



**SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY UNION
("SARU")**

**SCRUM LAW MODIFICATIONS FOR RUGBY PLAYED
WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA**

(updated in January 2026):

Document Title: SCRUM LAW MODIFICATIONS FOR RUGBY PLAYED WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA

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REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	ORIG	CHK	APP
Rev 0	15-01-2026	WV and CR drafted update Document to align with SARU's newly approved Tackle-Age Policy	CR, WV, DvB	CR, WV	

Summary of calls, bind, ball-in, push, and turnovers at scrums

SCRUM CALLS	U9 (first exposure to contact rugby and tackling)	U10 to U16 (Including provincial school age-group rugby)	U18 & U19, club U18 & U19, provincial U18 & U19, national U18 & U19	All other adult rugby U20 and above
Crouch - Ear to ear distance apart Bind - Pre-bind & come together with passive engagement, no hit SCRUM - Ball in, <u>no contest</u>	YES	NO	NO	NO
Crouch - Ear to ear distance apart Bind - Pre-bind & come together with passive engagement, no hit SCRUM - Ball in, <u>scrum contest</u>	NO	YES	NO	NO
Crouch - Ear to ear distance apart Bind - Pre-bind, maintain ear-to-ear distance pre-engagement SET - Active World Rugby form of engagement. Once scrum is square and stable, ball put in.	NO	NO	YES	YES
ELBOW	Both loose - head and tight - head props must bind with their elbows not lower than their shoulder line			
BALL IN	Ball must be put in on "Scrum" call		Ball must be put into the scrum once scrum is square and stable	
SCRUM CONTEST	No contest	Scrum contest at put-in on "Scrum" call	Scrum contest at put-in of ball. No signal from referee	
SCRUM PUSH	NO	Max 1.5m		Full contest
TURNOVER SCRUM	NO			

U9 (Under-9 Age-grade)

(FIRST EXPOSURE TO CONTACT RUGBY AND TACKLING)

Applies to Mini Rugby

- Passive engagement or fold-over, with pre-scrum binding.
 - With **5 - man uncontested scrums**, purely to restart play; a maximum of **10** players allowed per side.
 - With **8 - man uncontested scrums**, purely to restart play; a minimum of **15** players per side required for 8-man scrums.

Scrum calls

- **Crouch** (align ear-to-ear, and get into spine-in-line and parallel position)
- **Bind** (come together and pre-bind, with **passive** engagement, no hit)
- **SCRUM** (ball in, uncontested)

Scrum Management

- No hit allowed during engagement.
- No scrum contest allowed.
- Hooker must hook the ball.

U10 TO U16 AGE GROUPS

(INCLUDING PROVINCIAL SCHOOL AGE-GROUP RUGBY)

Applies to Mini Rugby and normal rugby

- Full scrum formation – first introduction to competitive scrumming.
- Passive engagement or fold-over, with pre-scrum binding.
- Uncontested scrums as a result of sending off, temporary suspension or injury must be played with eight players per side.

Scrum calls

- **Crouch** (align ear-to-ear, and get into spine-in-line and parallel position)
- **Bind** (come together and pre-bind, with **passive** engagement, no hit)
- **SCRUM** (ball in, and contest begins)
 - No hit allowed during engagement.
 - Full scrumming contest at put-in.
 - One-and-a-half (1½) metre push allowed, thereafter no more contest.

Post-engagement

- Enforce Under 19 Variations.
- No wheeling, a team must not intentionally wheel a scrum.
 - If the wheel reaches more than 45°, the referee must stop play.
 - If the wheel is unintentional, the referee orders another scrum at the place where the scrum is stopped.
 - No turnover possession when the scrum wheels through 45°.
- Both loose-head and tight-head props must bind with their elbows not lower than their shoulder line.

Scrum Management

- Should there be a mismatch, inadequacy or unsuitability of either of the forward packs, then uncontested scrums should be called for by the referee.

U/18 & U/19, CLUB U/18 & U/19, PROVINCIAL U/18 & U/19 AND NATIONAL U/18 & U/19

Normal rugby laws with scrum law modifications

- Full scrum formation.
- Active Engagement, with pre-scrum binding and a reduced hit allowed on engagement.
- Uncontested scrums as a result of sending off, temporary suspension or injury must be played with eight players per side.

Scrum calls

- **Crouch** (align ear-to-ear, and get into spine-in-line and parallel position)
- **Bind** (Take the bind firmly on opposite front row, but do not fully come together yet, keep the ear-to-ear distance, bar up, and prepare)
- **SET** (Maintain, and secure the bind and **actively** engage)
 - Ball to be put in once the scrum is square and stationary – no indication from the referee.
 - Full scrumming contest at put-in.
 - One-and-a-half (1½) metre push allowed, thereafter no more contest.

Post-engagement

- Enforce Under 19 Variations.
- No wheeling - a team must not intentionally wheel a scrum.
 - If the wheel reaches more than 45°, the referee must stop play.
 - If the wheel is unintentional, the referee orders another scrum at the place where the scrum is stopped.
 - No turnover possession when the scrum wheels through 45°
- Both loose-head and tight-head props must bind with their elbows not lower than their shoulder line.

Scrum Management

- Should there be a mismatch, inadequacy or unsuitability of either of the forward packs, then the current World Rugby laws prevail in correctly managing the situation.
- Failing that, uncontested scrums should be called for by the referee.

ALL OTHER ADULT RUGBY U20 AND ABOVE

Normal Rugby Laws

- Full scrum formation.
- Active Engagement, with pre-scrum binding and a reduced hit allowed on engagement
- Full scrum contest within World Rugby adult rugby laws for club rugby, national representative U20, provincial representative U21 or provincial or national representative senior teams
- Uncontested scrums as a result of sending off, temporary suspension or injury must be played with eight players per side

Engagement Sequence

- **Crouch** (align ear-to-ear, and get into spine-in-line and parallel position)
- **Bind** (Take the bind firmly on opposite front row, but do not fully come together yet, keep the ear-to-ear distance, bar up, and prepare)
- **SET** (Maintain and secure the bind, **actively** engage)
 - Once the scrum is square and stable the scrumhalf has to put in the ball

Post-engagement

- No deliberate wheeling of the scrum
- No turnover possession when the scrum wheels through 90°
- Both loose-head and tight-head props must bind with their elbows not lower than their shoulder line

Scrum Management

- Should there be a mismatch, inadequacy or unsuitability of either of the forward packs, then the current World Rugby laws prevail in correctly managing the situation.