

ROOKIE RUGBY



HOW TO PLAY



USA RUGBY

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ROOKIE THE EAGLE

Rookie is the USA Rugby Eagles' mascot and **number 1 fan!** He loves rugby and follows USA Rugby teams everywhere.

Throughout this manual, you'll find rookie pointing out key laws, demonstrating skills, or just goofing off.

If you see Rookie at a USA Rugby event, stop by for a photo!





**RUGBY HISTORY
AND VALUES**



HISTORY AND ETHOS

Legend has it that in 1823, during a game of school football (soccer) in the town of Rugby, England, a young man named William Webb Ellis picked up the ball and ran towards the opposition's goal line. William Webb Ellis was such a big influence on rugby that the Rugby World Cup's Trophy was named after him.

Two centuries later, rugby football has evolved into one of the world's most popular sports, with millions of people playing, watching and enjoying the game. The first Rugby World Cup was hosted in 1987 by Australia and New Zealand. Similar to the FIFA World Cup, the Rugby World Cup is played every four years and is one of the largest sporting tournaments in the world.

At the heart of rugby is a unique ethos which it has retained over the years. Not only is the game played to the Laws, but within the spirit of the Laws.

Through discipline, control and mutual self-respect, a fellowship and sense of fair play are forged, defining Rugby as the Game it is.

From the school playground to the Rugby World Cup final, Rugby offers a truly unique and thoroughly rewarding experience for all involved in the Game.

For more information on the history and the basics of rugby, go to <https://passport.worldrugby.org/> and take the free Beginners guide to Rugby Union course.

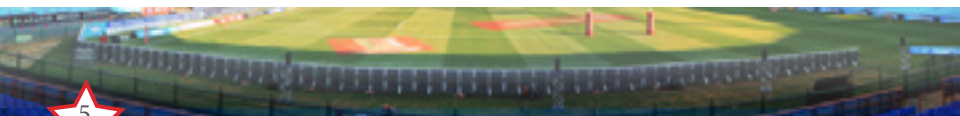


ROOKIE RUGBY CORE VALUES

Adopting World Rugby's 6 core values, Rookie Rugby adds "Friendship" to make seven values which aim to preserve the characteristics of the game both on the field and off the field. In addition, the core values aim to teach rugby participants the unique essence of rugby and to uphold its players to a high standard.

The core values are:

- 1. INTEGRITY**
- 2. PASSION**
- 3. SOLIDARITY**
- 4. DISCIPLINE**
- 5. TEAMWORK**
- 6. SPORTSMANSHIP**
- 7. FRIENDSHIP**



Rugby vs. Rookie Rugby

All variations of rugby are free flowing and continuous. Players will work as a team to move the ball across their opponent's goal line to score. Rookie Rugby uses flags to simulate the tackling in rugby and simplifies many aspects of the game to keep everyone involved and the rate of success high. These adaptations make it a perfect version of rugby for young and new athletes to the sport.

Rookie Rugby

- ★ Non-Contact
- ★ Introductory
- ★ Skill development
- ★ Small sided
- ★ Small pitch

Rookie Rugby Progressions

- ★ Scrums + Lineouts
- ★ Kicking
- ★ More focus on team concepts

Contact Rugby

- ★ Contact
- ★ All set pieces
- ★ Open, free flowing
- ★ Focus on player advancement



ROOKIE RUGBY HONOR CODE

Rugby is a diverse sport for men and women, boys and girls. It builds teamwork, understanding, cooperation, and respect for fellow athletes. Rookie Rugby is proud to follow the traditions of rugby, including: high standards of sportsmanship, ethical behavior, and fair play. The Rookie Rugby Honor Code was created to uphold the cherished values that rugby has built itself on since its beginning.

As a Parent or Supporter, I will...

1. Honor the game in action and language.
2. Use praise and positive recognition with all who are involved.
3. Allow coaches or officials to correct player mistakes. Resist the urge to give instructions
4. Cheer on good play from both teams
5. Acknowledge that all referees perform a difficult task.
6. Appreciate coaches for their commitment and effort.
7. Set a good example - think before I act.
8. Have Fun!

As a Coach, I will...

1. Honor the game by adopting a culture that rewards effort, not only outcome.
2. Emphasize both the spirit and letter of the rules.
3. Appreciate that a worthy opponent brings out the best in any team.
4. Aim for strong competition when the match is on, and friendly interaction when time is out.
5. Respect the officials even when you disagree.
6. Never do anything, on or off the field, that compromises player efforts to be the best they can be. Think before I act!
7. Have Fun!

As a Player, I will...

1. Honor the game and try my best.
2. Put effort into learning both individual AND team skills.
3. Play according to the laws of the game.
4. Commit to your team with high attendance, effort and energy.
5. Show respect for all.
6. Appreciate good play from both sides.
7. Be an ambassador of the sport - think before I act!
8. Have Fun!





BEFORE THE MATCH

GAME SETUP

The Playing Space

Maximum recommended dimensions: 75 yards (or 70 meters) in length and 45 yards (or 40 m) in width.

The Try Zone: Exactly 5 yards (4.5 m) deep from the try line and is clearly marked with cones.

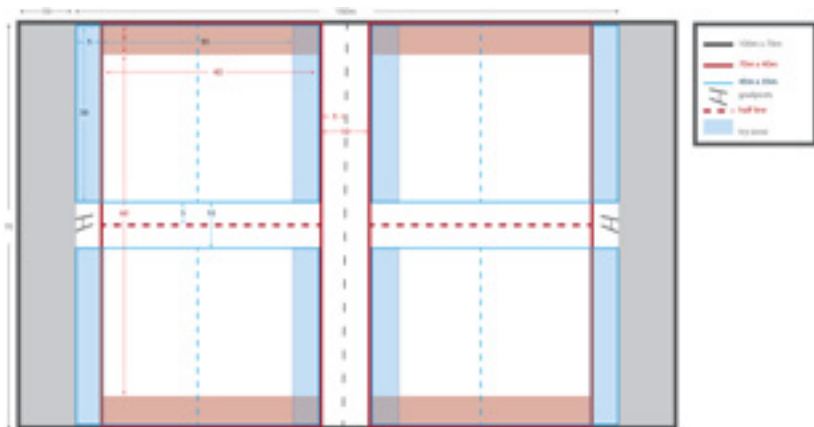
The size of the field can be adapted to suit the age and ability of the teams participating.

Playing Surfaces

Rookie Rugby can be played in any open space of any size. You can play outside on grass, in a gymnasium and even outside in a parking lot! A full sized field can be lined for several rookie rugby fields.

A full-sized rugby field or pitch is up to 76 yards (70 meters) wide and up to 110 yards (100 meters) long.

For competition prior to 5th grade, USA Rugby recommends 50x30 yd fields.



EQUIPMENT

The Ball

The rugby ball is oval and is made of four panels. There are two types and three sizes of rugby balls.

The preferred ball for Rookie Rugby is a rubberized beach ball that is designed for easy handling due to a soft and grippy surface.

A leather stitched or a synthetic rugby ball is utilized in competition rugby, and can also be used for Rookie Rugby.



Official Rookie Rugby balls and flags are available at www.rookierugby.com/shop.

The following ball sizes are recommended

- ★ Size 3 competition or Size 4 beach for 4th grade and below
- ★ Size 4 for 5th-8th Grade
- ★ Size 5 for HS rugby

Flags

To prevent injuries and build skill, Rookie Rugby replaces tackling with flags, similar to flag football. Each Rookie Rugby flag has one adjustable belt strap with 2 Velcro flags that attach on the sides of the hip. Flags must be worn over t-shirts.



Field Markers

To set up the field, cones, painted field lines or both will clearly mark the sidelines and touch area.





NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Five players per team is the preferred format of Rookie Rugby.

Rookie Rugby can be played between teams with equal numbers of players on each team. Each team contains no more than seven players, and no less than four. Each team may have an agreed number of substitutions. Substituted players may return to play during any stoppage in play. Each player is encouraged to play every position on the field.

Remember, keep team numbers at or below 7v7! Rookie Rugby is about learning and participation. More players on the field means less opportunity for each player to pass, run, catch, defend, and score.





PLAYERS' CLOTHING

Personal Safety Apparel

Footwear should to be appropriate for the type of playing surface used in order to minimize risk for players. Cleats are the most appropriate footwear for grass fields. Tennis shoes are the most appropriate footwear for indoor surfaces. Both cleats and tennis shoes may be equally appropriate for turf fields.

Mouthguards may prevent dental and facial injuries during accidental contact.

No clothing with hoods may be worn.

Prescription sport glasses and sunglasses are permitted with approval of the referee.

Wearing Flags

In Rookie Rugby, pulling a flag should be simple, as it simply moves the offense to their next phase. As such, rules around flags help promote flag tackling and make it easy on players:

- ★ 2 flags are worn, one on each hip
- ★ Jerseys or shirts must be tucked into the flag belt, with no overlap
- ★ No knotting or tucking flags into belts or pockets

It is helpful to instruct participants to place flags upside down when play starts, so that the flags dog-ear and stick out from the hips. This can be difficult to enforce during open play. Once players have established a routine, however, the practice becomes second nature.



BEFORE THE MATCH



CORRECT



Flags on hips, upside down



Jersey tucked into belt

INCORRECT



Flags knotted



Jersey untucked, covering flags



Flags tucked into pockets



Flags not on hips

TIME OF PLAY

A Rookie Rugby game is made up of two halves. It is recommended that each half last between 5 and 20 minutes, depending on players' ages and abilities.

Halftime is 2-5 minutes in length.

The Clock will be stopped for: Injury and water-breaks. Coaches may agree to stop the clock for brief coaching points, with approval of the referee.

Recommended times for a single match: (running clock)

- ★ 3rd-4th grade: 2, 10-minute halves
- ★ 5th-6th grade: 2, 10-minute halves
- ★ 7th-8th grade: 2, 12-minute halves
- ★ HS and above: 2, 15-minute halves

Recommended times for multiple matches in a day: (festival formats)

- ★ 3rd-4th grade: 2, 7-minute halves
- ★ 5th-6th grade: 2, 7-minute halves
- ★ 7th-8th grade: 2, 7-minute halves
- ★ HS and above: 2, 7-minute halves



OFFICIALS

Rookie Rugby should be officiated by individuals, most often coaches, who have taken the Rookie Rugby Instructor course, which includes a portion on refereeing.

The Goals of Match Officials Should be:

- 1 Be fair and manage foul play.** The primary goal of any official on any level is to keep the match fair and safe.
- 2 Keep the game moving.** Address common and obvious violations to help children learn the game, but do not over-penalize.
- 3 Be a teacher.** Kids will learn a great deal from your calls, but only if it is clear why they are being called.



Duties of the Official:

- 1 Arrive prepared:** Wear appropriate clothing, bring your whistle and communicate with coaches about appropriate pitch and equipment.
- 2 Meet with coaches and/or captains to:**
 - a. Discuss foul play
 - b. Clarify subbing and time out rules & processes.
(These may vary by league)
 - c. Organize the coin toss.
- 3 Address injuries immediately.**



**See Refereeing Rookie Rugby for common officiating calls and gestures.*

SAFETY

Rugby and Rookie Rugby's top priority is player safety. Coaches and players must understand how to play rugby in order to enjoy the game safely. Though playing with flags reduces the chance of injury, risk is always present in any field sport. Please contact USA Rugby if you have further questions about player safety or for any additional information.



DURING THE MATCH

OBJECTIVE OF THE GAME AND SCORING

The objective of the game is to score more points than the opposing team. To earn points, the offensive team will work to move the ball forward until one player can run over the goal line and touch the ball to the ground with two hands. This action is called **grounding the ball** and will result in a score, which is called a **try** in rugby.



DURING THE MATCH

Defenses will prevent the offense from moving forward with flag pulls, which force the offense to pass, or by intercepting the ball.

Being successful in rugby is a combination of offensive and defensive play. Ensuring success on the field means teaching your athletes the basics of both.

OPEN PLAY

Moving the Ball

Players advance the ball by running towards the opposition's try zone. **Players run forward**, passing the ball from one player to another. **All passes in rugby must be thrown backwards or sideways (lateral).**



Offense

Offense in rugby is centered on two main principles: Go Forward and Support.

Go Forward means that in order to score, all offensive players, including support players, should be moving toward their opponent's try line. Players will naturally run from sideline to sideline in order to avoid a flag pull. Get them moving forward by running towards the spaces between defensive players.



Support in rugby means that players are following the ball carrier in the proper position to receive a pass.

- Players should work to support their teammates and always be ready to receive a pass. The easiest way to teach this concept is by using shapes, specifically triangles, by placing them in an offensive position. The most effective shape in rugby is a triangle because it provides the ball carrier multiple options. Since ball carriers can only pass

laterally or backwards, these players will be a step behind to the right and left, creating a triangle.

- When a defensive player removes the ball carrier's flag, the defensive player is "removed" from play until they return the flag. This creates open space in the defense, which is vulnerable for attack. Placing players in support positions will enable them to take advantage of this situation. In order to be successful, support players must move forward into these open spaces.



Defense

Defense prevents the opposing team from scoring. Similar to offense, defense is also taught in a basic shape, in this case a flat line with defenders standing side by side, two to three steps apart.



A flat line defense is similar to a solid wall without space or gaps. Space in a defensive line will create places for the offense to run through and score.



A great way to practice defense is by having your team work together as a moving unit. When adding in an offensive team, move the ball up and down the field, as well as around to different players. Your defensive team will have to react and continue to get into position to maintain their flat line. Once players can understand the basics of defensive movement, you can introduce more advanced defensive concepts to defend against more advanced offensive movements.

Before teaching defense to players, it is helpful to inform them of how defense moves with the offensive team. We have outlined some key questions that your players may ask, an explanatory answer, and a defensive command that can be used to help players get into position.

DURING THE MATCH



Defensive Questions

?	Where should I stand on Defense?
Explanation	Encourage players to “cross the street” in defense, making sure to look to their left and right. Players should be in line and “flat” with their teammates. This will help them be in the right position and ready to pull a flag.
Command	Although there is no set command for being in the correct position, players tend to understand the command, “FLAT.” Both teammates and coaches can communicate this during matches.

?	Do I have an opposite player that I guard?
Explanation	Sort of. When positioning yourself on defense, it is smart to line yourself opposite from another player on the opposing team. This will help ensure that all offensive players are covered. Defense in rugby is a combination of man-to-man and zone defense.
Command	There are no main commands for finding an opposing player while on defense. The best thing a player can do is count the offensive players and find the one open person who has a clear path in front of them.

?	When do we move forward as a defensive line?
Explanation	Remaining in a flat line is just one part of defense; moving as a team in the same direction is the other part. A defensive line will move forward or “up” towards the offense when the first pass is made after a penalty.
Command	A common command that is used for moving forward on defense is “UP.” This can be signaled by teammates and coaches.



?	When do we move back as a defensive line?
Explanation	Similar to other movements, moving backwards as a team is important for maintaining a flat line. Players will need to move back when a penalty takes place and a free pass is awarded.
Command	A simple command of “BACK” will help all players know that they need to back up to get into position.

?	Will the defense move left and right?
Explanation	Yes! The defense will move in conjunction with the offensive team in order to contest possession. As play moves across the field, the defense will need to react and move as a team in their flat line.
Command	The most common commands for moving across the field are “SLIDE RIGHT” and “SLIDE LEFT.” Whenever a player recognizes that the offensive play is moving in one direction, they can call out for their teammates to slide.



PLAYING WITH FLAGS

The game of Rookie Rugby is played with flags to replace the action of tackling. Flag rugby is the preferred method to introduce rugby. If no flags are available, the game can be played as two hand touch; however, flags are always the better option. Rookie Rugby is played with flags for several reasons:

Flag Rugby Keeps it Safe!

- 1** Flag rugby eliminates the opportunity for players to push or shove. Flag rugby increases the safety of the game for kids, especially when playing indoors.

Flag Rugby Keeps it Simple!

- 2** Ball carriers will clearly know when their flag is pulled, creating continuity. This free flowing part of the game is important for new players to learn the basic skills of rugby.

Flag Rugby is Easier to Referee!

- 3** Athletes will proclaim "FLAG" as they pull each flag, making a clear indicator for the referee. Determining if a two-handed touch has been made can be more difficult.

Flag Rugby Encourages Co-Ed Play!

- 4** Flag rugby eliminates body-to-body contact, which diminishes issues with co-ed play.

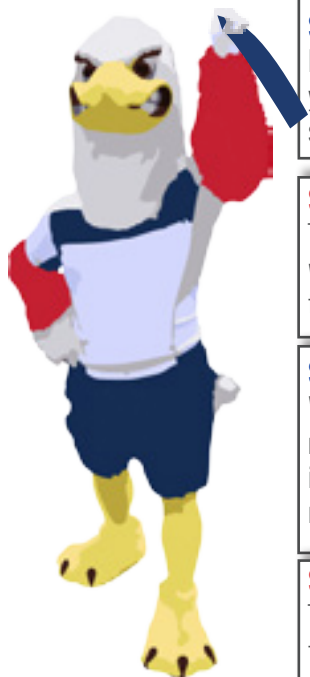
Flag Rugby develops decision-making skills!

- 5** Using flags more closely reflect a tackle situation in rugby by taking both players out of the game temporarily. Similar to tackle rugby, both the ball carrier and defensive player must perform a task before returning to play. The ball carrier must pass the ball and replace their flag, and the defensive player must return the pulled flag to the ball carrier.

FLAG ETIQUETTE

While the offensive team attempts to move the ball forward, the defensive team will attempt to slow them down by pulling the ball carrier's flag, simulating a tackle. Flags must be worn over t-shirts to allow defenders access to the flag. It is best to put flags on upside down so they stick out a ways.

Once the ball carrier's flag is removed the game will continue by using the following flag etiquette:



Step 1

Defender removes the flag, holds it up in the air and yells, "FLAG!" The defender is now out of play and should stand still.

Step 2

The ball carrier must pass the ball to a teammate within three steps or three seconds. After the pass, the player with a flag missing is out of play.

Step 3

While play continues the (former) ball carrier must retrieve their flag from where the defender is standing. The defender may return to play after returning the flag.

Step 4

The player whose flag was removed must replace their flag on their belt before returning to play.

Continuation

Play **DOES NOT STOP** when a flag is pulled—this is an essential aspect to Rookie Rugby and keeps the game continuous. Blowing a whistle or stopping play after a flag pull is not recommended for Rookie Rugby. If flag etiquette is violated, initially play advantage and only penalize the infraction when play is affected (ie, a defensive player who has pulled one flag pulls another flag or an offensive player receives a pass before returning their flag to their belt).

DURING THE MATCH



Starting the Game and Restarts

At the start of the match, or after each score, the team who did not score or is starting the game takes a free pass from the center of the playing field. The defense must be at least 5 steps back. A **free pass** is an uncontested pass allowed from one player to a teammate. Remember it must be lateral or backwards.



Into Touch (Out of Bounds)

If the ball is passed or carried into touch (out of bounds), Rookie Rugby begins with a free pass to restart play. The free pass should be one yard in field from the sideline. See “Rookie Rugby Progressions” for more advanced lineout opportunities.



Penalties

The results of any penalty: Any violation of Rookie Rugby laws follow the same pattern:

1. If the penalty is on the offense, the defense is awarded possession of the ball.
2. The defense retreats 5 steps, and must wait for the offensive player to pass the ball before moving up the field.
3. The offense will make a free pass, laterally or backwards, or start the ball with a tap of the foot. Play is restarted as soon as the pass is made.

Penalty Examples:

Knock-On: A knock-on occurs when a player fumbles the ball forward.

Forward Pass

In rugby, passes can only be made backwards or laterally. If a player passes the ball forward to a teammate it will result in a penalty.



Obstruction, Blocking, or Fending Off

Players must not obstruct a defender from making a flag pull. Obstruction will result in a turnover, with the opposing team being awarded a free pass at the spot of the penalty. **Spinning** is frequently banned in Rookie Rugby play as an obstruction.

Diving

Players must not dive to the ground at any point. Rugby is a game best played on your feet, so players must remain on their feet at all times. A dive in the try zone will result in a penalty to the defense, 5 meters from the offense.



DURING THE MATCH



Deliberate Contact:

Rookie Rugby is a non-contact game, if a player pushes or hits another player it will result in a penalty.

Failure to Release the Ball:

Experienced Rookie Rugby leagues may need to implement this penalty. After a flag pull, beginners often hold the ball for longer than three seconds as they learn the game—it is not the intent to penalize this behavior, but to allow the ball carrier time to make a fundamentally sound pass.

There are two options for awarding failure to release:

Turnover option: If a player fails to pass the ball within three seconds/ three steps of having their flag pulled, the referee will stop play and award a penalty to the other team. Teams **MUST** reset their lines after this penalty before play is restarted.





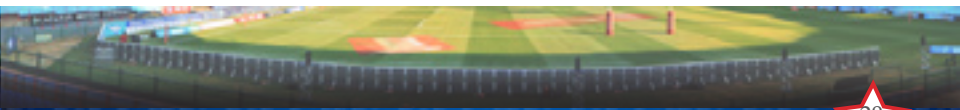
Reset option: If a player fails to pass the ball within three seconds/three steps of getting their flag pulled the referee will stop play. Teams MUST reset their lines before play is restarted.

Yellow/Red Cards

The use of cards in Rookie Rugby to penalize repeated foul play should be determined prior to the season by the league administrator.

ADVANTAGE

The laws of rugby were designed to keep play fair and continuous. An advanced concept of rugby, which features both ideas, is called Advantage. This rule comes into play after an infringement of the laws occurs. Although advantage can be found in many places during a regular game of rugby, we keep it simple in Rookie Rugby. There are three game scenarios in which we apply Rookie Rugby laws for advantage progression to progress.



3 ADVANTAGE SCENARIOS

Game Scenario	A pass is dropped and fumbles forward. The defense picks up the ball.
Rookie Rugby Rule	Turnover to the other team.
Advantage Progression	Allow the defense to pick up the ball and play on without blowing the whistle.

Game Scenario	A pass is dropped and fumbles forward. The offense picks up the ball.
Rookie Rugby Rule	Turnover to the other team.
Advantage Progression	Turnover to the other team. Restart play with a free pass or an uncontested scrum.

Game Scenario	A pass is dropped and fumbles backwards.
Rookie Rugby Rule	Play on!
Advantage Progression	In this case, the ball was not advanced forward. Either team can pick up the ball and play on without blowing the whistle.



ROOKIE RUGBY PROGRESSIONS

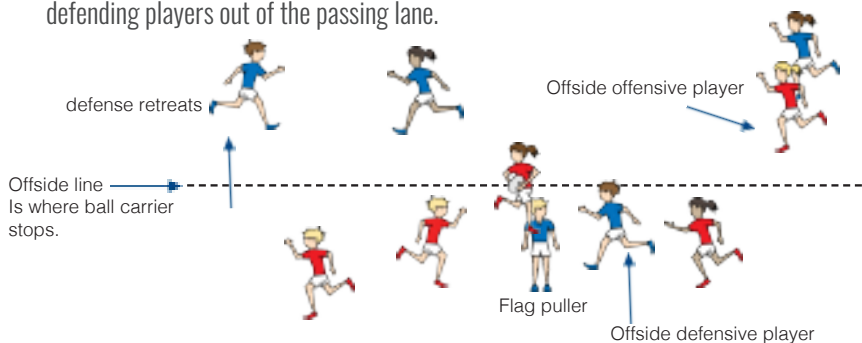
ROOKIE RUGBY PROGRESSIONS

Once players are comfortable with the basic play of Rookie Rugby, progressions of the game can be added. These progressions should only be introduced after players have mastered the intro game. They can be very useful for preparing players to move into higher-level rugby leagues.

OFFSIDE

Offside is one of the most difficult sporting concepts for players to understand. Rookie Rugby should be played with an offside line only after a stoppage in play as a simple way to introduce the game. Players are encouraged to take the three steps allowed after their flag is pulled so that they create open space for passing to a support player. Support players are encouraged to always move forward. Once players are advanced enough with the game, you can introduce an offside concept that resembles offside in rugby. It is split into both offensive and defensive offside.

The offside line is drawn across the field where the ball carrier stops after the flag pull--not where the flag is pulled. This difference, though a few steps, keeps defending players out of the passing lane.



Offensive Offside: In Rookie Rugby, passes can only be made laterally or backwards. Because of this, offensive offside occurs when teammates are in front of the ball carrier. Keep in mind that a penalty will only occur if the offside offensive player receives a pass.

Defensive Offside: Draw an imaginary line drawn through the ball once the ball carrier has stopped after her flag has been pulled. The defense retreat behind this line in order to play the ball.

A defending player is offside if she is:

- ★ Within 5 yards of a free pass,
- ★ Behind the offside line once the ball carrier comes to a stop after her flag has been pulled,
- ★ Blocking an attacking player (who is onside) from receiving a pass from a ball carrier who has come to a stop after her flag has been pulled.

A defending player is NOT offside during open play, or during the three steps a ball carrier may take after a flag pull (continuation).

KICKING

It should be noted that kicking should not be added into Rookie Rugby until the players are of the appropriate age and ability. The safety and development of players is at the forefront of the game, and the focus of introductory rugby is playing with the ball in hand. In advanced versions of rugby, kicking is allowed at any time during open play, as well as for starts of the match. The following is a recommended plan for introducing kicking to the game.

There are two main types of kicking in rugby:

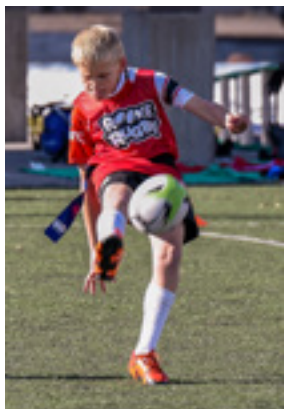
Punting: When a player kicks the ball with their foot while it is in the air.

Drop Kick : A drop kick is a rugby-specific kick where players will drop the ball and allow it to hit the ground and bounce up before kicking it.

In both instances, kickers should aim to strike the “X” made by the seams on the bottom of the ball.



Introducing Kicking to the Game



USA Rugby recommends adding kicking elements in the following order:

1. Starting the Match and after a Try: The first time to introduce kicking in Rookie Rugby is at the start of the match. This allows kicking to be introduced slowly and gives all players a chance to practice their skills. Drop kicks can be more difficult for younger players. Start kick-offs with punting until players are ready to advance. After a try is scored, the team that scored the try will kick off to the opposing team. Kicks are taken from the middle of the field.

If a kick cannot be put into play by the receiving team, (ie: the ball travels immediately into touch,) the receiving team will receive a free pass at midfield.

2. Penalty Kicks: When penalties are committed during open play in Rookie Rugby a free pass is awarded. An advancement to add, once players are ready, is the option for a penalty kick. A penalty kick in rugby is when the non-infringing team kicks the ball down the field and out of bounds in order to restart play with a lineout where the ball went out. If the ball does not go out of bounds, the non-kicking team can recover the ball, and play continues.

3. Kicking During Open Play: The last progression for kicking is to add it during open play. Players will be permitted to punt the ball at any time during the match as a strategic move. It is recommended that teams are limited to the number of kicks they can perform until they are ready to strategically make kicking decisions.

4. Offside at kick: Offensive players must be even with, or behind the ball when it is kicked or they are offside.

UNCONTESTED LINEOUTS



Another great advancement to the game of Rookie Rugby is a lineout. A lineout occurs when the ball goes out or is carried out of bounds during play. The lineout occurs at the point where the ball goes into touch.

Three to four players from each team will make up a lineout. For the team in possession of the ball, there will be one player throwing the ball in, one or two players receiving, and one player who will receive the ball from the lineout.

Players should not lift in lineouts until they have developed the necessary skills and strength.

There are no contested lineouts in Rookie Rugby. The team that throws the ball in must be allowed to win possession of the ball.



UNCONTESTED SCRUMS

When kids participating in Rookie Rugby have advanced their skills to a point where they are ready for the next step, try adding scrums. A scrum is a unique part of this game. It should be noted that scrums in Rookie Rugby should only be added when participants are of the appropriate age and ability.

A scrum is formed from two units: one from each team made up of three players each, a **front row**. In each front row there are two **props** with a **strike** in the middle.

Before allowing a scrum to begin make sure that all players have proper body position throughout the scrum: Back flat, feet and body square, shoulders above hips, head neutral, and eyes forward.

Coaches and players must know the engagement sequence and cadence the referee uses to activate the scrum. The referee will call out the **engagement sequence**: “Crouch...Bind...Set!”

“Crouch”: Bound front rows lower into position, close enough so the ears of all 6 players are lined up.

“Bind”: Props will grasp on to opposing players’ jerseys just below their armpits.

“Set”: The two front rows come together, placing their heads to the left of the player across to form a scrum. The two sides do not push.

Roll the ball: The referee will tell the team in possession to roll the ball into the scrum from the side.

Strike: The strike from the team rolling the ball in uses a foot to pull the ball backwards.



ROOKIE RUGBY PROGRESSIONS



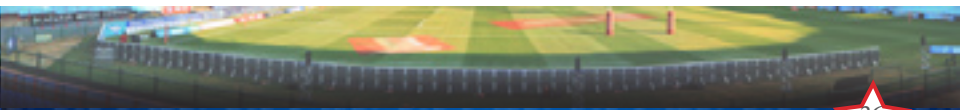
Safety First! Before any engagement make sure that all players are bound together properly. At any time before engagement if a front row player is not ready for the scrum they should inform the referee.



Prop

Strike

Prop





GETTING INVOLVED

COACHING ROOKIE RUGBY

While there is no fast track to becoming a good coach, the experience can be very rewarding and worth all of the time and effort expended. By taking the time to read the right resources and take coaching courses, you will be on your way to becoming a successful coach.

Rookie Rugby Coaching Tips

Plan your practice: Know how your practice will be structured before you arrive; a session should include warm up, activities, cool down, and review. Be sure to have a backup plan for different number of players, as well as, ways to change practice if things are going better or worse than expected.

Look like a coach: Your first impression to players is how you look. If you look and act like a coach, players will view you as one. Wear nice athletic gear to practice and materials; avoid old torn up rugby t-shirts and dirty tennis shoes.

Arrive early: Arriving early will help you prepare the area for practice and also help set the tone for a well-run practice. Before practice is also a great time to answer questions that your parents or players may have.

Organize the activities: It is very important to have each skill and game organized. If you are attempting to organize while at practice you will lose the attention of your players.

Let the players play, and only stop to talk sparingly: Understand that players can only retain a small amount of new information at a time. Make your coaching points succinct, and then let the players practice these points. Avoid instructing too much so that your players can learn by doing.

Use questions: Use questions to heighten players' self-awareness. Question players to ensure they understand your instruction.

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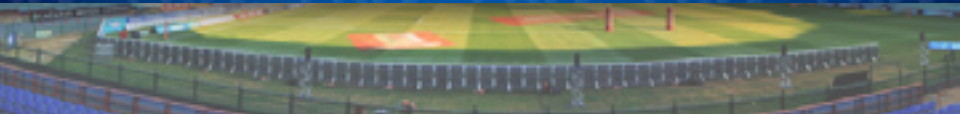


Provide feedback: Providing feedback lets players know you are listening and watching. Make sure to keep feedback positive. If you are correcting a player make sure they understand how it will help them play better.

Be a role model: Realize that your players look up to you. Act the way you would want your players to act.

Deal with disruptive behavior: Players will occasionally act up. Pull those players aside and take the time to figure out why that behavior is occurring. Punishing a disruptive player with running or physical activity is only a quick fix; taking time to understand and deal with the problem will lead to better behavior in the long run.





Coaching Tips for Running Practice

1 Instruction and Explanation

- Plan what you say before you speak
- Gain player's attention before you start
- Keep the message simple
- Invite questions and check for understanding

2 Demonstration

- Position yourself so all can see and hear
- Focus on one or two key points per practice
- Repeat the demonstration
- Invite questions and check for understanding

3 Observation and Analysis

- Focus on one key point at a time
- Observe action several times and from different positions
- Compare observation with correct behavior to find matches/mismatches
- Determine action: Build on strengths, correct errors, or do nothing

4 Feedback for Players

- Ask players questions to generate self-feedback
- Limit information to one or two key points
- Give specific and simple information
- Keep it positive



REFEREEING ROOKIE RUGBY

One of the greatest things about Rookie Rugby is how easy it is to administer, coach, and referee. In many instances, a Rookie Rugby coach can take on the role of a referee during matches. When doing so, it should be noted that referees in Rookie Rugby are more like coaches. Refereeing as a coach means using your words more than your whistle. The number one priority as a referee is maintaining the player's safety. If a player makes a mistake, let them know what they are doing wrong and why you are awarding a penalty or blowing your whistle. This will help coach the athlete so that they do not make the same mistake again.

Always keep in mind the following elements while on the field as a referee:
Safety Comes First: Keeping a match safe should be a top priority of the referee. Rookie Rugby players have not learned the proper techniques for contact yet, therefore the referee should be quick to discourage any unsafe actions.

Use a quick whistle for unsafe actions such as:

- Holding, pushing, or shoving
 - Blocking and obstructions
 - Pulling the ball from the ball carrier
 - Players diving on the ball or going to the ground
- *Remember to instruct players on WHY you are blowing the whistle

Communication: Clearly communicating is a key skill for rugby referees. Remember to help coach the players by talking with them during the game rather than always using your whistle.

- Blow your whistle only when you want to stop play
- Shout "FLAG" when a flag has been pulled
- Shout "PLAY" when you want play to resume
- Signal the team starting play after a penalty by extending your arm towards that team
- Coach/educate players on the laws.
- Have a friendly attitude

Maintain Space: Young players will tend to bunch up during play, and will often interfere with passing because of their positioning. Utilize your voice to establish spacing rules with the players to maintain the continuity of the game.

Encourage Continuity: Rookie Rugby is a free flowing and continuous game. Avoid blowing your whistle too many times so players begin understanding the flow of rugby.

- Use the advantage rule. Although harder to understand at first, this helps keep play flowing

Be in Position: The key to making good calls is being in a position to see the play. Be sure to keep moving so that you can see the game play and ball carrier at all times.

- Be level with the play
- Call what you see
- Blow the whistle only when you want play to stop.





REFEREE SIGNALS



Penalty



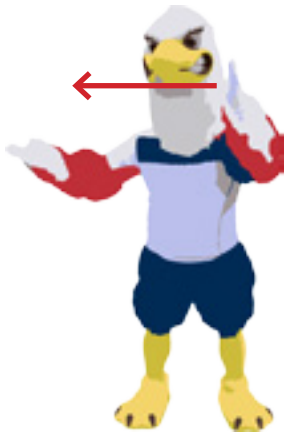
Advantage



Ball travelled forward



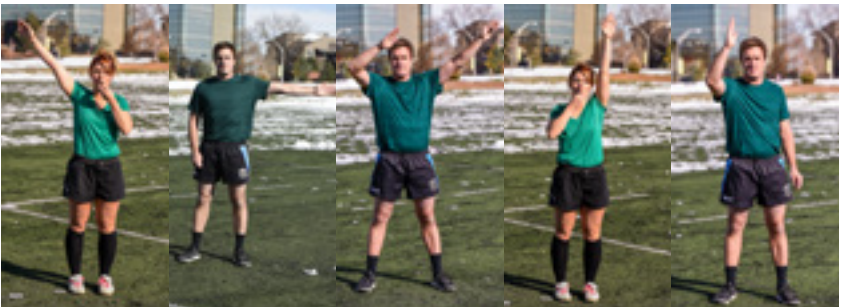
Try Scored



Knock On



Lineout



ROOKIE RUGBY RESOURCES



[WWW.USARUGBY.ORG](http://www.usarugby.org)

Visit USA Rugby's official website to find out more about rugby in the US. Learn how to get involved with coaching or refereeing, keep up to date on our national teams, or even find out about a rugby event in your area!



[WWW.ROOKIERUGBY.COM](http://www.rookierugby.com)

Check out this page for everything that you need related to Rookierugby.com. This site includes lesson plans, game cards, skill cards, the Rookierugby store, local contact information and much more!



[WWW.TRYONRUGBY.COM](http://www.tryonrugby.com)

Visit Try On Rugby's webpage to find out how to help more young women and girls get involved in the newest Olympic Sport. This site includes how to get involved with administrating, coaching, refereeing or starting a Try On Rugby team in your community and much more!





RUGBY RESOURCES

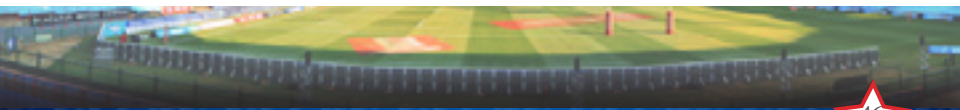
Information on coaching rugby: <http://usarugby.org/coaching>

Information on refereeing rugby: <http://usarugby.org/referee>

Information on youth rugby: <http://usarugby.org/youth>

Information on USA Rugby events: <http://usarugby.org/events1/usa-rugby-events/calendar>

State Rugby Organizations can coordinate Rookie Rugby Instructor Trainings: <http://usarugby.org/sro>





ROOKIE RUGBY VOCABULARY

Advantage: The purpose of this rule is to let the game flow and avoid unnecessary stoppages. If an infringement occurs that results in the benefit of the non-infringing team, the referee will let play continue. For example, if a knock-on occurs and the non-infringing team gains possession from this knock-on, the referee will call “Advantage” and allow play to continue. To help play, the referee must say “Advantage” loudly when this occurs.

Bind: For an uncontested scrum, referees will call out, “Crouch, Bind, Set,” to start the play. On the “Bind” command the prop players will grasp on to opposing players’ jerseys in the proper location.

Crouch: When calling out the cadence to an uncontested scrum, referees will start with the word “Crouch.” This signals players to get into the proper scrum positions, with backs flat and a low athletic position.

Drawing a Defender: Drawing a defender is an act done by the ball carrier to attract defensive players. Drawing the defender is an important skill in rugby because once a defender is drawn in; it becomes more difficult for them to defend against other offensive players.

Drop Kick: A drop kick in rugby is used to restart play and score points. A ball is drop kicked by dropping the ball and then kicking it when it bounces off the ground.

Evade: The act of evading is done by a ball carrier to avoid being tagged by defenders. To evade, players can fake a run one direction and then run the other way, make a quick cut in one direction, or fake a pass.

Forward Pass: Passes that are thrown forward (towards the try zone in which a team is trying to score) are not allowed. All passes in rugby must be thrown sideways or backwards.

ROOKIE RUGBY VOCABULARY



Flat Line Defense: The flat line defense is a common term used in rugby. If the defense team covers the field in a flat line it makes it much harder for the offense to get through because there are no holes. Learning to stay in a flat line with teammates is an important skill for every rugby player to gain.

Free Pass: A free pass is an uncontested pass allowed from one player to a teammate. A free pass is used to start the following:

- A. Each half of the match at the center of the field
- B. After an infringement to restart the match at the place of infringement

Grounding: Grounding is when a player touches the rugby ball down to the ground in order to score a try. In order to properly ground the ball a player must stay on their feet and touch the ball down with 2 hands.

Kick-off: A kick off in rugby is used to start a half, or to restart the game after points have been scored. Kick offs are made by players drop kicking the ball at the center line. Rookie Rugby typically does not include kicking to restart play, but it can be incorporated if players have practiced it sufficiently.

Knock-on: A knock-on occurs when a player, while carrying the ball or trying to receive a pass, fumbles or fails to catch the ball, resulting with the ball falling forward and hitting the ground or another player.

Lift: A lift in rugby is used for true lineouts when players physically lift one of the players into the air to compete for possession of the ball. Lifts should never be used in Rookie Rugby.

Lineout: A lineout is used to restart play after the ball goes out of bounds.

Offside: A player is offside any time that player is in front of a teammate who is carrying the ball. The player is offside and must not become involved or interfere in play in any way until he/she becomes onside again.

ROOKIE RUGBY VOCABULARY

Pass: A pass is when a rugby ball is thrown from one player to another. All passes in rugby must be thrown sideways or backward.

Olympic Rugby Sevens: Olympic Rugby Sevens is the seven-a-side version of rugby that is played in the Olympics. Younger players can start playing rugby sevens as early as middle school and have the possibility to work all the way up to making the USA Olympic Rugby team.

Punting: In rugby punting will exchange field position for possession by kicking the ball up the field and out of bounds. Punting the ball can be done at any time during free play, but is typically used sparingly because of the risk of losing possession. Rookie Rugby typically does not include punting, but it can be incorporated if players have practiced it sufficiently. Punting is only recommended for maximum Rookie Rugby dimensions.

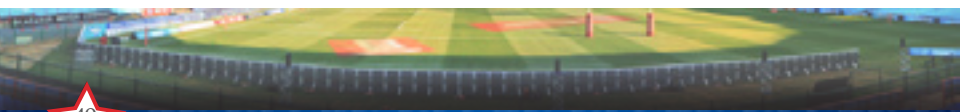
Rugby World Cup: The Rugby World Cup is an international rugby competition organized by World Rugby has been held every four years since 1987. The winners are awarded the William Web Ellis Cup.

Set: When calling out the cadence to an uncontested scrum, referees will call out “Crouch, Bind, Set” to start the play. On the “Set” signal, players will bind with the opposing team in the scrum in order for the ball to be rolled in to the center.

Support: Support is a common term in rugby and refers to offensively being a position to receive a pass from a teammate with the ball. Support players should never be ahead of the ball carrier and should be close enough to receive a pass.

Triangle Shaped Offense: This offensive is always forming triangles so players are always in support of the ball carrier.

Uncontested Scrum: An uncontested scrum is a scrum where one team is required to win the ball unopposed by the other team. No pushing is allowed.



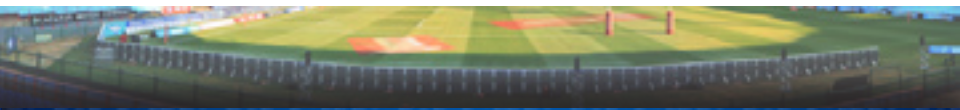
ROOKIE RUGBY VOCABULARY



USA Eagles: The USA Eagles are the men's and women's national teams who compete at the international level and represent the United States in the sport of rugby.

Try: Scoring in rugby is called a 'try.' Scoring a try is done by crossing over the goal line, into the try zone, and touching the ball down to the ground. A try is worth five points.

Try Zone: The try zone in rugby is the end zone where players can score a try.



ROOKIE RUGBY



USA RUGBY