

UNDER 11s NEW RULES OF PLAY (Transitional Contact)

Players and match officials must also ensure that RFU Regulation 15 www.rfu.com/thegame/regulations and the IRB Laws of the Game, modified by the Rules of Play, are observed when playing rugby at Under 11.

Club Rugby: As of 1 September 2014, all Constituent Bodies are permitted to implement the Under 11s Rules of Play set out below on a discretionary basis. Alternatively, Constituent Bodies are permitted to continue to implement the previous Under 11s Rules of Play that can be found at www.rfu.com/thegame/regulations.

School Rugby: The Under 11s Rules of Play set out below are also discretionary in school rugby but the RFU will continue to work with IAPS and the ERSFU with a view to eventually converge the schools' Rules of Play with those of club rugby. The previous Rules of Play that can still be played by schools can be found at www.rfu.com/thegame/regulations.

Any terms defined in these Rules shall have the meanings set out in the IRB Laws of the Game.

The **key elements of the Under 11s** Rules of Play are:

- Team numbers: 7, 8 or 9-a-side
- Maximum pitch size: 60 metres x 43 metres
- Ball Size: 4
- Continuation of uncontested scrum
- Nearest 3 players in scrum (all players trained, late specialisation)
- 3 player contest for the ball
- Introduction of ball carrier plus 2 and tackler plus 2
- Introduction of tactical kicking and kicking restart

1. **General:**

- a) The object of the game is to score a try by placing the ball with a downward pressure on or behind the opponents' goal line. A penalty try will be awarded if a try would probably have been scored but for foul play by the defending team.
- b) Only infringements that affect the opposition's play should be penalised.

2. **Teams:**

- a) Under 11 Rugby is played between teams of equal numbers of players, containing seven, eight or nine players from each team on the pitch at any one time.
- b) Rolling substitutions are permitted and substituted players can be re-used at any time. Substitutions can only take place when the ball is dead and always with the referee's knowledge.

3. Pitch Size:

- a) The maximum pitch size is 60 metres by 43 metres, plus 5 metres for each in-goal area.
- b) Reduced pitch sizes are acceptable provided this is agreed between the referee and coaches from both teams, and the smaller pitches do not materially increase the risk of injury to players.
- c) Adjacent pitches should be no closer than 5 metres.
- d) Provision should be made to indicate the position of the line 15 metres out from each goal line, serving a similar purpose to the 22 metre line in the IRB Laws of the Game.

4. Starts and Restarts

- a) A drop kick from the centre of the half way line will be used to start the game, the second half, and for all restarts after a score. After a score, the team which has been scored against will have the option to receive the kick or kick to the opposing team.
- b) The kicker's team must be behind the ball until it has been kicked and the non-kicking team must be at least 7 metres back from the half way line.
- c) If the ball does not travel 7 metres but is first played by an opponent, play continues.
- d) If the ball does not travel 7 metres or is played by the kicking team before reaching 7 metres or is kicked directly into touch, the non-kicking team will have the option to have the ball kicked off again or to have a scrum at the centre of the half-way line and the throw in to the scrum.
- e) Where players of the kicking team are in front of the kicker at the kick-off the non-kicking team shall have a throw in to a scrum on the half way line.
- f) If from the kick-off the ball is kicked into the in-goal, without having touched or been touched by a player and is then immediately touched down or made dead, or the ball goes into touch in goal, the non-kicking team has the choice of:
 - i. a throw in to a scrum by the non-kicking team at the centre of the half way line
 - ii. the kick to be re-taken.

5. Free kick

- a) Following the infringement from the following offences a free kick will be awarded to the non-offending team:
 - i. Foul Play

- ii. Offside
- iii. Where a fend off or hand off has been used
- iv. In the event that a ball carrier uses the “squeezeball” technique

Note: Squeezeball” is a technique where the ball carrier goes to ground, head forward (touching or close to the ground), irrespective of immediate contact with opponents, usually keeping parallel to the touchline, holding and protecting the ball close to the chest and, when on the ground, pushing the ball back between the legs.

- v. If a player voluntarily falls on or over a player lying on the ground with the ball in his possession or voluntarily fall on or over players lying on the ground with the ball between them, or near them
 - vi. If a player is prevented by the opposition from passing the ball when the ball has gone to ground
 - vii. If a team contests, pushes or strikes for the ball in the scrum
- b) A free kick is a kick from hand. This can either be a tap by the player to himself, or a kick to gain ground. The opponents must be 7 metres back, towards their own goal line.

6. Passing:

- a) The ball can only be passed sideways or backwards. If the ball is handed to another player who is in front or passed or knocked forwards (towards the opponents’ dead ball line) then a scrum is awarded to the non-offending team, unless advantage occurs to the non-offending team. In order to keep the game flowing, referees should play advantage wherever possible.
- b) Where the ball has been ripped from the ball carrier, whether by the attacker or defender, the ball must be passed immediately away from the contact area.

7. Free Passes:

- a) A free pass is used:
 - i. where the ball or ball carrier has gone into touch, 5 metres in from the side of the pitch where the ball or ball carrier went into touch
 - ii. once forward momentum has been stopped and the ball has not been played away from the contact area
 - iii. if the tackler makes contact above the shoulder

- b) At a free pass, the opposition must be 7 metres 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 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 referee calls “Play”.

8. The Tackle, Maul and Ruck

- a) A “tackle” is deemed to be any contact below the armpits of the ball carrier which results in the ball carrier being held by the opponent of the ball carrier. Where the ball carrier is taken to ground, the referee will call “Tackle-Release”.
- b) A “maul” is formed when the ball carrier and tackler are joined by two additional players from either the defending or attacking team. No more than 3 players from either side (including the ball carrier and tackler) can be involved in the maul.
- c) A “ruck” is formed when two players from each team, are on their feet, in physical contact and close around the ball on the ground. Players are rucking when they are in a ruck and using their feet to try to win or keep possession of the ball, without being guilty of foul play. Open play has ended.
- d) Only the ball carrier can be tackled. The ball carrier can run and dodge potential tacklers but cannot fend them off using their hands or the ball.
- e) The tackler must grasp the ball carrier below the armpits, on the shirt, shorts or around the legs.
- f) When the ball carrier grounds the ball on or over the opponents’ goal line, a try should be awarded.
- g) When the ball carrier is held in contact and remains on their feet they may continue to progress forward. Once forward momentum has been stopped, the ball must be played away from the contact area.
- h) When the ball carrier is not taken to ground, the tackler may contest the ball by grabbing it.
- i) When the ball carrier is taken to ground, the tackler must immediately release the ball carrier and must get to their feet as soon as possible before he is permitted to contest the ball or block the pass.
- j) If the ball carrier is taken to ground and the referee calls “Tackle-Release”, the ball carrier must pass the ball immediately, roll away or place the ball towards their own team.
- k) When a maul is formed the ball must be made available within 5 seconds. The referee should call “Use it” and the ball should be moved away from the contact area. If neither team can pass the ball away, a scrum should be awarded to the defending team.

- l) When the tackle is made the attacking team may only support from behind.
- m) When the tackle is made and the ball carrier is on the ground, two supporting players may join to form a ruck but must do so from their own side (i.e. from the direction of their own goal line) and:
 - i. Drive over the ball, taking their immediate opponent away from the ball; or
 - ii. Pick up the ball and pass away from the contact area; or
 - iii. Pick up the ball and run if the ruck is not formed or if the ball is out of the ruck.
- n) A supporting player may rip the ball from the ball carrier but must then pass the ball immediately to a team mate.
- o) If m)i. above has taken place, the next arriving player must pass the ball to another player.
- p) When the ball has been clearly won by a team at a ruck and the ball is available to be played the referee will call “Use it” after which the ball must be played within 5 seconds. If the ball is not played within 5 seconds the referee will award a scrum and the team not in possession of the ball at the ruck is awarded the throw-in.
- q) Support players must not stand either side and in close proximity to the ball carrier to prevent defenders from making the next tackle.

9. **Kicking:**

- a) Kicking on the ground is prohibited (often referred to as a ‘fly-hack’).
- b) If the ball is kicked outside of the 22 metre line directly into touch, a free pass is awarded to opposing team in line with where the ball was kicked and 5 metres in from the touchline, unless the non-kicking team elects to take a quick throw-in, in accordance with 9(g).
- c) Other than from a restart or a free kick, if a ball is caught directly from a kick anywhere on the pitch, by any player of the non-kicking team, one of the following options applies:
 - i. Play on
 - ii. A “mark” is called and the referee awards a free kick to the non-kicking team.
- d) Other than from a restart, a free kick or charge down, if from a kick the ball is played in flight by a player of the non-kicking team and knocked forward, a scrum will be awarded to the non-kicking team from where the ball is touched.
- e) If from a kick the non-kicking team plays the ball and it goes backward, advantage can be played to the non-kicking team. Where

no advantage is gained a scrum should be awarded to the non-kicking team.

- f) Drop goals are not permitted.
- g) Where the kick goes into touch the non-kicking team has the option to take a quick throw in preference to the free pass unless it has been touched by a spectator (including coaches/replacements). It must be the same ball that was kicked into touch. For a quick throw-in, the player may be anywhere outside the field of play between the line of touch and the player's goal line. If the ball is brought back into the field of play, or players from the kicking team are in close proximity before the throw can be taken the referee should award a free-kick in accordance with the rules above.

10. Actions Inside the 22 Metre Line (the "22"):

- a) If the ball is kicked from within the 22 by the defending team and goes directly into touch, a free pass will be awarded to the non-kicking team 5 metres in from where the ball crossed the touchline unless it has been passed back into the "22" and there has been no subsequent ruck, maul, tackle and touching of the opposition player, in which case a restart will be from where the ball was kicked.
- b) A drop out "22" will be awarded:
 - i. when the ball is kicked into in-goal by the attacking team and grounded by a defender; or
 - ii. when the ball is kicked, sent or carried into in-goal by the attacking team and the ball touches or crosses the in-goal touchline or dead ball line.

11. Ball to Ground

- a) Players must play rugby on their feet, with the ball in hand.
- b) 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 pass the ball immediately and be allowed to do so by the opposition.
- c) If the ball is lost forward, a scrum is awarded to the non-offending team unless advantage occurs to the non-offending team.
- d) 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 be awarded 5 metres from the touchline level with where it crossed the touchline to the non-offending team.

12. Scrums:

- a) A scrum will be awarded for:
 - i. Forward pass; or

- ii. Knock on; or
 - iii. Where the ball does not emerge from a maul or ruck; or
 - iv. Where the ball becomes unplayable.
- b) The scrum will consist of 3 players from each team, i.e. a prop on either side of the hooker. They will be the nearest 3 players from either side, with the fourth nearest acting as scrum half.
 - c) The referee will call "Crouch" and then "Bind". The front rows crouch and using their outside arm each prop must bind onto the arm of their opponent. Following a pause, the referee will then call "Set" when the front rows are ready. The front rows may then engage.
 - d) The scrum is uncontested and the team awarded the scrum will throw the ball into the scrum. Neither team may contest or push and only the side throwing the ball in may strike for the ball.
 - e) Front rows must not charge at each other. If they start to set too close together and with their necks and backs bent, the scrum must be stopped and the scrum reformed. Props' body positions must be parallel to the touchline, their head and shoulders must be no lower than the hips and there must be no downward pressure exerted. Shoulders must always be above the level of the hips.

Note to referee: Although unlikely at this age, referees and coaches MUST be aware of the following: If the scrum collapses, the whistle must immediately be blown and the appropriate sanction awarded or the scrum reset. If a player is persistently involved in collapsing or illegal binding, they must not take any further part in the scrum or if a player's lack of technique or strength is a danger then they must be replaced. All players, including replacements, should be suitably trained and experienced.

- f) The back line of both teams must remain 5 metres behind the scrum until the ball emerges or the opposing scrum half lifts the ball from the ground. Until this happens, their scrum half must remain directly behind his scrum, in the pocket edged by the two props.
- g) If a scrum is awarded within 5 metres of the goal line, the scrum is to be taken at a mark such that the middle line of the scrum is 5 metres from the goal line. In this case the backs of the defending team must stay on or behind the goal line.

Note to referees: Referees should pay particular attention to ensure that the scrum half throwing the ball into the scrum is not "feeding" his own players: the scrum half must hold the ball with both hands, with its major axis parallel to the ground/the touchline, midway between his knees and ankles. The scrum half must release the ball from outside the tunnel so that it lands midway between the two front rows and beyond the width of the nearer props' shoulders.

13. Offside:

- a) In general play, anyone who is in front of a team mate who has played the ball is liable to sanction unless they return to an inside position (i.e. behind the team mate who played the ball).
- b) At the tackle, offside occurs at the time of the tackle where the offside line is the hindmost part of the tackled player and tackler. All the other players from the defending team must retire towards their own goal line until they are behind the hindmost part of the tackled player and tackler.
- c) At the maul, where contact is made and the ball carrier stays on their feet and a maul is formed, the offside line is the hindmost foot of the hindmost player in the maul.
- d) At the ruck, the offside line is the hindmost foot of the hindmost player in the ruck.
- e) At the scrum, a player is offside if they are less than 5 metres from the scrum before the ball is out of the scrum, unless the player is the scrum half or participating in the scrum.
- f) When kicking, a player is offside if they are not behind the ball when it is kicked or behind a line 7 metres in front of the non-kicking team (or the place where the ball will land).

14. Prohibited Play:

- a) The ball carrier can run and dodge potential tacklers but cannot fend or hand them off .
- b) The tackler can only make contact with the ball carrier below the armpits.
- c) No player shall use the technique known or referred to as “Squeezeball” and no person involved in the teaching or coaching of rugby may teach or coach to encourage to use the “Squeezeball” technique.
- d) No player shall voluntarily fall on or over a player lying on the ground with the ball in his possession or voluntarily fall on or over players lying on the ground with the ball between them, or near them.

Note to referee: No advantage shall be played:

A player is assumed to have fallen voluntarily unless the referee is absolutely certain the fall was accidental.

In the very rare instances when the fall is accidental, play must be stopped and a scrum awarded to the team previously in possession. The object is to keep players on their feet and to prevent them from falling to the ground, thus removing a dangerous area of play. This will create proper rucks and mauls through encouraging players from each team to remain on their feet.