

BEGINNERS GUIDE RUGBY UNION



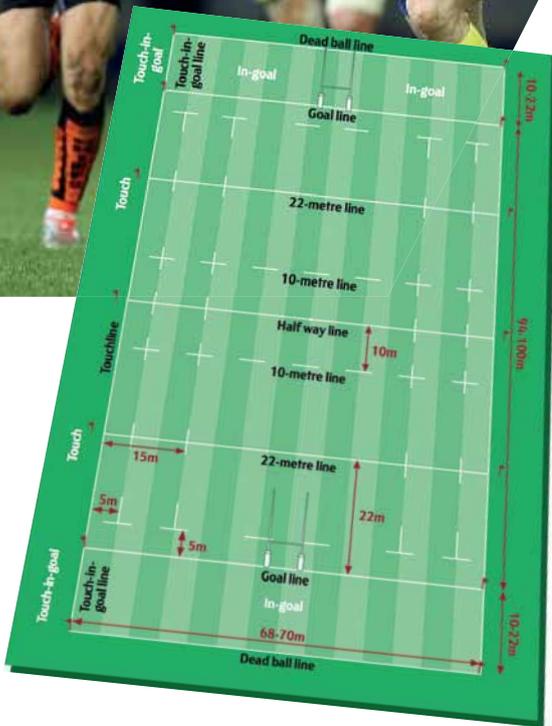
THE GAME

The object of the game is to carry the ball over the opponents' goal line and force it to the ground to score. It's simple... but complex.

To go forward, the ball must be passed backwards. The ball can be kicked forwards, but the kicker's team mates must be behind the ball at the moment the ball is kicked.

In order to succeed, you need fine teamwork and great discipline, as little can be achieved by any one individual player. Only by working as a team can players move the ball forward towards their opponents' goal line and eventually go on to win the game.

The winners of a game of Rugby is the team who can get themselves and the ball into space and use that space wisely, whilst denying the opposing team both possession of the ball and access to space in which to use it.



SCORING POINTS

TRY - 5 POINTS

A try is scored when the ball is forced to the ground over the opponents' goal line in the in-goal area.

A penalty try can be awarded if a player would have scored but for foul play by the opposition.

CONVERSION - 2 POINTS

After scoring a try, that team can attempt to add two further points by kicking the ball over the crossbar and between the posts from a place in line with where the try was scored.



Try signal

PENALTY - 3 POINTS

A team may choose to kick at goal if a penalty is awarded after an infringement by the opposition.

DROP GOAL - 3 POINTS

A drop goal is scored when a player kicks for goal in open play by dropping the ball onto the ground and kicking it on the half-volley.



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THE LINEOUT

If the ball goes into touch (off the field of play at the side), a lineout is used to restart play. It concentrates a selection of forwards in one place near to the touch line, so the backs have the rest of the width of the field to mount an attack. The key for the forwards is to win possession and distribute the ball to the back line.

The forwards assemble in two lines, perpendicular to the touch line, one metre apart. The hooker then throws the ball down the corridor between these two lines of players. The thrower's team mates normally have an advantage, as they often know where the throw is likely to go. However, with speed of thought and movement, the opposition can contest for the ball and the lineout frequently results in a turnover of possession.

The player who successfully catches the ball can keep it and set up a maul, or can pass to the receiver (a player who stands next to the lineout to wait for such a pass) who then passes to the fly half and on to the back line.

LINEOUT SUPPORT

In order to catch high throws in the lineout, the catcher can be supported by team mates while jumping to catch the ball.

Safety is a prime concern here, and any player who is off the ground must be supported until that player returns to the ground. A player may not be tackled while in the air, and holding, shoving or levering on an opponent are all offences punishable with a penalty kick.



THE SCRUM

The scrum is a means of restarting play after a stoppage that has been caused by a minor infringement of the Laws (e.g. a forward pass or knock on) or the ball becoming unplayable in a ruck or maul. The scrum serves to concentrate all the forwards and the scrum halves in one place on the field, providing the opportunity for the backs to mount an attack using the space created around it.

The ball is thrown into the middle of the tunnel between the two front rows and the two hookers compete for the ball, attempting to hook it back in the direction of their team mates. The team who throws the ball into the scrum usually retains possession, because the hooker and scrum half can synchronise their actions.

Once possession has been secured, a team can keep the ball on the ground and in the scrum in an attempt to drive the opposition down field. Alternatively, they can bring the ball to the hindmost foot of the scrum, where the ball is then passed into the back line and open play resumes again.



WHY DID THE WHISTLE BLOW?

It can sometimes be hard to tell why the referee has stopped play for an infringement if you don't know the finer points of the Laws of Rugby. Here are some of the most common reasons why the whistle may have blown. Alongside is the signal you'll see the referee make when each infringement occurs during play.

ADVANTAGE BEING PLAYED

An advantage can be applied to either minor infringements (e.g. knock-on), or offences which would result in a penalty (e.g. offside). The referee must decide whether there may be more benefit to the non-offending team if play continues. If no advantage occurs, the referee will blow the whistle and bring play back to the place of the original infringement which occurred prior to advantage being played.



FORWARD PASS OR KNOCK ON

Sometimes an attack which seems to be heading towards the try line will be stopped by the referee's whistle.

If a pass has gone forwards, or a handling error has resulted in a knock-on, a scrum will be awarded to the non-offending team.



Forward pass

Knock on

FAILURE TO RELEASE PLAYER OR BALL

After a tackle, the tackler must immediately release the ball carrier, and the ball carrier must immediately release the ball.

Failure on either of these counts limits a fair contest for possession. If release does not occur within a reasonable time frame, the referee will award a penalty to the non-offending team.



Failure to release player

Failure to release ball

FAILURE TO ROLL AWAY

Any players on the ground when a ruck or maul is formed must immediately roll away from the ball, so as to allow continuity of play for the team in possession.

Failure to do so will result in the award of a penalty to the non-offending team.



JOINING RUCK/MAUL FROM THE SIDE

When joining a ruck or maul, all players must do so from behind the hindmost foot of their hindmost team mate.

If they join from the side, they are in an offside position and taking part in the game, and this will immediately be penalised with a penalty to the opposing team.



UNPLAYABLE BALL AT RUCK OR MAUL

If the ball becomes unplayable at a ruck e.g. under players who are on the ground, the referee will award a scrum to the team going forward before the ball became unplayable. For a maul the scrum goes to the team not in possession when the maul began.



Unplayable at ruck

Unplayable at maul

O2 has launched a Matchday app, Ref!Link, which gives rugby fans the ability to eavesdrop on the on live microphone feed from the most important man on the field: the ref. It allows you to hear a blow-by-blow account of every call made.



PLAYER POSITIONS

PROPS

What they do: Their primary role is to anchor the scrummage and provide lifting strength and support for the lineout jumpers. They are also crucial in rucks and mauls.

HOOKER

What they do: The hooker has two unique roles on the pitch: he is the player who wins possession in the scrum and usually throws the ball in to the lineout.

NUMBER 8

What they do: The Number 8 must secure possession at the base of the scrum, carry the ball in open play, provide the link between the forwards and backs in attacking phases and defend aggressively.

SCRUM HALF

What they do: Provides the link between forwards and backs at the scrum and lineouts. A true decision-maker, the 9 will judge whether to distribute quick ball to the backs or keep it close to the forwards.

WINGS

What they do: The wings provide the injection of out-and-out pace needed to outrun an opponent and score a try. They are needed to be solid in defence.

LOCKS

What they do: Locks win ball from lineouts and restarts. They drive momentum in the scrum, rucks and mauls and provide a platform for attack.

FLANKERS

What they do: Their key objective is to win possession through turnovers, using physicality in the tackle and speed to the breakdown.

FLY HALF

What they do: As the player who orchestrates the team's performance, the 10 will receive the ball from the 9 and choose to kick, pass or make a break based upon split-second interpretation of the phase of play.

CENTRES

What they do: The centres are key in both defence and attack. In defence, they will attempt to tackle attacking players and, in attack, they will use their speed, power and creative flair to breach defences.

FULL BACK

What they do: Generally perceived as the last line of defence, the full back must be confident under a high ball, have a good boot to clear the lines and enjoy the physicality required to make try-saving tackles.

RUGBY FIFTEENS

FORWARDS



BACKS



- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 LOOSE-HEAD PROP | 6 BLIND-SIDE FLANKER | 11 LEFT WING |
| 2 HOOKER | 7 OPEN-SIDE FLANKER | 12 INSIDE CENTRE |
| 3 TIGHT-HEAD PROP | 8 NUMBER 8 | 13 OUTSIDE CENTRE |
| 4 LOCK | 9 SCRUM HALF | 14 RIGHT WING |
| 5 LOCK | 10 FLY HALF | 15 FULL BACK |

RUGBY SEVENS

FORWARDS



BACKS



- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 LOOSE-HEAD PROP | 4 SCRUM HALF |
| 2 HOOKER | 5 FLY HALF |
| 3 TIGHT-HEAD PROP | 6 CENTRE |
| | 7 WING |

SEVENS AND THE OLYMPICS

Rugby rejoins the Olympic Programme at Rio 2016™ when Rugby Sevens makes its eagerly awaited debut. Rugby is a perfect fit for the Olympic Games: it reinforces the Olympic movement's ideals thanks to its longstanding ethos of fair play and friendship while the vibrant and exciting format of Rugby Sevens appeals to both existing followers of the sport and a wider sports-loving audience worldwide.