Australian Rugby Union

2011 TryRugby Kids Pathway Review

National Survey Results

7 December 2011

Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

Everyone Plays a Part

Introduction

2011 saw the roll-out of the National Kids Pathway which included education sessions, distribution of resources and Law dissemination across all States and Territories.

Given 2011 was the inaugural season where the changed game modifications and Laws were uniformly applied to each age group across the country, ARU conducted a survey between Wednesday 10 and Monday 29 August. The survey was accessible online and was distributed to parents, coaches, referees and other stakeholders who were invited to participate.

The following report provides an overview of the 2011 National Pathway Survey Results as well as presenting the outcomes of the recommendations which were driven by the survey results, constructed by the National Review Group and subsequently agreed upon by the Member Unions. Attached to this document is the 2012 Laws Summary.

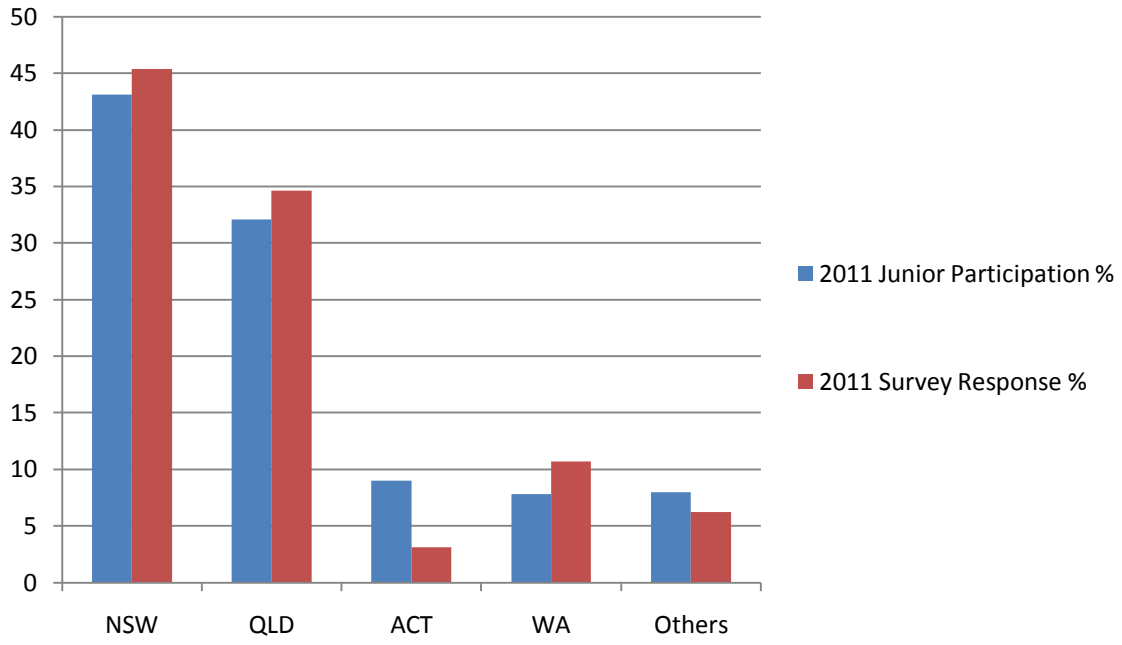
Survey Results 2011

Over the timeline that the survey was accessible, there were **2,527 responses received nationally**.

Breakdown of Respondents

The split between all respondents across the survey was Parent (Player) (55%), Coach/Manager (27%), Referees (5%), and Other (12%).

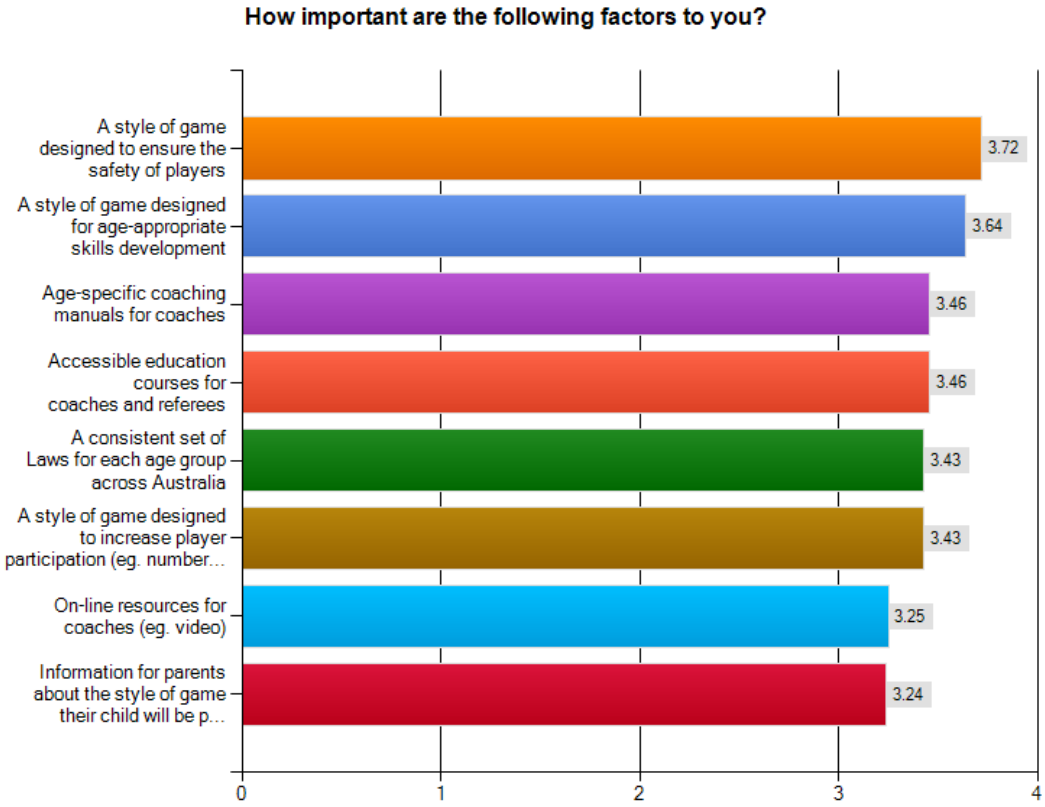
The graph below represents the 2011 junior rugby participation market share by State or Territory compared to the 2011 survey responses. This graph indicates that the response rate from the survey is representative of the junior player participation rate across Member Unions.



The response ratio across the country between Metropolitan and Regional areas was exactly 75% to 25% respectively. There were 71% of responses solely involved in Junior Club rugby, 26% were involved in both Juniors and Schools rugby whilst only 2% were exclusively Schools.

Important Pathway Factors

Information was sought from the survey respondents to ascertain how important certain factors in Pathway Rugby were to them. The response options ranged from 'Very Important' through to 'No Opinion' on a descending value scale of 5 down to 1. For the graph on the following page, the average rating for each factor is represented:



It is not surprising to note that safety and age-appropriate skill acquisition are highly regarded by those involved in the Kids Pathway.

One-Sided Results

When asked if the respondents were involved in significantly one-sided score lines this past season:

- 60% suggested 'Occasionally' or 'Rarely'
- 35% suggested 'Often'
- 5% suggested 'Always'

Education Sessions

Of the 53% of responses that were not aware of education sessions, only 11% of those were team coaches, team managers or age co-ordinators who might have otherwise been expected to attend.

Outcomes for 2012

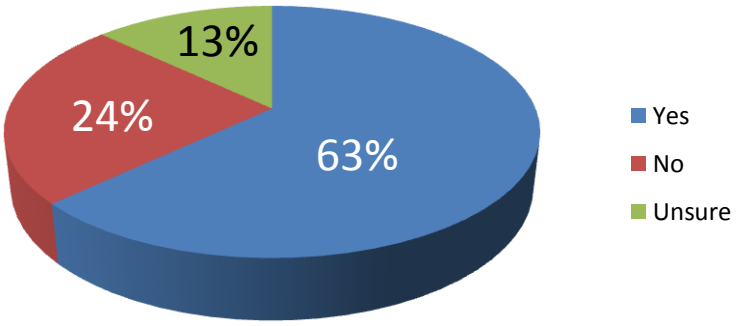
Below are the survey results for each age group along with the impact that these results had on the outcomes as proposed by the National Review Group and consolidated through the Member Unions and ARU as Pathway Rugby moves forward into 2012.

UNDER 6

When respondents were asked to assess their **U6 rugby** experience for 2011, **83% of stakeholders rated their experience as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'.**

Small-sided games

The major change that occurred in this age group from 2010 to 2011 was the inclusion of small-sided games that were played on match-days, effectively acting as the first half of the game. The question was asked in the survey whether respondents supported the concept of small-sided games? The national response rates were:

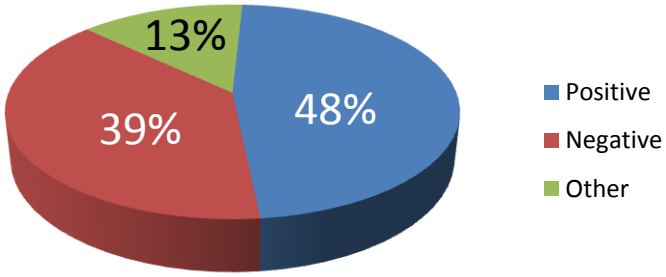


What was noted through the survey however was how the stakeholders wanted to play two halves of tag rugby on match-days, and not simply one half following the small-sided games.

Outcome: U6 match-days will be slightly revised.
Where in 2011, the first fifteen minute 'half' would be small-sided games with the second 15 minute half being a game of tag rugby, 2012 will see this change to two small-sided games, followed by 2 x 10 minute halves of tag rugby.

Removal of offside Law

The removal of an offside line caused confusion, mainly regarding the consistency of how the Law is to be applied in a tag game. Whilst there was a wide disparity of responses from state to state, the national response rate to the removal of an offside line was:



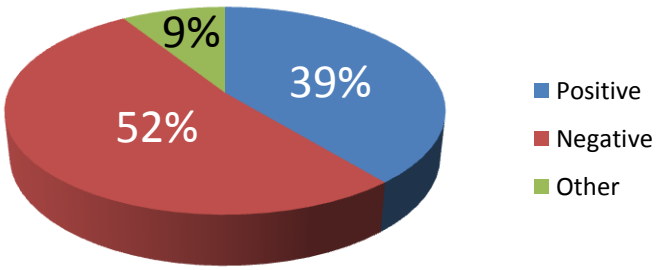
Greater education of coaches, referees and parents around the interpretation and application of how 'offside' players should be dealt with is required to achieve a more universal understanding, which in turn should reduce the dissatisfaction of the Law removal.

Outcome: The removal of the offside Law will remain for 2012.
The specific wording of the Law has been revised and stresses the importance of correctly applying the two-handed tag on the shorts of an opponent.

In conjunction with the above outcome, ARU agreed to conduct trial programs to gauge the best practise for offside Law at this age group. The results of this testing will be taken into consideration by the appropriate Pathway Committee or Review Group through next season in anticipation for 2013.

Inclusion of scrums and line-outs

Also included in this age group were scrums and line-outs. These uncontested restarts were included in the prescribed coaching manual. The national response rate for the inclusion of the set-piece was:



The critical response from the national survey suggested that the U6 coaches and participants struggled to grasp the concept of scrums and line-outs.

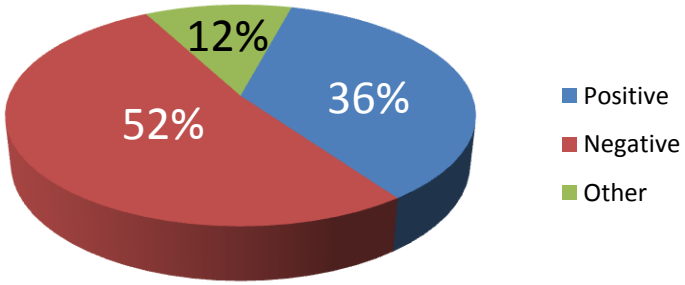
Outcome: Both the scrum and line-out to be removed from Law in this age group in 2012.
These two elements of the game will, however, not be lost on participants as appropriate activities will still be included in the coaching manuals for use in a training environment in preparation for the Under 7 age group.

UNDER 7

When respondents were asked to assess their **U7 rugby experience** for 2011, **81% of stakeholders rated their experience as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'.**

Removal of offside Law

Similarly to the U6 age group, there was a lot of confusion regarding the removal of the offside Law and how that translated to a game environment. The national response rate to the removal of an offside line was:

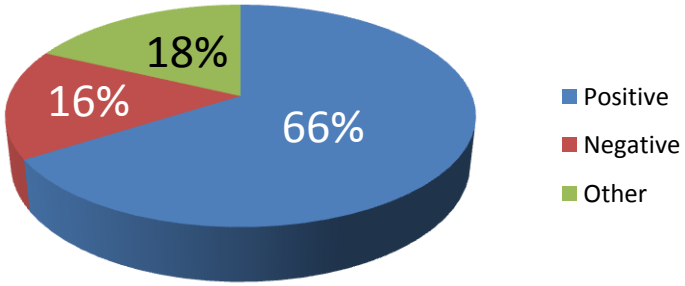


Outcome: The removal of the offside Law will remain for 2012.
The specific wording of the Law has been revised and stresses the importance of correctly applying the two-handed tag on the shorts of an opponent.

In conjunction with the above outcome, ARU agreed to conduct trial programs to gauge the best practise for offside Law at this age group. The results of this testing will be taken into consideration by the appropriate Pathway Committee or Review Group through next season in anticipation for 2013.

Inclusion of scrums and line-outs

Scrums and line-outs were introduced to the U7 age group for 2011. The national response rate was:



The National Review Group acknowledged that there was a vast difference between the U6 and U7 responses with regard to the inclusion of scrums and line-outs. At U6 the majority were opposed, but for U7 the majority were in favour.

In the lower age groups, it was considered imperative to retain certain elements of the game to differentiate Rugby Union from other football codes. By moving forward with the addition of set-piece play, this outcome is achieved.

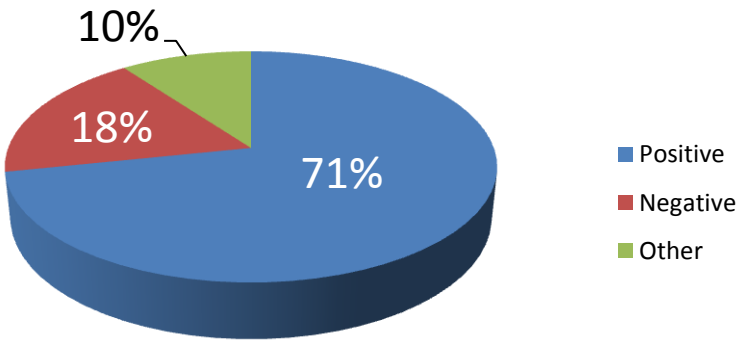
Outcome: Scrums and line-outs to remain in Law for 2012 at the U7 age group.

UNDER 8

When respondents were asked to assess their **U8 rugby experience** for 2011, **84% of stakeholders rated their experience as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'.**

7 Players per side

The introduction of the Pathway saw the reduction from 10 players to 7 players per side in order to increase player involvements. The national response rate was:



It was noted, however, that the reduction in player numbers had caused some issues for several teams with regard to their squad size.

Outcome: The playing numbers for the U8 age group to remain at 7 players per side for 2012.
ARU has since provided recommended squad sizes across all age groups in the Pathway to assist with squad management. These squad size recommendations are included in the National Pathway Final Report.

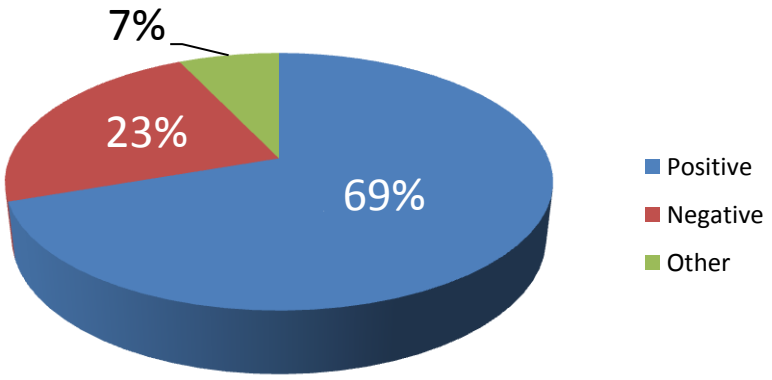
UNDER 9

When respondents were asked to assess their **U9 rugby experience** for 2011, **88% of stakeholders rated their experience as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'.**

Tap kick to restart play

The major game modification in the U9 age group in 2011 was the removal of a kick-off to re-start play following a try. A tap-kick for the non-scoring team was instead employed.

The national response rate was:



Outcome: Re-starts to continue unchanged for 2012, with a tap kick by the non-scoring team.

UNDER 10

When respondents were asked to assess their **U10 rugby experience** for 2011, **77% of stakeholders rated their experience as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'.**

There were no significant changes adopted in the U10 age group for 2011. As such, no specific questions were asked of the respondents.

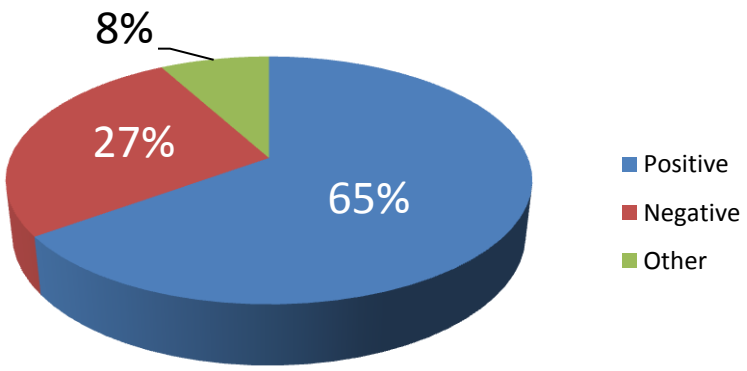
Outcome: No changes for the U10 age group were recommended for 2012.

UNDER 11

When respondents were asked to assess their **U11 rugby experience** for 2011, **81% of stakeholders rated their experience as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'.**

12 players per side

The significant amendment to the U11 age group was that the Pathway brought a reduction in from fifteen players per side down to twelve players per side.



In 2010, NSWRU requested that further analysis be conducted through 2011 and evidence produced regarding the effect of playing with reduced numbers in this age group.

The methodology for this review was to film and analyse ten x U11 games from various NSW based club and school fixtures, with the statistics generated from these coded games as follows:

Group	Pass	Run	Tackle	Ruck	Maul	Team Tries	Player Activity
2010 15-a-side	3	3	3	4	2	1.5	15
2010 12-a-side	4	4	4	5	3	3	20
2011 12-a-side	***3.1***	***3.5***	***2.6***	***9.2***	***1.7***	***3***	***22***

These results show a 47% increase in Player Activity from 15 per side to 12 per side.

The conclusion that the NSW Working Party Members reached was for the playing numbers in this age group to remain unchanged for 2012.

Outcome: The playing numbers for the U11 age group to remain unchanged in 2012.

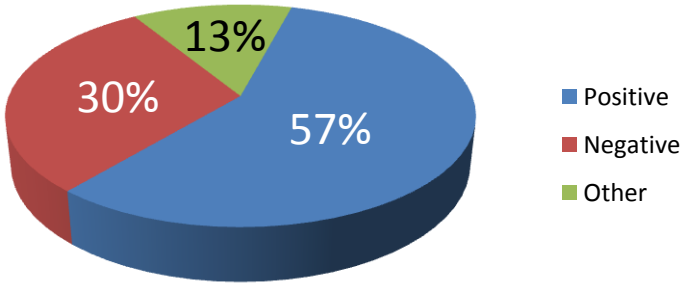
UNDER 12

When respondents were asked to assess their **U12 rugby experience** for 2011, **75% of stakeholders rated their experience as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'.**

Removal of penalty kicks and dropped goals

The first of two modifications at this age group was to remove the option to attempt a Penalty Kick at goal or attempt a Dropped Goal in general play.

The national response rate was:



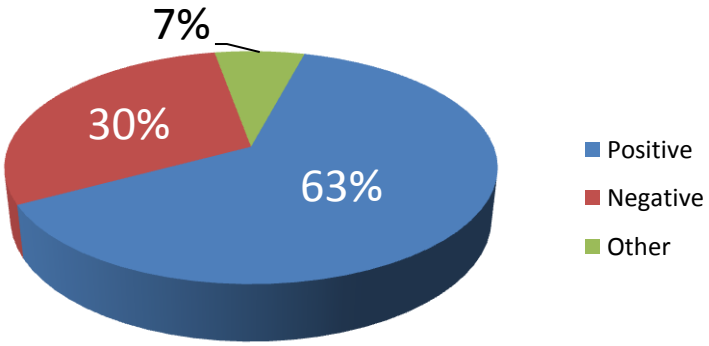
The conclusion that the NSW Working Party Members reached was to continue with the removal of Penalty Kicks and Dropped Goals from Law.

Outcome: Penalty Kicks and Dropped Goals to remain removed from Pathway Law.

No line-out lifting

Another element of the National Pathway for the U12 age group in 2011 was to remove lifting or supporting of jumpers at the line-out.

The national response rate was:



In 2010, NSWRU requested that further analysis be conducted through 2011 and evidence produced regarding the effect of playing with line-out lifting removed in this age group.

The methodology for this review was to film and analyse 16 x U12 games from various NSW based club and school fixtures, with the statistics generated from these coded games as follows:

Age Group	**L/O**	**Throwing Win**	**Non-Throw Win**	**Not straight**	**K/O**	**Throwing Team Success %**
Previous Years Lifting	4.8	1.6	3.2			34%
2011 No lifting	***3.5***	***1.8***	***0.9***	***0.4***	***0.3***	***51%***

These results show a 50% increase in the throwing team's success percentage.

The conclusion that the NSW Working Party Members reached was for 2011 Pathway Law to remain in place for 2012 with regards to no line-out lifting.

It was noted that the focus at this age grade, still in the Kids Pathway, must remain on the introductory aspects and skill acquisition; i.e. jumping for possession. As such the focus must remain on achieving an outcome in having the correct body shapes contesting at the lineout.

Outcome: Line-out lifting to remain removed from Law for the U12 age group.

2012 Laws Summary

LAWS SUMMARY FOR U6 TO U12

	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12
Player Numbers	7		7	10	12		15
Playing Area	1/4 field L:40m, W:25m		1/2 field L:60m, W:35m		Full field less 10m L:100m, W:60m		Full field L:100m, W:70m
Playing Time	2 x small-sided games, then 2 x 10min halves	2 x 15mins	2 x 15mins	2 x 20mins	2 x 20mins		2 x 25mins
Ball size	Size 2		Size 3		Size 4		Size 4
Conversions	No		Optional In front, 10m back		Yes Not past 15m-line		Yes Not past 15m-line
Kick-off	Punt 5m Exclusion zone		Punt or drop 5m Exclusion zone		Drop		Drop
Restart after score	Tap on half way by non-scoring team		Tap on half way by non-scoring team		Kick-off by non-scoring team		Kick-off by non-scoring team
Kicking	No		No		Yes		Yes
Tackle	2 handed tag on shorts No offside line for defence		Yes		Yes		Yes
Lineout	Tap restart	2 players No contest	2 players No contest	4 players No contest	5 players Contested No lifting		7 players Contested No lifting
Lineout receiver		Must pass	Must pass		All options		All options
Scrum	Tap restart	3 players No contest	3 players No contest	5 players No contest	6 players Contested 1m push		8 players Contested 1m push
Scrum half		Must pass	Must pass		All options #8 moves illegal		All options
When is Lineout and Scrum over?	Played by fly-half or bounces		Played by fly-half or bounces		Ball out		Ball out
PK + FK	Tap only Opp 5m back		Tap only Opp 5m back		All options Opp 10m back		All options Opp 10m back

Common Pathway Laws for U6 to U12

Player Numbers	Equal number of players on each team. If one team is short, teams MUST share players to reach the maximum number of equal players possible. Unlimited rolling substitutions		
Scoring	No Drop Goals No Penalty Goals	**Tackle**	Slinging tackles, fending to the head and squeeze ball illegal
Lineout	No Quick Throw-ins No variation in numbers allowed Must have a lineout receiver	**Foul Play**	Yellow card = 5 minutes YC and RC player may be replaced
Scrum	Defending scrum-half can't go past midline and cannot leave scrum	**Advantage**	Should be played as much as possible to ensure continuity