

Laws and Guidelines for U9 Mini Rugby (Last amended 9/2010)

Generic information

The following information applies to all age groups.

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to guide

- referees on the laws of the game for a specific year group; and
- coaches as to how they should be training their players to comply with the laws that apply across all Mini Clubs, especially for inter-club competitions such as festivals.

As such it is essential that all referees and coaches make themselves aware of these laws and that clubs provide suitable support to assist members and players in interpreting these laws correctly. Coaches are strongly encouraged to participate in referee training courses.

These laws are based on those published by the iRB for the senior game to ensure

- a smooth transition for players from Mini to Youth to Senior rugby
- a consistent base for Mini rugby.

Naturally there are variations on the senior game and many of the laws have been simplified or even removed as appropriate. In what follows the numbering of laws for Mini rugby uses the corresponding numbering in the iRB booklet “Laws of the Game – Rugby Union – 2008”.

Any additions to or alterations of the laws of the preceding year group are given in *italics* to make it easier for coaches moving up a year to identify the changes.

The spirit of the game and its laws

“ It is not the winning but the spirit of fair play, enjoyment and safety that is paramount.”

The “Spirit of the Game” includes:

- to enjoy the game.
- to play as part of a team;
- to give one's best efforts at all times;
- the ability to accept defeat gracefully and to win with equal grace;
- to play the game and not cheat because you think you may not get caught;
- the ability to abide by the referees decision without resentment;
- the ability to take hard knocks when fairly given and never bear a grudge.

Coaching and refereeing Minis

The laws alter progressively across the year groups to both accommodate the players’ growth and maturity as well as their development of rugby skills. It is essential that a coach avoids going beyond the laws for their year group even if he/she believes that the

players are capable of it. To introduce skills from later year groups will both be unfair and possibly dangerous in inter-club games.

In games coaches are expected to encourage respect for the opposing team. In particular, where one team is clearly dominating a game at the expense of the morale of the other team coaches should work with the referee in trying to bring some form of balance to the game so that both teams leave the pitch with a sense of satisfaction and achievement.

When coaches are allowed to accompany teams onto the pitch they are there to help the referee ensure that players get the maximum enjoyment and benefit from participating within the laws of the game. By their own actions and attitudes coaches must set an example to players of how the decisions of the referee must be accepted with good grace at all times. It is acceptable to request clarification of a decision, but it is totally inappropriate to challenge that decision on the field of play. Any further discussion should take place off the pitch away from the players.

The primary role of the referee is to allow the game to flow as far as possible and to achieve that aim full use of the 'advantage' rule should be taken. A referee is expected to

- conduct the game to ensure the safety of all participants;
- apply advantage equally to both sides;
- apply the rules fairly to both teams;
- communicate clearly decisions to the players and, as far as possible, to spectators;
- keep up with the game.

When the referee considers that spectators are behaving inappropriately towards the referee, then a direct confrontation should be avoided. A complaint should be registered after the game with the coach of the relevant side and/or the chair of the club concerned. For serious cases the referee should report the incident to the organizer of the event and/or the chair of the Mini Union.

Common failings of some referees are:

- not blowing the whistle loudly to ensure that all concerned are aware of the stoppage;
- not clearly and loudly describing the decision by signal and voice;
- where appropriate not explaining to players involved how the offense can be avoided in the future; and
- not admitting an error.

The U9 game

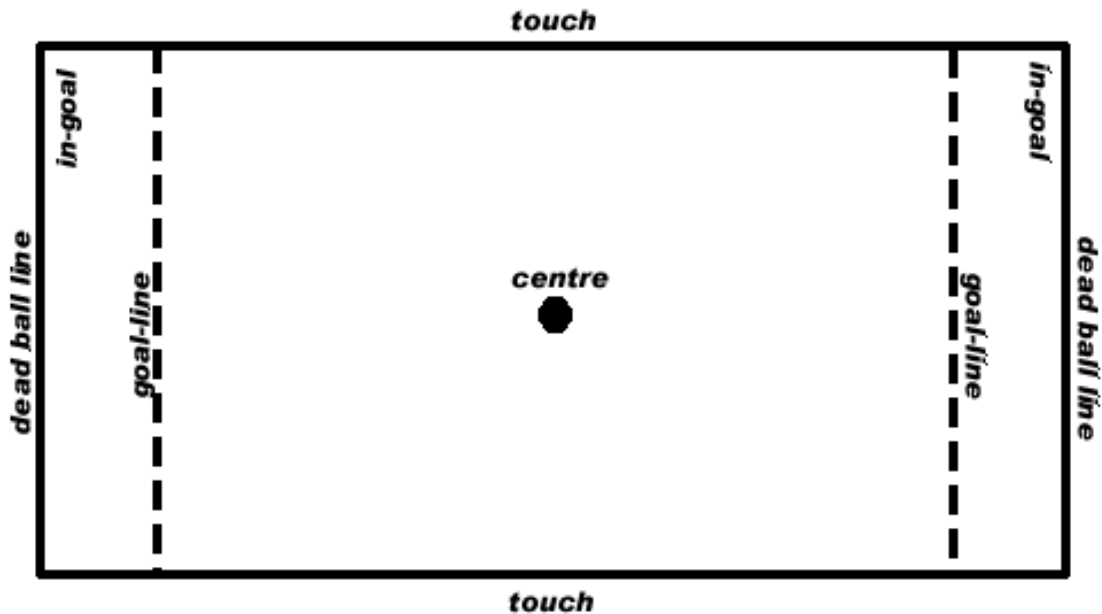
The main objectives of this year group are to build on U8 skills in that players learn how to:

- *tackle and be tackled*
- *participate in an un-contested, no jumping, 4-man line-out*
- *participate in a contested, no-push, 5-man scrum*
- *restart with a punt kick*

1 Pitch size

Inevitably this will depend on

- the size of the players;
- the number of players involved; and
- the amount of space available.



As a general guide the length of the pitch should be *three-quarters* the width of a full-size pitch and half as wide.

Note that for this year group there are no goal posts as kicking for points is not allowed.

2 Ball size

Size 3.

3 Number of players

A team will consist of *nine players* with up to three substitutes. *Five players will be designated as forwards and four players designated as backs.*

Substitutions can be made at any time provided that coaches notify the referee of any change so that a check can be made on numbers on the pitch.

The coach may accompany the team on the pitch during the game to instruct players; however, the coach must not deliberately interfere with

- the movement of the ball or any players;
- the referee's control of the game.

4 Players' clothing

Each player must wear a mouthguard.

Boots should not have a leading single stud and should have no sharp edges on the studs.

Any spectacles, gloves, or headgear should bear the iRB-approval label.

The referee's decision on the suitability of any item of clothing is final.

5 Time

The length of a game may vary according to the event, but normally it should not be more than 15 minutes. Usually this time will include a 2-minute break at half-time at which point teams will change ends, although for shorter games this break may be dropped.

Depending on the weather the referee should ensure that suitable water breaks are taken in addition to any half-time stoppage.

6 Match officials

Duty of the referee before the match

Point out the lines denoting the pitch especially the goal-line.

Carry out the coin-toss to determine which team starts at which end and who kicks off.

To remind both sets of forwards on the conduct of scrums.

Duty of the coaches before the match

Identify any players playing up/down to both the opposition coach and the referee. Any player playing outside of his/her age group without approval will be required to leave the pitch.

Check players kit for compliance with the laws especially boots.

Mandatory substitution of a player

Where the referee considers that a player has been guilty of dangerous play on more than one occasion, then the referee can require that the player be substituted.

7 Mode of play

Playing a match

The match starts with a kick-off.

After the kick-off, any player who is on-side may take the ball and run with it.

Any player may throw it or pass the ball to another player.

Any player may tackle *or hold* an opponent holding the ball.
Any player may fall on the ball and then be allowed to get up.
Any player may take part in a scrum, *ruck, maul or line-out.*
Any player may ground the ball in in-goal.

8 Advantage

The Law of advantage takes precedence over most other Laws and its purpose is to make play more continuous with fewer stoppages for infringements. Players are encouraged to play to the whistle despite infringements by their opponents. When the result of an infringement by one team is that their opposing team may gain an advantage, the referee does not whistle immediately for the infringement.

The referee is sole judge of whether or not a team has gained an advantage. The referee has wide discretion when making decisions.

Advantage can be either territorial or tactical.

Advantage must not be applied when the ball comes out of either end of the tunnel at a scrum without having been played.

The referee blows the whistle immediately once the referee decides an advantage cannot be gained by the non-offending team.

9 Method of scoring

Each try counts for one point.

Note that there are no other means of scoring.

10 Foul play

Obstruction

Charging or pushing – penalty: free kick.

Running in front of a ball carrier. A player must not intentionally move or stand in front of a team-mate carrying the ball thereby preventing opponents from tackling the current ball-carrier or the opportunity to tackle potential ball-carriers when they gain possession. – penalty: free kick.

Blocking the ball. A player must not intentionally move or stand in a position that prevents an opponent from playing the ball. – penalty: free kick.

Ball-carrier running into a team-mate at a set piece. A player carrying a ball after it has left a scrum, ruck, maul, or line-out must not run into team-mates in front of the player. – penalty: free kick.

Dangerous play and misconduct

A player must not stamp or trample on an opponent. – penalty: free kick.

A player must not kick an opponent. – penalty: free kick.

A player must not trip an opponent with the leg or foot. – penalty: free kick.

A ball-carrier must not attempt to push off an opponent with his/her hand. – penalty: free kick.

Dangerous tackling

A player must not tackle an opponent early, late or dangerously. – penalty: free kick.

A player must not tackle (or try to tackle) an opponent above the line of the shoulders. – penalty: free kick.

A ‘stiff-arm tackle’ is dangerous play. – penalty: free kick.

Playing a player without the ball is dangerous play. – penalty: free kick.

In making a tackle a player must not grab the ball-carrier’s shirt unless he/she also attempts to grab the ball-carrier’s body. – penalty: free kick.

Dangerous charging

A player must not charge or knock down an opponent carrying the ball without trying to grasp the player. This includes pushing players into touch without attempting to make a proper tackle. – penalty: free kick.

Dangerous play in a scrum, ruck or maul

The front row of a scrum must not push against its opponents. – penalty: free kick.

Players must not intentionally collapse a scrum, *ruck or maul*. – penalty: free kick.

Players must not charge into a ruck or maul without binding onto a player in the ruck or maul. – penalty: free kick.

Acts contrary to good sportsmanship

– penalty: free kick.

Kicking the ball.

A player may not kick the ball out of hand or a loose ball – penalty: free kick.

11 Off-side and on-side in general play

In general play a player is off-side if the player is in front of a team-mate who is carrying the ball, or in front of a team-mate who last played the ball.

Off-side means that a player is temporarily out of the game. Such players are liable to be penalized if they take part in the game.

A player who is in an off-side position is not automatically penalized.

In general play, there are three ways by which an off-side players can be put on-side:

- When the off-side player runs behind the team-mate who last touched or carried the ball.
- When a team-mate carrying the ball runs in front of the off-side player.
- When an opponent obtains the ball.

At a scrum, *ruck, maul or line-out*, a player is off-side if the player is in front of the off-side line as described in the relevant parts of these Laws.

When a scrum, *ruck, maul or line-out* forms, a player who is off-side and is retiring as required by Law remains off-side even when the opposing team wins possession and the scrum has ended.

- The player is put on-side by retiring behind the applicable off-side line. No other action of the off-side player and no action of that player's team-mates can put the off-side player on-side.
- If the player remains off-side the player can be put on-side only through the action of the opposing team; i.e. when it advances 2 metres with ball.

12 Knock-on or throw-forward

A knock-on occurs when a player loses possession of the ball and it goes forward, or when a player hits the ball forward with the hand or arm, or when the ball hits the hand or arm and goes forward, and the ball touches the ground or another player before the original player can catch it.

A throw-forward occurs when a player throws or passes the ball forward.

A scrum is awarded at the place of the knock-on or throw-forward.

If the offense occurs within the in-goal, then the scrum is awarded 3 metres from the goal-line in line with the place of infringement not closer than 3 metres from the touch-line.

13 Kick-off and restart kicks

The kick-off occurs at the start of the match and the restart of the match after half-time. Restart kicks occur after a score or a touch down.

A kick-off is taken with a punt kick at the centre spot.

After a score the losing team restarts play with a punt kick, i.e. a kick where the ball is dropped from the hands to the boot.

All the kicker's team must be behind the ball when it is kicked. If they are not, then a scrum is formed at the centre with the receiving team throwing-in the ball.

All the opposing team must stand on or behind the 5-metre 'line' until the ball is kicked. If they are not, the kick is taken again.

If the ball does not reach the opponent's 5-metre 'line' but is played by an opponent, play continues.

If the ball does not reach the opponent's 5-metre 'line', then the opposing team has two choices:

- *To have the ball kicked off again, or*
- *To have a scrum at the centre. They throw-in the ball.*

If the ball is kicked directly into touch, then the opposing team has three choices:

- *To have the ball kicked off again, or*
- *To have a scrum at the centre. They throw-in the ball.*
- *To accept the kick and to have the throw-in at the line-out on the half-way line.*

If the ball is kicked in to the in-goal without having touched or been touched by a player, then the opposing team has two choices:

- *To ground the ball, or*
- *To make it dead, or*

- *To play on.*

If the opposing team grounds the ball, or they make it dead, or if the ball becomes dead by going into touch-in-goal or on or over the dead ball line, they have two choices:

- *To have the ball kicked off again, or*
- *To have a scrum at the centre. They throw-in the ball.*

If they opt to ground the ball or make it dead, they must do so without delay. Any other action with the ball by a defending player means the player has elected to play on.

Drop-out

A drop-out is used to restart play after an attacking player has put or taken the ball into the in-goal, without infringement, and a defending player has made the ball dead there or it has gone into touch-in-goal or on or over the dead ball line.

- *A drop-out takes the form of a tap kick by the defending team 10 metres from the goal line.*
- *All the defending team must be behind the ball. – penalty: a scrum is formed at the centre of the 10-metre line from goal with the opposing team throwing-in the ball.*
- *The opposing team must retreat at least 5 metres from the ball. – penalty: free kick at a point 5 metres forward from the 10-metre line.*

14 Ball on the ground – no tackle

Player on the ground

The player must immediately do one of three things:

- *get up with the ball; or*
- *pass the ball; or*
- *release the ball.*

The situation occurs when

- *the ball is available on the ground and a player goes to ground to gather the ball, except immediately after a scrum or a ruck.*
- *a player is on the ground in possession of the ball and has not been tackled.*

The game is to be played by players who are on their feet. A player must not make the ball unplayable by falling down. Unplayable means that the ball is not immediately available to either team so that play may continue.

A player who makes the ball unplayable, or who obstructs the opposing team by falling down, is negating the purpose and spirit of the game and must be penalized. – penalty: free kick.

A player who is not tackled, but who goes to ground while holding the ball, or a player who goes to ground and gathers the ball, must act immediately. – penalty: free kick.

A player must not intentionally fall on or over player with the ball who is lying on the ground. – penalty: free kick.

15 Tackle: ball-carrier brought to the ground

A tackle occurs when a ball-carrier is simultaneously held by one or more opponents and is brought to the ground (one/both knees or sitting on the ground) and/or the ball touches the ground.

Tackler

When both tackler and ball-carrier go to ground the tackler must

- *immediately release the player. – penalty: free kick.*
- *immediately get up or move away. – penalty: free kick.*
- *get up before playing the ball.*

The tackled player

A tackled player

- *must not lie on, over, or near the ball to prevent opponents from gaining possession of it, and must try to make the ball available immediately so that play can continue. – penalty: free kick.*
- *must immediately pass the ball or release it. That player must also get up or move away from it at once. – penalty: free kick.*
- *may release the ball by putting it on the ground in any direction, provided this is done immediately. – penalty: free kick.*
- *may release the ball by pushing it along the ground in any direction except forward, provided this is done immediately. – penalty: free kick.*

If opposition players who are on their feet attempt to play the ball, the tackled player must release the ball. – penalty: free kick.

If the tackled player's momentum carries the player into the in-goal, the player can score a try or make a touch down. – penalty: free kick.

If a player is tackled near to the goal-line, these players may immediately reach out and ground the ball on or over the goal-line to score a try or make a touch down.

The tackled player must not intentionally place the ball in touch. The tackled player must not intentionally push the ball into touch. – penalty: free kick.

Other players

After a tackle, all other players must be on their feet when they play the ball. – penalty: free kick.

At a tackle or near to a tackle, other players who play the ball must do so from behind the ball and from directly behind the tackled player or the tackler closest to those players' goal-line – penalty: free kick.

Doubt about failure to comply

If the ball becomes unplayable at a tackle and there is doubt about which player did not conform to Law, the referee orders a scrum immediately with the throw-in by the team that was moving forward prior to the stoppage or, if no team was moving forward, by the attacking team.

16 Ruck

A ruck is a phase of play where one or more players from each team, who are on their feet, in physical contact, close around the ball on the ground. Open play has ended.

Players are rucking when they are in a ruck and using their feet to try to win or keep possession of the ball.

Joining a ruck

All players forming, joining or taking part in a ruck must have their heads and shoulders no lower than their hips. – penalty: free kick.

A player joining a ruck must bind onto the ruck with at least one arm around the body of a team-mate. – penalty: free kick.

Placing a hand on another player in the ruck does not constitute binding. – penalty: free kick.

Rucking

Players in a ruck must try to stay on their feet. Any player intentionally falling in, kneeling in or collapsing a ruck is guilty of dangerous play. – penalty: free kick.

A player must not jump on top of a ruck. – penalty: free kick.

A player rucking for the ball must not ruck players on the ground. – penalty: free kick.

Other ruck offences

Players must not return the ball into a ruck. – penalty: free kick.

Players must not handle the ball in a ruck. – penalty: free kick.

Players on the ground in or near the ruck must try to move away from the ball. These players must not interfere with the ball in the ruck or as it comes out of the ruck. – penalty: free kick.

A player must not take any action to make the opposing team think that the ball is out of the ruck while it is still in the ruck. – penalty: free kick.

Off-side at the ruck

There are two off-side lines– one for each team. Each off-side line runs through the back foot of the last player in the ruck. If this foot is on or behind the goal-line, the off-side line for the defending team is the goal-line.

Players must either join a ruck, or retire behind the off-side line immediately. If a player stays at the side of the ruck, the player is off-side. – penalty: free kick.

All players joining a ruck must do so from behind the back foot of the last player in the ruck. A player may join alongside this last player– penalty: free kick on the offending team's off-side line.

Unsuccessful end to a ruck

A ruck ends unsuccessfully when the ball becomes unplayable or has not emerged from the ruck within five seconds with no sign of the ball emerging and a scrum is ordered with ball going to the team moving forward immediately before the ball became unplayable.

If the referee cannot decide which team was moving forward, the attacking team throws in the ball.

17 Maul

A maul occurs when a player carrying the ball is held by one or more opponents, and one or more of the ball-carrier's team-mates bind on the ball-carrier. A maul therefore consists of three players or more, all on their feet. Open play has ended.

Joining a maul

Players joining a maul must have their heads and shoulders no lower than their hips. – penalty: free kick.

A player must be caught in or bound to the maul and not just alongside it. – penalty: free kick.

Placing a hand on another player in the maul does not constitute binding. – penalty: free kick.

Players in a maul must try to stay on their feet. – penalty: free kick.

A player must not intentionally collapse a maul. This is dangerous play. – penalty: free kick.

A player must not jump on top of a maul. – penalty: free kick.

Other maul offences

A player must not try to drag an opponent out of a maul. – penalty: free kick.

A player must not take any action to make the opposing team think that the ball is out of the maul while it is still in the maul. – penalty: free kick.

Off-side at the maul

There are two off-side lines – one for each team. Each off-side line runs through the last foot of the last player in the maul. If this foot is on or behind the goal-line, the off-side line for the defending team is the goal-line.

Players must either join a maul, or retire behind the off-side line immediately. If a player stays at the side of the maul, the player is off-side. – penalty: free kick.

All players joining a ruck must do so from behind the back foot of the last player in the ruck. A player may join alongside this last player. – penalty: free kick on the offending team's off-side line.

Unsuccessful end to a maul

A maul ends unsuccessfully if

- *it lasts more than 5 seconds with no sign of the ball emerging, or*
- *the maul collapses*

and a scrum is ordered with ball going to the team not in possession when the maul began.

If the referee cannot decide which team had possession, the attacking team throws in the ball.

If the ball-carrier goes to ground, the referee orders a scrum.

If a maul moves into the player's in-goal, where the ball is touched down or becomes unplayable, a 5-metre scrum is formed. The attacking team throws in the ball.

19 Touch and line-out

The ball is in touch when

- *it is not being carried by a player and it touches the touch-line or anything or anyone on or beyond the touch-line.*
- *the ball-carrier touches the touch-line or the ground beyond the touch-line.*
- *a player catches the ball and that player has a foot on the touch-line or the ground beyond the touch-line.*
- *and a line-out follows.*

If the ball crosses the touch-line or touch-in-goal line, and is caught by a player who has both feet in the playing area, the ball is not in touch or touch-in-goal. Such a player may knock the ball into the playing area.

Throw-in

No throw-in is permitted until the referee has indicated that a line-out has been formed. – penalty: free kick.

The throw-in is taken where the ball went into touch and is taken by an opponent of the player who last held or touched the ball before it went into touch.

The thrower must not step into the field of play as the ball is thrown. The ball must be thrown straight, so that it travels at least 3 metres and no more than 10 metres along the line of touch before it first touches the ground or a player. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning and the line-out will be retaken but after any further repetition the opposing team has a choice of throwing in at a line-out or at a scrum.

After the throw-in the thrower may

- *stay within 3 metres of the touch-line behind the off-side line, or*
- *retire to the 5-metre off-side line for non-participating players.*

Line-out

The receiver is the player in position to catch the ball when line-out players pass or knock the ball back from the line-out. Any player may be the receiver but each team may have only one receiver at a line-out.

On receiving/collecting the ball the receiver must pass the ball. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning and the line-out will be retaken but after any further repetition the opposing team receives a free-kick on the 10-metre line.

The receiver must not move into the line-out. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning and the line-out will be retaken but after any further repetition the opposing team has a choice of throwing in at a line-out or a scrum.

The 3/10-metre line is 3/10 metres in-field and parallel with the touch-line.

Any scrum ordered because of an infringement or stoppage at the line-out is on the 10-metre line on the line of touch.

Forming a line-out

Four players from each team must form a line-out. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning and the line-out will be retaken but after any further repetition the opposing team receives a free-kick on the 10-metre line.

Players must not leave the line-out nor change position in the line-out once they have taken up a position in the line-out until the line-out has ended. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning and the line-out will be retaken but after any further repetition the opposing team receives a free-kick on the 10-metre line.

The front of the line-out is not less than 3 metres from the touch-line. The back of the line-out is not more than 10 metres from the touch-line. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning and the line-out will be retaken but after any further repetition the opposing team receives a free-kick on the 10-metre line.

The line-out players must keep a clear space between their inside shoulders. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning and the line-out will be retaken but after any further repetition the opposing team receives a free-kick on the 10-metre line.

The opposing team may position an additional player between the touch-line and the three-metre line. This player must not participate in the line-out and is subject to the same off-side line as the line-out players. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning and the line-out will be retaken but after any further repetition the opposing team receives a free-kick on the 10-metre line.

The line of touch must not be within 5 metres of the goal-line.

Beginning and ending a line-out

The line-out begins when the ball leaves the hands of the player throwing it in.

The line-out ends only when the ball has been passed by a line-out player of the team awarded the throw-in to the receiver and then the receiver passes the ball (i.e. uncontested line-out)

Options available in a line-out

A line-out player must not be off-side. The off-side line runs through the line of touch until the line-out ends. – penalty: the opposing team receives a free-kick on the 10-metre line.

Line-out players in the opposing team must not attempt to interfere with the other line of players catching the ball or the receiver passing the ball. – penalty: the opposing team receives a free-kick on the 10-metre line.

Where the ball travels into the opposing team's line-out, then the throw-in is deemed not to have been straight.

Where the receiving line-out knocks the ball forward, then this is deemed to be a knock-on.

The feet of a line-out player must not leave the ground in attempting to catch the ball. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning and the line-out will be retaken but after any further repetition the opposing team receives a free-kick on the 10-metre line.

Off-side at the line-out

Until the line-out has ended the off-side line for participating players, including the receiver, is the line of touch. – penalty: the opposing team receives a free-kick on the 10-metre line.

For non-participating players the off-side line until the line-out has ended is 5 metres behind the line of touch or their goal-line, if that is nearer. – penalty: : the opposing team receives a free-kick on the 10-metre line.

20 Scrum

Definitions

A scrum is formed in the field of play when *five* players from each team, bound together in *two rows* for each team, close up with their opponents so that the heads *of the front row* are interlocked. This creates a tunnel into which a scrum-half throws in the ball so that the hooker can hook the ball with either of his/her feet.

The middle line of a scrum must not be within 3 metres of the goal-line. A scrum cannot take place within 3 metres of a touch-line.

The middle player in each front row is the hooker.

The players on either side of the hooker are the props. The left-side props are the loose-head props. The right-side props are the tight-head props.

The two players in the second row are the locks.

Forming a scrum

If there is an infringement or stoppage in the in-goal, the place for the scrum is 3 metres from the goal-line.

The scrum is formed in line with the place of the infringement or stoppage.

A team must not intentionally delay forming a scrum. – *penalty: free kick.*

A scrum must have five players from each team. All five players must stay bound to the scrum until it ends. Each front row must have three players in it, no more and no less. Two locks must form the second row. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning but for any further repetition free kick.

Front rows coming together: First, the referee marks with a foot the place where the scrum is to be formed. Before the two front rows come together they must be standing not more than an arm's length apart. The ball is in the scrum-half's hands, ready to be thrown in. The front rows must crouch so that when they meet, each player's head and shoulders are no lower than the hips. The front rows must interlock so that no player's head is next to the head of a team-mate. – *penalty: free kick.*

The referee calls "crouch" "touch", and "pause". The front rows then come together only when the referee calls 'engage'. This call is not a command but an indication that the front rows may come together when ready. – *penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning but for any further repetition free kick.*

A team must not push once the scrum has been formed. – penalty: free kick.

A crouched position is the extension of the normal stance by bending the knees sufficiently to move into the engagement without a charge.

A front row must not form at a distance from its opponents and rush against them. This is dangerous play. – *penalty: free kick.*

The scrum must remain stationary until the ball has left the scrum and the scrum has unformed. – *penalty: free kick.*

Front-row players' positions

The front-row players must have both feet on the ground, with their weight firmly on at least one foot. Players must not cross their feet, although the foot of one player may cross a team-mate's foot. Each player's shoulders must be no lower than the hips. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning but for any further repetition free kick.

Until the ball is thrown in, the hooker must be in a position to hook the ball. Each hooker must have both feet on the ground, with weight firmly on at least one foot. A hooker's foremost foot must not be in front of the foremost foot of that team's props. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning but for any further repetition free kick.

No players' feet may obstruct the tunnel.

Binding in the scrum

When a player binds on a team-mate that player must use the whole arm from hand to shoulder to grasp the team-mate's body at or below the level of the armpit. Placing a hand on another player is not satisfactory binding.

All front row players must bind firmly and continuously from the start to the finish of the scrum. – penalty: free kick.

The hooker may bind either over or under the arms of the props. The props must not support the hooker so that the hooker has no weight on either foot. – penalty: free kick.

A loose-head prop must bind on the opposing tight-head prop by placing the left arm inside the right arm of the tight-head and gripping the tight-head prop's jersey on the back or side. The loose-head prop must not grip the chest, arm, sleeve or collar of the opposition tight-head prop. – penalty: free kick.

A tight-head prop must bind on the opposing loose-head prop by placing the right arm outside the left upper arm of the loose-head and gripping the loose-head prop's jersey on the back or side. The tight-head prop must not grip the chest, arm, sleeve or collar of the opposition loose-head prop. – penalty: free kick.

Each lock must bind on the other lock's body and with the prop in front of them around the hips only. – penalty: free kick

If a scrum collapses, the referee must blow the whistle immediately. The scrum is reformed and the ball is thrown in by the same scrum-half unless a penalty has been awarded.

Throwing the ball into the scrum

As soon as the front rows have come together, the scrum-half must throw-in the ball without delay once instructed by the referee. – penalty: free kick.

The scrum-half must hold the ball with both hands, with its major axis parallel to the ground and to the touch-line. – penalty: free kick.

The scrum-half must throw-in the ball straight along the middle line of the tunnel. – penalty: free kick.

If the scrum-half throws in the ball and it comes out at either end of the tunnel, the ball must be thrown in again unless a penalty has been awarded.

If the scrum-half throws in the ball and it comes out through either front row without being struck by the receiving hooker, the ball must be thrown in again unless a penalty has been awarded.

If the ball is played by a *hooker* and comes out of the tunnel, advantage may apply.

Front-row players

Only the hookers may strike for the ball using a foot or lower leg, but he/she must not raise or advance a foot until the ball has left the scrum-half's hands.

Each hooker must not strike for the ball with both feet off the ground. – penalty: free kick.

No other player must deliberately strike. – *penalty: free kick.*

If any other player accidentally contacts the ball, then advantage may apply otherwise the ball must be thrown in again.

The referee must penalize strictly any intentional collapsing of the scrum. This is dangerous play. – *penalty: free kick.*

Props must not play the ball in the tunnel. – penalty: on the first occasion the referee will issue a warning but for any further repetition free kick.

A scrum-half must not kick the ball while it is in the scrum. – *penalty: free kick. penalty: free kick*

Ending the scrum

When the ball comes out of the scrum in accordance with the above laws, the scrum ends.

Off-side at the scrum

The purpose of the scrum off-side law is to ensure that, until the scrum ends, the team winning the ball has a clear space in which to make use of it.

The scrum-half not throwing the ball into the scrum must take up a position either at the same side of the scrum as the scrum-half throwing in the ball or behind the off-side line defined for other players. – *penalty: free kick.*

When a team has won the ball in a scrum, the scrum-half of the opposing team must not move beyond the middle line of the tunnel until the scrum ends. – penalty: free kick.

Players who are not in the scrum, and who are not the team's scrum-half, are off-side if they remain within 2 metres of the back feet of their teams hindmost player. – penalty: penalty kick.

21 Free kicks

A free kick is to be taken at the place of infringement. If the place is within 5 metres of the opponent's goal-line, the mark for the kick is 5 metres from the goal-line.

When a free kick is awarded for an infringement in in-goal, the mark for the kick is in the field of play, 5 metres from the goal-line.

The kicker must kick the ball a visible distance. If the kicker is holding it, it must clearly leave the hands. If it is on the ground, it must clearly leave the mark. Failure to do so will require the free kick to be retaken. Any further repetition will result in a penalty: free kick to the opposing team.

On taking the kick the kicker must immediately pass the ball. Failure to do so will result in a penalty: free kick to the opposing team.

The kicker must await the referee's signal to take the kick. Failure to do so will result in a penalty: free kick to the opposing team.

All the kicker's team must be behind the ball until it has been kicked.

The opposing team must all withdraw at least 5 metres from the line of the free kick. They can only move forward once the ball has been kicked. Failure to do so will result in a penalty: free kick to the kicking team 5 metres forwards of the original mark.

22 In-goal

When an attacking player is first to ground the ball in the opponent's in-goal, the attacking player scores a try.

When a defending player is first to ground the ball in their in-goal, the defending player makes a touch down. The result depends on who initially placed the ball in the in-goal:

- *If the attacking team caused the ball to enter the in-goal area prior to the touch down, then play restarts with a drop-out by the defending team.*
- *If the defending team caused the ball to enter the in-goal area prior to the touch down, then play restarts with a scrum 3 metres from the goal-line with the attacking team throwing the ball into the scrum.*

When a tackle is made in-goal the referee will halt the game and restart the game with a scrum 3 metres from the goal-line with the attacking team throwing the ball into the scrum.
