

17 October 2019

TO: ALL PROVINCIAL UNIONS
via *Email Communication*

Dear CEOs,

INTRODUCTION OF GAME ON FOR ADULT AND SECONDARY SCHOOL RUGBY

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the approved Domestic Safety law Variation (DSLVL) to enable the introduction of Game On for the 2020 season.

The NZR Participation Plan identifies three critical objectives to improve participation in rugby. This year we have developed a simple and inclusive rugby framework in consultation with NZR and Provincial Unions that placed the participant at the centre of how we deliver the game. A key initiative for secondary school and adult rugby was the introduction of a flexible game format (Game On) to address the large numbers of defaults arising from a lack of players and/or qualified front rowers. This was approved for introduction by the NZR Board on 17 August 2019 subject to the development of the required set of laws.

NZR has conducted a series of workshops across Mitre 10 Cup and Heartland PUs with players, coaches, clubs and referees to develop a NZ version of Game On for introduction in 2020. This has identified four key variations appropriate to the NZ context, namely:

- The ability to commence meaningful competition games with numbers between 10 and 15 a side.
- The ability for meaningful competition games to be played with uncontested scrums.
- The ability for meaningful competition games to be played with rolling substitutions.
- The ability to vary playing duration based on the combination of team size, rolling substitutions and availability of front rowers.

The workshops also identified the need for a clear, efficient and effective process for determining game variations on match days between team representatives and the referee.

The introduction of Game On has now been approved through an amendment to the DSLVLs as attached and is effective from 1 January 2020. NZR will be developing marketing, communications, and resources for players, coaches and referees over the coming months in time for the 2020 season. Promotional and educational material for use by PUs in introducing Game On will be available by 30 November 2019.

Points to note:

- Game On applies to all adult and secondary school competitions not designated as Premier grades.



- PUs are free to determine which grades will be designated as Premier Grades however our intention is that Premier Grades are limited to a small number. For the purposes of interpretation, it is considered that designated Premier grades would, subject to the depth of your PUs playing population, be limited to:
 - The highest ranked Senior Club rugby grade for men and women.
 - One other development/contributing adult grade if deemed appropriate. For example, Senior B or the premier school leaver grade.
 - 1st XV rugby for boys and girls.
 - Other Secondary School development grade as deemed appropriate.
- Game On is only triggered if a team presents with less than 15 players and/or less than 3 qualified front rowers at the commencement of the match. Normal competition rules would apply in all other instances.
- Notwithstanding Game On, Secondary School rugby competition grades are not eligible to utilise rolling substitutions as the Half Game Rule still applies and should be applied at all levels below 1st XV Rugby.
- Referees are requested to submit a match report for any game played under Game On so the reasons for using the flexible game format are tracked.
- Game On will be subject to a review in August 2020 to determine its effectiveness and any necessary changes for the 2021 season.

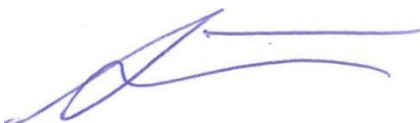
PUs are now requested to undertake the following actions:

1. Determine through their respective organising committees and bodies which grades are designated as Premier and therefore exempt from Game On.
2. Make any necessary amendments to competition regulations and communicate these as required.
3. Advise NZR by 1 February 2020 of the grades designated as Premier within your PU.

The existing DSLV around front row numbers and replacements will continue to apply to grades designated as Premier. The Game On workshops did, however, indicate that there is potentially value in empowering PUs to being able to vary the number of front row requirements for Premier competitions. NZR is therefore requesting feedback by 5 November 2019 on whether a further amendment to the existing DSLV is required for Premier designated competitions to vary the number of front row replacements required.

For any questions relating to the above request for feedback or the introduction of Game On please contact Mike Hester at mike.hester@nzrugby.co.nz or on 027 467 2199.

Yours Sincerely,



Steve Lancaster
Head of Participation and Development

Appendix:

1. Amended DSLV - Game On

NZRU DOMESTIC SAFETY LAW VARIATIONS

LAW 3 - NUMBER OF PLAYERS - THE TEAM

Application

Applicable to all levels of New Zealand Domestic rugby.
Does not apply to International and Investec Super Rugby.

DEFINITIONS

Temporary Replacement: A player who temporarily replaces another who leaves the field to have bleeding controlled and/or an open wound covered, or who replaces a front row player who has been temporarily suspended or required to leave the field to obtain a mouthguard.

Permanent Replacement: A player who permanently replaces an injured player or a front row forward who has been ordered off.

Rolling Substitutions: up to 12 tactical substitutions (per team), which can be made only when the ball is dead and with the permission of the referee.

Secondary School Rugby: all grades of rugby between U14 and U19 inclusive, including all grades played by teams comprising secondary school students (whether representing schools or clubs).

Designated Premier Grade Competitions: rugby competitions that have been designated as such by the Provincial Union/s (or other organisation, such as a regional secondary school sports authority) having jurisdiction over that competition. For the avoidance of doubt more than one grade may be designated as a Designated Premier Grade Competition.

Game On Provisions: means the provisions set out in appendix 1.

3. WHEN THERE ARE FEWER THAN FIFTEEN PLAYERS

- (a) When a team participating in a Designated Premier Grade Competition is unable to provide at least 15 players for a match (including the number of trained front rowers required by 5(e)), that team shall forfeit the match and the opposition team will be deemed to have won the match and will receive the winning competition points (without any bonus points). The match may still be played in accordance with the Game On Provisions (without impact on the official match result or competition points).
- (b) When a team or teams participating in a competition that is not a Designated Premier Grade Competition is or are unable to provide at least 15 players for a match (including at least 3 players who are trained to play in front row positions), but both teams have at least 10 players, the game will proceed in accordance with the Game On Provisions, without any consequence to the match result or competition points.

5. THE FRONT ROW - REPLACEMENTS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- (c) The replacement of a front row forward must come from suitably trained and experienced players who started the match or from nominated replacements. A player other than a nominated front row player is permitted to play in the front row only when uncontested scrums are being played and there are no available front row replacements.
- (e) A team in a competition that is not a Designated Premier Grade Competition must have a minimum of 3 players trained to play in front row positions.

If a team in a Designated Premier Grade Competition nominates 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 or 20 players, it must have a minimum of 3 players trained to play in the front row positions.

If a team in a Designated Premier Grade Competition nominates 21 players, it must have a minimum of 4 players who are trained to play in front row positions.

If a team in a Designated Premier Grade Competition nominates 22 players, it must have a minimum of 5 players who are trained to play in front row positions.

- (f) When a team or teams participating in a competition that is not a Designated Premier Grade Competition is or are unable to provide sufficient players who are trained to play in front row positions for a match in accordance with 5(e), the match will proceed with uncontested scrums in accordance with the Game On Provisions, without any consequence to the match's result or competition points.

15. ROLLING SUBSTITUTIONS

- (a) Rolling Substitutions are not permitted in Designated Premier Grade Competition matches or matches in Secondary School Rugby. Rolling substitutions are permitted in matches in competitions that are neither Secondary School Rugby nor Designated Premier Grade Competitions, where that match is played in accordance with the Game On Provisions.

LAW 5 - TIME

5.1 DURATION OF MATCH

Each half of an Under 19 match last 35 minutes playing time. Play in a match lasts no longer than 70 minutes. After a total of 70 minutes playing time, the referee must not allow extra time to be played in the case of a drawn match in a knock out competition.

N.B: 90 minutes is the maximum playing time permitted in one day for players in all grades of rugby Under 19 and below (World Rugby Guideline).

5.2 VARIATIONS IN DURATION OF MATCH

The duration of matches in competitions that are not Designated Premier Grade Competitions, that proceed in accordance with the Game On Provisions, may be varied in accordance with appendix 1.

Appendix 1 - GAME ON PROVISIONS

- 1. Game On is a flexible game format designated to enable games to proceed with meaningful outcomes despite teams being unable to meet normal team number and/or front row considerations. It applies to all adult club and secondary school rugby

competitions that are not Designated Premier Grade Competitions.

2. Game On is only to be used when a team(s) has less than 15 players and/or insufficient players trained to play in front row positions to commence the match.
3. The rules to apply to matches under the Game On Provisions are determined as follows:
 - a. Team Size (when one or both teams has less than 15 players). Playing numbers (between 10 - 15 a side) are determined by agreement between the Teams. In the event of no agreement, the playing numbers will match the number of players that the team with the fewest players has.
 - b. Rolling Subs (Grades above Secondary School Rugby only). Rolling subs will be permitted in all games played under the Game On Provisions unless the teams agree that Rolling Subs will not be used, and notify the referee prior to kick-off. 1/2 Game rule applies to Secondary School Rugby.
 - c. Contested or uncontested scrums. Subject to availability of a minimum of three players trained to play in front row positions to start in each team, the match will commence with contested scrums, but for the avoidance of doubt will revert to uncontested scrums if any of those trained players leave the field.
 - d. Length of match. To be agreed between the teams (with 40 minutes being the minimum and 70 minutes being the maximum for Secondary School Rugby, and 80 minutes being the maximum for grades above Secondary School Rugby). If no agreement is reached, the match duration will be based on team size as follows:

10 a side - 2 x 20 min halves. 40 min max.
11 a side - 2 x 25 min halves, 50 min max.
12 a side - 2 x 30 min halves, 60 min max.
13/14 a side - 2 x 35 min halves, 70 min max.
15 a side - 2 x 40 min halves, 80 min max (Secondary School Rugby 70 mins max).