



RUGBY REFEREES

**REFEREEING
IN PRACTICE
2020**

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INTRODUCTION

The game of Rugby has undergone many changes over the years but it is very surprising to note that many of the key techniques have stayed the same.

Paul Akon in his seminal 1970s publication *Play the Whistle* clearly set out the traditional skills as they applied at that time. In 2000, David Fryer, then a referee recruitment officer with the ACTRU (in consultation with Kim Lees, Bruce Cook, and David's local support crew at the ACTRRA), updated and revised this publication to bring it in line with the game at the time. Minor revisions were made in subsequent years.

For the 2018 season, the booklet received a major update to incorporate the Game Management Guidelines, the Rugby Australia Referee Profile, content from the publication *Refereeing Kids Rugby*, plus additional information that is relevant to refereeing rugby in Australia today.

As the title suggests, the booklet is extremely practical and stresses the need for a referee to be a people manager. Referees and Assistant Referees these days are expected to be fast and fit educated facilitators, rather than authoritative dictators. This book is designed as a practical guide for new and less experienced referees. However, it is hoped that it may be a useful reminder for all referees, especially at the beginning of a rugby season.

Rugby is a players' and spectators' game. Referees are expected to be the 31st man on the field, but have the ability to move into the No.1 role when required. At times this 2nd technique will be required and tough decisions will have to be made accordingly. This publication sets out the various protocols and checklists that are recommended to allow you to fulfil both roles.

In conclusion, it is suggested that referees keep this compact resource, coupled with their Law Book in their kit bag to assist them to enjoy their role as a Rugby official.

Enjoy your refereeing!

Shane Barr

**National Community Match Officials Manager
Rugby Australia**

- Boots
- Laces
- Socks
- Garters/Tape
- Shorts
- 2 x Whistles
- Watch
- Coin
- Jerseys (one usual, one alternate)
- Pencils & Notebook
- Red, Yellow and Blue Cards
- Touch Judge Flags
- Personal Items:
 - ▶ Water Bottle
 - ▶ Sun Tan Lotion
 - ▶ Cap
 - ▶ Plastic Bags
 - ▶ Towel And Toiletries
 - ▶ Law Book, Local Competition Rules, etc.

Make a checklist of gear and keep it permanently in your kit bag.

GEAR

Whatever your sport, it is important to look after your gear. Personal presentation is very important in the way players will view the referee. 'Looking the part' will impact on players and spectators alike. Make sure your gear never lets you down. You will have enough to do when refereeing without worrying about a broken bootlace or your socks falling down.

BOOTS

Make sure your boots are of good quality and kept clean. There are two basic types of boots used by referees. Boots with moulded soles to be used when grounds are hard, and boots with long studs for when the grounds are soft or muddy. Use metal screw in studs for the latter so they can be replaced as necessary. Check your boots and studs regularly. If your boots are covered in mud after a game, clean them immediately before the mud hardens.

LACES

Always have a spare pair of clean laces in case one breaks when you are putting on your boots. After tying your laces tuck the loose ends under the tied laces, which helps to stop them coming undone. You can also use tape (preferably black) to secure the laces.

SOCKS

Don't let socks get the 'woolly look' or be at 'half mast'. Have a second pair of socks available.

GARTERS

A referee must never be seen to have trouble with socks falling down. Garters can be elastic, old laces or electrical tape but make sure they are not too tight, stopping the circulation in the legs.

SHORTS

Shorts should have good pockets to carry your spare whistle, coin, handkerchief, notebook, cards and pencils. Many associations provide shorts as part of their issue of uniform/gear.

JERSEY

Associations provide jerseys as part of their issue of uniform/gear. However, be prepared for the team that has a similar strip to that of the referee, in which case a different coloured jersey can come in handy.

WHISTLES

Have at least two whistles. You never know when the pea will stop working in one, or when a whistle will fill with mud if you take a tumble.

COIN

For the toss.

WATCH

A wristwatch with a stop watch facility, or smartwatch is recommended. You usually want the watch to count up, and not backwards to zero. If you have a player in the sin bin near the end of the 1st half you need to know how much time is played past 40 mins (for example) and therefore how long that player must continue to serve in the 2nd half. Furthermore, if play continues beyond 40 mins due to penalties etc, the player may even be entitled to return before the half actually ends.

PENCILS AND NOTEBOOK

To keep the score and other information such as details of send offs. Don't use a ballpoint pen - they can leak!

RED, YELLOW AND BLUE CARDS

For send-offs, sin bins, and concussion cases. Rugby Australia provides these to all referees via the referee associations.

TOUCH JUDGE FLAGS

Be prepared for team managers and/or touch judges to ask you for touch judges flags. The referee's association often provides touch judge flags.

SUN TAN LOTION AND YOUR REFEREE ASSOCIATION CAP

A cap should not be worn while refereeing. However, as a touch judge a cap may be worn.

YOUR OWN WATER BOTTLE

Be prepared for those extra hot and/or sunny days. Don't be a victim of dehydration.

PLASTIC BAGS

To put muddy boots and gear in after the game.

CHECKLIST

It is recommended that a checklist of these items and other items you may require personally e.g. the Law Book, local competition rules (length of matches and conditions of play for different grades, etc.), be kept in your referee's bag. This should be a strong weatherproof travelling bag dedicated for your rugby gear.

BEFORE THE GAME

BE PREPARED; DON'T BE CAUGHT OUT

Start thinking about the game before match day. On match day ensure you have time to consider each aspect of the forthcoming game. Prior Preparation Prevents Poor Performance.

CHECK OF GEAR

Make sure you have a final check of your gear, preferably the day or night before and again prior to leaving for the game. Now is the time to start thinking rugby.

GETTING TO THE GAME IN PLENTY OF TIME

It is recommended that you plan to arrive at least 40-60 minutes prior to your game. Allow for possible traffic jams. On arrival at the ground, relax by walking around the ground to familiarise yourself with the layout and any unusual features e.g. a narrow in-goal area.

If possible, walk onto the ground and ensure you know if there are any very muddy areas or potholes. Get the feel of the ground and the spectators. Be visible before a game so that both the teams and coaches know you are there and that you are available to answer questions and clarify points of law.

Introduce yourself to coach and captain (remember their names), ask the coach if they have a full squad of players, and ask for a convenient time to check boots, gear and talk to front row. Ask the coach if they can organise a touch judge able to run the line .

WEATHER

Be prepared for different weather conditions and be aware of where the sun will be during the game. This may influence your positioning for different phases of the game e.g. at lineouts and kicks.

REFEREE COACH

If a referee coach has come to see you referee, introduce yourself prior to the game. Don't expect the coach to come and find you. Be ready to let them know any key areas of your refereeing with which you may wish assistance. These could be refereeing areas requiring improvement commented upon by a previous coach that could be improved.

If there is another experienced referee available to watch your game, when no coach is available, ask that referee for some feedback in lieu. Don't forget to find that referee or referee coach after the game to thank them and to obtain their comments. Alternatively, telephone them later.

CHANGING

Start getting changed at least 30 minutes before a game. This will give you time to check your gear, to warm up, meet and brief the teams and inspect their boots. Don't keep the players waiting. It is a fact that players can keep referees waiting but not vice versa. This is the time to concentrate on the game ahead and to complete your mental preparation.

ASSISTANT REFEREES / TOUCH JUDGES

Make sure that you have two have assistant referees or touch judges (one from each club if not appointed), and ascertain if they are qualified. They should not be wearing the same jersey as the players. If they are qualified, brief them of how they can assist you in reporting foul play, being especially vigilant around the goal line, and assisting the players by marking the offside line at penalty and free kicks and lineouts. Ask one of the touch judges to keep the time as well to check on your timing and as a back up if your watch fails. Act as a team of three.

TIME

Make sure you know how long each half should be and whether time is allowed for injury. Also if there is a drawn game, check if extra time is to be played and the scoring procedure. Don't forget to restart your stopwatch after a stoppage for injury when injury time is played. In case you forget (it does happen to the best referees!), make a note of the time at the start of each half as well as asking your touch judges to keep the time.

For the vast majority of junior and club rugby, if another game is due to be played after your game on the same ground and your game starts late, it may be necessary to shorten the halves of your game.



BRIEFING TEAMS AND INSPECTION OF BOOTS

Don't try to brief the players as they line up in the centre of the field. At that time they are waiting to play rugby and will not wish to listen to a speech by the referee. Therefore, the boot inspection should be done well before the start of the game to avoid interfering with a team's warm up. If you have qualified touch judges take them with you so that from the beginning they know they are part of the team of three and the players see them.

If you have not already done so, introduce yourself to the coach and captain. Inspect boots for sharp or dangerous studs. Also check for watches and jewellery. Then brief the front-row players, scrum-half, and captain of each team. Keep the briefing short and simple. Players will not absorb a lot of information when they are trying to focus on their forthcoming game.

Checklist 1

- a) Explain to the front row the engagement sequence: CROUCH – BIND – SET, informing players that there will be a non-verbal pause after each call.
- b) Ask the front-row players if they know the 'Mayday' procedure. (If they do not, it is not your role to brief the players in this procedure – instead, request the coach instruct the players in it, or the game should not go ahead with contested scrums).
- c) Remind the scrum-half that the ball should not be fed into the scrum until the scrum is steady and square.
- d) Remind the scrum-half that when a penalty is awarded, they should run to the mark, not towards you if they wish to take a quick tap.
- e) Ask the captain if he or she has any questions for you.
- f) Emphasise to the captain that you (the referee) will communicate to their players through them, as they are responsible for the team. Any queries from players on their team should come through them.
- g) Reinforce that there is an appropriate time and a place for them to bring big-picture issues to you during the game, and that immediately after a penalty is awarded will most likely not be a good time.
- h) Wish them an enjoyable game and arrange a time for the toss.

THE TOSS

The toss of the coin (remember the coin is provided by the referee) is usually done prior to the game at a time convenient to the two captains. It is usually done immediately after both teams have been briefed. However, sometimes teams prefer to toss after they run onto the ground and line up opposite each other.

Generally the home team will toss the coin and the captain of the visiting team will call. Ask the winner of the toss whether they would like to kick or which way they'd like to run. Some inexperienced captains sometimes ask to 'Receive' which is not an option. If the winning captain chooses which way they'd like to run, the opposing team kicks off and vice versa.

GROUND MARSHAL

Every competition should have a Ground Marshal or someone responsible for ensuring the behaviour of the spectators and coaches remains positive (usually wearing a hi-vis vest). Sometimes this person will introduce themselves to you, sometimes you will have to find them. Do not start a game without having identified who this person is – you may need to ask the home team coach.

RUNNING ONTO THE PLAYING ENCLOSURE

It is the referee's responsibility to get the teams onto the field (before the scheduled kick-off time if possible). Blowing the whistle outside the changing rooms may help. DON'T stand in the centre of the field waiting for the teams. This makes you appear like you are making yourself the centre of attention. Always try to run on last – but don't keep the players waiting.

PRIOR TO THE KICK-OFF

Checklist 2

- a) Check the 10-metre line (a good reminder of the distance needed at off side incidents).
- b) Check the assistant referees / touch judges are in position.
- c) Note the actual time.
- d) Note which side is kicking off.
- e) Check the captains are ready.
- f) Start your watch.
- g) If there is a timekeeper raise your arm as you blow your whistle for the start of the game.
- h) ENJOY THE GAME

KICKS

KICK-OFF AND RESTARTS

Referee's Position

It is suggested the referee should start at a position a few metres from the ball, behind the halfway line in line with the kicker, with the ball between the referee and the kicking team's chasers. The referee should begin to move with the kicker and as soon as the ball is kicked then accelerate to be in line with where the ball lands, to be as close as practicable to where the next phase of play will develop. Do not watch the ball in the air, watch the players converge on the ball. The ball will always come down and it is easier to observe players actions this way and manage them out of any infringements.

Kids Rugby U8-U12

It is unlikely there will be too much structure at kick offs and restarts. For U8-U9 matches, kickers can start and restart games with a kick from the hand (punt kick). They are encouraged to try a drop kick later on in the season. The receiving team for U8-U9 matches must be given a 5m exclusion zone to re-gather an often irregularly bouncing ball. By U10-U12, players are required to drop kick the ball off the ground as normal but it is unlikely there will be much height and planned placement in the kick.



KICK OFF

Checklist 3

- a) Check with the kicker that if they intend to change direction of kick-off to confuse the opposition, that they inform you first. (So you don't wear the ball!)
- b) Remind the kicker to kick the ball behind the half-way line.
- c) Wrong type of kick. All kick-offs are taken by a drop kick from the centre of the half way line.
- d) Kicker's team is not behind the kicker and/or crosses the line early. Don't forget to glance behind you too!
- e) The ball not travelling 10 metres. Don't forget it is play on if the receiving team touches the ball first.

- f) The ball going straight into touch. Don't forget it is all right if the ball travels 10 metres and then bounces into touch.
- g) Obstruction on players waiting to receive the ball.
- h) Players jumping for the ball being tackled while still off the ground.
- i) The ball being kicked into the in-goal without being touched. Watch the player who picks up the ball – their actions will determine your next decision.
- j) Watch the ensuing ruck or maul very closely for any obstruction or off-side, especially the receiving players entering from the wrong side. Remember don't blow the whistle to restart the game after a try or goal.

22m DROP-OUT

Referee's Position

As soon as a drop-out is awarded, keep your eye on the ball in case a team tries to take the drop-out quickly. Get to the 22-metre line as quickly as possible remembering this type of kick can be taken anywhere from behind the 22-metre line. Try and stay just in line with the kicker. As soon as the ball is kicked the referee should move as for a kick-off. Accelerate to be in line and as near as possible to the next phase of play.

Checklist 4

- a) Obstruction by the attacking team when the ball is being brought back to the 22-metre line.
- b) The kicker's team not staying behind the kicker. Look both ways.
- c) The ball is charged down after crossing the 22-metre line.
- d) The ball not crossing the 22-metre line. Remember the drop-out kick can be taken anywhere from behind the 22-metre line.
- e) The ball goes straight into touch on the full. Remember it is OK if the ball bounces into touch.
- f) It is not necessary to blow your whistle to restart the game at a drop-out.

PENALTY KICK

Referee's Position

Make the mark and move away quickly to a position generally a few metres infield, so that the kicker is between you and the kicker's team. In many cases, the kicker will be kicking to touch.

Checklist 5

- a) The team taking a quick tap kick.
- b) Obstruction or delaying tactics by the offending team e.g. kicking or throwing the ball away.
- c) The offending team moving back 10 metres or being in the process of doing so.
- d) The kicker kicks from behind or at the marked position
- e) The kicker's team is not in front of the kicker.
- f) The kicking team gets the throw in for the lineout.

"UP AND UNDER"

Checklist 6

- a) Interference on chasers to protect the catcher.
- b) Interference with the catcher before receiving the ball.
- c) A player being tackled in the air when jumping to receive the ball.

"TAP KICK"

Be Alert, especially if the penalty kick is awarded near the goal-line. Be prepared to move very quickly.

Checklist 7

- a) As above for the other penalty kicks.
- b) Make sure the ball is kicked correctly – the ball must leave the hands
- c) Ensure the player who takes the tap doesn't try to 'milk' a further penalty by deliberately running into opposition players who are still getting onside. If so, play on.



PENALTY KICK AT GOAL

Referee's Position

Take up a position a few metres away, level with and outside the kicker, where you can see the ball and most of both teams. Ensure your shadow is clear of the ball and does not cross the kicker's path. Try not to be looking into the sun. Move with the kicker and run towards the trajectory of the ball. If the kick looks like being unsuccessful, run straight for the goal-line or in-goal area as quickly as possible to ensure you are in a good position to determine what happens next.

Checklist 8

- a) Exceeding the time limit of 60 seconds after the kicking tee or sand arrives for the kicker. Communicate to the kicker if it looks like being a close thing.

- b) Check defenders are standing still, with hands by their sides and are silent.
- c) The ball bouncing back into the field-of-play from the crossbar or the goal posts.
- d) The ball not reaching the goal-line and being carried over the goal-line by a defender.
- e) The ball being knocked on by a defender.

KICKS IN GENERAL PLAY AND KICKING DUELS

Referee's Position

Before the kick occurs, move towards the kicker (in case the ball is dropped or charged down). When the kick occurs, keep watching the kicker to ensure they are not late tackled, then change direction and follow the kick. Check for offside teammates but continue running toward where the ball will land.

In a kicking duel, move as quickly as possible infield to a position between the two kickers and away from the flight of the ball. This will enable you to have a good view of all players. Watch the players NOT the ball. Gravity will bring the ball down!

Kids Rugby U8-U12

When a U8-U9 player kicks the ball a scrum is awarded to the team not in possession.

Checklist 9

- a) The kicker is not late tackled or obstructed when chasing.
- b) Has the ball been touched by an opponent in flight?
- c) The place from where the kick was made and where it will land or be caught - in case players are offside.
- d) Are players in front of the kicker moving forward? – “Stop”
- e) Are players inside the ten metres offside line across the field, and not retiring? – “Out of the 10”
- f) The kicking team players who are stopped being put onside, especially by a player who is not the kicker.

Goal Kick



CONVERSION KICK

Referee's Position

Similar to a Penalty Kick at Goal. Don't forget to check your touch judges signals, but remember the referee has to make the final decision. If the ball goes over the top of an upright and you assess that the ball would have hit the upright, remember that it is ruled as no goal.

FREE KICK (AND MARK)

Whistle as soon as a Mark is called, or call "Play on" if you are not awarding the Mark, to ensure the safety of the player calling the Mark. Both for a Mark and a Free Kick, make the mark clearly and quickly. If the kicker wants to take the kick quickly don't be too pedantic about the location.

Checklist 10

- a) If the kick is a 'tap kick', ensure that the ball is kicked correctly.
- b) The receiving team moves back 10 metres and does not advance until the ball is kicked or the kicker begins to move for the kick.
- c) The kick which goes directly into touch, when the kick has been made outside the 22-metre line.
- d) The touch judge gives the throw-in for the lineout to the non-kicking team. Touch judges sometimes mistake the type of kick that has been awarded i.e. penalty vs free kick.

DROPPED GOAL

Referee's Position

Accelerate as fast as you can to be in line with the ball's trajectory and to be as close as possible to the goal posts. As the ball nears the goal posts slow down to assist your vision and concentrate on whether the ball crosses the crossbar and goes between the goal posts.

If the dropped goal attempt misses and goes dead, restart with a 22m drop-out. There is no scrum option.

KICKS

Penalty Kick and Free Kicks

- If a player takes a Penalty Kick or Free Kick quickly, the ball must leave the hands of the player, and the kick must be taken in the right place (ie. at or on a line directly behind the mark)
- Zero tolerance on the ball being thrown away or preventing a Free Kick or Penalty Kick being taken quickly. If a member of the infringing team is in possession, they must put the ball on the ground where they are standing or give the ball to an opponent who tries to take it from them.
- Beware of players 'milking' an extra 10 metres by intentionally running into offside players who are retreating onside and not taking part in play. Referees should 'play on' in these situations.
- When a Free Kick or Penalty Kick is taken quickly, defending players who are not back 10m are not put onside until they retire 10m or while they are retiring a teammate who was back 10m runs past them. No action of the team taking the penalty kick can put them onside (including running 5m).

OFFSIDE IN GENERAL PLAY

Rationale for emphasis

- When the ball is kicked in general play, any player of the kicking team in front of the kicker is offside.
- Offside players who are advancing are cutting down options for counter attack and forcing the receiving team to kick as their first option. Referees must penalise offside players and should no longer rely on continually verbally managing these players because by advancing they have already had an impact on play.
- With a long kick downfield, referees may be able to manage an offside player. The referee should call only once for the player to stop. If the player does not stop immediately (not just slow down), they are liable to penalty.
- With a short or high kick, there will be little or no opportunity for the referee to manage and players must immediately act as per Law or they are liable to penalty.

- Offside players must be dealt with even when the ball looks like it will go into touch because a quick throw may be an option. Once the ball is in touch, offside no longer applies and offside players may move forward toward a lineout or where a quick throw is being attempted.

Requirements for offside players

- If offside players are within 10m of where an opponent is waiting to play the ball or where the ball may land, they must immediately retreat outside this 10m zone. This 10m line stretches across the field (it is not a circle).
- Offside players within the 10m who are retreating can only be put onside when an onside teammate runs them on. No action of the team catching the ball puts such an offside player onside.
- Offside players who are not within 10m must not move forward or towards the ball. These offside players who are standing still can be put onside when an onside teammate runs them on, or when an opponent runs 5m, kicks, passes or touches but does not catch the ball.
- Offside players cannot be run onside unless they are either standing still, or retreating out of the 10m zone as applicable.



LINEOUT

Always aim to be first to the lineout. As the players arrive, the referee can watch the players arriving, see the set up of the lineout, and check the number of players. If there seems to be trouble in a lineout, walk down the outside of the lineout when it is forming and speak to the players concerned. Do NOT walk down between the two teams, someone might throw the ball in!

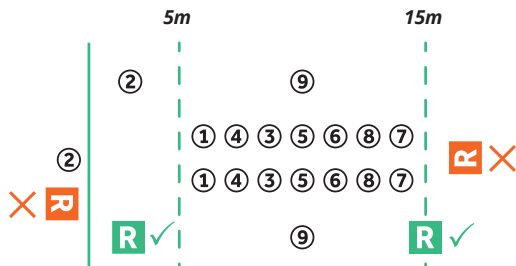
Referee's Position

There are many things which can go wrong in a lineout for the referee to manage which are all more important than a crooked throw. Therefore your positioning must be such that you have the best view of all participants in the lineout and what they are doing, not the throw. So, do NOT stand next to the thrower at the front or in the middle of the lineout at the back. The closer to the line of touch, the less you see as bodies come together at the throw in.

You should be positioned on the same side of the lineout as the team throwing in the ball, a few metres off the line of touch, at either the front or the back. The referee may need to take into account the position of the sun when deciding on the front or the back. A referee might referee from the back if they were concerned about defending players crossing the 15m line early, if they wanted to better manage the defensive backs, or if the lineout is in an attacking situation.

Refereeing from the front gives you a better authority awareness with the players because you are in their faces. At the front, you should be roughly

opposite the non-throwing hooker. At either the front or the back you should be roughly in line with the scrum-half of the team throwing in the ball.



Kids Rugby U8-U12

The referee should verbally manage the set-up of both teams. This is much simpler in Kids Rugby as each age group has a set number of players allowed in the lineout, and variation in numbers is not allowed. The lineout is contested in U10s and above but there is no lifting or supporting of lineout jumpers at any level U8 to U12.

LINEOUT SET UP

Checklist 11

- Has a Line out formed? A quick throw cannot be taken after this point.
- Ensure the correct team throws in the ball.
- The player at the front of each line can assist in getting the correct gap.
- Is there a non-throwing hooker standing in the right place?
- All players not in the lineout are 10 metres back.
- The player throwing in is on the line-of-touch - no deviation to one side to advantage their team.

LINEOUT PLAY

Checklist 12

- No baulking by the thrower.
- Players jumping early and/or across the line-of-touch.

- c) The ball is not prevented from travelling 5-metres.
- d) Correct support in the lineout (e.g. U13-U15 on the shorts only).
- e) No interference with the jumper in the air. Sacking the jumper is OK if done immediately they land on the ground.
- f) No sacking of lifters.
- g) No obstruction by the lifters (i.e. blocking opponents from playing the jumper).
- h) As a team forms a maul, no 'long transfer' by the jumper to the back.
- i) All lineout players staying within the 15m line until the lineout is over.
- j) Last feet of a maul crossing the line-of-touch before the backs advance across the 10-metre line.
- k) Know when a lineout ends and when players not in the lineout can advance.

QUICK THROW

Before a lineout forms, a team may take a quick throw. The referee needs to watch the ball as it goes into touch carefully in case a team looks to take a quick throw. (In matches where the referee is lucky enough to have Assistant Referees who are working well in a 'Team of 3', it is common place for the referee to watch the formation of the lineout and the Assistant Referees to assist in ensuring the same ball is used and no-one has touched the ball other than the thrower.)

Checklist 13

- a) The same ball is used.
- b) The player throwing in the ball collects it.
- c) No one else handling the ball except the player throwing it in.
Remember that the ball can hit objects (grandstand, fence, a passing dog) and a quick throw is allowed.
- d) The ball is thrown in straight or backwards.
- e) The ball is thrown in 5 metres.
- f) The line out being formed - 2 players from each team - so a quick throw in is no longer allowed.

LINEOUT AND QUICK THROW

Put back into own 22m

- When a ball is passed into the 22 metre area and is touched by an opposing player, or a tackle, ruck, scrum, maul or lineout is formed, then that team can now kick directly into touch and gain ground.
- The ball is considered to have been 'taken back' into a team's 22m area in the following situations:
 - ▶ When a team wins possession of a ball from a scrum, ruck, maul or lineout where the mark is outside of the 22m area, even though the rear participants may have their feet within the 22m area
 - ▶ When a quick throw-in is passed from in front of the 22m line, back across the 22m line and into the 22m area
 - ▶ When a quick throw-in is taken from within the 22m area when the mark of touch is actually outside the 22m.

Knock on or throw forward into touch

- If a player knocks the ball on, or throws the ball forward, and the ball goes into touch (without touching another player), the non-offending team will be offered the choice of a lineout where the ball went into touch, or a scrum at the place of the knock on or throw forward.
- Without being offered this choice by the referee, a team may choose to immediately take a quick throw in this scenario. The usual restrictions on whether a quick throw may be taken apply.

Quick Throw

Quick throws may be taken from between the place wherever the subsequent lineout would be formed, and the throwing team's own goal line.

A quick throw may be thrown in straight or towards the throwing team's own goal line. The ball must travel across the 5m line before it touches another player or the ground.

Players who end up over the touch line must give up the ball to opposition players and must not throw the ball away such as to prevent a quick throw (PK, 15m in from touch).

Players standing within 5m of the touch line attempting to block a quick throw-in should be managed away. These players may not block the ball from travelling 5m (FK, 15m in from touch).

Numbers and Lineout Players

The minimum number of players to form a lineout is two from each team (i.e. 4 total minimum).

A receiver at the lineout must be exactly 2 metres back away from the Lineout when formed (they can't set up further than 2 metres away). In U13s and above, it is optional for a team to have a receiver.

- It is mandatory for a team to have a player in opposition to the player throwing in the ball. This player must be positioned two metres away from the 5m line and two metres away from the line-of-touch.
- Receivers must not join until after the ball has left the thrower's hands (FK). A receiver may only join the lineout before the ball is thrown if another lineout player simultaneously takes the receiver position (i.e. they switch).
- In U16s and above, the front support player at the lineout may lift on the thighs, as in senior Law. In U13s-U15s, all support players may still only lift on the shorts.

LINEOUT MANAGEMENT

- The throwing team must not delay the formation of a lineout by forming a line or huddle away from the line-of-touch. They must set their numbers clearly when forming the lineout, hence giving the defending team a reasonable opportunity to match (FK).
- Sacking is the act of bringing the jumper/ball carrier to the ground by the upper body. Sacking is legal but can only be done after the jumper/ball carrier has returned to the ground and must be done immediately. No sacking of lifters (PK).
- Referees should penalise a defending lineout that drives in on the jumper and/or support players while the jumper is off the ground. (Referees should manage teams holding jumpers in the air trying to contrive this PK.)

Teams deciding not to engage the maul at lineout

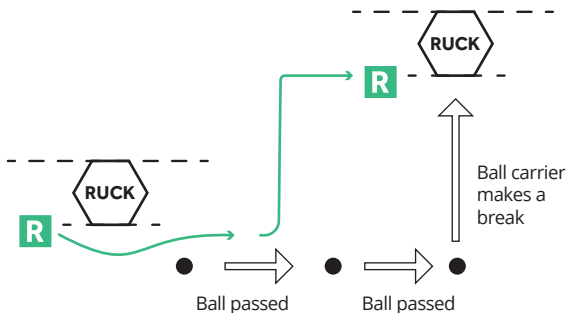
- If the defenders in the line out choose to not engage the line out drive by leaving the line out as a group, then PK to attacking team.
- If the defenders in the line out choose to not engage the line out drive by simply opening up a gap and creating space, and not leaving the line out, the following process should be followed:
 - ▶ The attacking team would need to keep the ball with the front player if they were to drive down-field (therefore play on, general play – defenders could either engage to form a maul, or tackle the ball carrier.)
 - ▶ If the attacking team immediately passes the ball back to a player behind the front player or at the rear of the group, the referee would tell them to “Use it” which they must do immediately.
 - ▶ If the team drives forward with the ball at the back (and ignores the referee’s call to “Use it”), the referee should award a scrum to the defending team for “accidental offside” (rather than PK for obstruction).



TACKLE AND RUCK

Get to the tackle as quickly as possible. Good running lines from the previous phase of play will assist in being there early.

Ball Line Running

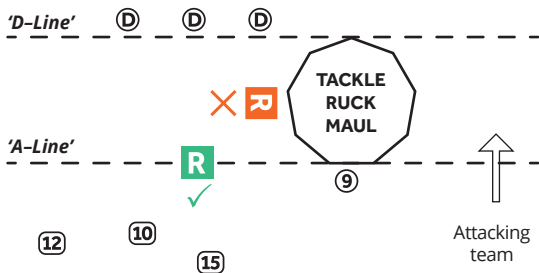


'Ball-line running' is the recommended principle for you to follow when refereeing rugby in general play. It means to be in line with the ball at all times. It puts the referee in the best position to rule on forward passes and knock-ons, and to see tackles clearly.

- You will run across the field to follow the lateral passing of the ball.
- You will run directly up field when a player breaks the defensive line.
- You won't run in arcs or diagonally.
- When a tackle is made, you should be roughly in line with it, and you then run laterally toward the tackle.

Referee's Position

When the tackle occurs, move in close enough to see where the ball is without getting in the way of arriving players. You should be able to communicate effectively to players involved in the tackle and manage arriving players to enter the tackle zone correctly. The recommended referee position is 1 to 2 metres to the side of the tackle, in line with the attacking teams tackle entry gate, also known as the 'A-line'. This becomes the attacking team's offside line in a subsequent ruck.



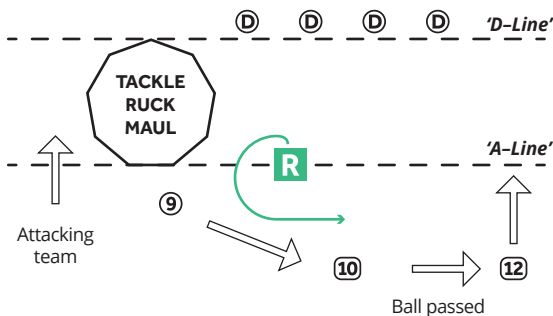
Your positioning at the ruck is a simple progression from that of the tackle. The referee stands on the 'A-line' facing the defenders. You should move slightly further away from the ruck (3 to 5 metres) than the position taken at the tackle, to provide a channel for a player to 'pick and drive' with the ball, and to open your field of view.

Remember that having your shoulders parallel to the goal lines and facing the goal posts allows you to quickly turn your head 180 degrees and see the defensive players on both wings. If you are facing the tackle/ruck you will become ball focused and defensive players out wide can creep up behind you without you knowing, and unfairly shut down time and space. You should be able to referee from either side of the ruck, although it is often an advantage to be positioned on the side you think play will head next so you can directly manage (with body language) players on that side of the ruck who may be offside.

Sometimes, it may be an advantage to move quickly round to the blind side of a ruck, especially if close to the touchline, to ascertain the whereabouts of the ball. This enables the referee to see a majority of the players and should eliminate having to look behind for players creeping up offside.

Pivot Turn

As the ball is about to be played by the scrum-half, use this as a trigger to check offside. Turn back and pivot turn with the ball – never lose sight of the ball as it is passed. This will ensure you don't miss knock ons, and can see if a player is running toward you. Move with the ball, back onto ball-line running. Do NOT turn 'blind', towards the outside backs.



TACKLE

Around 60% of penalties occur at the tackle and contest just after the tackle. Typical infringements once a fair tackle has occurred are:

- the tackler/tackle assist not releasing tackled player,
- the tackler not rolling away,
- the tackler playing the ball before regaining their feet,
- the tackled player not releasing the ball, and
- incorrect entry at the tackle by arriving players.

Communication

- When a tackle has occurred and you see the tackler is on top of the ball carrier or in the road of the ball, call “(3 Red) roll away!”. If the tackler is already clear of the ball carrier you do not need to call any instructions to the tackler.
- If a player makes a tackle but remains on their feet and has not released the tackled player, call “Let him/her go (5 Red)!”.
- If the ball carrier holds onto the ball and there are defenders that have rights to the ball (e.g. they are on their feet and entered the tackle zone correctly), then call “Play it, Blue!”
- Saying “Release” is NOT recommended as it could refer to the tackler holding onto the ball carrier, or the ball carrier holding onto the ball, or an arriving player who is trying to play the ball. While this may work once or twice, it is a bad habit and a recipe for confusion and non-compliance.

Kids Rugby U8-U12

You will find that especially in U8-U9 matches, the players need to be continually reminded to aim for the shorts and below in the tackle, to roll off the tackler and not to try to play the ball when they are on the ground (more often than not with one knee on the ground.)

Whilst there is a lot to watch out for, try not to get too technical. Keep it safe, simple and reward positive play. Players who infringe once the tackle has occurred and do not have a big impact on the game should be reminded what they should do, but there is no need to blow your whistle and pull up play unnecessarily unless it is unsafe.

1. IS THE ATTEMPTED TACKLE LEGAL?

2. IS THERE A TACKLE?

3. IS THERE A TACKLER?

▶ **YES** – Player making tackle goes to ground = ‘Tackler’

- Releases and rolls away
- Gets to feet and comes through gate to play ball

“Roll away!”

▶ **NO** – Player making tackle stays on feet = ‘Tackle Assist’

- Releases
- Comes through gate if not already in gate

“Let him/her go!”

4. TACKLED PLAYER RELEASING THE BALL

▶ If no-one is around, give the player a couple of seconds to place, pass or release the ball

▶ If someone is legally attempting to play the ball, communicate to tackled player, and/or penalise if appropriate

“Play it!”

5. ARRIVING PLAYERS AT THE TACKLE

▶ Must come through the gate

▶ Must stay on their feet

- Going off feet after legally contesting a threat
- Going off feet sealing the ball

OK

not OK

▶ Arriving player over ball – offside lines form at the last feet

6. DEFENDER CONTESTING POSSESSION

▶ If body weight is on their feet, let them win the turnover

▶ If off feet, communicate and/or penalise if appropriate

“Hands off!”

▶ If two opponents make physical contact over the ball first, no hands can be used

“No Hands!”

Checklist 14

For more detail see page 31.

- a) Is the attempted tackle legal?
- b) Is there a tackle?
- c) Is there a tackler?
- d) Tackled player releasing the ball.
- e) Arriving players at the tackle.
- f) Defender contesting possession.
- g) Have offside lines formed?

RUCK

Communication

- As players are contesting for the ball after a tackle, a player whose body weight was on their feet initially may lose their feet before they have gained possession of the ball, in this case call “(7 Red) Hands off!”
- If a player looks like attempting to use their hands after physical contact has been made over the ball in the ruck, call “No hands!”
- If players not in the ruck but on the side (called ‘pillars’) are creeping up the side of the ruck, then call “Step back (red)!”
- Remember if the ball is available to be played at the back of a ruck, and a team does not look like playing it soon, call “Use it!”

Checklist 15

- a) Has a player who is the first from their team to arrive at the tackle got their hands on the ball? Let them play.
- b) Players do not start using their hands after physical contact has been made over the ball
- c) Joining players keeping their head and shoulders above their hips.
- d) Joining players binding on when joining the ruck.
- e) Non-participating players stay behind the last feet in the ruck.
- f) No boots stamping or trampling on bodies.
- g) The ball is available to be played but not being used.
- h) The ruck becoming unplayable.

TACKLE

Tackle protocol for referees

- The order of priority at a tackle situation is almost always:
1. Tackler / Assist Tackler 2. Tackled Player 3. Arriving Players

Tackler and Tackle Assist

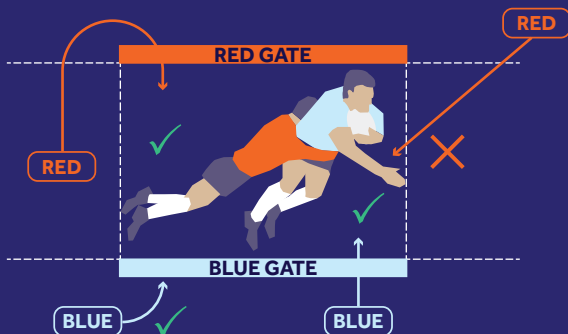
- Referees must ensure the tackler first clearly releases the tackled player and then either rolls away or gets to their feet before attempting to play the ball. The tackler must not hold onto the tackled player as they get to their feet.
- After getting up, the tackler can only play from their side of the tackle 'gate' (PK).
- A tackler who ends up on their opponents' side of the tackle must roll away immediately. Previously a tackler could play the ball from any direction after getting up.
- Referees should be strict on the tackler and unplayables should be rare. Zero tolerance on tacklers who slow up the ball and stop the attacking team gaining quick possession.
- Players who make a tackle or assist in making a tackle but remain on their feet and do not go to ground (Assist Tackler) must clearly release the tackled player and ball before going back to play the ball. This player must show clear release, i.e. 'daylight made obvious' and enter 'through the gate'.

Tackled Player

- The tackled player must not either crawl or re-position their body (e.g. 'squeeze ball') to delay the release of the ball when isolated or under pressure. The ball must be available immediately for play (PK). (Note: 'squeeze ball' is illegal entirely in Kids Pathway U6-U12).

Arriving Players

- Players who play the ball after a tackle must do so from the direction of their own goal line and directly behind the tackled player or tackler nearest to their goal line (i.e. 'through the gate').



- Referees should decide tackle entry based on how the arriving player enters, not how they exit. A player who comes from depth and cleans on slight angle is acceptable. A player with no depth who removes a 'threat' from side is unacceptable.
- Arriving players must demonstrate positive intent to stay on their feet. 'Plane taking off' is acceptable. 'Plane landing' (to seal possession or deny a contest) is not acceptable.



- A player who is supporting the ball carrier, or who then goes to ground with the ball carrier in or following a tackle must roll away, or get to their feet and be supporting their weight on their feet.
- Such players cannot stay on top of the ball (often with hands on the ground) to deny a contest for possession.

Post-Tackle

- An offside line is created at a tackle when at least one player is on their feet and over the ball. Each team's offside line runs through the hindmost point of any player in the tackle or on their feet.
- A player who arrives and picks the ball up at a tackle does not form an offside line.
- Any player on their feet who has their hands on the ball immediately after a tackle and before a ruck forms ('jackal') may keep contesting for the ball even if a ruck forms around them.
- No other arriving player at this point may play the ball with their hands, until the ball clearly leaves ruck (i.e. there is no body part over the top of it).
- 'Jackal' players have one shot at the ball. If such a player is driven off the ball by the opposition then their opportunity to play the ball with their hands has ceased.
- To earn a PK for 'holding on', arriving 'jackal' players must:
 - ▶ Be in a position of strength (on feet, with no hands or elbows past the ball on the ground), and
 - ▶ Attempt to lift ball up, and
 - ▶ Survive the cleanout.
- 'Driving out' at the tackle must be near the ball – i.e. 1 metre width either side of the ball. Players must not interfere with players on the fringes or past the ball who are not involved in the tackle/ruck.

RUCK

Ruck Definition

- A ruck is formed when at least one player from each team are in contact, on their feet and over the ball which is on the ground.
- Each team has an offside line that runs parallel to the goal line through the hindmost point of any ruck participant. (In previous years, this was written as 'hindmost foot'.)

Offside (pillars)

- Pillars must not have hands on ground ahead of the offside line.
- Pillars must not form an offside 'wall' when setting up a box kick. Players may set up together behind the last feet, but can't obstruct tacklers coming through to tackle the kicker or charge down the kick.
- Pillars may be managed back onside on occasions, but referees should not be continually verbally managing them. Players in teams that continue to stand offside should be penalised.

"Use it!" at ruck

- When the ball has been clearly won by a team at the ruck, and the ball is available to be played immediately by the scrum-half or another player, the referee should call "Use it!"
- The "Use it!" call does not mean the ball is out.
- The team in possession then has 5 seconds (the countdown is not verbalised) to use the ball. If the ball is not used, a scrum should be awarded to the team not in possession.

Ball out and collapsed ruck

- The ball is only out of a ruck (or scrum) when it is totally exposed or it is clear of bodies.
- If the ball is being dug out (after being won) or is under the feet of players at the back of the ruck, the scrum-half cannot be touched until the ball is clearly out of the ruck. The benefit of any doubt must go to the scrum-half.
- Zero tolerance on defending players at the ruck who target the scrum-half before they have the ball, even if the ball is out of the ruck. Any onside player must play the ball and not the scrum-half.
- Players cannot step through or over the middle of a collapsed ruck before the ball is cleared or the ball is completely clear of bodies. These players are unbound and in front of the last feet and are therefore offside.
- A player must not kick the ball out of a ruck. The player can only hook it in a backwards motion (PK).
- At a tackle, a player can pick up the ball as long as one foot is level with or behind the ball. At a ruck, a player can pick up the ball as long as both feet are level with or behind the ball. If a player is still bound with an opponent, then they cannot pick up the ball.

MAUL

Mauls generally occur after an incomplete tackle where the ball carrier is held after being upright in contact, or following a lineout throw.

Referee position

Generally speaking, the same rules for positioning yourself on the 'A-line' apply at maul as they do at tackle and ruck. The biggest difference between ruck and maul positioning is if you do not know where the ball is, you must move around and find the ball (especially near in-goal).

Kids Rugby U8-U12

Mauls are very common in younger age groups. Prolonged wrestling for the ball should be discouraged – if the ball is not coming out anytime soon, rule the maul unplayable and award a scrum.

Communication

- As soon as a maul is formed, the referee should communicate this by calling "Maul!" This lets the players know that you will be treating what happens next differently to a tackle, and the possibility exists that the ball will be turned over if it becomes unplayable.
- Players who become unbound as the maul progresses dynamically should be encouraged to get back onside. Call "Back and around blue!"
- If the maul stops moving once, call "Use it or move it!" Often you are communicating this to the scrum-half who is managing the maul for their team.
- If the maul stops moving a second time, call "Use it or lose it!" and award a turnover scrum if the ball is not used.
- After communicating, count 5 secs in your head and then blow the maul as unplayable if the ball does not emerge. If you can see the ball being moved back through the maul, allow time for it to emerge.

Checklist 16

- a) The correct formation to form a maul (ball carrier and one from each team).
- b) No long transfer (if maul is formed from a lineout).
- c) The person or team responsible for taking the ball into the maul.
- d) Players joining the maul from behind the rear feet.
- e) The players remain correctly bound.
- f) Ball-carrier in the maul doesn't move/slide to the back.
- g) Non-participating players remain behind the hindmost feet.
- h) Deliberate collapsing of the maul.
- i) The maul becoming stationery (or moves sideways) and not moving forward again within 5 seconds.
- j) The maul becoming unplayable.



MAUL

World Rugby Law changes / clarifications

- The ball can only be moved backwards hand-to-hand once the maul has formed. A player is not allowed to move/slide to the back of the maul when they are in possession of the ball (PK).
- The ball can be moved backwards hand-to-hand once the maul has formed.
- The 'ripper' needs to stay in contact with the jumper until the ball is fully transferred, and cannot immediately shift lanes. No 'long transfer' of the ball to the back of the maul from the lineout jumper. This is particularly obvious when players join in front of new ball carrier.

Other Maul Issues – Attack

- When a maul is formed at a lineout or after a kick, defenders must have access to the ball carrier at the formation of the maul. It is obstruction if blockers move in front of the ball carrier before the maul is formed.
- Attacking players must join from behind or alongside the hind-most teammate in the maul – they must not join in front of the player in the maul with the ball.
- Players detaching from a maul with the ball being carried by a player behind the leading player and who engage the opposition are liable to penalty for obstruction (commonly referred to as 'Truck and Trailer').

Other Maul Issues – Defence

- Players bound on the side of the maul may not 'slide' forward or 'swim' around the maul. These players are not remaining bound and are not caught up in the maul, and are therefore offside.
- Players who join the maul legally and are either caught up in the maul or have remained bound are legally entitled to be in the maul and contest the ball carrier. The referee should not call out such players even though they may appear to be on the 'wrong' side.
- If the defending players choose to unbind and leave the maul, it is still a maul and the maul Laws still apply, i.e. the team in possession may continue to drive forward, and opposing players must join from their side of the maul.

Unplayable and Collapsed Mauls

- A maul moving sideways is considered stationary.
- If the ball becomes unplayable at a maul, the referee orders a scrum with the throw-in to the team that was not in possession when the maul began.
- If the ball carrier in a maul goes to ground, and it is possible to make the ball available immediately, the ball carrier must do so (PK). This includes releasing the ball to an opponent on their feet. This opponent does not have to release the ball carrier or the ball when the maul goes to ground.
- If the ball carrier in a maul goes to ground, and it is impossible for the ball carrier to make the ball available immediately, the referee should award a scrum with the throw-in to the team that was not in possession when the maul began.

"Use it!" at maul

- If a maul goes to ground legally, and the ball is available to be played immediately by the scrum-half or another player of either team, the referee should call "Use it!"
- The team in possession then has 5 seconds (the countdown is not verbalised) to use the ball. If the ball is not used, a scrum should be awarded to the team not in possession.



SCRUM

The scrum engagement is managed in sequence by the referee to ensure that it occurs safely, squarely and in synchronisation. If any part of the scrum set-up is not right, the referee should call the front rows up and re-start the process. Referees will call the scrum engagement in the sequence CROUCH, BIND and then, when both front rows are ready, SET. This is to be strictly observed. Only when the scrum is steady should the ball to be put in by the scrum-half.

Referee's Position

When awarding a scrum, stand sideways facing towards the touchline and the players forming up and put the RIGHT arm out horizontally to indicate the side the ball is to be put in. This places the referee on the loose-head side where the ball is to be put into the scrum by the scrum-half.

As you get more experienced as a referee, and if there are problems in the scrum it may pay for the referee to stand on the tight-head side of the scrum, as the non-feeding loose-head can often cause issues.

Initially, stand close up to the scrum with both scrum-halves behind you to the left. Stay with the scrum while you take the front rows through the engagement process. Don't let the scrum-half force their way in front of you until the scrum is steady and you are ready for the ball to be thrown in. When you are ready, step about two metres back on the centre line of the scrum to observe the ball being thrown in. Start to turn sideways so that both the scrum and defending backs can be seen and move backward with the ball. Don't get caught flat-footed as the ball emerges!

Kids Rugby U8-U12

Ensure the scrum does not move more than is allowed (i.e. no push U8-U9, and 1 metre in U10-U12). The key to safe and effective scrummaging is correct body shape – in U10s and above, be on the lookout for inexperienced players with poor technique in case you need to blow the whistle to stop the scrum for safety reasons.

PRE-ENGAGEMENT

Checklist 17

- a) Decide which side of the scrum you'll stand on – based on issues at previous scrums and the position of the scrum on the field.
- b) Check the ball is available for the scrum.
- c) 8 players from each team form the scrum if both teams have 15 players.
- d) Numbers in the scrum must be the same for each side in U19 and below.
- e) Have the locks bound correctly to the front row?
- f) No crutch binding by U15 and below.
- g) Number 8 is bound and not 'sling-shotting' in.
- h) Non-participating players are behind the 5-metre offside line.

1.



CROUCH

Front rowers should adopt a **CROUCH** position with their head and shoulders at or above the level of the hips, feet square, and knees bent sufficiently to make a simple forward movement into engagement. Players should keep their head straight, in order to maintain the normal and safe alignment of the cervical spine.

Once all front-rowers are crouched, there must be a non-verbal pause, during which time the referee should be checking that:

- the distance between opposing front rows should be close enough that players' heads are interlinked (approximately ear to ear)
- the height of the two packs is the same
- all players are balanced, and are set up straight (not at an angle)

2.



BIND

The **BIND** call requires each prop to bind on the side or back of their opposing prop (not on the arm or shoulder). Props should grab onto the jersey, not just rest their hand in place.

Once all front-rowers are bound, there must be a non-verbal pause, during which time the referee should check that all players are balanced and stationary.

3.



SET

On the **SET** call, and not before, the front rows should engage the opposition firmly with a short horizontal movement and the props should draw with their outside binds. In this position, all players must be able to maintain body shape and pressure on the opposition scrum.

4.

FEED

The scrum must be stationary and stable before the feed – no hit and chase off the mark allowed (FK). There will be **NO SIGNAL** from the referee to the scrum-half to feed the ball. There must be no delay of feed from the scrum-half once the ball has been presented (FK). One player from the team who put the ball in must strike for the ball (FK).

ENGAGEMENT AND FEED

The referee must control the engagement process. Each of the 3 calls should result in an action by the players. If any part of the scrum set-up is not right, the referee should call the front rows up and re-start the process.

POST-ENGAGEMENT

Checklist 18

- a) The scrum-half must throw the ball in straight, but is allowed to align their shoulder on the middle line of the scrum, therefore allowing them to stand a shoulder width towards their side of the middle line.
- b) The hooker of the team feeding hooking for the ball.
- c) Front row players boring in, or collapsing, or standing up during the scrum.
- d) Illegal wheeling (any deliberate wheel in games U19 and below is illegal).
- e) The attacking side breakaway does not move out to obstruct the opposing scrum-half following the ball through the scrum.
- f) The scrum-half of the team that didn't win the ball getting offside in front of the ball.
- g) Back-row forwards (especially the open-side flanker) breaking from the scrum before it has ended.
- h) The defending backs creeping up offside.
- i) No push more than 1 metre in U10-U12 or more than 1.5 metres in U13-U19.

UNCONTESTED SCRUMS

Scrum will become uncontested if either team cannot field a suitably trained front-row. An uncontested scrum is a scrum in which the team throwing-in gains possession without contest, with neither team being allowed to push from the mark. Otherwise, there is no difference from a normal scrum. (In some competitions in years past there used to be the option for a Free Kick or limitations on Number 8 moves but these are no longer allowed in any competition in Australia.)

MAYDAY

If 'Mayday' is called by a player fearing serious injury, begin to manage the procedure appropriately by blowing the whistle loudly once the players have collapsed to their knees. The procedure for identifying and managing injured players should then be followed step by step.



SCRUM

World Rugby Law changes from 2016-2018

- When a scrum is legally wheeled through 90 degrees, this no longer results in a turnover. The scrum is reset with the same team feeding the ball, regardless of who had possession at the time the scrum went through the 90 degrees.
- Advantage may now be played (if it is safe to do so) when a scrum collapses, or when a player stands up in a scrum and their feet are on the ground. Advantage still cannot be played if a player in the scrum is forced upwards and has no support on the ground. Safety should always be the priority when a scrum collapses.
- When a team has the ball at the #8's feet but the scrum is not moving forward, the referee will call "Use it!" The team must use the ball immediately (turnover scrum).
- The scrum-half of the team that doesn't win the ball in the scrum may not move into the space between the flanker and No. 8 when following the ball through the scrum (PK).
- A team must be ready for the referee to call "crouch" within 30 seconds from the time the referee makes the mark for the scrum (FK).
- Uncontested scrums as a result of a sending off, temporary suspension or injury must be played with eight players per side. (Applies in U13s and older. This would not apply if uncontested scrums are caused by a team starting a match short of a trained front row. Competition rules would apply.)
- The Number 8 can reach into the scrum and pick up the ball from under the feet of the second-rows.

Collapsed scrums and illegal wheeling

- Coaches and referees should ensure pre-match that players are aware of the "Mayday" Procedure and its application. Refer to the Rugby AU Smart Rugby online course for clarification.
- A legal wheel goes forward and through the opposition scrum. A wheel that spins around at pace (usually on its axis) is illegal and should be penalised (PK).
- Only after both props have made a forward movement together, will a team be allowed to wheel. Referees should not reward a team that initiates a wheel without dominance.

GAME MANAGEMENT BY THE REFEREE

Game Management is one of the cornerstones of a referee's skill set. Primarily, it consists of:

- Having an appropriate on-field 'presence' and body language
- Effective timing of interventions/trends (warnings, YC)
- Effective captain management (timing and clarity of messages)
- Not compromising standards in pressure situations
- Being strong and accurate in high impact moments

Preventative Communication

- Use number, colour, action, i.e. "6 blue roll away"
- Say exactly what you want the players to do, i.e. "Hands off blue!"
- It needs to be timely (keep it short)
- Don't talk down to players – show respect
- Don't use first names

Talk Explaining Decisions

- Explain your decision, but keep things simple
- Especially with younger players, try and word things positively (e.g. prefer "Next time you need to roll away quicker please" rather than "You didn't roll away. Penalty!")
- During the week, practise what you are going to say!

GAME MANAGEMENT

Checklist 19

- a) First impressions are important. In what tone do you talk to the captains before the match – conversational or dismissive? Set yourself up for success later in the match when you need a captain's co-operation.
- b) A referee should be an adjudicator NOT an enforcer. But try to be decisive, making decisions quickly.
- c) Remember: "Whistle", "Signal", "Talk"

- d) Take any early opportunity in a match to set a standard (especially tackler roll, tackle assist, pillars, scrum engagement, lineout set up). Setting the standard does not always mean blowing your whistle: you can also make your point through down-time communication to the player or captain.
- e) Learn to read where you need physical presence at breakdown. You might not need to communicate verbally, and be more effective!
- f) An occasional joke often relaxes a tense situation but DON'T be a comedian.
- g) Don't initiate discussion with players if they have already accepted a decision you've made.
- h) Don't get sucked into conversations or bite back at off-hand comments by players.
- i) Learn to understand the game better by watching and discussing games at all levels.
- j) Whenever possible, watch videos of your refereeing performance at your games with a referee coach.



SIGNALS

Signals are really important as people love to know what is going on. Poor referees use poor signals (floppy arms, low arms). Good referees use clear and expansive signals that everyone can see.

Learn the basic signals initially e.g. scrum, knock-on, free kick, penalty, advantage, etc. so they become automatic, immediately after the whistle has been blown for an infringement. Pictures of the various signals are included at the back of the Law Book.

Show your Primary Signal (PK, FK, scrum) before the Secondary Signal (what it's for).

ADVANTAGE

Advantage may be territorial (gain in ground) or tactical (the non-offending team is free to play the ball as they wish.)

Check the Law Book to ensure you remember the situations where you cannot play advantage (Law 7.3).

Checklist 20

- a) When you spot an infringement which has a material effect on the game, consider first if this is an appropriate time and place to even play advantage. In some cases (e.g. a team deep in their own half) the team might just want the penalty.
- b) After foul play, only play advantage if a try is imminent.
- c) If you decide to play advantage, call "Advantage blue". You may also consider a brief explanation to assist the non-offending team (e.g. "Knock-on by red!"). Hold your arm out for a short time (5 secs max) to signal this.
- d) Continue running and refereeing the game. Don't stand on the spot of the infringement and watch play get away from you. Make a mental note where to return to on the field if advantage does not eventuate.
- e) Penalty kick vs free kick vs scrum advantage – they will last different lengths. Scrum advantage = play roughly equivalent to what the team would get from a scrum. Penalty advantage = a greater territorial or tactical outcome.

- f) Consider other factors (such as the state of the game, the score, the skill level of the teams) in order to try and decide what the non-offending captain would want. If you reach a point where you think the captain would prefer to continue with what is playing out in front of you (as opposed to going back to the penalty or scrum) then call “Advantage over!” and play on.
- g) If advantage does not look like it will accrue, don’t waste additional time hoping and trying to make it happen. Blow the whistle and return to the infringement.

ADVANTAGE

- For a ‘scrum advantage’ to accrue, the non-offending team needs to have gained clear and real possession roughly equivalent to that which they would get from a scrum.
- A ‘penalty kick advantage’ calls for a greater level of reward than for a knock-on or Free Kick. The non-offending team must gain either tactical or territorial advantage roughly equivalent to that of receiving the Penalty Kick in the first instance.
- On the rare occasions that advantage is played after foul play, the very least that should happen is an admonishment. The player involved needs to understand that the referee was playing advantage for their offence.
- Advantage may now be played when a scrum collapses, or when a player stands up in a scrum (see scrum section for more detail).
- If referee plays 2 or more advantages, the captain can be asked which location is preferable.

GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES 2020

IN GOAL

BE THERE. Aim to be in-goal before the ball. Make sure you have a clear view of the ball. Make quick and firm decisions. This should stop any overzealous play developing. Don’t hesitate to consult the Assistant Referees or touch judges. If you cannot see the ball being grounded, blow it up quickly and award the 5-metre scrum to the attacking side.

Incorrect decisions around the in-goal can impact markedly on the players’ confidence in the referee.



ESCALATION

If you are getting slow ball at the breakdown, poor set-piece outcomes, or teams have little time or space to use the ball, consider whether there is a trend forming.

In some matches in which a team or both teams commit regular infringements, it is left to the referee to add value to the match by encouraging teams to change their behaviour. The referee can do this by escalating their sanctions, being sure to warn captains. The aim is to not have to escalate further if the team changes its behaviour.

A major part of changing behaviour escalation is interaction with a team's captain. This can be a tricky thing to do, and is not a perfect science. But there are some techniques that can be learned and practiced, and referees will find the process easier with more experience.

(Remember, deliberate infringements can result in a Yellow Card without any warning, depending on the cynical nature of the infringement.)

Identify the trend

Be aware of what constitutes a trend. It could be:

- Multiple infringements by an individual player
- Multiple similar infringements by a team (e.g. at breakdown, repeated high tackles, or other foul play)
- Negative tactics in red zone under pressure
- Negative attitude generally / frustration (lots of penalties for different things).

'Heads Up'

Let the captain know that you've identified a trend. Things to consider:

- Find time at downtime, on the run to a lineout, before a scrum forms, at an injury stoppage or a shot for goal.
- This situation is informal and does not require a time off or double blast of the whistle
- Say something like "There's been some X, can you address it please?"
- There is no pressure ... if the trend doesn't continue, excellent!



Final Chat

If the trend continues despite the 'heads up', have a final chat to the captain. Things to consider:

- Call time out, give a double blast of the whistle. The entire attention is now on you. Everyone playing and watching the game is thinking this is a Yellow Card warning (so don't call the captain out if it's not a YC warning!). It's now obvious to all what the next step is going to be.
- When talking to the captain, don't be vague, be clear about what specifically the trend is you are addressing. Say something like "If the trend continues, you'll lose a player to the bin".
- Be aware of body language. Don't point fingers. Keep the tone conversational. This is not a lecture.
- The 'old' referee coaching advice – "don't back yourself into a corner" is no longer relevant. Better advice is to be specific about what the trend is that would result in a card. This way it is clear in both your mind, and the Captain's.



Intervention

At the next relevant Penalty kick, the referee should give a Yellow Card or they may sacrifice some credibility. Things to consider:

- You should assume that the teams will change their behaviour i.e. it's important not to go looking for the next "one", instead it should stand out.
- If a penalty is given away which does not match the identified trend, then the Yellow Card is not appropriate (but you might now have a new trend of general negativity you need to address the captain about).
- There is no need for formal process of calling captain out in order to give the Yellow Card. Everyone should see it coming, just show the card to the player.
- If the next incident is a marginal penalty (a '50/50' decision), ask yourself "Should I be blowing this penalty in the first place?"
- If a trend goes away for a substantial period of time at any point in the process, and then there is another infringement, the referee might choose to go back one step or repeat a step – whatever they feel is appropriate to the game.



FOUL PLAY

Dangerous play should not be tolerated. The referee must determine whether it was deliberate, or over enthusiasm and carelessness by the player. This is especially important in the younger age group games. Nevertheless, it is very important the situation is managed fairly by the referee. There is no excuse for repeated offences by an individual or a team.

Kids Rugby U8-U12

All players who leave the field of play must be replaced. A yellow card constitutes 5 mins in the sin bin and if the time period has not expired when half-time or full-time is called, the temporary suspension ends.

FOUL PLAY REPORT

In some cases foul play will be bad enough it deserves a Yellow Card or Red Card on the first offence. Be aware of the many guidelines provided by World Rugby and Rugby Australia.

Practice before a game both giving a foul play report as an Assistant Referee, and giving a Yellow Card or Red Card a player as a Referee - maybe in the shower in the morning! The foul play report must be short and concise.

Checklist 21

- a) Identification of the offending player/s. Make sure you know the number of the player, the team the player is in (by colour). If there is no number on the jersey or it is not seen, then try to identify the player by another means (boot colour, headgear, etc).
- b) A clear description of the offence.
- c) Where the offence occurred.
- d) Where the penalty should be awarded (if it is a different place).
- e) Have a recommendation in mind – but don't tell the referee directly unless they ask.
- f) The Referee should suggest a sanction (PK, YC, or RC) based on your report. If you disagree with the sanction, the referee may give you a chance to re-state the facts to lead the referee in the right direction.

GIVING A CARD

Checklist 22

- a) A loud blast on the whistle.
- b) Separate the teams if need be.
- c) Step well back from the incident, away from the touch line and out of earshot of the players and spectators.
- d) If there is one, listen to the Assistant Referee report and then send them to the touchline.
- e) Decide what the sanctions are going to be.
- f) Call out the offending player/s and their captain (if both teams have players involved, do each team separately. Start with the team that will be receiving the penalty).
- g) Clearly state the nature of the offence without elaborating or getting into an argument. Talk to the captain, not the player.
- h) Issue the necessary card.
- i) Deal with the other team (if necessary).
- j) Proceed to the position of the incident and award the necessary penalty.
- k) If a player receives a second yellow card in the same match, they must be sent off. In which case you should show the player the yellow card for the second offence, and then a red card for the send off.

WRITTEN REPORT

Remember if a player is sent off, then a written report is required. You must obtain the player's name from the Team Manager before leaving the ground.

If the send off is because of an Assistant Referee or touch judge's report, then a report is required from both the referee and the Assistant Referee. The report should be written up as soon after a game as possible while the incident is still fresh in the mind. Just state the facts in a report and don't embellish them. The report form can be accessed via Rugby Australia's Referee Appointment System.

FOUL PLAY

World Rugby High Tackle guidance 2017

- World Rugby has provided new guidance regarding high tackles which are 'reckless' (minimum YC) and 'accidental' (minimum PK). Stricter enforcement is encouraged: 'contact with the head' should in most cases result in a PK minimum. This includes a fend from ball carrier with forearm/elbow.
- To decide an appropriate sanction (PK, YC or RC), referees should be considering:
 - ▶ **Contact point** – where did the tackle start/finish, was contact with hand, arm or shoulder?
 - ▶ **Action** – was the tackling action accidental, reckless or deliberate?
 - ▶ **Degree of force** – severity of impact, does the tackler 'carry on' through the tackle, e.g. around the neck?
- Referees should use common sense – but player safety is paramount.

Neck rolls

- World Rugby is working to eliminate the practice of 'neck grab and rolls' in the act of cleaning out a player. Guidelines for referees are as follows:
 - ▶ **PK** = Neck grab, without twisting, which cleans out a player at the tackle or ruck
 - ▶ **YC** = Neck grab & roll (likely bringing the player to the ground)
 - ▶ **RC** = Neck grab & roll with a forceful 'dumping action' in bringing the player to the ground

Challenge in the air

- World Rugby has provided guidelines for situations where two players contest for a ball in the air and collide:
 - ▶ **Play on** = Fair challenge with both players in a realistic position to catch the ball. Even if the player lands dangerously, play on
 - ▶ **PK** = Not a fair challenge, wrong timing but no pulling down
 - ▶ **YC** = Not a fair challenge, there is no contest and the player is pulled down/interfered with landing on their back or side
 - ▶ **RC** = Not a fair challenge, there is no contest and the player is pulled down/interfered with landing on their head, neck or shoulder

Other Foul Play

- Players must not charge at speed into the side of rucks and mauls without binding (shoulder charge).
- The Law regarding what is commonly called a 'shoulder charge' says that a player must not charge or knock down an opponent carrying the ball without trying to grasp that player. This should be the standard for referees to apply. 'Grasscut' tackles are illegal (diving at a ball carrier's legs).
- Lifting tackles that place players in danger of injury must have serious consequences. The onus is on the tackler to complete the tackle safely. Dropping or throwing tackled players once they are in a dangerous position is to be strongly sanctioned.
- Any time a tackled player's legs are lifted above horizontal it should result in a yellow card as a minimum. If the tackled player is lifted and lands on their shoulder or head area it should result in a red card.
- In U19 matches, punching and stamping are an automatic send off (red card).
- If a player makes a deliberate action in order to 'milk' a penalty, where possible play will continue.
- Players should not appeal for decisions, wave arms, or shout at match officials (e.g. "That's a card!")
- In open play, lifters must lower that player to the ground safely as soon as the ball is won by either team which brings this in line with lineout (FK).

OTHER

Blue Card Implementation – from 1st March 2018

- When a player leaves the field due to signs and symptoms of suspected concussion, the referee will show them a Blue Card. This triggers an off-field process. (Blue Card applies in U13s and older.)
- A tactically replaced player may return to play to replace a player who has been shown a Blue Card.

Touch-line Law Trials 2017

- A player who is attempting to bring the ball under control is now deemed to be in possession of the ball.
- When a player jumps from inside the playing area, and before landing in touch, manages to knock (or catch and throw) the ball from across plane of touch back into the playing area, this is now play on (previously this was in touch).
- The process used to decide who has taken the ball into touch changes for 2018. Previously whether the ball was rolling or stopped was relevant, now the question is: did the ball reach the plane?
 - ▶ If the ball has reached the plane of touch when it is caught, then the catcher is not deemed to have taken the ball into touch.
 - ▶ If the ball has not reached the plane of touch when it is caught or picked up, then the catcher is deemed to have taken the ball into touch, regardless of if the ball was in motion or stationary.

The principle above also applies to the goal-lines, touch-in-goal, 22m and dead-ball lines.

To make a Mark, a player must catch a ball that has reached the plane of the 22-metre line.

Other World Rugby Law changes / clarifications from 2016-2018

- A tactically replaced player may come on to replace a player who has been injured as a result of foul play. If the team chooses to replace a player injured from foul play with a fresh reserve, or if the foul play happens before any player is tactically replaced, then the team doesn't gain any advantage from this Law change. In many Australian competitions with Rolling Replacements this will have no effect.
- If a try is scored close to time expiring, so long as the conversion is kicked (boot striking ball) before time expires, there will be a restart.
- A scrum, lineout or restart kick following a try or touch down, awarded before time expires, must be completed and the ball returned to open play. This includes when the scrum, lineout or restart kick is taken incorrectly.

- If a penalty is kicked into touch after time has elapsed (either half-time or full-time), without touching another player, the throw-in is taken and play continues until the next time the ball becomes dead.
- Any Penalty Try now = 7 points. No conversion attempt will be taken.

Knock-on and intentional knock-on

- If a player, in tackling an opponent, makes contact with the ball and the ball goes forward from the ball carrier's hands, that is a knock-on. If a player rips the ball or deliberately knocks the ball from an opponent's hands and the ball goes forward from the ball carrier's hands, that is not a knock-on.
- The decision-making process for an intentional knock-on is:
 - ▶ Was there a reasonable expectation the player could regather the ball?
If no = **PK**.
 - ▶ Was there an opportunity for a clear line break? If yes = **YC**.
 - ▶ Was there an opportunity for a probable try to be scored?
If yes = **Penalty Try + YC**.

Conversion attempt within 90 seconds

- Conversion kicks following a try must be taken within 90 seconds from the time the try was scored. The time taken to retrieve a ball is included in the 90 seconds if the scoring team kicked or threw the ball away, and is not included if defenders kicked or threw the ball away.

Referee Management

- Referees should manage unnecessary injury stoppages and be pro-active in playing on, e.g. front row players going down with injury at line outs.
- If an injured player is not in the way of the game and the players is being attended to, play on.
- If medical staff attending to a player indicate that an injury is serious, the referee should stop the game.
- If play approaches an injured player on the ground, the referee should stop the game immediately.
- Referees should be pro-active in ensuring players with bleeding wounds leave the field for treatment.

THE WHISTLE

The whistle is the most important communicating tool for a referee. Believe it or not, but both the players and spectators may assess a referee by how the whistle is used. The whistle should be made to 'talk' to signal the different infringements, etc.



USEFUL HINTS

- Always carry a spare whistle, particularly in wet weather or muddy conditions. Sometimes after a fall, the referee can blow the whistle to no avail; only to find it clogged with mud.
- A large type of metal whistle, called the Acme Thunderer Size 58.5, is recommended.
- Attach the whistle to the wrist by a small piece of cord so if the referee falls or is bumped, the whistle is not dropped.
- The type of whistle that attaches to a finger is not recommended as it can cause injury to a finger and it is much harder to make the 'rugby' sounds.
- Keep the whistle clean. Some referees boil their whistles and then put them in the freezer. Don't let the pea dry out.
- The whistle should be tried out before the commencement of each game.

MAKE THE WHISTLE 'TALK'

The angle of the whistle in the mouth gives different tones as follows:

- Up for a higher note. Down for a lower note.
- A quick circular movement gives a resonating tone.
- Moving the thumb over the edge of the whistle will also change the tone. (A combination of both these techniques incorporated with a long hard blast is very effective but it does need practice).
- The tone can be shortened or lengthened by quickly withdrawing the whistle from the mouth or equally effective is putting the tongue to the front of the mouth to block the whistle's opening.

- With practice (or if you play the trumpet or a woodwind instrument) tongue tipping can be used. This is the technique of moving the tongue rapidly back and forth to the mouthpiece of the whistle. To practice this technique, try saying the letter “T” rapidly.

WHISTLE SIGNALS

A loud long blast

Commencement or resumption of the game, a Penalty kick, a Mark for a fair catch, or foul play/dangerous play or a player or players' safety is in jeopardy.

A 'happy' loud blast

A try and a goal.

A short blast

An infringement requiring a scrum or Free Kick, and when the ball or a player is in touch and play are continuing to play.

A series of short loud blasts

To emphasise a stoppage of play if the players have not heard the first whistle, or to gain the attention of the players when they are not responding to your requests (e.g. not forming the lineout correctly), or to call for medical assistance.

When the referee has blown the whistle it is important to ensure all players have heard it. Watch the players to see they disengage and come towards the place of the infringement.

Remember:-

- Players don't like excessive whistle blowing, so don't blow the whistle unnecessarily (such as when the ball is obviously in touch).
- Be precise and definite in your variations of blowing the whistle.
- Be sure not to blow too early for an infringement so you can judge whether it is appropriate to play advantage.
- Remember the sequence:- “Whistle” “Signal” “Talk”.

THE THREE C'S

CONCENTRATION

Concentration is vital throughout a game for a referee. A referee may relax physically during a game but a high level of concentration must be maintained throughout. Don't be distracted by spectators who may disagree with a decision. Try to show no reaction at all.

If the referee considers concentration is slipping it may assist:-

- To focus on the drills in the appropriate checklists for set plays to ensure they are being carried out.
- Concentrate on reading the game to try to anticipate future moves.
- Concentrate more on positional play.
- Use key words such as "concentrate" to raise the concentration levels.

CONSISTENCY

Nothing annoys players, coaches and spectators more than inconsistency by a referee. It is important to set the pattern of the game from the beginning so the players know the referee's interpretations of the laws and don't "try out" the referee. Once the pattern of the game has been set by the referee's initial decisions then the referee must continue in the same way.

Inconsistency can occur if a referee is seen by the players to be penalising one side and not the other for a similar offence. Beware of half time advice and then penalising because of it.

CONTROL

Control is an integral part of management. A referee must know how to control a game and to what level, to ensure it does not become overheated. Control can be efficiently administered by:

Checklist 23

- a) Reading a game e.g. is it a fast flowing game or a hard rugged game?
- b) Restraining the over-vigorous player.
- c) Being firm but not authoritarian.
- d) Being firm with the first foul play e.g. a marginal late tackle or high tackle. It is better to be over cautious and award the penalty.
- e) Playing less advantage if there are problems. This results in more structure in the game.
- f) Slowing the game down e.g. taking longer to set up scrums and lineouts.
- g) Not letting players try to “even up”.
- h) Blowing up rucks and mauls quickly when the ball does not look like emerging so that players do not have the opportunity to engage in illegal actions.
- i) Make sure key definitions are known verbatim. However, don't be a law book basher – it's very embarrassing if the referee is wrong.
- j) Stay calm and firm in making decisions. If speaking to players in a tense situation, take time and be very deliberate. Use the captains to control individual players. THINK before speaking.

FITNESS

Ensure you are FIT to REFEREE - NOT Refereeing to get fit.

The following 'warm up' and 'warm down' programs are suggested for all levels of referees:-

PRE GAME

1. **Light jog at least 400m.**
2. **2 sets of slow skips (high knees)**
 - 20 metres each
3. **2 sets of shallow lunges**
 - Alternate with heel to butt
4. **Jog at least 200m**
5. **Hold for 3 sec (10 repeats):-**
 - Trunk twists and hold
 - Alternate arm/leg raise
 - Alternate trunk/leg raise
6. **Jog at least 200m**
7. **Trunk stabilisers (repeats of 10)**
 - Abdominal curls - Crunches
 - Obliques
8. **Jog at least 200m**
9. **Progressive speed (4 repeats) 20m – 50m – 100m**
 - Light Moderate Long Stride

Note: Only use static stretches if after complete warm up there is still tightness felt. Take plenty of water throughout warm up.

POST GAME

1. **Light jog/walk**
2. **Static stretches (major muscles)**
3. **One litre of water in first hour.**



ASSISTANT REFEREEING AND TOUCH JUDGING

Make the most of every opportunity to run touch. It enables a referee to see a game from a different perspective and to learn from it. Liaise with the referee and the other AR/TJ before and during the game.

You will often be able to be involved in a level above your current standing as a referee – this is a fantastic introduction to a higher level of play. No referee selector will select a referee for a higher grade if they cannot adequately run touch in that grade.

Similar to refereeing, there are many and varied situations for which a touch judge has to make a decision, so concentration throughout the game is essential. Refrain from talking to spectators or being distracted by them. It is not a time to relax.

An Assistant Referee / touch judge must be fully conversant with the laws especially with regard to touch, foul play, and kicks at goal. They must be able to assist the referee, if requested, over the decisions to be made in the in-goal area and elsewhere.

Don't let spectators wander over the touch-line in their enthusiasm for the game when there is no rope to keep them back. Speak to them on the first occasion, but if they persist, seek the assistance of the referee at the next lineout to stop the game until they do get back behind the touchline.

If ball boys/girls are available ensure they are properly briefed prior to the game as to the importance of their responsibilities, especially about handling the ball or providing a different ball if a quick throw-in is possible.

AFTER THE GAME

The referee should try to organise the day whereby other commitments are not arranged elsewhere soon after a game – though it is appreciated that sometimes this is not always possible e.g. refereeing or touch judging for a following game, or a family function.

Don't forget to thank the captains and assistant referees / touch judges.

If a referee coach has been watching, make a point of thanking that person as well and making a time later to meet up or to telephone. Don't be afraid to talk to the referee coach. They are there to assist the referee with improvements in refereeing. Make a point of listening to the coach's comments even if you don't necessarily agree with them. A discussion with a referee coach will give the referee the opportunity to explain why certain decisions were made and allow the referee the opportunity to consider alternative solutions to certain aspects of play.

If the referee has made a wrong decision on a point of law then as soon as possible after a game when back at home the referee should check in the law book and ensure that the law in question is interpreted correctly at the next game. After each game it is good practice for a referee to do a self-analysis of the game to try to overcome any weaknesses or errors prior to the next game.

Try and speak with the coaches, captains and players of both sides after a game, preferably over a drink in the clubhouse. The referee can learn a lot from them. However, don't be afraid of criticism. Listen and check the comments later. If explanations are required they should be given in simple terms.

Never sneak off after a game. The players and coaches will realise referees are human after all and the referee will make many good friends and continue the unique camaraderie of rugby!

REFEREEING U19 GAMES

If a referee has not refereed an U19 game recently, then the U19 laws at the back of the law book should be revised. Remember that both the World Rugby U19 Law Variations and Australian U19 Law Variations apply to U19 matches in Australia.

Parents and other spectators can be extremely critical at U19 games if a game is not played safely. If a game is refereed safely they can be very appreciative. Management of U19 games can vary according to age and it is most important referees are fully aware of the variations in the different age groups.

DO

- Act with calm authority
- Be aware of age characteristics.
- Be consistent.
- Speak calmly.
- Show self-control both in voice and manner.

DON'T

- Appear confused.
- Make threatening or sarcastic remarks.
- Lose your temper or show anger.
- Imply that the authority of the referee is being threatened.

7 to 10 years old

They are very much “small boys or girls”.

They like to be “fathered/mothered”.

They like to be recognised and praised.

They have short attention span.

They are open to new simple ideas.

10 to 13 years old

This group are the “little gentlemen” & “young ladies”.

They are self-assured.

They are keen to show they know the answers.

They are outgoing and usually easy to deal with.

13 to 15 year old

They develop to maturity differently both mentally and physically.

They are uncertain of their identity.

They are unsure of their self-image.

They react to praise well.

They resent criticism.

They can become aggressive if they feel “threatened” by an adult mannerism.

They are easily influenced by their peers.

They like to be one of a group or team and therefore hate to be singled out.

15 years and upwards

The approach to this group must be positive.

They are still influenced by the group mentality.

They like to be treated as adults.

They resent any treatment that implies they are being treated as a “kid”.

They soon detect an unsure referee who thinks this age group is a threat.

DEALING WITH ABUSE

Under the Rugby Australia Code of Conduct all players, match officials, and coaches are entitled to an enjoyable environment in which to participate in the game. Unfortunately, there may be situations where you are on the receiving end of abuse or witness abuse. There are a number of things you can do to maintain control.

Whilst not acceptable, the call of “Get ‘em onside ref!” or “What about the knock on, ref?” can occur during your game. The odd remark should be ignored but if it escalates to questioning your character such as “Ref, you’re a joke!” this is personal and should not be tolerated. Players who do this should be removed from the field, either Yellow Carded to calm down or if swearing is involved, Red Carded. There is a zero tolerance for foul language directed at match officials or players.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

If you are faced with an abusive spectator, do not approach that person. Blow your whistle to stop the game, move away from the sideline, call over the Ground Marshal (or if there is no Ground Marshal, the coach of the team in question, or both coaches), and calmly ask them to deal with the person so that the game can restart. If it continues, you will need to request the coaches to ensure the offender(s) totally remove themselves from the ground.

If you are approached after the match by an angry supporter, the best approach is to not participate in the discussion or communicate anything that may escalate or inflame the situation. Suggest very politely that you will speak to them after a recovery period of 15 minutes where you can get a drink and collect your thoughts. You will usually find the person in question will be more rational then.

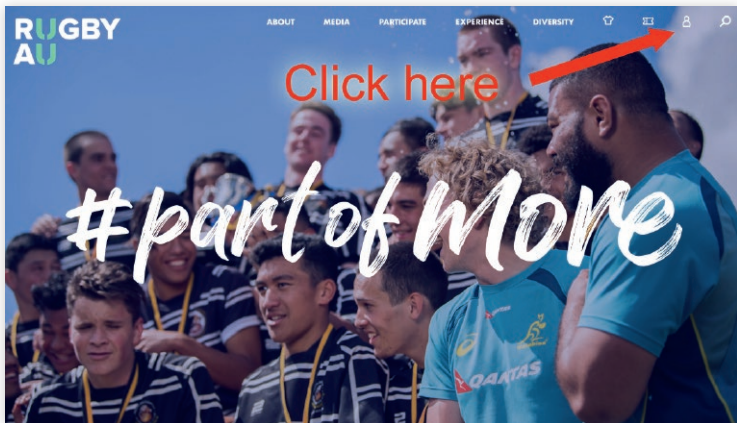
Rugby Australia has an incident form for you to use to report referee abuse, available at: <http://www.rugbyau.com/refabuse>

Please report referee abuse, because while you may decide you can ‘take it’, the next referee might not be so lucky. It is important that you take exact note of what is said to you, and through a school or club representative ask for names of the offending person(s). You may also find a referee coach at your game or a willing spectator that can help support your side of events.

Hopefully this will not happen to you but best be prepared, just in case.

ONLINE SYSTEMS

In Australia, there are four online systems you need to be acquainted with when you start to referee. All four of these systems can be accessed via Rugby Australia's website: www.rugbyau.com



This is where referees go to register to a Referee Association in order to referee. It allows Associations to collect details about their referees in the registration process. You must be registered on this system to be insured by Rugby Australia's Sports Injury and Liability Program.

RUGBY LEARNING CENTRE

This system is what you may have used to register for a referee course. It houses Smart Rugby (an online course which every referee must do every 2 years), and is where referees go to see their current qualifications, do online learning, register for courses, and complete their accreditation and re-accreditation.

REFEREE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

This system manages the appointment of referees to matches in most locations around Australia. Referees can see their past and future appointments, submit their unavailability dates, and identify teams and clubs with which they have a relationship (such as a team they are playing in, or a team their child is playing in). This information assists Associations in appointing referees to games. Referees can also submit Send-Off Reports (Red Card) reports through this system, and report incidences of referee abuse.

SIDELINE

This system contains every registered referee in Australia, and allows for referees to see coaching reports and competency assessments written on them by referee coaches.

A referee can also submit and complete an Individual Season Plan (ISP). This sets you up with season goals and an action plan of how to achieve them. If you are interested in doing an ISP, we recommend asking your Referee Association to talk to an appropriate referee coach before starting to complete it.

More experienced referees can also submit and complete Game Plan Reviews (GPR). These are pre-match plans and post-match reflections specific to an individual game, done in concert with the referee coach who watches you. If you are interested in using GPRs, you should discuss this with your Referee Association.

THE REFEREE PROFILE

In Australia, we have identified the key aspects to successful refereeing that we think make for a good match official. These aspects form a “Rugby Australia Referee Profile”.

Referees are identified as having promise on the basis of how their performances match this profile.

The detail of each aspect of the profile can be found at the bottom of every coaching report done on a referee using the Sideline system. Referee coaches can identify up to 3 positive areas and up to 3 areas for the referee to work on.

REFEREE PROFILE

RUGBY
REFEREES



DECISION MAKING

- Tackle - clear release, tackler roll, players on feet
- Scrum - set up, stability, pushing straight
- Lineout to Maul - legal sack, transfer, obstruction, entry
- Space - pillars, set piece offside, kicks in general play
- Foul Play - applies appropriate sanctions

GAME MANAGEMENT

- Communication (verbal comms, presence, body language)
- Captain Management (clarity of messages)
- Strong and accurate in high impact moments

GAME CONNECTION

- Credibility - earns respect through logical decision making
- Reads game context and adapts
- Balances relevance vs technical (gets what matters)
- Identification of trends and timing of interventions (warnings, YC)

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Physical preparation non-negotiable
- Game ready - match preparation non-negotiable
- Demonstrates team values (accountable, authentic, professional)
- Respects and is respected by game stakeholders
- OWN IT - drives own development



LAWS SUMMARY FOR U6 TO U12

	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12
Player Numbers	7		7	10	12		15
Playing Area	1/4 field L:40m, W:25m		1/2 field L:60m, W:35m		Full field less 10m L:100m, W:60m		Full field L:100m, W:70m
Playing Time	2 x small-sided games, then 2 x 10min halves	2 x 15mins	2 x 15mins	2 x 20mins	2 x 20mins		2 x 25mins
Ball size	Size 2		Size 3		Size 4		Size 4
Conversions	No		Optional In front, 10m back		Yes Not past 15m-line		Yes Not past 15m-line
Kick-off	Punt 5m Exclusion zone		Punt or drop 5m Exclusion zone		Drop		Drop
Restart after score	Tap on half way by non-scoring team		Tap on half way by non-scoring team		Kick-off by non-scoring team		Kick-off by non-scoring team
Kicking	No		No		Yes		Yes
Tackle	2 handed tag on shorts No offside line for defence		Yes		Yes		Yes
Lineout	Tap restart	2 players No contest	2 players No contest	4 players No contest	5 players Contested No lifting		7 players Contested No lifting
Lineout receiver		Must pass	Must pass		All options		All options
Scrum	Tap restart	3 players No contest	3 players No contest	5 players No contest	6 players Contested 1m push		8 players Contested 1m push
Scrum half		Must pass	Must pass		All options #8 moves illegal		All options
When is Lineout and Scrum over?	Played by fly-half or bounces		Played by fly-half or bounces		Ball out		Ball out
Penalty Kicks and Free Kicks	Tap only Opp 5m back		Tap only Opp 5m back		All options Opp 10m back		All options Opp 10m back

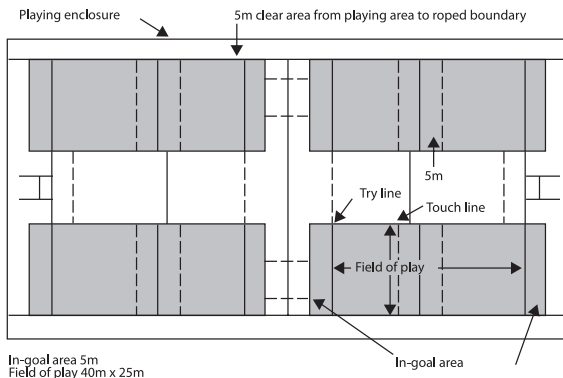
COMMON PATHWAY LAWS FOR U6 TO U12

Player Numbers	Equal number of players on each team. If one team is short, teams MUST share players to reach the maximum number of equal players possible. Unlimited rolling replacements.		
Scrum	Scrum engagement sequence is CROUCH - BIND - SET. When crouched, the distance between opposing front rows should be close enough that players' heads are interlinked approximately ear to ear. There must be a clear non-verbal pause between 'bind' and 'set'. Defending scrum-half can't go past midline and cannot leave scrum.		
Scoring	No Drop Goals No Penalty Goals	Tackle	Slinging tackles, fending to the head and squeeze ball illegal
Lineout	No Quick Throw-ins No variation in numbers allowed Must have a lineout receiver	Foul Play	Yellow card = 5 minutes A player given a Yellow card or Red card may be replaced

Under 6 Game Modifications 2019

- Competitions**
- No finals series, no competition ladders and no premierships allowed.
 - Coaches are allowed on the field for the duration of the game.

- The Ground**
- 40m x 25m maximum (ie. usually 1/4 field)



- The Ball**
- Size 2

Number of Players	➤ 7 players ➤ Teams must match numbers on the field during play. ➤ If either team has fewer than 7 players during play, then teams must share players to get the maximum number of players on the field, while maintaining equal numbers. ➤ If a team has few or no reserve players, the coach or manager should inform the opposing team before the game starts that they may be required to share players at some point during the game. ➤ Rolling replacements are allowed and these are unlimited in number, but can only be made when the ball is dead. ➤ It is recommended that the maximum size of a team's squad be 10 players.
Time	➤ Two small-sided games are to be played, which are Activities 1 and 4 from that week's activities in the Under 6 Coaching Manual. This is then followed by 2 x 10min halves of tag rugby, with a 5min half time. ➤ There is no time off for injury or other stoppages.
Scoring	➤ A try is awarded 5 points. ➤ Conversions, Drop Goals and Penalty Goals are not permitted.
Foul Play	➤ No tackling allowed (PK). ➤ No fending allowed (PK). ➤ No kicking allowed in general play (tap restart). ➤ A red card = sent off and cannot return. ➤ A yellow card = 5 mins in the sin-bin and if the time period has not expired when half-time or full-time is called, the temporary suspension ends. ➤ When a yellow or red card is issued, the player may be replaced.
Knock on and Forward Pass	➤ Referees are encouraged to be lenient. ➤ The assumption should be that the ball has gone backwards unless it is clearly and obviously forwards.
Kick-off and Restarts	➤ Kick-offs to begin each half are punt kicks. ➤ The receiving team at a kick-off must be at least 5m back from half-way. ➤ If a kick-off is unsuccessful in any way (eg. wrong kick, doesn't go 5m, goes dead etc), another chance is provided until the kick is successfully taken. ➤ There is a 5m radius circle 'exclusion zone' around a player attempting to field the ball after a kick-off. No opposing player can enter this zone until the receiving player has caught or picked up the ball (PK). ➤ After a try, the non-scoring team takes a tap restart from the centre of the half-way line.

The Tag

- A tag MUST be:
 - a two-handed touch, and
 - on the shorts only.
- Tags are not permitted on the jersey above the waist from either in front or behind. A tag is not permitted on the legs.
- The referee MUST apply this strictly, as this will allow attacking players to continue running when incorrectly tagged, and reinforce good habits in defence.
- Players' jerseys should be tucked in.
- Referee will call "TAG" if performed correctly, or "PLAY ON" if not.
- Once the referee has called "TAG", the coach may then call "TURN AND PASS".
- Once tagged, players are required to stop as quickly as possible and turn and pass to a team-mate. They are not required to return to the mark where they were tagged.
- There are no offside lines at a tag for the defence. The players of the team not in possession of the ball do not need to retreat to any line. This ensures game continuity and forward progress for the team in possession by removing a fully set line of defence.
- To defend effectively, players may need to be encouraged by their coaches to retreat backwards to remain in front of the attacking team.
- No opposing player may block or prevent the tagged player from passing the ball to a teammate (PK).
- If a player cannot pass for any reason, a tap restart is awarded to the team in possession.

Lineout

- Where a lineout would normally be played, the team which would normally be given the throw-in is awarded a tap restart, 5 metres in from the touch line.

Scrum

- Where a scrum would normally be played, the team which would normally be given the throw-in is awarded a tap restart at the place where the scrum would be formed.

Tap Restarts

- All Penalty Kicks (PK) and Free Kicks (FK) are taken as a tap restart.
- The opposing team must run back at least 5 metres from the mark.
- At a tap restart the ball must be either kicked out of the hands, or put on the ground and kicked a visible distance. The player must not hold the ball and tap with the foot without letting go. Another chance is provided until taken correctly.

In-Goal

- If a player grounds the ball in the opposition in-goal, but is tagged in the act of scoring, a try is awarded.
- If a player is tagged in the opposition in-goal, the referee should encourage the player to ground the ball and then award the try.
- A player is not permitted to 'dive' when scoring a try (either through a defensive line or when in the clear). A player must be on their feet to score a try, otherwise a tap restart is awarded to the team in possession, 5 metres out from the goal line in line with where the player attempted to score the try.
- If the ball becomes dead in in-goal, play restarts with a tap restart to the defending team, 5m out from their goal line.

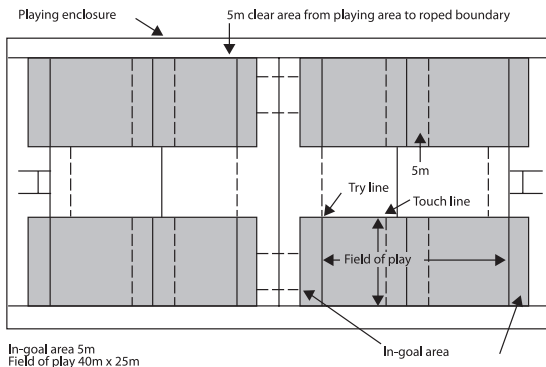
Under 7 Game Modifications 2019

Competitions

- No finals series, no competition ladders and no premierships allowed.
- Coaches are allowed on the field for the duration of the game.

The Ground

- 40m x 25m maximum (ie. usually 1/4 field)



The Ball

- Size 2

Number of Players	➤ 7 players ➤ Teams must match numbers on the field during play. ➤ If either team has fewer than 7 players during play, then teams must share players to get the maximum number of players on the field, while maintaining equal numbers. ➤ If a team has few or no reserve players, the coach or manager should inform the opposing team before the game starts that they may be required to share players at some point during the game. ➤ Rolling replacements are allowed and these are unlimited in number, but can only be made when the ball is dead. ➤ It is recommended that the maximum size of a team's squad be 10 players.
Time	➤ 2 x 15min halves, 5 min half time. ➤ There is no time off for injury or other stoppages.
Scoring	➤ A try is awarded 5 points. ➤ Conversions, Drop Goals and Penalty Goals are not permitted.
Foul Play	➤ No tackling allowed (PK). ➤ No fending allowed (PK). ➤ No kicking allowed in general play (scrum). ➤ A red card = sent off and cannot return. ➤ A yellow card = 5 mins in the sin-bin and if the time period has not expired when half-time or full-time is called, the temporary suspension ends. ➤ When a yellow or red card is issued, the player may be replaced.
Knock on and Forward Pass	➤ Referees are encouraged to be lenient. ➤ The assumption should be that the ball has gone backwards unless it is clearly and obviously forwards.
Kick-off and Restarts	➤ Kick-offs to begin each half are punt kicks. ➤ The receiving team at a kick-off must be at least 5m back from half-way. ➤ If a kick-off is unsuccessful in any way (eg. wrong kick, doesn't go 5m, goes dead etc), another chance is provided until the kick is successfully taken. ➤ There is a 5m radius circle 'exclusion zone' around a player attempting to field the ball after a kick-off. No opposing player can enter this zone until the receiving player has caught or picked up the ball (PK). ➤ After a try, the non-scoring team takes a tap restart from the centre of the half-way line.

The Tag

- A tag **MUST** be:
 - a two-handed touch, and
 - on the shorts only.
- Tags are not permitted on the jersey above the waist from either in front or behind. A tag is not permitted on the legs.
- The referee **MUST** apply this strictly, as this will allow attacking players to continue running when incorrectly tagged, and reinforce good habits in defence.
- Players' jerseys should be tucked in.
- Referee will call "TAG" if performed correctly, or "PLAY ON" if not.
- Once the referee has called "TAG", the coach may then call "TURN AND PASS".
- Once tagged, players are required to stop as quickly as possible and turn and pass to a team-mate. They are not required to return to the mark where they were tagged.
- There are no offside lines at a tag for the defence. The players of the team not in possession of the ball do not need to retreat to any line. This ensures game continuity and forward progress for the team in possession by removing a fully set line of defence.
- To defend effectively, players may need to be encouraged by their coaches to retreat backwards to remain in front of the attacking team.
- No opposing player may block or prevent the tagged player from passing the ball to a teammate (PK).
- If a player cannot pass for any reason, a tap restart is awarded to the team in possession.

Lineout setup

- No quick throw-ins allowed.
- 2 players from each team stand as catchers 1 metre from the opposition players in a single line 3 metres away from the touch line.
- The thrower of the team in possession stands opposite their team's first catcher.
- The thrower's immediate opponent must stand on their side between the lineout and the touch line, and 2 metres from the line of touch.
- There must be a receiver (scrum-half) 2 metres back from the line-out. The receiver must stay in position until they receive the ball from the lineout.
- All other players not taking part in the line-out must be back at least 5 metres.
- If the setup is not right, the referee awards another lineout with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right.

Lineout play

- The team throwing the ball in must win it.
- The ball is passed or knocked to the receiver who must then pass it to a team-mate.
- If the wrong team wins the ball or the receiver doesn't pass, the referee awards another lineout with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right (if there is repeated infringement, a PK may be awarded).

Lineout offside

- The lineout does not end until the ball is either played by a team-mate, or touches the ground, after being passed by the receiver.
- Opposition backline players must stay onside and lineout players must stay in the lineout until the line-out is over.
- If players are offside, the referee awards another lineout with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right (if there is repeated infringement, a PK may be awarded).

Scrum setup

- 3 players from each team form the scrum.
- Both scrum-halves must stand on the same side of the scrum.
- All other players not taking part in the scrum must be back at least 5 metres.
- If the setup is not right, the referee awards another scrum with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right.

Scrum play

- Scrum engagement sequence is CROUCH - BIND - SET. When crouched, the distance between opposing front rows should be close enough that players' heads are interlinked approximately ear to ear. There must be a clear non-verbal pause between 'bind' and 'set'.
- There is no pushing in the scrum and the team throwing in the ball must win it.
- After gathering the ball, the scrum-half must pass it to a team-mate.
- If the scrum-half doesn't pass, the referee awards another scrum with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right (if there is repeated infringement, a PK may be awarded).

Scrum offside

- The scrum does not end until the ball is either played by a team-mate, or touches the ground, after being passed by the receiver.
- The defending scrum-half cannot go past the midline of the scrum and must stay within 1 metre of the scrum on the feeding side until it is over.
- Opposition players must stay onside or bound until the scrum is over.
- If players are offside, the referee awards another scrum with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right (if there is repeated infringement, a PK may be awarded).

Tap Restarts

- All Penalty Kicks (PK) and Free Kicks (FK) are taken as a tap restart.
- The opposing team must run back at least 5 metres from the mark.
- At a tap restart the ball must be either kicked out of the hands, or put on the ground and kicked a visible distance. The player must not hold the ball and tap with the foot without letting go. Another chance is provided until taken correctly.

In-Goal

- If a player grounds the ball in the opposition in-goal, but is tagged in the act of scoring, a try is awarded.
- If a player is tagged in the opposition in-goal, the referee should encourage the player to ground the ball and then award the try.
- A player is not permitted to 'dive' when scoring a try (either through a defensive line or when in the clear). A player must be on their feet to score a try, otherwise a tap restart is awarded to the team in possession, 5 metres out from the goal line in line with where the player attempted to score the try.
- If the ball becomes dead in in-goal, play restarts with a tap restart to the defending team, 5m out from their goal line.

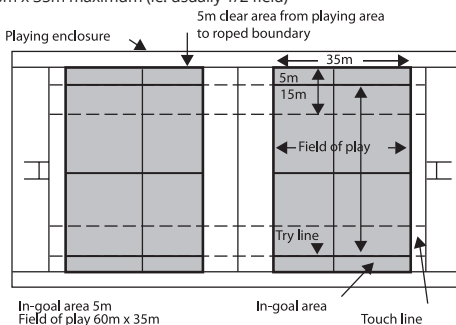
Under 8 and Under 9 Game Modifications 2019

Competitions

- No finals series allowed.
- Competition ladders and premierships are actively discouraged.
- Coaches are not allowed on the field beyond the first half of the season in the Under 9 age group.

The Ground

- 60m x 35m maximum (ie. usually 1/2 field)



The Ball

- Size 3

Number of Players

- Under 8: 7 players
- Under 9: 10 players
- Teams must match numbers on the field during play.
- If either team has fewer than the standard number of players during play, then teams must share players to get the maximum number of players on the field, while maintaining equal numbers.

	➤ If a team has few or no reserve players, the coach or manager should inform the opposing team before the game starts that they may be required to share players at some point during the game. ➤ Rolling replacements are allowed and these are unlimited in number, but can only be made when the ball is dead. ➤ It is recommended that the maximum size of a team's squad be 10 players for Under 8 and 14 players for Under 9.
Time	➤ Under 8: 2 x 15min halves, 5min half time. ➤ Under 9: 2 x 20min halves, 5min half time. ➤ There is no time off for injury or other stoppages.
Scoring	➤ A try is awarded 5 points. ➤ Drop Goals and Penalty Goals are not permitted. ➤ Conversions, if allowed by the competition organiser, can be either a drop kick or a place kick, and are taken on a line through the centre of the goal posts from 10m away. ➤ Players may not charge a Conversion attempt.
Foul Play	➤ No fending to the face or head allowed (PK). ➤ No jersey swinging tackles allowed (PK). ➤ No kicking allowed in general play (scrum). ➤ A red card = sent off and cannot return. ➤ A yellow card = 5 mins in the sin-bin and if the time period has not expired when half-time or full-time is called, the temporary suspension ends. ➤ When a yellow or red card is issued, the player may be replaced. ➤ 'Squeeze ball' technique illegal (PK).
Kick-off and Restarts	➤ Kick-offs to begin each half are punt kicks or drop kicks. ➤ The receiving team at a kick-off must be at least 5m back from half-way. ➤ If a kick-off is unsuccessful in any way (eg. wrong kick, doesn't go 5m, goes dead etc), another chance is provided until the kick is successfully taken. ➤ There is a 5m radius circle 'exclusion zone' around a player attempting to field the ball after a kick-off. No opposing player can enter this zone until the receiving player has caught or picked up the ball (PK). ➤ After a try, the non-scoring team takes a tap restart from the centre of the half-way line. ➤ Where a drop-out would normally occur under Law, the team entitled to the drop out will restart play with a tap restart at the centre of the 15-metre line.
Tackle / Ruck	➤ Referees are reminded to encourage players to only play for the ball when they are on their feet. After the tackled player has passed or released the ball, no player may play the ball while on their knees.

Lineout setup	➤ No quick throw-ins allowed. ➤ 2 players (in Under 8s) or 4 players (in Under 9s) from each team stand as catchers 1 metre from the opposition players in a single line 4 metres away from the touch line. ➤ The thrower of the team in possession stands on the line of touch. ➤ The thrower's immediate opponent must stand on their side between the lineout and the touch line, and 2 metres from the line of touch. ➤ There must be a receiver (scrum-half) 2 metres back from the lineout. The receiver must stay in position until they receive the ball from the lineout. ➤ All other players not taking part in the line-out must be back at least 5 metres. ➤ If the setup is not right, the referee awards another lineout with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right.
Lineout play	➤ The team throwing the ball in must win it. ➤ The ball is passed or knocked to the receiver who must then pass it to a team-mate. ➤ If the wrong team wins the ball or the receiver doesn't pass, the referee awards another lineout with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right (if there is repeated infringement, a PK may be awarded).
Lineout offside	➤ The lineout does not end until the ball is either played by a team-mate, or touches the ground, after being passed by the receiver. ➤ Opposition backline players must stay onside and lineout players must stay in the lineout until the line-out is over. ➤ If players are offside, the referee awards a Penalty Kick.
Scrum setup	➤ 3 players (in Under 8s) or 5 players (in Under 9s) from each team form the scrum. ➤ Both scrum-halves must stand on the same side of the scrum. ➤ All other players not taking part in the scrum must be back at least 5 metres. ➤ If the setup is not right, the referee awards another scrum with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right.
Scrum play	➤ Scrum engagement sequence is CROUCH - BIND - SET. When crouched, the distance between opposing front rows should be close enough that players' heads are interlinked approximately ear to ear. There must be a clear non-verbal pause between 'bind' and 'set'. ➤ There is no pushing in the scrum and the team throwing in the ball must win it. ➤ After gathering the ball, the scrum-half must pass it to a team-mate. ➤ If the scrum-half doesn't pass, the referee awards another scrum with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right (if there is repeated infringement, a PK may be awarded).

Scrum offside

- The scrum does not end until the ball is either played by a team-mate, or touches the ground, after being passed by the receiver.
- The defending scrum-half cannot go past the midline of the scrum and must stay within 1 metre of the scrum on the feeding side until it is over.
- Opposition players must stay onside or stay bound until the scrum is over.
- If players are offside, the referee awards a Penalty Kick.

Tap Restarts

- All Penalty Kicks (PK) and Free Kicks (FK) are taken as a tap restart.
- The opposing team must run back at least 5 metres from the mark.
- At a tap restart the ball must be either kicked out of the hands, or put on the ground and kicked a visible distance. The player must not hold the ball and tap with the foot without letting go. Another chance is provided until taken correctly.

Under 10 and Under 11 Game Modifications 2019**Competitions**

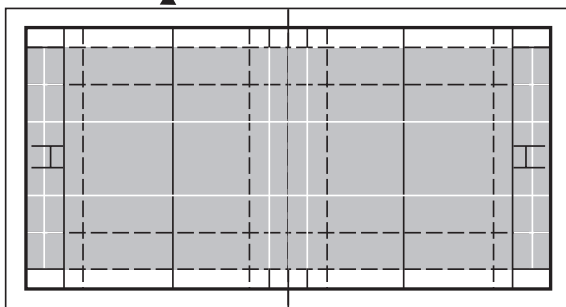
- Finals series, competition ladders and premierships allowed.

The Ground

- 100m x 60m maximum (ie. usually full field minus 10m width)

Playing enclosure

Minimum 5m clear area from playing area to roped boundary



Field of play 100m x 60m
In-goal area 10m

The Ball

- Size 4

Number of Players	➤ 12 players ➤ Teams must match numbers on the field during play. ➤ If either team has fewer than 12 players during play, then teams must share players to get the maximum number of players on the field, while maintaining equal numbers. ➤ If a team has few or no reserve players, the coach or manager should inform the opposing team before the game starts that they may be required to share players at some point during the game. ➤ Rolling replacements are allowed and these are unlimited in number, but can only be made when the ball is dead. ➤ It is recommended that the maximum size of a team's squad be 17 players.
Time	➤ 2 x 20min halves, 5min half time. ➤ There is no time off for injury or other stoppages.
Scoring	➤ A try is awarded 5 points. ➤ Drop Goals and Penalty Goals are not permitted. ➤ Conversions are taken on a line through the place where the try was scored, up to but not beyond the 15-metre line (ie. 10 metres from the touch line). ➤ Players may not charge a Conversion attempt.
Foul Play	➤ No fending to the face or head allowed (PK). ➤ No jersey swinging tackles allowed (PK). ➤ A red card = sent off and cannot return. ➤ A yellow card = 5 mins in the sin-bin and if the time period has not expired when half-time or full-time is called, the temporary suspension ends. ➤ When a yellow or red card is issued, the player may be replaced. ➤ 'Squeeze ball' technique illegal (PK).
Kick-off and Restarts	➤ Kick-offs and restarts are drop kicks. ➤ If a kick-off or drop-out is unsuccessful in any way (eg. wrong kick, goes dead etc), another chance is provided, and if the second kick is also unsuccessful, then a scrum is awarded at the centre of the half-way line or 22m-line with the throw-in to the non-infringing team.
Lineout setup	➤ No quick throw-ins allowed. ➤ 5 players from each team stand as catchers 1 metre from the opposition players in a single line 5 metres away from the touch line. ➤ The thrower of the team in possession stands on the line of touch. ➤ The thrower's immediate opponent must stand on their side between the lineout and the touch line, and 2 metres from the line of touch.

	➤ There must be a receiver (scrum-half) 2 metres back from the line-out. The receiver may not switch positions or join the lineout until the ball is thrown. ➤ All other players not taking part in the line-out must be back at least 10 metres. ➤ If the setup is not right, the referee awards another lineout with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right.
Lineout play	➤ If the throw is incorrect (eg. not straight), the referee awards another lineout with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right. If the second attempt is also incorrect, a scrum is awarded to the non-infringing team. ➤ There is no lifting or supporting allowed (FK).
Scrum setup	➤ 6 players from each team form the scrum. ➤ Both scrum-halves must stand on the same side of the scrum. ➤ All other players not taking part in the scrum must be back at least 5 metres. ➤ If the setup is not right, the referee awards another scrum with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right.
Scrum play	➤ Scrum engagement sequence is CROUCH - BIND - SET. When crouched, the distance between opposing front rows should be close enough that players' heads are interlinked approximately ear to ear. There must be a clear non-verbal pause between 'bind' and 'set'. ➤ A team must not push the scrum more than 1 metre (FK). ➤ No Number 8 moves allowed (FK).
Scrum offside	➤ The scrum is not over until the ball is completely out of the scrum (eg. even if the scrum-half has hands on the ball it is not out). ➤ The defending scrum-half cannot go past the midline of the scrum and must stay within 1 metre of the scrum on the feeding side until it is over. ➤ Opposition players must stay onside or stay bound until the scrum is over. ➤ If players are offside, the referee awards a Penalty Kick.

Under 12 Game Modifications 2019

Competitions

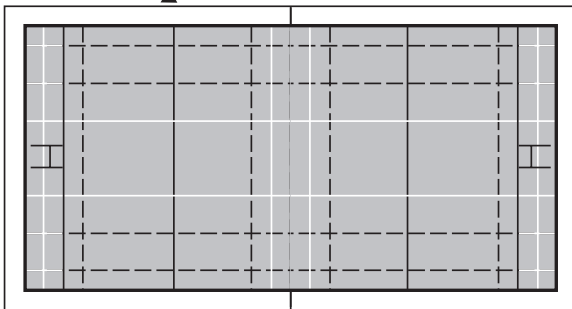
- Finals series, competition ladders and premierships allowed.

The Ground

- 100m x 70m maximum (ie. usually full field)

Playing enclosure

Minimum 5m clear area from playing area to roped boundary



Field of play 100m x 70m

In-goal area 10m

The Ball

- Size 4

Number of Players

- 15 players
- Teams must match numbers on the field during play.
- If either team has fewer than 15 players during play, then teams must share players to get the maximum number of players on the field, while maintaining equal numbers.
- If a team has few or no reserve players, the coach or manager should inform the opposing team before the game starts that they may be required to share players at some point during the game.
- Rolling replacements are allowed and these are unlimited in number, but can only be made when the ball is dead.
- It is recommended that the maximum size of a team's squad be 20 players.

Time	➤ 2 x 25min halves, 5min half time. ➤ There is no time off for injury or other stoppages.
Scoring Foul Play	➤ A try is awarded 5 points. ➤ Drop Goals and Penalty Goals are not permitted. ➤ Conversions are taken on a line through the place where the try was scored, up to but not beyond the 15-metre line. ➤ Players may not charge a Conversion attempt. ➤ No fending to the face or head allowed (PK). ➤ No jersey swinging tackles allowed (PK). ➤ A red card = sent off and cannot return. ➤ A yellow card = 5 mins in the sin-bin and if the time period has not expired when half-time or full-time is called, the temporary suspension ends. ➤ When a yellow or red card is issued, the player may be replaced. ➤ 'Squeeze ball' technique illegal (PK).
Kick-off and Restarts	➤ Kick-offs and restarts are drop kicks. ➤ No second chances for incorrect kick-offs and drop-outs.
Lineout setup	➤ No quick throw-ins allowed. ➤ 7 players from each team stand as catchers 1 metre from the opposition players in a single line 5 metres away from the touch line. ➤ The thrower of the team in possession stands on the line of touch. ➤ The thrower's immediate opponent must stand on their side between the lineout and the touch line, and 2 metres from the line of touch. ➤ There must be a receiver (scrum-half) 2 metres back from the lineout. The receiver may not switch positions or join the lineout until the ball is thrown. ➤ All other players not taking part in the lineout must be back at least 10 metres. ➤ If the setup is not right, the referee awards another lineout with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right.

Lineout play	➤ No second chance if the throw is incorrect (ie not straight). ➤ There is no lifting or supporting allowed (FK).
Scrum setup	➤ 8 players from each team form the scrum. ➤ Both scrum-halves must stand on the same side of the scrum. ➤ All other players not taking part in the scrum must be back at least 5 metres. ➤ If the setup is not right, the referee awards another scrum with the same team throwing in, so the players can get it right.
Scrum play	➤ Scrum engagement sequence is CROUCH - BIND - SET. When crouched, the distance between opposing front rows should be close enough that players' heads are interlinked approximately ear to ear. There must be a clear non-verbal pause between 'bind' and 'set'. ➤ A team must not push the scrum more than 1 metre (FK).
Scrum offside	➤ The scrum is not over until the ball is completely out of the scrum (eg. even if the scrum-half has hands on the ball it is not out). ➤ The defending scrum-half cannot go past the midline of the scrum and must stay within 1 metre of the scrum on the feeding side until it is over. ➤ Opposition players must stay onside or stay bound until the scrum is over. ➤ If players are offside, the referee awards a Penalty Kick.

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