

Law Variations, Replacements and Game On Principles

Age-Grade Variations

Age-grade law variations apply to *all* under 18 fixtures and *all* reserve league fixtures in the Borders.

Time

All under 18 All under 18 matches last a maximum of 70 minutes (split into two halves, each of not more than 35 minutes) plus time lost. No extra-time is permissible.

Adult reserve leagues, although playing to under 19 law variations, still play a total of 80 minutes.

Scrum

In addition to the variations described in the team section at annex B, the following variations apply to the scrum.

In an eight-person scrum, the formation must be 3-4-1, with the single player (normally the number eight) shoving on the two locks. The locks must pack with their heads on either side of the hooker.

1. When a team is reduced to fewer than 15 for any reason, the number of players in each team in the scrum must be similarly reduced.
2. Where a permitted reduction is made in the scrum by one team, the other team must reduce their scrum accordingly, down to a minimum of five.
3. Where there is an incomplete scrum, it must be formed as follows:
 1. Seven players – three-four formation (i.e. no number eight).
 2. Six players – three-two-one formation (i.e. no flankers).
 3. Five players – three-two formation (i.e. no flankers or number eight)

Teams must not push the scrum more than 1.5 metres towards the opponents' goal line.

Team Sheet and Front Row

It is really important the referee receives completed team sheets from both teams ahead of the match – this supports the referee in any instance a yellow or red card is issued, match official abuse by a player and in the case of serious injury.

- Clubs must deliver a fully completed team sheet to the match referee not later than 30 minutes before kick-off.
- Changes to the team sheet may be made up to kick-off.
- The team sheet must specify the jersey number, full name and registration number of each Player.
- Players capable of playing at tight-head prop, loose-head prop and hooker must be highlighted.
- The maximum number of replacements shall be seven.

Team (you should refer to Law 3 of the Laws of Rugby Union)

Some key points:

Aside from Game On (see Annex C), the following number of front row players must be available in the playing squad:

Squad size	Minimum number of front row players in the squad	Must be able to replace at the first time of asking
15 or fewer	3	-
16, 17 or 18	4	Either a prop or a hooker
19, 20, 21, 22	5	Both a prop and a hooker
23	6	Loose-head, tight-head and prop

- Prior to the match, each team must advise the referee, by way of teamsheet, of their front-row players and possible front-row replacements and which position(s) in the front row they can play. Only these players may play in the front row when the scrum is contested and only in their designated position(s).
- A replacement front-row player may start the match in another position.

Under 19 law variations: If a team nominates 22 players, it must have at least six players who can play in the front row so that there is replacement cover for the loose-head prop, hooker and tight-head prop.

All players in the three front-row positions and the two lock positions must be suitably trained for these positions. If a team cannot field such suitably trained players for whatever reason, then the referee must order uncontested scrums. Uncontested scrums as a result of a sending off, temporary suspension or injury must be played with eight players per side.

Uncontested scrums

- Scrums will become uncontested if either team cannot field a suitably trained front row or if the referee so orders.
- Uncontested scrums as a result of a sending off, temporary suspension or injury must be played with eight players per side.
- When a front-row player leaves the playing area, whether through injury or temporary or permanent suspension, the referee enquires at that time whether the team can continue with contested scrums. If the referee is informed that the team will not be able to contest the scrum, then the referee orders uncontested scrums. If the player returns or another front-row player comes on, then contested scrums may resume.
- Only when no replacement front-row player is available is any other player permitted to play in the front row.
- If a front-row player is temporarily suspended, and the team cannot continue with contested scrums with players already on the field, then the team nominates another player to leave the playing area to enable an available front-row player to come on. The nominated player may not return until the period of suspension ends, or to act as a replacement.
- If a front-row player is sent off, and the team cannot continue with contested scrums with players already on the field, then the team nominates another player to leave the playing area to enable an available front-row player to come on. The nominated player may act as a replacement.

Permanent replacement

A player may be replaced if injured. An injured player may not return once replaced.

A player is deemed to be injured if:

- It is the opinion of a doctor or physio that it would be inadvisable for the player to continue;
- The referee decides (with or without medical advice) that it would be inadvisable for the player to continue. The referee orders that player to leave the playing area.
- The referee may also order an injured player to leave the playing area to be medically examined.

Permanent replacement - recognise and remove

If, at any point during a match, a player is concussed or has suspected concussion, that player must be immediately and permanently removed from the playing area. This process is known as "Recognise and Remove".

Temporary replacement - blood injury

When a player has a blood injury, that player leaves the field of play and may be temporarily replaced. The injured player returns to play as soon as the bleeding has been controlled

and/or covered. If the player is not available to return to the field of play within 15 minutes (actual time) of leaving the playing area, the replacement becomes permanent.

Temporary replacement - Head Injury Assessment (HIA)

There are no HIAs in domestic rugby – only the professional game. If a doctor/ physio/ coach or the referee suspects concussion, then the player must leave the field immediately.

Temporary replacements - all

A temporary replacement can be temporarily replaced (even if all replacements have been used).

- If a temporary replacement is injured, that player may also be replaced.
- If a temporary replacement is sent off, the originally replaced player is not permitted to return to the playing area, except to comply Law 3.19 or 3.20, and only if the player has been medically cleared to do so and does so within the required time of leaving the field of play.
- If the temporary replacement is temporarily suspended, the replaced player is not permitted to return to the field of play until after the period of suspension, except to comply with Law 3.19 or 3.20, and only if the player has been medically cleared to do so and does so within the required time of leaving the field of play.
- If the time allowed for a temporary replacement elapses during half-time, the replacement shall become permanent unless the replaced player returns to the field of play immediately at the start of the second half.

Tactical replacements joining the match

Tactically replaced players may return to play only when replacing:

- An injured front-row player.
- A player with a blood injury.
- A player who has just been injured as a result of foul play (as verified by the match officials).
- The nominated player described in Law 3.19 or 3.20.

Under 19 law variations: A player who has been tactically replaced may replace any injured player.

Game On

None of us want to see fixtures being cancelled or postponed because teams don't have sufficient numbers, or enough position specific players. By utilising some of the principles below, clubs can work together to ensure the Game is On.

It is absolutely critical the referee and both captains are in agreement to play under Game On principles and this must be done before the game kicks-off.

Fixtures

For Season 2021 – 2022 Game On principles can be applied in the following Scottish Rugby competitions, in addition to any friendly fixtures:

Men's

In all regions: Caledonia, North Caledonia, Midlands, East, West

Division 2

Division 3

Division 4

Reserve 2 (east and west)

Reserve 3 (east and west)

Women's

North, Midlands, East and West

Youth Rugby

Game On principles apply to all levels of the youth game with further specific principles outlined in both boys and girls age grade law variation documents.

Communication

The team wishing to use any of the Game On principles must communicate with their opponents as soon as possible. The principles should then be agreed prior to kick off between both team captains and the Match Official(s).

Clubs should also consider notifying spectators of any Game On principles being applied so that they are aware of what is going on in the game.

Player matching

A match can start with fewer than 15 players (but no less than 10 players), subject to each team fielding at least five players in the scrum at all times. If a team starts the match with less than 15 players both teams must start with an equal number of players. Player matching must be maintained throughout the match other than where a player has been permanently or temporarily dismissed from the field.

Match duration

Match duration can be reduced to better suit the number of players involved in the match. The match should still consist of two halves but they can be reduced to a minimum time of 20 minutes as required.

Scrum

A match can be played with uncontested scrums without any additional restrictions. In the instance of there being 6 - 8 players from each team involved in the scrum, the player in the number 8 position is still able to play the ball from the back of the scrum once the ball is won.

Rolling substitutions

There are no limitations to how many substitutions you can make in a match. Rolling substitutions can be applied (i.e. players can be substituted and then return to the field of play). All substitutions must be communicated with the Match Official(s) before being made.

Competition points

Fixtures in the applicable Scottish Rugby competitions that are played with Game On principle/s in place will still stand for competition points. Amendments have been made to the Scottish Rugby National Competition rules.