



Law Trials set to feature in the 2024 Autumn Nations Series

- All 21 Autumn Nations Series fixtures will feature a range of law trials intended to enhance the experience for fans, and help simplify the game
- A variation on the 20-minute red card is one of the law trials set to appear in the November fixtures, with referees retaining the ability to award a permanent red card for deliberate and dangerous offences
- Scrum and Lineout countdown clocks are both intended to reduce stoppage
- Referees will go 'On Mic' at points within games to explain decisions for fans in stadia and watching at home
- The Instrumented Mouthguard program will be in operation, providing continuity to the players throughout their season.

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The 2024 Autumn Nations Series kicks off on Saturday 2nd November, and offers fans a month of blockbuster international rugby. Featuring fourteen of the strongest rugby nations, and their players going toe to toe, and reigniting rivalries for the first time since Rugby World Cup 2023.

The set of November fixtures for this year's Autumn Nations Series will see the European Six Nations sides host some of the strongest nations from the rest of the world.

The stage is set for a genuine sporting spectacle, and to enhance the experience for fans, a range of law trials are confirmed to feature in the November test matches.

The introduction of these law trials by Six Nations Rugby; the Official Organisation responsible for the Autumn Nations Series, has been driven by a game wide commitment to enhance the spectacle for fans, alongside the ambition to simplify the game in key areas, whilst continuing to ensure player safety and welfare standards remains paramount.

The law trials featuring in the 2024 Autumn Nations Series will be:

1) Introduction of a 20-Minute Red Card variation for technical offences

Referees will retain the ability to award a permanent red card for foul play, deemed to be deliberate and dangerous. However, this November, referees will have the option to award a 20-minute red card for technical offences. This variation on the law trial will run throughout the Autumn Nation Series and differs to the standalone 20-minute red card proposal due to be discussed by the wider game later this year.

The red-card variation ensures that players deemed to commit deliberate, and dangerous offences receive the full sanctioning, and subsequent disciplinary process, with the team being reduced to 14 men for the remainder of the game.



The 20-Minute Red Card element will relate to an act of foul play which is not deliberate or intentional. In these circumstances, the player will be removed from the field of play for the remainder of the game, with the offending team able to replace that player after 20 minutes, with one of their available replacements taking the team back to 15 players.

Another law trial being introduced to the Autumn Nations Series for the first time, is the option for the referee to go 'on mic' to explain their decision or key moments, for the benefit of those in stadia, or watching at home via broadcast coverage.

2) **Countdown clock for Scrum, Lineout and Kicks at Goal**

- a) **Conversion & Penalty Kicks:** Kickers will now have only 60 seconds to complete a conversion, with the time starting straight after a try is scored. If a player exceeds this time limit the conversion kick shall be disallowed.

60 seconds will also be allocated for a penalty kick at goal, starting from the time the referee is informed of the decision to take the kick at goal option. If the penalty attempt times out, a scrum is awarded to the non-kicking team at the place of the penalty.

- b) **Scrum clock:** A scrum must be set within 30 seconds of the referee making their mark for the scrum. A Free Kick will be given against the team deemed to be causing the delay.
- c) **Lineout clock:** A lineout must be formed within 30 seconds of the assistant referee signalling the mark for a lineout. A free kick will be awarded on the 15-metre line against the team deemed to be causing the delay.

Commenting on the introduction of these law trials, to the 2024 Autumn Nations Series, Julie Paterson, Chief of Rugby at Six Nations Rugby, said:

"Everyone in rugby understands that there is a huge opportunity to capture the attention of a far broader audience, alongside catering for its existing and passionate fanbase. The law trials are just one step towards exploring this opportunity, and the trials running throughout the Autumn Nations Series will hopefully enhance the experience for fans, whilst helping explain some of the decisions taken 'live' and to embrace but also explain the nuances that are part of what make rugby so unique and special.

No trial or subsequent change is considered without utter confidence that player safety and welfare is front and centre though. First and foremost, we need to look after the players and their interests, and the trials we have opted to use this November deliver on this commitment."

The law variations featuring in the 2024 Autumn Nation Series have been selected from a wider package of opt-in law variations introduced by World Rugby in May this year. A number of these closed law trials have already been tested across various rugby competitions, including The Rugby Championship, World Rugby's U20 Championship, and the Pacific Nations Cup.

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