

in this issue

1. March calendar of events
2. Lee Smith: Thoughts on the game
3. Ruling on Law 20.1 (h) scrum

editor's comments

Dear All,

In addition to the Calendar of Events for march and April just some thoughts I have about the game after watching the wealth of rugby on our screens at present. Watching a lot enables the trends, variations, consistencies to come to mind.

Finally, a ruling from the designated members re. **Law Scrum 20.1(h)**.

I am sure you will find them interesting.

Kind regards,
Lee Smith

MARCH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Union	Activity	Trainers/Attendees
7-9 Mar	IRB	IRB Chairman Syd Millar visits NZ.	
7-9 Mar	American Samoa	Referee training	Greg Davey
8 Mar	IRB	Meeting with FORU Executive. Meeting with Tier 2 Chairmen & CEO's.	
9-15 Mar	Fiji	Level 1 and 2 Refereeing. Development Planning.	Keith Hole
12-14 Mar	FORU	Visit to Samoa	
13-14 Mar	NZ	HP Conference	Representatives from each Tier 2 union and Lee Smith
21-27 Mar	Solomon Islands	Refereeing.	Frank Mieklejohn
24-28 Mar	Cook Islands	Preparation of U19 team in Auckland prior to World U19 Tournament.	Chris Roden
28-31 Mar	Samoa	IRB Officiating Trainer to conduct coaching activities in association with	Kerry Petrie
28 Mar – 1 Apr	American Samoa	Coaching and Development Planning.	Hugh Galvan
30 Mar – 1 Apr	Tonga/ NSW	Tonga Refs to Sydney	Kim Lees
31 Mar	PRC	Upolu Samoa Vs Savai'i Samoa in Apia	
April	FORU	Pacific Rugby Cup. At least one game in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa each week-	Referee trainers to host union conducting match Official coaching for the MO's appointed to each

Some thoughts that come to mind on the way the game is being played...

Principles of Attack.	Principles of Defence
<p>Gaining possession</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positioning of the last player in the line-out is insurance for the overthrow by being further infield than his opposite number so the ball can be moved into. • It is more difficult to compensate for a throw that drops short than the over throw. • The height of the jump at the line-out is maintained by watching the ball into the hands. • A kick-off that is contested close to the touch line reduces left and right options to just left or right. • At line-out off the top ball close to the touch-line allows the defence at the tail of the line-out to flood the mid-field. 	<p>Contest possession</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The success of a scrum is based on the maintenance of pressure after engagement until the ball is out.
<p>Go forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pass is only as good as the ease with which it can be caught. • The effectiveness of a penetrator depends on the player entering the line and making a difference, not standing in it initially. • The speed of the delivery depends on the halfback knowing the direction of the attack before arriving at the breakdown and positioning to execute without wasting time. • A left handed halfback is more valuable than a right handed one – think about it. • Players who require less space are more competitive. • Success is based on getting past the gain line in both attack and defence. • A late change in direction is preferable to an early one. • Lack of space can be compensated for by reducing leg speed and increasing hand speed. • Grubber kicks rebound against shins so they have to be made by moving into a gap and putting the ball into the space beyond. • The overlap is maintained only if defenders are drawn and is eliminated by passing to early and using miss passes. 	<p>Go forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The longer the time that the ball is in the air the greater the time for the defence to adjust their forward movement and reduce the attacks options. • Unless they are good enough to play reverse drift defence those in the defensive line must not get ahead of the player inside them, otherwise a dog-leg gap will be created. • A square on defender gives the ball carrier left and right options. • In defence number from the outside- in so that extra defenders are closer to the ball where hit ups are more likely to occur. • Defend inside out but on a narrow angle to ensure there is "body" in the tackle. • The touchline is the most reliable defender of all as it is always in position, therefore it should always be used.
<p>Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The space created is the space moved away from not the space moving into. • Depth allows time to adjust. • The time needed to adjust is greater in a game than at practice so be deeper in a game. • Upon going into contact have an escape route for the ball at the ready. • When trying to play through the tackle hit and spin or a chest pass, made by the player lying on the ground, are more stable than the arms through pass on the way down. For these the support can afford to be deeper. • Hit and spin keeps the ball carrier in the game. • When a player penetrates the ball carrier will be isolated from lateral support by the defence so the only support that can be used to minimise interference is linear support. 	<p>Applying pressure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To delay the recycle and contest possession the advantage the tackler has by not having to come through gate means that the tackle and ball recovery must be coached as a single skill. • The danger of tackling at ball height is that the tackle is incomplete for some time allowing the attack to retain options eg the maul. • The advantage is infrequently a turnover in play but sometimes at the ensuing scrum if the ball is not recycled. • In addition delay in the recycle allows the defence to re-group.

Some thoughts that come to mind on the way the game is being played...

Principles of Attack.	Principles of Defence
<p>Continuity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the responsibility of the players in the ruck to provide a protective screen for the halfback. The ball should be delivered to the halfback, he should not have to go and get it. If he does those who should be doing this job will abdicate their responsibilities. This will continue and the halfback will continue to compromise his primary role. The halfback has enough to do. • The ball should be delivered on the forward move if the team wishes to retain it's attacking options. • Illegalities in front row play provide a list of options for effective "front row" play at the maul. 	<p>Prevent territorial gain.</p>
<p>Pressure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players who require less space apply more pressure. • By achieving field position and cherishing possession a team puts itself in a good position to win. 	<p>Support.</p>
	<p>Regain possession</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To catch the high ball under a challenge enter the space and leap for the ball. It is better to do this from the side than chest on as the impact is more easily deflected.
<p>Scoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If in doubt – "Head down; follow through". • Three points for a penalty is due reward for pressure applied and provides players (the forwards?) with the incentive to go and do it again. 	<p>Counter Attack.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The options at counter attack should be based on the opposition's chasing pattern. If the pattern is sound a return kick is not a silly option.

Laws and Refs

Should the Law apply equally to the attack as it does to the defence in the following situations:

- Entering through the gate at the post tackle ruck.
- Handling the ball in the ruck especially rucks near the goal-line.
- Standing in front of the offside line at phase play.

Law Quandaries:

- Can the ball on the ground be won with the shoulders above the hips.
- Equally by being bound.

RFU ruling with regard to Law Scrum 20.1 (h)

To: Secretaries/CEO's of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership
From: David Carrigy, Head of Member Services
Subject: Law Ruling by Designated Members of Rugby Committee
Date: February 16, 2007
Ruling: 1: 2007

The RFU has requested a ruling with regard to Law Scrum 20.1(h)

In the letter to all Unions from the IRB dated November 29, 2006 it was stated that this amendment would apply at all levels of the game. There has been some confusion within the game in England as to whether the new Law 20.1(h) applies to Age Grade Rugby in place of the previous Age Grade Variations.

The Designated Members have ruled the following in answer to the question raised:

The amendment to Law 20.1(h) applies to all levels of the game. 'All levels of the game' encompasses and includes all stages in the Union's Player Pathway where the Laws provide for a scrum, or modified 3 person scrum to be played. By example, if a 3 person scrum is played in Under 8's, or a full scrum is played in Under 19's, or it is a game of Seven-a-side, then this Law must be applied.

Yours sincerely,
David Carrigy
Head of Member Services

Law Scrum 20.1 (h)

20.1 (h)

The referee will call "crouch" then "touch". The front rows crouch and using their outside arm each prop touches the point of the opposing prop's outside shoulder. The props then withdraw their arms. The referee will then call "pause". 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.