

5th December 2006

Gentlemen,

Scrum Law Change

As you will be aware, with effect from 1st January 2007, the Law governing the scrum at all levels of the Game will change. Specifically, the change will see the implementation of a four stage “crouch, touch, pause, engage” sequence. This follows a review of the scrum by the iRB Rugby Committee and its Law Project Group following recommendations made by the iRB’s Medical Committee.

The new sequence, as approved by the iRB Council, is as follows:

1. The referee will call “**crouch**” and the front rows will crouch.
2. The referee will call “**touch**”. Using their outside arm, each prop will touch the point of the opposing prop’s outside shoulder. The props then withdraw their arms.
3. The referee will then call “**pause**”.
4. Following a pause, the referee will then call “**engage**”. The front rows may then engage. The “engage” call is not a command but an indication that the front rows may come together when ready. This is a change to Law 20.1(h). Presently Law 20.1(h) stipulates a “crouch, pause, engage” sequence.

Referees will continue to brief the front rows as to their responsibilities prior to the match.

Please find below a list of possible infringements, along with the appropriate sanctions:

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Infringement	Sanction
Each player's head and shoulders are no lower than the hips	FK Law 20.1 (g)
The referee will call "crouch".....	FK Law 20.1 (h)
The front rows crouch and using their outside arm each prop touches the point of the opposing prop's shoulder	FK Law 20.1 (h)
The front rows crouch and using their outside arm each prop touches the point of the opposing prop's shoulder. The props then withdraw their arms	FK Law 20.1 (h)
The referee will then call "pause". Following a pause the referee will then call "engage"	FK Law 20.1 (h)
A front row must not form at a distance from its opponents and rush against them. This is dangerous play	PK Law 20.1 (j)
Until the ball leaves the scrum half's hands, the scrum must be stationary and the middle line must be parallel to the goal lines. A team must not shove the scrum away from the mark before the ball is thrown in	FK Law 20.1 (k)
Incorrect binding by props and hookers	PK Law 20.3 (a-d)
As soon as the front rows have come together, the scrum half must throw in the ball without delay. The scrum half must throw in the ball when told to do so by the referee	FK Law 20.5 (a)
The scrum half must throw in the ball straight along the middle line....	FK Law 20.6 (d)

With effect from Thursday 7th December, you will be able to view an educational DVD demonstrating the new sequence at www.irb.com Your Society Training Officer (STO) will shortly be receiving the same DVD, which may be used at forthcoming Society Training Meetings.

We are currently seeking advice as to the implications should front rows not have been trained on the new sequence. Should there be anything further to report you will notified by the end of next week.

Should you have any questions relating to the new Scrum Law, please contact either myself or a member of the Referee Department Development Team.

Regards

Richard Glynn-Jones
Referee Manager