

FLAG RUGBY

RULES OF PLAY

1.1 OBJECT:

The object of the game is to score a try (1 point) by placing the ball with a downward pressure on or behind the opponents' goal line.

- the ball carrier must remain on their feet at all times
- if a player grounds the ball while on their knees, the try should be allowed but, afterwards, all players should be reminded that they should stay on their feet.

When a try is scored, the game is restarted by a free pass from the center of the pitch by the non-scoring team.

1.2 TEAMS:

FLAG RUGBY is played between teams of equal numbers of players, (5-8)

Substituted players can be re-used at any time. Substitutions can only take place when the ball is 'dead' or at half time and always with the referee's knowledge.

1.3 PASSING:

The ball can only be passed sideways or backwards through the air, not handed to another player. If the ball is handed to another player or passed or knocked forwards (towards the opponents' goal-line) then a free pass is awarded to the non-offending side, unless advantage occurs to the non-offending side. In order to keep the game flowing, referees should play advantage wherever possible.

1.4 FREE PASSES:

(a) A free pass is used:

- to start the match at the beginning of each half from the center of the pitch,
- from the side of the pitch when the ball goes into touch (out of bounds)
- from where the referee makes a mark when an infringement has taken place.

(b) At a free pass, the opposition must be 7 meters back from the mark. They cannot start moving forward until the ball leaves the hands of the passer. At a free pass, the player must start with the ball in both hands and, when instructed by the referee who will call "PLAY", pass the ball backwards through the air to a member of their team. For safety reasons, the receiver of the pass must not start more than 2 meters from the free pass mark. The player taking the free pass must pass the ball and cannot just run with the ball when the referee calls "PLAY".

1.5 THE FLAG:

(a) All players wear a FLAG belt:

- around their waist with two tags attached to it by Velcro positioned over each hip.
- outside of shirts and not obscured in any way.

(b) A 'FLAG' is the removal of one of the two tags from the ball carrier's belt. Only the ball carrier can be flagged. The ball carrier can run and dodge potential flaggers but cannot fend them off using their hands or the ball and cannot guard or shield their flags in any way. The ball cannot be pulled out of the ball carrier's hands at any time.

(c) If a player does not have two flags on their belt, one on each hip, they will be penalized if they become a ball carrier or if they flag an opponent and a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending side at the place of infringement.

(d) Actions by the ball carrier:

(1) When the ball carrier is tagged the ball must be passed to a teammate within 3 seconds. The ball carrier must attempt to stop as soon as possible; within 3 strides is a reasonable guide for referees, but the ball can be passed in the act of stopping.

(2) After the ball has been passed, the player must go to the flagger, retrieve their flag and place it back on their belt before re-joining play. If the player continues to play and influences the game without collecting their flag, they must be penalized and a free pass awarded to the non-offending side at the place of infringement.

(3) Players are however only allowed one step to score a try after being tagged.

(4) If the ball carrier is tagged whilst standing inside the goal area they must ground the ball immediately in order to score. Referees should help this part of the game along by advising the ball carrier "Touch the ball down and I'll award the try", or similar.

(5) If the ball carrier dives to ground to score a try it will be disallowed and free pass will be awarded to the defending side 7 meters out from the goal-line.

(e) Actions by the flagger:

(1) When a FLAG is made, the flagger must stop running, hold the FLAG above their head and shout, "FLAG". At this stage the referee must shout, "FLAG - PASS".

(2) If the ball carrier stops running within 1 meter of the tagger, the tagger must move back towards their own goal-line, at least 1 meter, to allow room for the ball to be passed.

(3) Once the ball has been passed, the tagger must hand back the FLAG to the

player and cannot re-join the match until this has been done. If a flagger continues to play and influences the match with an opponent's flag in their hand, or throws it to the floor, they must be penalized and a free pass awarded to the non-offending side at the place of infringement.

(g) FLAG RUGBY VARIATION for (UNDER 10 - 11 - 12 & 13 ONLY). To reward good defense and to promote the attacking side keeping the ball alive by passing the ball before being tagged, the side in possession of the ball will only be allowed to be tagged a maximum of 6 times before scoring a try. At the 7th FLAG, the referee will stop the game and give the ball to the other side by awarding a free pass at the point that the FLAG took place. If the 7th FLAG takes place one step from the try line and the ball is grounded, the try will be disallowed and the opposition will be given the ball for a free pass 7 meters out from the goal line, in line with the point the goal line was crossed.

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FLAG RUGBY VARIATION

Note: Coaches/referees of the teams may agree to reduce the maximum number of allowable

tags to provide more of a challenge to their players, both in attack and defense. If coaches cannot

agree then the 7th FLAG ruling must be enforced.

1.6 OFFSIDE:

Offside only occurs at the time of the flag where the offside line is through the center of the ball.

When a flag is made, all players from the flagger's team must attempt to retire towards their own

goal line until they are behind the ball. If a player, in an offside position, intercepts, prevents or

slows down a pass from the tagged player to a teammate, a free pass will be awarded to the nonoffending side.

A player can, however, run from an onside position to intercept a floated pass before it reaches

the intended receiver.

1.7 OBSTRUCTION:

(a) The ball carrier can run and dodge potential taggers but cannot fend them off using their

hands or the ball and cannot guard or shield their tags in any way.

(b) Similarly, the ball carrier must not deliberately make contact with an opponent.

(c) If such contact is made the game must be stopped, the offender spoken to, reminded of the

non-contact rules of flag and a free pass awarded to the non-offending side.

(d) If the ball is pulled from the ball carrier's grasp, a free pass is awarded to the ball carrier's side.

1.8 KICKING:

There is no kicking of any kind in FLAG RUGBY.

1.9 BALL ON THE GROUND:

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Players play FLAG RUGBY on their feet, with the ball in hand. If the ball goes to ground, players

can pick it up but they must not dive to the floor to recover the ball. Penalty: free pass to nonoffending

side and the following rules will apply:

(a) If the ball was lost forward, a free pass is awarded to the non-offending side unless advantage

occurs to the non-offending side.

(b) If the ball carrier falls to the ground with the ball then a free pass will be awarded to the

defending side.

(c) If the ball is passed other than forward and goes to ground play will continue and either side

may pick up the ball. If the passed ball rolls into touch a free pass will commence from the

touchline to the non-passing side.

1.10 NO CONTACT:

The only contact allowed between the two teams is the removal of a FLAG from the belt of the

ball carrier. Any other type of contact on the ball carrier, such as shirt pulling, running in front of or

barging the ball carrier, forcing the ball carrier into touch, etc must be penalized with a free pass

and the players concerned reminded of the rules.

1.11 PROHIBITED PLAY:

In Minor FLAG Rugby, there is a total emphasis on running with the ball, evasion, running in

support of the ball carrier, passing and running to FLAG the ball carrier.

In FLAG RUGBY there is:

.. No tackling

- .. No Scrums
- .. No lineout
- .. No kicking
- .. No hand off/fend off (a hand off being the placing of an open palmed hand by the ball carrier against an opponent's face or body while a fend off is an outstretched arm by the ball carrier towards an opponent to discourage that person making a FLAG);
- .. No going to ground
- .. No ripping of the ball

1.12 COACHING:

(a) RUGBY CANADA recommends that at a Fixture, a coaching session should precede each match.

(b) All matches should be used as an extension of the coaching session with the emphasis being on the quality of performance rather than the result.

(c) During the match, coaches can direct and develop play, in a coaching sense, from on the field of play, ideally from behind their teams. Coaches must help to encourage the carrying of the ball in two hands and prompt players to pass when tagged. Coaches must not have any contact with players of either side while on the pitch.

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(d) The emphasis must be on enjoyment and the players must be encouraged to enjoy the physical skills of running, passing and evasion.

(e) During the half-time interval, coaches must take time to talk to, encourage, coach and explain the game to the players.

(f) Mismatches can be avoided by talking to the coach in charge of the opposition before the game.

RUGBY CANADA ♦ REGULATIONS

1.13 FIXTURES & FESTIVALS:

In the Rugby Continuum:

(a) A Fixture is the playing of FLAG RUGBY between teams of different Schools, not

more than

three Schools being involved together on any one day. Where three Schools are involved, these

are sometimes referred to as “Triangular Fixtures”.

(b) A Festival is the playing of FLAG RUGBY between more than three teams of different

Schools, normally to establish a winner, all matches being part of one event.

(c) A Tour is considered to be a Fixture or Festival according to the number of teams involved.

(d) Fixtures and Festivals must all comply with the regulations contained in the Rugby Continuum,

however, Festival organizers may impose additional conditions on participation including

maximum squad sizes which should not be less than 10 players (although this should not prevent

teams from participating with less than this number should they so wish).

1.14 THE SEASON:

(With the exception of British Columbia Province) The FLAG RUGBY season starts on 1st APRIL

each year. Fixtures and FLAG RUGBY

Festivals may only take place during the period 1st MAY to 30th SEPTEMBER each season

unless a special dispensation has been granted by the RUGBY CANADA. Outside this period

players may only participate in training and recruitment initiatives. Applications for special

dispensations should be submitted to the RUGBY CANADA Director of Development.

1.15 AGE GRADES:

(a) A player's RUGBY age grade is determined by their age on 1st APRIL at the beginning of the

season. EXAMPLE: An Under 9 player will therefore only turn 9 during the course of the season.

(b) During the course of a season players may only play rugby with other Under 9 players unless

they are permitted to play with players from a different age grade under a dispensation referred to

in Section 1.16.

(c) When participating in Fixtures or Festivals, the School must inform the coaches and match

officials of opposing teams of any dispensation being applied and identify each player concerned.

1.16 AGE GRADE DISPENSATIONS

The following general dispensations apply as exceptions to the age grade rules.

Particular

attention is drawn to the need to ensure that player safety is not compromised when applying any

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of these dispensations since players of different age grade and development will be playing

together and the duty of care owed to players means it may not always be appropriate to allow a

player to take advantage of a dispensation.

(a) Team Dispensation: EXAMPLE: Under 9 players may play down in an Under 8 team if the

School does not have enough players to complete an Under 8 team fixture, however, this

dispensation is subject to strict observance of the following qualifications:

(1) The maximum numbers of players allowed to play up or down is two; and

(2) NO Players above or below may move by MORE THAN one year in under/any circumstances EXAMPLE: a U/9 CANNOT play in the U11s. This dispensation will also

apply if a School does have one or more full Under 9 teams, but needs extra players to

field a further Under 9 team.

(b) Training Dispensation: During internal School training, players permitted by the RUGBY

CANADA Continuum to play in Under 8 and Under 9 Under 10 and Under 11 Under

12 and Under 13 Squads may train together and play internal training matches together.

(c) Special Dispensation: The vast majority of children, with correct coaching, can play in their

correct age grades but in exceptional cases where child safety may be compromised due to a

developmental disability (physical or behavioral).

1.16 LIMITATIONS ON FIXTURES:

Each player in each age grades is limited to playing in not more than:

(1) 17 Fixtures and/or Festivals during a season in addition to any Fixtures and/or Festivals

played by them for their Schools;

(2) 17 School Fixtures and/or Festivals during a season in addition to any Fixtures and/or

Festivals played by them for their Club;

(3) One Festival during the same weekend; and

(4) 8 games at a Festival.

Schools must maintain a record of how many Fixtures and Festivals are played by each age

grade (player) during a season to ensure they are not exceeding these limits.

Where Schools have large squads, additional Fixtures/Festivals may be arranged, provided that

no player plays in more than the maximum number referred to above.

1.20 MATCH DURATIONS:

A match is made up of two halves with half-time lasting 2 minutes. Matches are limited to the

following durations:

Fixture (when 2 Clubs or Schools are present): 20 minutes each way, 1 game = 40 minutes.

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1.21 DURATION OF COACHING OR TRAINING SESSIONS:

Fixtures, coaching and training sessions must last no longer than 60 Minutes, inclusive of time

devoted to match play. At a Festival, time spent on training and matches must not total more than

60 minutes.

1.22 EQUIPMENT:

(a) A Size 3 Ball should be used for UNDER 8/9/10 A Size 4 Ball should be used UNDER

11/12/13. Note: A regulation size rugby ball is acceptable.

(b) Players may only use studs and other clothing during training sessions and matches that are

in accordance with the IRB Laws of the Game. Spectacles may not be worn during training or in

matches.

1.23 PITCH SIZES:

The maximum pitch size for is 60 meters x 40 meters, plus 5 meters for each in-goal area.

Reduced pitch sizes are acceptable provided this is agreed between the officiating referee and coaches and the smaller pitches will not materially increase the risk of injury to players. NOTE

adjacent pitches should be no closer than 5 meters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations represent best practice and Schools, their match officials and coaches must endeavor to follow these:

1.24 THE GOOD MATCH OFFICIAL'S CODE:

Match Officials should:

- (a) Recognize the importance of fun and enjoyment when officiating players.
- (b) Provide positive verbal feedback in a constructive and encouraging manner during games.
- (c) Emphasize the spirit of the game.
- (d) Appreciate the needs of the players before the needs of the sport.
- (e) Understand the physical and behavioral development of players.
- (f) Be a positive role model. Set an example, and as such, comments should be positive and supportive.
- (g) Look to self-improvement e.g. participation in training courses.
- (h) Recognize that the safety of players is paramount.
- (i) Explain decisions - all players are still learning and parents will understand the game better.
- (j) Always penalize foul play.
- (k) Play advantage whenever possible in order to let the game flow.

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- (l) Show empathy for the age and ability of players.
- (m) Be consistent and objective.
- (n) Be familiar with the Good Spectators Code and ensure that verbal abuse from players, coaches or spectators is not tolerated and is dealt with by club officials immediately.
- (o) Be aware of, and abide by, the RUGBY CANADA Child Protection Guidance policies and procedures.
- (p) Officiate to the rules laid down in the Rugby Continuum and keep themselves updated on rule

changes.

(q) Check that the host School has provided a qualified first aid provider, ambulance access has not been obstructed and that appropriate equipment is available along with someone trained in its use before starting play.

(r) Before training sessions and matches check that studs and other clothing are in accordance with the IRB Laws of the Game.

1.25 THE GOOD COACHES' CODE:

Coaches of players should:

(a) Recognize the importance of fun and enjoyment when coaching players.

(b) Understand that most learning is achieved through doing.

(c) Appreciate the needs of the players before the needs of the sport.

(d) Be a positive role model - think what this implies.

(e) Keep winning and losing in perspective - encourage players to behave with dignity in all circumstances.

(f) Respect all referees and the decisions they make, even if they appear to make a mistake,

(remember it could be you refereeing next week) and ensure that the players recognize that they must do the same.

(g) Provide positive verbal feedback in a constructive and encouraging manner to all players, both during coaching sessions and matches.

(h) Provide rugby experiences, which are matched to the players' ages and abilities, as well as their physical and behavioral development.

(i) Ensure all players are coached in a safe environment, with adequate first aid readily to hand.

(j) Avoid the overplaying of the best players by using a squad system, which gives everybody a satisfactory amount of playing time.

(k) Never allow a player to train or play when injured.

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(l) Ensure good supervision of players, both on and off the field.

(m) Recognize that players should never be exposed to extremes of heat, cold or unacceptable risk of injury.

(n) Develop an awareness of nutrition as part of an overall education in lifestyle management.

(o) Recognize that it is illegal for players under 19 to drink alcohol or for those under

19 to smoke.

Coaches should actively discourage both.

(p) Ensure that their knowledge and coaching strategies are up to date and in line with RUGBY

CANADA philosophy.

(q) Be aware of, and abide by, the RUGBY CANADA recommended procedures for taking young

people on residential tours at home and abroad.

(r) Be aware of and abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the Policy and Procedures

for the Welfare of Young People in Rugby Union in CANADA.

(s) Coach to the rules laid down in the Rugby Continuum and keeps them updated on rule

changes.

1.26 THE GOOD PLAYER'S CODE:

Players should be encouraged to:

(a) Recognize and appreciate the efforts made by coaches, parents, match officials and

administrators in providing the opportunity to play the game and enjoy the rugby environment.

(b) Understand the values of loyalty and commitment to adults and teammates.

(c) Recognize that every player has a right to expect his or her involvement in rugby to be safe

and free from all types of abuse.

(d) Understand that if an individual or groups of players feel they are not being treated in a

manner that is acceptable, then they should tell an adult either at the Club or School or outside of

the game.

(e) Play because they want to do so, not to please coaches or parents.

(f) Remember that skill development, fun and enjoyment are the most important parts of the

game.

(g) Be attentive at all training and coaching sessions.

(h) Work equally hard for themselves and their team - both will then benefit.

(i) Recognize good play by all players on their team and by their opponents.

(j) Be a sportsman - "Win with dignity, lose with grace".

(k) Play to the IRB Laws of the Game and accept, without question, all referees' decisions even if

they appear to make a mistake.

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(l) Control their emotions. Verbal or physical abuse of teammates, opponents,

coaches, match

officials or spectators is not acceptable.

(m) Treat all players, as they would like to be treated themselves. Do not interfere with, bully or

take advantage of any player.

1.27 DANGEROUS PLAY:

(a) Dangerous play can cause injury. Coaches and match officials must be particularly vigilant to prevent it.

(b) There will always be knocks and bumps in rugby, but if dangerous play is eliminated, then

many serious injuries will never happen.

(c) After a stoppage for injury, restart play with a free pass to the team that had possession of the

ball immediately prior to the stoppage.

1.28 DISCIPLINE:

(a) If the referee decides that a player must cease to participate in a match, they must stop the

match, call the individual player aside from the other players and invite the coach of that player on

to the field. The referee must explain to the coach and the player(s) why they feel the player's

behavior is unacceptable and instruct the coach to provide a substitute player. That player is to

take no further part in that Festival or Fixture. It is the responsibility of the coach to speak to and

educate the player as to why such action was taken.

(b) Clubs and Schools complying with Section 2 of the Rugby Continuum will have