



Premiership Competition Notes 2026

MATCH TIMINGS

Grade	Each Half	Grade	Each Half
Shute Shield	40 mins	1 st Grade Colts	40 mins
Colin Caird Shield	40 mins	2 nd Grade Colts	35 mins
J. R. Henderson Shield	35 mins	3 rd Grade Colts	30 mins
Henderson Cup	35 mins		

LOGISTICS

Some clubs are running all 7 grades at one venue. Others have Colts and Grade at different venues. Others are playing matches on Fri night. Check your appointment time carefully.

LAW VARIATIONS

The Colts competition is an Under 20 competition, with 3rd Grade Colts playing Under 19 laws.

TIME

Half-time is 5 mins, except for Shute Shield where it is 10 mins.

Time shall be allowed off for injuries in Shute Shield. There is no injury time in other grades. The referee may delegate timekeeping to a timekeeper or assistant referee however the referee's opinion of time shall prevail.

Any time lost in commencing a game for whatever reason shall be taken off that match in order that the ensuing matches may commence at the scheduled time.

TEAM

A minimum of 12 players is needed to constitute a team for Competition matches. Any team unable to field 12 players within 10 minutes of the official kick off time, or at any stage during the match, for whatever reason (excluding sin bins), including send offs, shall forfeit the match. Teams playing against an opposition with less than 15 players are not required to match opposition team numbers. The referee shall report such occurrence to Kim Taufu.

When checking apps with team managers, referees are to check that scores match, reasons are noted for all sin bins, and suspected concussions are recorded. Get the name of any player sent-off at this point.

REPLACEMENT OF PLAYERS / RESERVES

Replacement and substitution of players shall be governed by the World Rugby Laws of the Game, with 8 players nominated as replacements/substitutions. A team may substitute up to 3 front-row players and up to 5 other players. Law 3.8 applies to all Grade and Colts matches.

For 4th Grade and 3rd Grade Colts, a maximum number of 10 players may be nominated as replacements/substitutes. A team may substitute up to 10 players regardless of position.

Rolling substitutions will not be played in the Premiership Competition.

In all Grade and Colts matches except Shute Shield, replacements/substitutions do not have to be nominated before the match but can be determined during the course of the game.

Particularly in Shute Shield, the referee/AR must be notified by the accredited medical personnel that a player is leaving the field due to injury. If not so advised the replacement is deemed to be tactical. This becomes relevant when uncontested scrums are being called, as if a team has an uninjured front-row player on the bench that can play in the scrum so they remain contested then they should use that player. Similarly if they do go uncontested they must continue to use front-row trained players in the front-row (Law 3.18)

UNCONTESTED SCRUMS

Law 3.8 applies to all Grade and Colts matches. All teams must have sufficient front row players to play at hooker, tight-head prop and loose-head prop who are suitably trained and experienced, to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement in each front row position is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums.

Contravention of this rule will mean that in all grades except 4th Grade and 3rd Grade Colts, Law 3.17 shall apply, namely:

- a) 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.
- b) If, subsequently, a qualified front rower becomes available so that scrums can be contested then that player will be allowed onto the field and the team may return to the appropriate complement of players.
- c) If neither team has suitably trained front row players to start a game with contested scrums, the above arrangements do not apply to the game, even if qualified front rowers subsequently become available.

Law 3.15 applies where a team commenced the game with contested scrums and 15 players – if uncontested scrums are called as a result of a sending off, temporary suspension or injury, scrums must continue with eight players from both sides.

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION

Any player temporarily suspended will remain with the No.4 or No. 5 Match Official. If one is not appointed, the player must remain outside the playing enclosure. The No. 4 or No. 5 Match Official shall keep the time period. If one is not appointed, the referee may delegate time keeping to an Assistant Referee or time keeper, however the referee's opinion of time shall prevail. Note that time off (10 mins) commences when the game recommences after the stoppage.

If halftime occurs during the sin bin period the player may go to his team's changing room or huddle but must return directly to the sin bin for the remaining time of his suspension when the second half resumes. A one minute warm-up is permitted prior to the temporarily suspended player returning to the field of play.

No player is permitted to return to the field until the referee has given the player permission to do so.

ATTENDANTS

No more than two medically trained persons (certified doctors or physiotherapists only) and two water carriers (who must not be a coach of the team concerned) are allowed inside the playing enclosure. Medical attendants may go onto the field as allowed in the Laws of the Game and must retire to the side line after rendering assistance to a player(s). All attendants must adhere to the World Rugby Technical Area / Water Carriers Protocol detailed below.

During all matches, Attendants / Medical Personnel will be required to wear high visibility bibs/shirts as supplied or approved by the SRU at all times to clearly distinguish who they are and their role as per World Rugby Laws.

The Referee reserves the right to refuse entry to the field of play to any Club personnel not wearing the appropriate bibs/shirts. Any attendant not wearing a bib/shirt should not be allowed on the field.

WORLD RUGBY TECHNICAL AREA / WATER CARRIERS PROTOCOL

- a) Two technical zones shall be provided within the playing enclosure on the same side of the pitch, each one on either side of the half-way line and outside the field of play. Personnel Permitted in the Technical Zone.
- b) One of the medically trained personnel permitted to operate from the technical zone, as listed above, may be positioned instead on the far side of the playing area on the touch line opposite the technical zone.
- c) The second medically trained personnel permitted to operate from the technical zone as listed in (a) above may be positioned on the near side of the playing area on the touch line. The two medically trained personnel may not be together on one touch line (i.e. one on either side of the field).
- d) Where practically possible the medical personnel must stay outside the advertising hoardings. The medical personnel may keep up with play, but must pay due regard to the needs and right of players, match officials, spectators, broadcasters and commercial partners.
- e) The medical personnel may enter the field of play in accordance with Law at any time a player is injured. They must not obstruct, interfere or aim comments at match officials.
- f) **Medical personnel must not position themselves in-goal.**

Roles of Personnel in the Technical Zone

- a) Water may only be taken on the field during stoppages in play, for injuries in the playing area and when a try has been scored.
- b) The two water carriers are not permitted in the playing area during penalty kicks at goal.
- c) The water carriers must remain in the technical zone at all times unless they enter the playing area to provide water or when **ONE** enters to provide a kicking tee to the kicker at a penalty kick.
- d) Players may come to the touch line adjacent to the technical zone to receive water.
- e) Water bottles must not be thrown on the field of play.

Management of the Technical Zone

- a) All personnel permitted in the technical zone must have some distinguishing mark e.g. bibs/shirts, as described above.
- b) The fourth and fifth officials or designee will manage the technical zones. If there is a transgression of the protocol, the matter will be reported to the match referee.
- c) The match referee may caution any offender or at his discretion expel the person(s) from the playing enclosure for any breach of the protocol.
- d) Any breach of the protocol may be reported to the Match Day Controller who shall attempt to rectify the situation, or if necessary report the breach to the Competition Manager via his General Manager
- e) Should any person be expelled from the playing enclosure for a breach of the protocol they must be reported by the match referee to the Competition Manager

Personnel Outside of the Technical Zone

- a) The replacement bench and the location of the coaches should, wherever possible, be outside the playing enclosure.
- b) If replacements require to warm-up and there is not an area outside the playing enclosure, they may warm up in the opposition in-goal area but must not use balls or any other rugby equipment in

their warm-up. Balls and hit shields may be used where there is a designated warm-up area away from the in-goal area. All other equipment for the purposes of warm-up must only be used outside the playing enclosure or another designated area away from the playing enclosure. The playing enclosure is defined as per the Definitions Section of Law 1 (The Ground).

Players temporarily suspended

- a) When a player has been temporarily suspended (sin binned) that player is to be situated in the designated sin bin area (with the fourth or fifth match official, or if one is not appointed, outside the playing enclosure) and must remain there for the duration of the Temporary Suspension with the exception that a one minute warm-up is permitted prior to the temporarily suspended player returning to the field of play.
- b) The player may be given water and the provision of warm clothing.

Management of Protocol

- a) The management of this Protocol will be the responsibility of the Number 4 and 5 officials or by the appointed Match Day Controller or Match Manager. The Match Day Controller should be wearing a red bib stating their role.