rod Macqueen attended the 2007 event and it is hoped that either one or both will again be at the 2009 Carnival to meet with the 30 strong referee group prior to the event's commencement to ensure that the ELVs are completely understood. They will also be in attendance at the Team Management meeting TSS Sports Centre at 6.30 pm Monday 6th July to address team officials, discuss the ELVs and to answer questions.

The Full List of ELVs appear below.

EXPERIMENTAL LAW VARIATIONS AND COMMENTARY

Flag Judges (FJs)

1. To distinguish the new role of the touch judges, they have been renamed flag judges. FJs can indicate offside at the tackle by raising their flag horizontally in the direction of the offending team. This flag raising will be mirrored by the opposite FJ so as to provide visual assistance to the referee. The referee however is not obliged to act on the offence.
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Posts and flags around the field

2. Corner post, and post at corner of touch in goal and dead ball line are moved back 2 metres. This ensures consistency of touch along the entire length of the touch line and touch in goal line.
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Inside the 22 metre line

3. When a defending player receives the ball outside the 22 metre line and passes, puts or takes the ball back inside the 22, the following can occur.
 - a. If the ball is then kicked directly into touch, the lineout is in line with where the ball was kicked.
 - b. If a tackle, ruck or maul is subsequently formed and the ball is then kicked directly into touch, the lineout is where the ball crossed the touch line.
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Lineout

4. On a quick throw in, the ball can be thrown straight or backwards towards the defenders goal line, but not forward towards the opposition goal line.
 5. A player peeling off at the front of the lineout can do so as soon as the ball leaves the throwers hands.
 6. The receiver in a lineout must stand 2 metres from the lineout.
 7. The non throwing hooker does not have to stand between the 5 metre line and the touch line. They must conform to law wherever they stand.
 8. There is no maximum number of players in the lineout but there is a minimum of 2.
 9. Neither team determines numbers in the lineout.
 10. Pre-gripping is allowed.
 11. If a lineout throw is not straight, the option is a lineout or FK to the non-throwing team.
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Breakdown (tackle/post tackle)

12. Players entering the breakdown area must do so through the gate. **RIGIDLY APPLIED**
 13. Immediately the tackle occurs there are offside lines.
 14. The offside lines run parallel to the goal lines through the hindmost part of the hindmost player at the tackle.
 15. A tackled player must immediately play the ball and may not be prevented from playing the ball by any players who are off their feet.
 16. Any other player playing the ball at the breakdown must be on their feet. (Added 1 Oct)
 17. If the ball is unplayable at the breakdown, the side that did not take the ball into contact will receive a FK.
 18. If the ball is received directly from a kick and a tackle occurs immediately, and the ball becomes unplayable, the FK is given to the team who received the kick.
 19. There are only 3 penalty offences (not including dangerous play) at the breakdown.
 - a. Offside for not coming through the gate.
 - b. Offside where defenders are in front of the last man on their side of the breakdown. i.e. the offside line.
 - c. Players on the ground preventing playing of the ball.
 20. Repeated infringements can be dealt with as per current law.
 21. All FKs are tap kicks including a mark and a scrum option is available for all FKs.
 22. Dangerous play will not be tolerated. Eg. Diving over the breakdown.
 23. The half back must not be touched unless he has his hands on the ball.
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Maul

24. Defending players can pull down the maul.
 25. Players joining the maul must do so through the gate. **RIGIDLY APPLIED**
 26. If a maul becomes unplayable, the team not in possession at the start of the maul receives a FK.
 27. The 'truck and trailer' is no longer an offence.
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Scrum

28. The offside line for players who are not in the scrum and who are not the teams scrum half, is 5 metres behind the hindmost foot of the scrum.
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Sanctions

26. For all offences other than offside, not entering through the gate, and Law 10-Foul Play, the sanction is a FK.
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