



To: **Secretaries/Chief Executive Officers of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership of the IRB**

From: **David Carrigy  
Head of Member Services**

Date: January 25, 2008

Re: **Experimental Law Variations (ELVs)**

February 2008 sees the start of Super 14 (S14) which will incorporate some of the ELVs developed by the IRB Laws Project Group (LPG). The inventory of ELVs to be used in the S14 is attached as Appendix One. In addition, the Australian Rugby Union and the South African Rugby Union will be utilising all of the ELVs developed by the LPG in certain domestic competitions (Appendix Two).

Significant analysis including injury surveillance is being undertaken to enable informed decisions to be made with regard to the adoption the ELVs on a worldwide basis. This has been overseen by the LPG which consists of Bill Nolan as Chairman, Rod Macqueen, Ian McIntosh, Graham Mourie, Pierre Villepreux, Richie Dixon, Mick Molloy, Paddy O'Brien and Bruce Cook with ongoing input from Syd Millar and Bill Beaumont.

It is intended that the ELVs will be circulated to Unions for comment in accordance with Bye Law 9.10 in June 2008. The IRB Council will then consider the proposed changes at the Interim Meeting in November 2008. If the ELVs are implemented world wide they will remain under review pending a final decision on the matter by the Council in November 2009.

Until that Council decision Unions may only trial the ELVs with the permission of the IRB. Union wishing to trial the ELVs will be required to satisfy the IRB Council that they can meet certain conditions with regard to analysis, medical surveillance and the provision of match DVDs.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Carrigy', is written over a light blue background.

**David Carrigy  
Head of Member Services**



## Appendix 1

### EXPERIMENTAL LAW VARIATIONS FOR 2008 RUGBY SUPER 14

#### Posts and flags around the field

- Posts and flags around the field (ARC variation)
  - a. Corner posts will be positioned at the outside junction of the goal line and the touch line.
    - i. If a player is in possession of the ball and touches a corner post he **will not** be in touch unless he touches the touchline or the ground beyond the touchline.
    - ii. If the ball is not being carried by a player and it touches the corner post the ball **will not** be deemed to be touch in goal.

#### Inside the 22 metre line

- 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.

#### Lineout

- 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.
- Pre-gripping, lifting and using another team mate to lever is allowed.

#### Tackle and Ruck

- Players entering the breakdown area must do so through the gate. **RIGIDLY APPLIED**
- Immediately the tackle occurs there are offside lines.
- If the ball is unplayable at a tackle or ruck, the side that did not take the ball into contact will receive a Free Kick.

#### Maul

- If a maul becomes unplayable, the team not in possession at the start of the maul receives a Free Kick.

#### Scrum

- 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.

#### Sanctions

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



## Appendix 2

### EXPERIMENTAL LAW VARIATIONS AND COMMENTARY

#### Assistant Referees

- Assistant Referees can assist referees in any manner required when appointed by a match organiser.

#### Posts and flags around the field

- Corner post, and post at corner of touch in goal and dead ball line not considered to be touch in goal unless the ball is grounded against the post.

#### Inside the 22 metre line

- When a defending player receives the ball outside the 22 metre line and passes, puts or takes the ball back inside the 22 by any means, the following can occur.
  - If the ball is then kicked directly into touch, the lineout is in line with where the ball was kicked.
  - 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.

#### Lineout

- 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.
- A player peeling off at the front of the lineout can do so as soon as the ball leaves the throwers hands.
- The receiver in a lineout must stand 2 metres from the lineout.
- 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.
- There is no maximum number of players in the lineout but there is a minimum of 2.
- Neither team determines numbers in the lineout.
- Pre-gripping, lifting and using another team mate to lever is allowed.
- If a lineout throw is not straight, a Free Kick to non throwing team.

#### Tackle/Post Tackle

- Players entering the breakdown area must do so through the gate. **RIGIDLY APPLIED**
- Immediately the tackle occurs there are offside lines.
- The offside lines run parallel to the goal lines through the hindmost part of the hindmost player at the tackle.
- A tackled player must immediately play the ball and may not be prevented from playing the ball by any player who is off their feet.
- Any other player playing the ball at the breakdown must be on their feet.
- If the ball is unplayable at the breakdown, the side that did not take the ball into contact will receive a Free Kick
- If the ball is received directly from a kick and a tackle occurs immediately, and the ball becomes unplayable, the Free Kick is given to the team who received the kick.
- There are only 3 penalty offences (not including dangerous play) at the breakdown.
  - Offside for not coming through the gate.



- Offside where defenders are in front of the last man on their side of the breakdown. i.e. the offside line
- Deliberate and repeated infringements.
- Free kicks can be taken in accordance with current Laws.
- Dangerous play will not be tolerated. Eg. Diving over the breakdown.
- The half back should not be touched unless he has his hands on the ball.

### **Maul**

- Defending players can pull down the maul.
- Players joining the maul must do so through the gate. RIGIDLY APPLIED
- If a maul becomes unplayable, the team not in possession at the start of the maul receives a Free Kick.
- The *truck and trailer* is no longer an offence providing it is formed from an existing maul.

### **Scrum**

- The offside line for players who are not in the scrum and who are not the team's scrum half, is 5 metres behind the hindmost foot of the scrum.

### **Kick Offs and Restart Kicks**

- The sanction for offences with regard to kick offs and restart kicks (drop outs) is a Free Kick

### **Sanctions**

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