



# **European Golden Oldies Rugby**

## **Playing & Refereeing Guidelines**

**Issue Status**

**004**

**Date**

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# **GOLDEN OLDIES RUGBY – PLAYING & REFEREEING GUIDELINES**

## **PREAMBLE**

Golden Oldies Rugby is played according to WORLD RUGBY LAWS of the GAME, U19 Variations plus some additional variations specific to Golden Oldies. Annex A of this document summarises the current variations pertinent to Golden Oldies Rugby as it is played in Europe.

Participants must be aged 35 and above and whilst the majority of players are between 35 and 55, there are quite a few in their 60's and 70's and one individual who is still taking part at 86! As with all aspects of the game **SAFETY** is paramount. However given the wide variation in the ages of players and the equally wide variation in physical prowess it is necessary to introduce some safeguards to ensure the safety of those who either because of previous injury or advancing years would be at risk in the full contact variant of the game.

It is the responsibility of individual players to determine whether or not they are capable of playing full contact rugby; note however that overly robust play is discouraged at all times in the Golden Oldies game.

This document details the Golden Oldies Variations and rationale for said, the current restrictions on tackling players wearing 'coloured' shorts and refereeing guidelines pertinent to the restrictions on tackling players wearing 'coloured' shorts. The essential purpose is to ensure consistency, equity and fair play for all.

## **GOLDEN OLDIES VARIATIONS**

### **SCRUMS:**

Scrum are uncontested and all forwards must remain bound until the ball comes out of the scrum. Scrum halves are not permitted to follow the ball around the scrum.

*In contested scrums the forces created especially upon front row players are considerable coupled with the fact that the time expended on the process can be somewhat lengthy; the uncontested scrum reduces the risk of injury and speeds the process allowing the ball to be brought quickly back into play following a minor infringement in the field of play.*

## **LINE OUTS:**

All forwards must participate at the lineout. Lifting of players is not permitted nor is the quick throw in allowed.

*The lineout is used to restart play after the ball has gone into touch. Lifting of players requires considerable skill and strength by all participants and the risk of injury is greater in such circumstances; removing the lifting element minimises the risk of injury and usually ensures the ball is brought back into play quickly.*

## **TACKLES, RUCKS & MAULS**

'Clearing' out of players is not permitted. No vigorous counter rucking or reckless driving into tackles, rucks and mauls is permitted.

*The principle in this case is safety of the individual especially when one considers the disparity in physical prowess which will inevitably be present when player ages range from 35 years to over 80 years!*

## **KICKING:**

A player may only kick when inside their own 22 metre area, Free kicks and Penalty kicks excepted.

*The emphasis in Golden Oldies is on the running and passing elements of the game hence the restriction on kicking out with the twenty-two*

## **SUBSTITUTIONS:**

Unlimited substitutions allowed and players may return to the field.

*The emphasis is on participation however the standard of fitness of players varies considerably and allowing unlimited substitutions ensures participants can play at their own pace!*

## **TIME:**

Games shall be played over two 20 minute periods or such lesser time as agreed by the match organiser or by both captains and the referee.

## **OTHER VARIATIONS:**

Other variations may be permitted at the discretion of the captains and the referee.

## GOLDEN OLDIES TACKLING RESTRICTIONS

### RESTRICTIONS:

All players must observe the restrictions on tackling players wearing coloured shorts i.e. **red** or **purple**.

**RED SHORTS** A player wearing **red** shorts is not to be tackled to the ground or pushed off their feet but may be held and once held must pass to a player not wearing **red** or **purple** shorts. It is the responsibility of the player to determine whether the wearing of **red** shorts is appropriate.

*Players wearing **red** shorts usually fall into two categories i.e. those who have suffered serious injury in the past and those currently recovering from serious injury. In either case such players are at risk if they are involved in heavy collisions appropriate to the full contact game hence the need to be identified by the wearing of **red** shorts.*

**PURPLE SHORTS** A player wearing **purple** shorts is not to be tackled or touched. Such players may run with the ball for up to 15 metres before passing the ball but are not permitted to pass to a player wearing **red** or **purple** shorts. It is the responsibility of the player to determine whether the wearing of **purple** shorts is appropriate; such players will most probably be 65 years of age and above.

*Players wearing **purple** shorts will invariably be of the 'older' generation and a little bit more frail perhaps, and a little less agile hence the rationale for allowing them to run 15 metres unmolested; this assumes of course that they receive the ball in the first instance!*

The foregoing summarises current status regarding the wearing of coloured shorts and the rationale for such. In the vast majority of games the restrictions pertinent to 'tackling' players wearing coloured shorts presents no issues. However there have been instances where some players (teams) feel they are sometimes unduly disadvantaged by having to abide by the restrictions imposed upon them as a result of opposition players wearing coloured shorts. There is a perception that those wearing coloured shorts are allowed greater freedom than otherwise might be the case. Doubtless there will be occasions when this holds true e.g. someone wearing **purple** shorts and 10 metres from the opposition goal line. However the ethos of Golden Oldies Rugby is about participation and not about winning or losing and one might argue does it really matter? Given however that one of the principles of Rugby is fair play it has been decided to introduce a more definitive set of guidelines regarding the 'tackling' of players wearing coloured shorts. **The match organiser may decide that the guidelines are not appropriate to a given festival or specific match within a festival and shall convey such to all participating teams prior to the commencement of the festival.**

## **COLOURED SHORTS – GUIDELINES**

**RED SHORTS.** Players wearing **red** shorts might well be very fit and mobile, as such they are sometimes able to elude the opposition i.e. an opposition player is unable to grasp or hold them. This is viewed as an unfair advantage especially if a defending player is close enough to tackle and would if allowed to do so be able to halt the ball carriers progress. In such circumstances if a defending player is able to place both his hands on the body of the ball carrier anywhere on the torso from the line of the shoulders to the waist then the ball carrier is deemed to be 'tackled' and must stop and pass the ball. Similarly if two defending players manage to place one hand each simultaneously upon the torso of the ball carrier then again he is deemed to be 'tackled' and must stop and pass the ball. The ball carrier must be allowed to pass the ball

**PURPLE SHORTS** The current variation doesn't give rise to any unfair or undue advantage and it has been determined that no change is required in respect of how referees should referee such situations.

## **TACKLING OPTIONS FOR PLAYERS WEARING COLOURED SHORTS**

A player wearing **red** shorts may attempt to tackle players wearing club shorts if they feel confident and comfortable about doing so; they should be reminded though that the act of tackling is not dissimilar to the act of being tackled and the obvious risk of being knocked to the ground. Players wearing **purple** shorts must not attempt to tackle other players.

## **TACKLING OPTIONS FOR PLAYERS WEARING CLUB SHORTS**

Players wearing club shorts must not 'target' players wearing **red** or **purple** shorts under any circumstances; this includes the ball carrier.

## **THE AIM**

The aim of these guidelines is to assist everyone involved in Golden Oldies Rugby to play and manage the game for the benefit of all. The essential purpose is to ensure **SAFETY** and **EQUITY** for every player who participates or wishes to participate in Golden Oldies Rugby irrespective of physical capability or age.

The Golden Oldies Laws embody and reflect the spirit of Golden Oldies Rugby. The aim of the laws and variations is to provide the best environment in which player enjoyment is maximised and the possibility of injury is minimised.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Questions, queries or suggestions may be addressed to Ray Mellis, telephone 07711 221424 or E-mail [ray.mellis@btinternet.com](mailto:ray.mellis@btinternet.com)

## Fun, Friendship, Fraternity



## Golden Oldies Rugby Laws Summary

### Played according to World Rugby Laws - U19 Variations Plus the following Golden Oldies Variations

**SCRUMS:** Scrums are uncontested and all forwards must remain bound until the ball comes out of the scrum. Scrum halves are not permitted to follow the ball around the scrum.

**LINE OUTS:** All forwards must participate at the lineout. Lifting of players is not permitted nor is the quick throw in allowed.

**TACKLES, RUCKS & MAULS:** 'Clearing' out of players is not permitted. No vigorous counter rucking or reckless driving into tackles, rucks and mauls is permitted.

**KICKING:** A player may only kick when inside their own 22 metre area; Free kicks and Penalty kicks excepted.

**SUBSTITUTIONS:** Unlimited substitutions allowed and players may return to the field.

**TIME:** Games shall be played over two 20 minute periods or such lesser time as agreed by both captains and the referee.

**RESTRICTIONS:** All players must observe the restrictions on tackling players wearing red or purple coloured shorts – refer tackling restrictions below.

**OTHER VARIATIONS:** May be permitted at the discretion of captains and the referee.

#### TACKLING RESTRICTIONS

**Red Shorts:** A player wearing red shorts is not to be tackled to the ground or pushed off their feet but may be held and once held must pass the ball to a player not wearing red or purple shorts.

**Purple Shorts:** A player wearing purple shorts is not to be tackled or touched. Such players may run with the ball for up to 15 metres before passing the ball but must pass to a player not wearing red or purple shorts.

Infringements of the Golden Oldies Variations are penalised with a Free Kick.