

SURVIVING THE EXPERIMENTAL LAW VARIATIONS



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BetterRUGBY
COACHING 

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How the ELVs affect you

The ELVs (experimental law variations) are experimental no more now and 10 ELVs have been ratified. They are in official use from May 23rd, 2009, to apply to all competitions and leagues commencing after this date.

The ELVs regarding lineout numbers and mauling were not ratified, however. The Laws concerning these areas of the game have reverted to what they were prior to the introduction of the ELVs in August 2008.

Below, Dan Cottrell outlines the key technical and tactical areas to consider.

	TECHNICAL	TACTICAL
LAW 6 - MATCH OFFICIALS		
1. Assistant referees are able to assist the referee in any way that the referee requires.	No technical difference.	No tactical difference.
LAW 19 - TOUCH AND LINEOUT		
4. If a team puts the ball back into its own 22 and the ball is subsequently kicked directly into touch, there is no gain in ground [for the lineout].	<p>The back three will need to improve their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long kicking. • High ball kick and chase. • High ball catch and return. • Positioning to offer options to the player taking the ball. 	<p>Attack: You need to decide whether to kick from a set piece just outside your 22.</p> <p>If you want to use a kicking game, it seems sensible to kick long for the corners, or use a high ball down the centre of the pitch.</p> <p>It is likely you will kick infield more than before the changes, so your chase needs more organisation with a chasing team and a backfield recovery team in place.</p> <p>Defence: Defending against these kicks requires a new type of set piece from lineouts and scrums on the edge or just outside the opposition 22.</p> <p>Wingers need to be deep and the full back lined up inside the line of the opposition fly half.</p>

	TECHNICAL	TACTICAL
		<p>The predominant foot of the fly half usually dictates the position they take. More sophisticated teams may look at the possible options offered by a "wiper"/cross kick or with a kick from a different footed centre. This affects the positioning of the defensive openside winger.</p>
<p>5. A quick throw in may be thrown in straight or towards the throwing team's own goal line.</p>	<p>Wingers making and taking long passes.</p> <p>Players need to be in position to take the throw. They need to think about arcing round from midfield positions, looking to find space to run on to the ball from behind the throw.</p> <p>Wingers and full backs need to improve their kick and chase game.</p>	<p>The quick throw in carries a certain amount of risk, so you need to work out how risk averse you are as a team.</p> <p>A quick throw guarantees possession, but the receiver has to either run to space or kick to space. It also risks the receiver becoming isolated, so the rest of the team need to be aware of the possibility of taking the quick throw.</p> <p>A quick throw could take place some way behind the possible lineout position, so the lost ground needs to be made up. Hence the quick throw needs to be a team tactical plan, not just a whim from a quick witted winger.</p> <p>A kick return from a quick throw could be either a high ball, a chip for a shorter retrieval, a long kick to the corners or, as some sides are already doing, long down the middle of the pitch.</p> <p>A kick to touch needs to be further beyond the touch line, with your players aware of the quick throw in possibilities.</p>

	TECHNICAL	TACTICAL
7. The receiver at the lineout must be 2 metres away from the lineout.	A player coming into the lineout to jump or support has to arrive faster. Beforehand they were able to be closer.	<p>In practice, this means it is difficult to insert a player at the front of the lineout. This is because they will not be able to get into the line fast enough, once the ball is in the air.</p> <p>However, you can drop a player out of the back of the lineout and then insert the receiver before the ball is thrown in (probably at the front of the lineout).</p> <p>You don't have to have a receiver at all. So, a player can start in the receiver's position to move into the lineout before the ball is thrown in. However, this process might be too slow for your team to take advantage of it.</p> <p>The ruling makes no tactical difference for throws to the back of the lineout.</p>
8. The player who is in opposition to the player throwing the ball must stand in the area between the 5m line and the touch line but must be 2 metres away from the 5m line.	The hooker cannot lift from in front of the 5m line.	<p>This is significant now numbers in the lineout have to match. The hooker cannot lift at the front of the lineout if he was standing in between the touchline and 5m line.</p> <p>The practice of having a hooker at the front of the lineout to step in to lift is redundant. So you may think about having your scrum half "marking" the throw in and defending against the front peel, which would enable your hooker to cover the midfield.</p>
9. Lineout players may pre-grip a jumper before the ball is thrown in.	There is little technical difference because teams tended to do this before.	No tactical difference.
10. The lifting of lineout players is permitted.	No technical difference.	No tactical difference, because players still cannot lift until the ball has left the thrower's hands.

TECHNICAL

TACTICAL

LAW 20 - SCRUM

11. Introduction of an offside line five-metres behind the hindmost feet of the scrum.

A good disruptive scrum can reduce the 5 metre advantage, so scrummaging in defence is important. A slight wheel towards the attacking angle needs practicing.

The tackle line: This is now closer to the gain line if not over it, which has implications for the running lines of the back row and the pack from a scrum.

The first attacking pack players now have better forward momentum at the first ruck, perhaps allowing quicker ruck ball. This can mean a faster second phase move, so the backs have to realign quicker than before.

Attack - back row moves: Close to the scrum back row moves retain their relevance in terms of tying in the opposition pack. However the extra space means your number 8 (eighthman) has more options to attack the space in front of the opposition fly half.

Other players can feed off your 8 (or scrum half) if he picks and goes, because the opposing flanker will be pulled out of position to cover the attack. (In defence, it is likely that the flanker will cover wide and the number 8 will fill in next to the scrum.)

Attack - backs moves: From scrums, the attacking team has more time and space to move the ball wider, thus reducing the chance that the opposition will block the move at outside centre.

The defence either has to drift or go up and out. On a drift there will be a gap inside the fly half, with the up and out there will be space outside the 13 or winger.

	TECHNICAL	TACTICAL
<p>11. Introduction of an offside line five-metres behind the hindmost feet of the scrum. (Cont.)</p>		<p>Defence: How do your back line and back row defend from scrums?</p> <p>Your flanker is now about 7 metres in front of your fly half, not 2 metres as before. This causes a bigger dogleg in the defensive line in the area where the flanker covers inside the fly half.</p> <p>When breaking from the scrum, the defensive flanker now either needs to slow down a little or cover across more, leaving the gap inside to be covered by your number 8, or the lock packing down on that side.</p>
<p>12. Identification of scrum half offside lines.</p> <p>The IRB has verified that the scrum half does not need to retreat 5m behind the hindmost feet if he is not in "close proximity" to the scrum.</p>	<p>No technical difference.</p>	<p>The scrum half can challenge for the ball or aim to get out into the back line, or track back.</p> <p>The scrum half is now by far the closest defending back to the attacking back line.</p> <p>Defending an openside on the left, the scrum half can go round to the other side of the scrum to get into the midfield.</p> <p>Defending an openside on the right, he can block the pass and then move into the midfield.</p>
LAW 22 - CORNER POSTS		
<p>13. The corner posts are no longer considered to be touch-in-goal except when the ball is grounded against the post.</p>	<p>Practise diving for the line to score tries. Players must get into the air and then dip forward.</p>	<p>No tactical difference.</p>