

SHAPING THE GAME

Transitional Contact (Under 9) Game

The Under 9 version of the game has been devised in line with research and child development recommendations, whilst up holding the principles, ethos and values of rugby and the pilot project. The Child is at the centre of development and the development of confidence and self-esteem of paramount importance

The game encourages the continuation of running, evasion, handling, support and decision making prevalent in Tag Rugby, while introducing the new skill of tackle. This is in line with evidence which supports an incremental introduction of new skills whilst building on existing skills.

This also enables the coach/referee to focus on the new skill of tackling with a real emphasis on safety and correct technique.

Although the tackle has been redefined as a grab by the tackler below the arm pits, the coach should continue to coach the correct tackle technique as demonstrated in Rugby Ready and the Level 1. It is recognised, however, that not all players are confident in the tackle and the revised tackle definition enables the less confident player to contribute to the defensive effort.

The more confident player also benefits from the revised tackle and play from it by encouraging them to use their passing, handling, off-loading and support skills in attack and apply the correct tackle technique in defence.

- **Object:**

- The object of the game is to score a try
- When a try is scored, the game is restarted by a free pass from the centre of the pitch by the non-scoring team.

- **Teams:**

- Played between teams of equal numbers of players, recommended 7-a-side to maximise space and involvement

- **Pitch size**

- Recommended for maximum space & decision making 60 meters by 30 meters.
- Reduced pitch sizes providing that the smaller pitches do not materially increase the risk of injury to players.

- **Passing:**

- The ball can only be passed sideways or backwards through the air, not handed to another player. If the ball is handed to another player or passed or knocked forwards (towards the opponents' goal-line) then a free pass is awarded to the non-offending side, unless advantage occurs to the non-offending side. In order to keep the game flowing, coach/referees should play advantage wherever possible.

- **Free Passes:**

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- A free pass is used:
 - o to start the match at the beginning of each half from the centre of the pitch
 - o when there has been foul play
 - o for a forward pass
 - o for a knock on
- At a free pass, the opposition must be 8 meters back from the mark. They cannot start moving forward until the ball leaves the hands of the passer. At a free pass, the player must start with the ball in both hands and, when instructed by the coach/referee who will call "PLAY", pass the ball backwards through the air to a member of their team. For safety reasons, no player may run until the pass is made. The player taking the free pass must pass the ball when the coach/referee calls "PLAY".

- **The Tackle:**
 - Only the ball carrier can be tackled. The ball carrier can run and dodge potential taggers but cannot fend them off using their hands (hand off) or the ball. The ball cannot be pulled out of the ball carrier's hands at any time.
 - A "TACKLE" in the transitional game is called for any contact below the arm-pit of the ball carrier which results in a grip by the opponent of the ball carrier. Where the ball carrier remains on their feet the coach/referee should call "TACKLE" (allow approx 2 secs to establish whether ball carrier held). Where ball carrier is taken to ground, the coach/referee must call "TACKLE"

 - **ACTIONS BY THE BALL CARRIER** in the tackle, the ball carrier, on hearing "tackle" from the coach/referee must pass the ball to a supporting player from their own team, either from standing or from the ground within 3 seconds of the call.
 - Once "tackle" has been called the ball carrier can continue to go forward (if on their feet), but must pass within the 3 seconds.
 - The ball carrier cannot score a try once "tackle" has been called and must pass to a supporting player.
 - If the ball carrier is within a metre of their opponents try line the coach/referee should allow the 3 seconds before calling "tackle". If the player touches the ball down over the try-line within that time, a try should be awarded

 - **ACTIONS BY THE TACKLER:**
 - The tackler must grasp the ball carrier below the shoulders, on the shirt, shorts or around the legs
 - The tackler may not contest the ball (grabbing it, blocking the pass), but must simply work to stop the ball carrier from gaining ground
 - Only one defender is allowed in the tackle
 - Once the coach/referee has called "tackle", the defender can continue to keep hold to prevent further forward movement of the ball carrier, but must release and rejoin the game once the pass has been made. If the tackle is made to ground, the tackler should get to their feet as soon as possible, but cannot contest the ball or block the pass and must endeavour to get in an on-side position (between their own try line and the tackled player)
 - Players are however only allowed one step to score a try after being tackled, or in one movement (if on the ground) place the ball over the try line.

 - **ACTIONS BY THE ATTACKING TEAM:**
 - When the tackle is made the ball carriers team should support from behind.
 - The supporting players may not assist the ball carrier in moving forward by either driving with the shoulder or "binding" on
 - The supporting players should be in a position to receive a pass.

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- A supporting player may rip the ball from the ball carrier but must then pass the ball immediately to a team mate.
- Support players must not deliberately stand either side and in close proximity to the ball carrier to prevent defenders from making the next tackle
- A supporting play may pick the ball up from a tackled player to ground, but must then pass the ball to a team mate

- **ACTIONS BY THE DEFENDING TEAM**
- When the tackle is made other defenders cannot join the tackle (ie it is a 1 v 1 tackle) – *However it is recognised that through the speed of the game more than one tackler may 'engage'. As long as they allow the pass to occur the coach/referee should allow play to continue*
- the tackled player represents the off side line and defenders must endeavour to retreat to stay between their own try line and the tackled player until the **pass is made** (off side) – *This includes where the ball has been placed in the tackle to ground. Defenders should not come forward to tackle until the pass has been made – and that pass should be immediate.*

- To reward good defence and to promote the attacking side keeping the ball alive by passing the ball before being tackled, the side in possession of a ball will only be allowed to be tackled a maximum of 6 times before scoring a try. At the 7th tackle, the coach/referee will stop the game and give the ball to the other side by awarding a free pass at the point that the tackle took place. If the 7th tackle takes place one metre from the try line and the ball is grounded, the try will be disallowed and the opposition will be given the ball for a free pass 7 metres out from the goal line, in line with the point the goal line was crossed.

- **Offside:**
- Offside only occurs at the time of the Tackle where the offside line is the hindmost part of the tackled player. When a Tackle is made, all the other players from the tackler's team must attempt to retire towards their own goal-line until they are behind the hindmost part of the tackled player. If a player, in an offside position, intercepts, prevents or slows down a pass from the tackled player to a team mate, a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending side. A player can, however, run from an onside position to intercept a floated pass before it reaches the intended receiver.

- **Obstruction:**
- The ball carrier can run and dodge potential tacklers but cannot fend them off using their hands (hand off).
- The tackler can only make contact with the ball carrier below the arm pits.
- If such contact is made the game must be stopped, the offender spoken to, reminded of the contact rules and a free pass awarded to the non-offending side.
- If the ball is pulled from the ball carrier's grasp, a free pass is awarded to the ball carrier's side.

- **Kicking:**
- There is no kicking of any kind.

- **Ball on the Ground:**
- If the ball goes to ground, players should be encouraged to pick it up. If they dive to recover the ball they must either get up or play the ball (pass) immediately & be allowed to do so by their opponents.

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- Penalty: free pass to non-offending side and the following rules apply:
 - If the ball was lost forward, a free pass is awarded to the non-offending side unless advantage occurs to the non-offending side.
 - If the ball is passed other than forward and goes to ground play will continue and either side may pick up the ball. If the passed ball rolls into touch a scrum will commence from the touchline to the non-passing side.
- **Play not allowed:**
 - In Transitional Rugby, there is total emphasis for the attack; on running with the ball, evasion, running in support of the ball carrier and passing; and for the defence: on running to tackle the ball carrier, prevent them going forward, and to get back into the game. In Transitional Rugby :
 - no contact above the arm pit
 - no line-out;
 - no kicking;
 - no hand off/fend off
 - no ripping of the ball by the defender.