



Game Priorities - 2015

The key areas and the reasons are as below. Refer to World Rugby law application focus areas as per this link: <http://laws.worldrugby.org/guidelines>

1. The Game Fundamentals

- For all restarts at half way and 22m Kick Offs players **must** be behind the kicker
- Penalty/Free Kicks are to be taken on or behind the mark (not use the mark to commence the run to kick)
- Play will not be stopped for injuries unless the player (being a front row player) is required for a scrum, or for a player who is seriously injured.

Reason:

To keep the game tidy, well managed and without undue stoppages.

2. Positive Set Pieces

“Scrum & lineouts formed within 30 seconds is a priority”

Scrum

- Half backs are required to be facing square on to the scrum so they feed the ball in straight...as a guide their left shoulder in line with the centre line of the scrum is acceptable
- Crouch/Bind/Set sequence - good set up essential
- Scrums to be stable before referee moves to next call during 3 call sequence and the ball is fed in when ready. No undue delay of feed
- legal strong bind by props...no binding on the arms
- Players must set up straight and push straight
- Scrum resets to be kept to a minimum through player attitude and referee decision making/management
- When scrums become stationary the ball must be played immediately - referee will communicate to team “clear it” and this must be done without delay or turnover scrum is awarded.

Line Outs

- Line out throws to be within the shoulder to shoulder gap. Tolerance allowable when teams choose not to challenge.
- Players not to interfere with jumpers in the air
- If a team chooses to 'sack the jumper' this must be completed prior to maul being formed.

Reason

The target is to have game restarts occur quickly, correctly and provide quality ball.

LINE OUT to MAUL

With increasing frequency of this occurring in games, clarity of the actions for all concerned needs special attention. With this in mind it is important that a contest is encouraged and that fairness applies to both teams engaged in this phase.

The decision process is:

- The defenders may hold their ground and choose not to engage the maul. If they do this...**play on**
- If the jumper still has the ball and the lifters are beside him, they can move forward together with no problem and no obstruction...**play on**
- If the jumper lands and the ball is transferred back from the jumper prior to the defenders engaging, it is potential obstruction. It becomes obstruction when the defenders engage...**the referee will first call use it, and should the team not use it immediately then accidental off side, scrum defenders ball**
- If the lifters set up in front of the jumper when he lands, this is obstruction, when the defenders engage...**Penalty**
- If the defenders walk or step away from the line out...**Penalty**
- When attackers have formed a maul correctly...any players who then join the maul, eg Backs, they must do so by binding onto or alongside the ball carrier...**Penalty**

3. The Breakdown (Tackle/Ruck/Maul)

- Players of **both teams** who are off their feet are out of the game
- Tacklers must roll clear quickly and move east/west to provide clear access to ball
- A contest at the tackle is encouraged, by players being on their feet, clearly supporting their own weight are to be rewarded.
- Players in the "jackal" position with hands or elbows on the ground beyond the ball will be penalised
- Half backs are not to be interfered with at ruck & mauls
- The ball is deemed out of the ruck when the half back lifts the ball (not when he touches the ball)

Reason

To give teams the opportunity to contest the breakdown and deliver quality quick ball

4. Space for the Game to Operate

- Both backlines at scrums must remain **5m back** from scrums until the ball is released, and the non feeding half back to remain 1m from the scrum or retire to the hindmost foot off side line.
- Both backlines at lineouts must remain **10m back** from lineouts until the lineout is over
- Backlines in ruck/mauls must be onside until the ball is clearly released
- Defenders near the goal line must have feet AND hands behind offside line (not feet behind and leaning forward on hands)
- Players must **STOP** when ahead of their kicker at kicks in general play
- Tail gunners at the 15m line in lineouts must remain so until the lineout has ended.

Reason:

To give the ball receiving team as much legal **SPACE** as they are entitled to under law.

5. Foul Play

- “Collisions in the Air”...players of both teams going for the ball will be seen as competing for the ball, and players who poorly execute or intentionally take out a player in the air will be penalised and or carded.
- Players joining “breakdowns” will be penalised for dangerous play if the first contact is a shoulder charge with no use of arms. It is illegal to take out a player not part of the breakdown (past the ball, on side of breakdown and a player on the ground)
- Players connecting with the head & neck areas will be penalised, this includes high and dangerous tackles, tackles that slide up from the chest to the head and grappling players around the neck.
- Deliberate and cynical infringing (occasionally close to goal lines) will be treated harshly, with Sin Bin’s applied without prior warning being necessary.

Reason

The aim is to protect the safety and welfare of players and discourage negative and dangerous actions.