

# **The Rules of Rugby & Basic Fundamentals**



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# The Game

## General Points

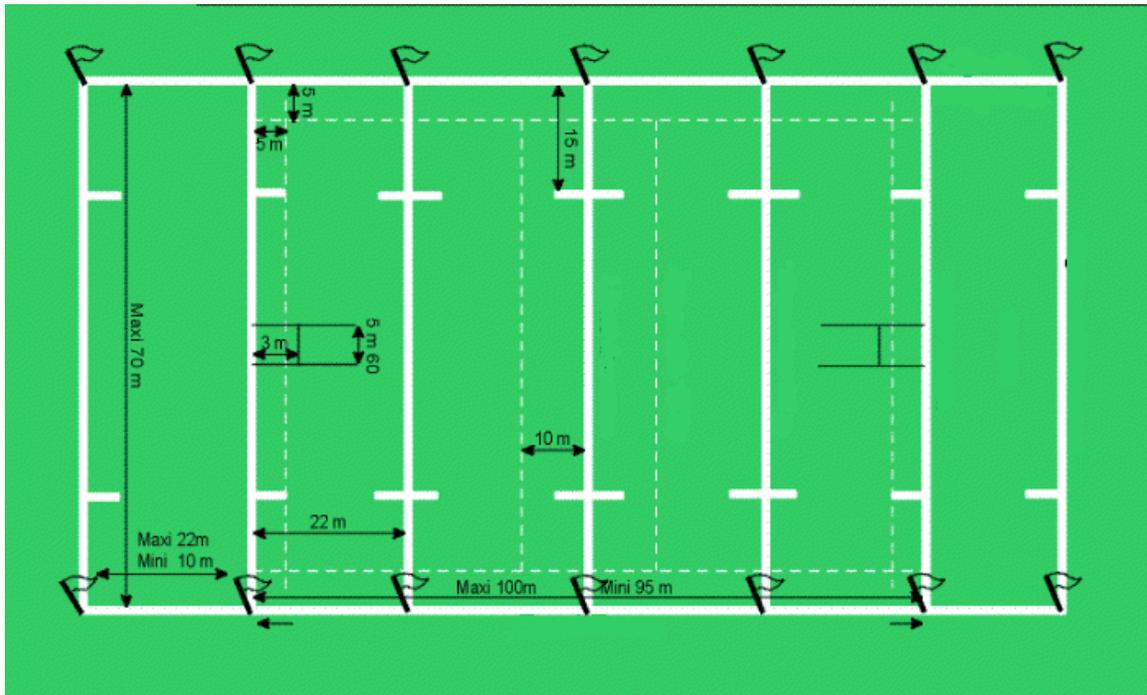
- The game is played with hands and feet and an oval ball, between two teams of 15 players each. The game consists of catching or picking up the ball and running with it, passing, throwing or knocking the ball to another player for scoring points, as well as kicking the ball. Passes to another team member are always in the backward direction.
- The duration of game is two, 40-minute halves with a halftime of ten minutes.

## Positions



## The Pitch

This pitch is rectangular and measures 66 to 70 meters wide by 95 to 100 meters long. It is divided into 2 equal halves, separated by the midfield line. Each half has an unbroken line marking 22 meters from the in-goal, parallel to the halfway line. The line is referred to simply as "The 22."



## The Points

- **Points after a Try:** 5 points
- **Conversion:** 2 points
  - May be attempted either by a place kick or a drop kick (commonly called a drop goal).
  - Defenders must be static and remain beyond the in-goal line until the kicker begins her forward movement toward the ball she is about to kick.
  - The kicker's teammates remain behind the line of the ball.
- **Drop-goal (Penalty Kick):** 3 points

## The Kickoff

- A Kickoff occurs:
  - at the start of each half
  - after a try and conversion kick in order to restart the game
- The ball is kicked from the halfway line into the opponent's half and must travel at least 10 meters. The ball is place drop kicked for the start of each half and to restart after the opposing side has scored.
- The kicker's teammates must be behind the halfway line at the moment the ball is kicked. The opposing players must be on or behind their 10 meters line.

## The Scrummage

The scrummage results from a foul. It must be composed of eight players from each team (3 front row players, 2 second row and 3 from the back row) who remain linked together for as long as the scrum continues. Generally, each front row player puts her head to the left of that of her opponent, and her shoulders must always be higher than her waist. The ball is then introduced on the ground by the scrum-half into the tunnel formed by the front row players. The hooker rucks (strikes) the ball with her foot towards the rear of her scrum. The scrum-half collects the ball as soon as it leaves the scrum to restart open play.

## The Ruck or Open Scrum

The ruck develops as a common means of securing the ball in open play as a result of an intentional or unintentional move, not after an infringement of the rules. A ruck occurs when the ball is on the ground and is surrounded by a number of players from both teams. The players in the ruck or joining the ruck must have their feet on the ground, their shoulders must be above the level of their waist, they must be linked together and they must join the ruck from the back. If the ball is unplayable, the referee shall intervene ordering a set-piece scrum.



## The Maul

As with the ruck, this is a situation that occurs in open play and is not the result of an infringement. The maul is formed in the same way as the ruck but the players surround the player with the ball, and she remains on her feet. At least 3 players are needed for a maul (the player in possession of the ball plus one teammate and one opponent). The maul ends when the ball goes to ground or the player with the ball gets free of the maul. If the ball is unplayable or if the maul ceases to move forward, the referee will intervene and stop play.



## The Line-Out

There is a line-out when the ball goes into touch (out of bounds).

**During open play:** If the ball goes directly into touch (flies out of bounds without touching the ground or another player), the throw-in is awarded to the opposing team at the point from which the ball was kicked, unless the kicker is within her own 22 meter line. In this case the throw-in is taken at the point where the ball goes into touch/actually crosses the touch line. If the ball touches the ground inside the playing area before going into touch, the throw-in is awarded to the opposing team at the point where the ball went out, wherever the player was when the ball was played.



### **From a penalty kick:**

If the team awarded a penalty chooses to kick for touch and the ball flies directly out of bounds, then the kicking team is awarded the throw-in at the point where the ball goes out.

To form a line-out, each team must form a line composed of at least two players. The two lines (one per team) must be parallel to the line of the throw-in, perpendicular to the touch line. One meter separates the two lines of players. The two lines are situated between the 5 and 15 meter lines. The line-out may be up to 15 meters long. The team that won the throw-in decides the number of players making up the line-out, and the opposing team must match with an equal number of players. The ball is thrown down the middle of the two lines by a member of the team awarded the line-out. This

player is standing in touch and facing the lines. The throw must travel at least 5 meters and be straight. Players not involved in the line-out must be at least 10 meters from the line of the throw-in.

## Tackling

Tackling is a defensive action. It consists of intercepting the player in possession of the ball and holding on to her or making her fall over (with one's arms) so that she releases the ball. Players on the ground after a tackle (the tackler and the player who was in possession) must release the ball, move away from it and may not rejoin play until they are back on their feet. It is against the rules to throw oneself on top of a tackled player who is in possession of or near the ball. It is also illegal and considered dangerous play to tackle at or above the neck.



## The Kick in Open Play

Kicking enables a team to find touch, to gain ground or, of course, to score points. Kicking is an essential part of the game and consists of kicking the ball in the desired direction, though there are several different types of kick:

- The kick ahead: may be collected by the kicker, or any other player behind her at the time the ball was kicked, to gain ground



- The up and under: a kick launched high enough to enable the kicker's teammates to position themselves to jump to collect the ball before they touch the ground

- The centralizing cross-kick: a kind of up and under allowing the ball to be sent back towards the middle of the pitch
- The drop goal: kicked on the half volley between the goalposts and over the cross bar, this kick scores 3 points if successful

## The Try

A player scores a try when she touches the ball down in the opponent's in-goal.



## **CALLING FOR THE MARK**

A player may call for the mark when she catches the ball on the volley or on/behind her 22 meter line. The ball must have come directly from an opposing player's kick. The player who catches the ball must call "MARK."

## **THE OFFSIDE**

A player is offside:

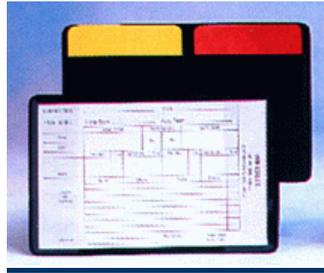
- When she is in front of a teammate who has the ball or has just played it.
- During a ruck or scrummage, if she remains or advances in front of the offside line. Only the number 8 is allowed to detach herself from the ruck or scrummage and collect the loose ball.
- If before a line-out is completed, a non-participating player advances or remains in front of the offside line set at ten meters from the line of the throw in.

## **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

Unsportsmanlike conduct occurs where an action breaches the rules or spirit of the game. This includes obstruction, unfair action, dangerous play, unsporting behavior or repeated foul play. These infringements may result in players being sent off, cautioned or the awarding of penalty tries or penalty kicks.



## THE YELLOW AND RED CARD



In the Five Nations Tournament and in all international matches, the yellow card represents a caution. Now in the Six Nations Tournament, if the referee judges a player to be guilty of an aggressive play or accidental unsportsmanlike conduct, he/she must temporarily exclude the guilty player without further warning. To do this, he/she summons the player at fault and shows him/her a yellow card. The player is sent behind the opposing team's dead ball line. The minimum duration of the exclusion is ten minutes. The red card means a player is definitively sent off. The card is handed out in cases of violent conduct, dangerous play and dissent or threatening behavior towards the referee.

## THE PENALTY

The penalty is a punishment for a team that has committed a foul. The penalty kick may be taken in the same way as a conversion, and in this manner is worth 3 three points. The penalty may also be taken rapidly in order to keep play moving. Finally, a team may choose to take the penalty by kicking into touch, and in this case, the kicking team will be awarded the throw-in. The team awarded the penalty kick can ask the referee to replace it with a scrummage.



# **SAFETY TIPS**

## **Preventing Rugby Union Injuries**

Effective injury prevention involves a host of measures such as physical preparation (e.g. conditioning, warming-up, stretching and cooling-down), skill and technique development, use of protective equipment, enforcement of game laws, rule/law changes, and the management of general safety issues by administrators, coaches, referees and other personnel. The following safety tips apply to all players, irrespective of the level of play.

## **Physical Preparation**

Players should undertake physical preseason preparation during the off-season and obtain advice on their conditioning program from either a coach or fitness advisor. Players should develop their individual and team skills, with guidance from their coach, before playing in competitive situations.

## **Warm-up and cool-down procedures**

A standard warm-up (15-30 min) should consist of aerobic activity, stretching and skills practice immediately before a game. Players should follow a regular stretching program to increase and maintain flexibility. Players should use correct techniques for regular stretching. Regular checking by a coach or trainer is advised.

## **Safety during the game**

- Tackling should be the focus of regular skills training and be progressively introduced to players.
- At the breakdown, players should try to remain on their feet. Training of team play for the breakdown is important, as is the prevention of foul play.
- Correct techniques for de-powering the scrum as specified by the ARU must be followed at all times.
- Mouth guards should be worn at all times during games and practices in which impacts to the teeth and jaw are possible. Mouth guards should be replaced every two years or when damaged or deteriorated.
- Players should recognize that injuries to either themselves or other players can still occur with the use of protective equipment.
- Injured players should return to play only after appropriate rehabilitation to regain their strength, fitness and mobility.
- Players should only wear correct footwear which is maintained to allow for optimal training and the rehabilitation of injuries.
- Players with a previous severe injury should consult their sports medicine practitioner about the value of using protective equipment in their individual case.