

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lead Area:	RUGBY SERVICES
Lead Policy Title:	PLAYER NUMBERS AND CONTESTED/UNCONTESTED SCRUMS
Date last modified:	April 2024

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

This policy applies to all matches in grades U14 and above

If a Coach/Team Manager knows before the game that their team will not be able to field 15 players at the start of the game and/or intend to nominate uncontested scrums at the commencement of the match, then they must notify the Referee and opposition Coach/Manager of this fact before the start of the match.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

The detail in this policy is approved to apply as a variation to Law and Rugby Australia Rules. However, this policy should be read in conjunction with:

- World Rugby Laws
- Rugby Australia Variations
- GMGs for Community Rugby 2024
- RUSA Laws Summary document
- RUSA Team Forfeit Procedure

STEPS

1. Minimum and Maximum Player Numbers (U14 and Above)

STEP	DESCRIPTION OF ACTION	RESPONSIBLE
1.1	<p>Minimum Playing Numbers = 11*</p> <p>*(exception for Senior Women in 2024 season is minimum 10)</p> <p>When competing for Competition Points, a team must maintain a minimum number of 11 players participating in the match.</p> <p>Participating players includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - players on the field, - reserve players, and - temporarily unavailable players (e.g. yellow card, blood injury) <p>Participating players excludes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - players who are injured and unable to return to play, and - players who have been sent off (red card) 	Club/ Team Manager
1.2	<p>Maximum Playing Numbers = 23</p> <p>Any team in U12 and above can name a maximum of 23 players for a match. Player names and jersey number must be accurately recorded in Rugby Xplorer.</p>	Club/ Team Manager

* This procedure has the effect of a Rule under the Competition Rules issued by the Union and terms used in this procedure and defined in the Competition Rules have the same meaning in this procedure and the rule of interpretation set out in the Competition Rules also apply to this procedure.

2. Contested Scrums

STEP	DESCRIPTION OF ACTION	RESPONSIBLE
2.1	<p>There must be sufficient players to play in the front row to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement hooker is required, and on the first occasion that a replacement prop forward is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums.</p> <p>Should a team not be able to meet this obligation for any reason during a game, or should a team not have three suitably trained front row players to commence a game with contested scrums, then the team concerned must play with one player fewer than would otherwise be allowed. (** See examples in the appendix)</p> <p>If, subsequently, a qualified front rower becomes available so that scrums can be contested, then that player will be allowed on to the field and the team may return to the appropriate compliment of players.</p>	Club/ Team Manager
2.2	<p><u>First Grade and Reserve Grade Mens</u></p> <p>Teams competing in First Grade Mens and Reserve Grade Mens must commence their match with contested scrums as described in 2.1 above. If a team is unable to commence their match with contested scrums, then that team will be recorded as forfeiting the match.</p> <p>There is exemption (considered on a case by case basis) from the requirement to commence a match with contested scrums for the Reserve Grade Mens team, where the lowest Senior Mens Grade in the Club is Reserve Grade.</p>	Club/ Team Manager

3. Number of Players in a Contested Scrum

STEP	DESCRIPTION OF ACTION	RESPONSIBLE
3.1	<p>Senior Grades</p> <p>When a team on the pitch is reduced to fewer than 15 for any reason, then the number of players in each team in the scrum may be similarly reduced.</p> <p>Where a permitted reduction is made by one team, there is no requirement for the other team to make a similar reduction. However, a team must not have fewer than five (5) players in the scrum (3 x front row and 2 x second row).</p>	Referee
3.2	<p>Junior Grades (U14 to U18)</p> <p>When a team on the pitch is reduced to fewer than 15 for any reason, the number of players in each team in the scrum may be similarly reduced.</p> <p>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 (5)</p> <p>Where there is an incomplete scrum, it must be formed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Seven (7) players = 3-4 formation (i.e. no number 8) (ii) Six (6) players = 3-2-1 formation (i.e. no flankers) (iii) Five (5) players = 3-2 formation (i.e. no flankers or number 8) <p>NB – In U12 competitions, teams must match team numbers at all times.</p>	Referee

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4. Uncontested Scrums

STEP	DESCRIPTION OF ACTION	RESPONSIBLE
4.1	<p>Uncontested scrums as a result of a sending off, temporary suspension or injury must be played with eight players in the scrum – particularly where the match commenced with contested scrums with 14 or more players participating.</p> <p>Uncontested scrums as a result of not having a suitably trained front row and insufficient numbers to play XV players may result in players in the scrum as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 14 or more players = 8 in the scrum - 13 players = 7 in the scrum - 12 players = 6 in the scrum - 11 players or less = 5 in the scrum <p>If neither team has suitably trained front row players to start a game with contested scrums, the action described in 2.1 above do not apply to the game, even if qualified front rowers subsequently become available.</p>	Referee

APPENDIX:

** EXAMPLES

Note the definition – If a team is required to nominate Uncontested Scrums, then that team must play with **one fewer player than would otherwise be allowed**.

A team is “allowed” to have 15 players on the pitch.

If a team turns up with 14 players or less:

Then because the team is “allowed” to have 15 on the pitch, then that team does not have to drop a player if nominating uncontested scrums, because that team is *already* playing with one fewer player than would otherwise be allowed (i.e. playing with 14 instead of 15)

If a team receives a yellow card or red card:

Then a team who was playing with 15 players is now playing with 14 players (for the duration of the yellow/red card). This also means that the team is only “allowed” to play with 14 players for that period.

So, if this team is required to nominate uncontested scrums, then the team must play with 13 players (i.e. one player less than would otherwise be allowed) for the duration of the yellow/red card.

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