

UNDER 10s RULES OF PLAY

Players and match officials must ensure that the following Rules of Play and RFU Regulation 15 <https://www.englandrugby.com/run/rules-governance/rfu-rules-and-regulat...> observed when playing rugby at Under 10.

These Under 10s Rules of Play set out below are part of the Playing Pathway that aim to equip players with the skills they need to safely enjoy rugby union. The Age Grade Rules of Play detail the level to which children of each can play to, coaches and match officials are encouraged to discuss necessary or desired pre-game and in-game modifications that reduce the playing level with the view to provide more appropriate learning opportunities.

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

The key elements of the Under 10s Rules of Play are:

- • Team numbers: a maximum of 8-a-side
- • Maximum pitch size: 60 metres x 35 metres
- • Ball Size: 4
- • Maximum minutes each half: 15
- • Introduction of uncontested scrum
- • Nearest 3 players in a scrum (all players trained, late specialisation)
- • Contest for the ball (1 player v 1 player)
- • Introduction of Maul
- • Introduction of Ruck

1. General:

- **a)** The object of the game is to score a try by grounding the ball on or behind the opponents' goal line. A penalty try will be awarded if a try would probably have been scored but for an infringement by an opponent.
- **b)** Only infringements that affect the opposition's play should be sanctioned. If there is no effect, advantage should be played wherever it is safe to do so.

2. Teams:

- **a)** Under 10 Rugby is played between teams of equal numbers of players, containing a maximum of eight players from each team on the pitch at any one time.
- **b)** Rolling substitutions are permitted and substituted players can return at any time. Substitutions can only take place when the ball is dead and always with the referee's permission.
- **c)** Coaches are not permitted on the pitch when the game is in play and the referee is encouraged to advise and guide the teams and players.

3. Pitch Size:

- **a)** The maximum pitch size is 60 metres by 35 metres, plus 5 metres for each in-goal area.
- **b)** The referee and coaches may agree to reduce the pitch sizes provided that they agree it is safe to do so.
- **c)** Adjacent pitches should be no closer than 5 metres.

4. Passing:

- **a)** The ball may 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 a team mate or opponent, the ball must be passed immediately away from the contact area.

5. Free Passes:

- **a)** A free pass is awarded:
 - **i.** To start the match at the beginning of each half and following a score, from the centre of the pitch.
 - **ii.** After the ball or ball carrier has gone into touch. The free pass is 5 metres from touch, level with where the ball or ball carrier went into touch.
 - **iii.** Where there is offside and no advantage.
 - **iv.** Where a fend-off or hand-off has been used.
 - **v.** When there has been an infringement.
 - **vi.** Once forward momentum has been stopped and the ball has not been played away from the contact area - tackle, maul or ruck.
 - **vii.** When the tackler makes contact above the base of the sternum.
 - **viii.** When a team contests, pushes or strikes for the ball in the scrum.
 - **ix.** 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.*
- **b)** At a free pass, the opposition must be 7 metres back from the mark. At a free pass, the passer must start with the ball in both hands and, when the referee calls "Play", pass the ball backwards through the air to a member of their team. For safety reasons, no player from either team may run until the pass is made.

6. The Tackle, Maul and Ruck:

- **a)** Only the ball carrier can be tackled. The ball carrier can run and dodge opponents but cannot fend them off using their hands or the ball.
- **b)** The opponents must grip and hold the ball carrier below the base of the sternum (the area of the tummy or belly or below). The ball carrier must not go into contact with any opponent with their shoulders below their hips, or dip down late and low or otherwise place their head into the head space of the opponent.
- **c)** Support players must not stand either side and in close proximity to the ball carrier to prevent defenders from making the next tackle.
- **d)** 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.
- **e)** When the ball carrier has not been taken to ground, the opponent may contest the ball by grabbing it.
- **f)** A “Tackle” occurs when the ball carrier is held by one or more opponents and is brought to ground. A ball carrier who is not held is not a tackled player and a tackle has not taken place. Opposition players who hold the ball carrier and bring that player to ground, and who also go to ground, are known as tacklers. Opposition players who hold the ball carrier and do not go to ground are not tacklers. The tackle must include the use of arms.
- **g)** When the ball carrier is taken to ground, the opponent must immediately release the ball carrier and must get to their feet as soon as possible before they are permitted to contest the ball or block the pass.
- **h)** 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.
- **i)** When the tackle is made the team in possession of the ball may only support from behind.
- **j)** When the tackle is made and the ball carrier is on the ground, ONE supporting player from each team, who must remain on their feet, may:
 - **i.** rip the ball from the ball carrier but must then pass the ball immediately to a team mate; or
 - **ii.** pick up the ball and pass away from the contact area; or
 - **iii.** if a ruck is not formed, pick up the ball and run; or
 - **iv.** join to form a ruck but must do so from their own side (i.e. from the direction of their own goal line) and attempt to drive over the ball, in an attempt to take their immediate opponents away from the ball.
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- **k)** If j) iv. above has taken place, the next arriving player must pass the ball to another player.
- **l)** A “ruck” is a phase of play where one or two 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, without being guilty of foul play. No more than two players from either team (including the ball carrier and opponent) can be involved in the ruck.
- **m)** 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 free pass to the team not in possession of the ball at the ruck.
- **n)** A “maul” begins when a player carrying the ball is held by one or two opponents and one of the ball carrier’s team mates bind on the ball carrier. A maul therefore consists, when it begins, of at least three players, all on their feet; the ball carrier and one player from each team. No more than two players from either team (including the ball carrier and opponent) can be involved in the maul. All the players involved must bound to the maul and must be on their feet and moving towards a goal line. Open play has ended.
- **o)** 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 pass the ball away, a free pass should be awarded to the team not in possession when the maul began.
- **p)** When the tackle is made the team in possession of the ball may only support from behind.
- **q)** When the tackle is made and the ball carrier is on the ground, ONE supporting player from each team, who must remain on their feet, may:
 - **i.** rip the ball from the ball carrier but must then pass the ball immediately to a team mate; or
 - **ii.** pick up the ball and pass away from the contact area; or
 - **iii.** if a ruck is not formed, pick up the ball and run; or
 - **iv.** join to form a ruck but must do so from their own side (i.e. from the direction of their own goal line) and attempt to drive over the ball, in an attempt to take their immediate opponents away from the ball.
- **r)** If q) iv. above has taken place, the next arriving player must pass the ball to another player.
- **s)** 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 free pass to the team not in possession of the ball at the ruck.
- **t)** Support players must not stand either side and in close proximity to the ball carrier to prevent defenders from making the next tackle.

7. Scrums:

- **a)** A scrum will be awarded for:
 - **i.** a forward pass; or
 - **ii.** a knock on.
- **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. All players should be encouraged to take part.
- **c)** The referee will call “Crouch” and then “Bind”. The front rows crouch and using their outside arm each prop must bind onto the back or side 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)** 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 never be below the level of the hips.
- **e)** The scrum is uncontested and the team awarded the scrum will throw the ball into the scrum. Neither team may contest or push. Only the team throwing the ball in may strike for the ball.
- *Note: 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 scrum half must pass the ball from the base of the scrum. They must not run with the ball.
- **g)** The back line of both teams must remain at least 5 metres behind the scrum until the ball emerges or the opposing scrum half lifts the ball from the ground. Until this happens, the scrum half of the non-throwing in team must remain directly behind their scrum, in the pocket edged by the two props.
- **h)** 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 until the scrum is completed.

8. 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 onside position (i.e. behind the team mate who played the ball).
- **b)** At the tackle, the offside line is the hindmost foot of the hindmost player of each team. All the other players must retire towards their own goal line until they are behind the hindmost part of the tackled player and tackler.
- **c)** At the maul, the offside line is the hindmost point of any player of each team in the maul.
- **d)** At the ruck, the offside line is the hindmost point of any player of each team in the ruck. Defenders must stay between their own goalline and the tackled player until the pass is made.

9. Infringements:

The following are not permitted:

- **a)** The ball carrier may run and dodge potential tacklers but cannot fend or hand them off with their hand or the ball.
- **b)** Contact above the base of the sternum: If contact is above the base of the sternum, the game must be stopped, the offender spoken to, reminded of the contact rules and a free pass awarded to the non-offending team.
- **c)** Kicking of any kind.
- **d)** Using 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 the use of the “Squeezeball” technique.
- **e)** Foul play.
- **f)** Pushing or competing at the scrum.
- **g)** Contact with players not in possession.