

FOREWORD

The Object of the Game is that two teams of fifteen, ten or seven players each, observing fair play according to the Laws and sporting spirit, should by carrying, passing, kicking and grounding the ball score as many points as possible, the team scoring the greater number of points being the winner of the match.

The Laws of the Game, including the Standard Set of Variations for Under 19 Rugby, are complete and contain all that is necessary to enable the game to be played correctly and fairly.

Rugby Union is a sport which involves physical contact. Any sport involving physical contact has inherent dangers. It is very important that players play the game in accordance with the Laws of the Game and be mindful of the safety of themselves and others. It is the responsibility of those who coach or teach the game to ensure that players are prepared in a manner which ensures compliance with the Laws of the Game and in accordance with safe practices.

It is the duty of the referee to apply fairly all the Laws of the Game in every match except when an experimental Law has been authorised by the IRB Council.

It is the duty of the Unions to ensure that the Game at every level is conducted in accordance with disciplined and sporting behaviour. This principle cannot be upheld solely by the referee; its observance also rests on Unions, affiliated bodies and clubs.

ADMINISTRATION

1 Proposals for changes in the Laws of the Game

Proposals together with any amendments to them, will be circulated to Unions and will be dealt with in accordance with Bye-Law 9.10.

2 Submission of Proposals

Unions shall with each proposal set out:

- (a) the exact wording of the proposed alteration;
- (b) the object of the proposal; and
- (c) the reason for it.

3 Laws Committee

Pursuant to Bye-Law 9.13, the Council shall establish a standing Laws Committee consisting of not more than six representatives (to be appointed or re-appointed annually).

4 The functions of the Laws Committee

These are as follows:

- (a) to consider and report on all proposals submitted by Unions to the Council for alterations in the Laws of the Game
- (b) to recommend amendments to the wording of proposals and consequential alterations to give effect to its recommendations
- (c) the Committee is not authorised to make recommendations which depart in principle, as distinct from detail, from specific proposals submitted by Unions; and
- (d) to investigate and report on such matters as the Council may, from time to time, direct. Where appropriate, reports may include recommendations for alterations to the Laws of the Game for consideration by Unions.

5 Designated Members

The Laws Committee should each year appoint three of their members to be the Designated Members who will give interim rulings pursuant to the Council Minutes on that subject.

6 Rulings from Designated Members

- (a) Rulings from the three Designated Members should only be sought in cases in which the Union concerned was itself unable to give a Ruling after full consideration of the point by their appropriate Committee. Only cases of real doubt or difficulty related to incidents in actual play, and not to hypothetical cases, should be referred to the Council. In all such references for a Ruling the Unions should state its own opinion as to what the correct ruling ought to be, as this will be helpful to the three Designated Members.

- (b) All decisions of the three Designated Members on applications for Rulings are to be submitted to the Council for consideration as alterations to the Laws.

The Chairman of the Laws Committee shall indicate which Rulings are to be submitted to the Council for consideration as alterations to the Laws.

The April 2004 Law Amendments, which take effect from 1st June 2004, are highlighted by:

