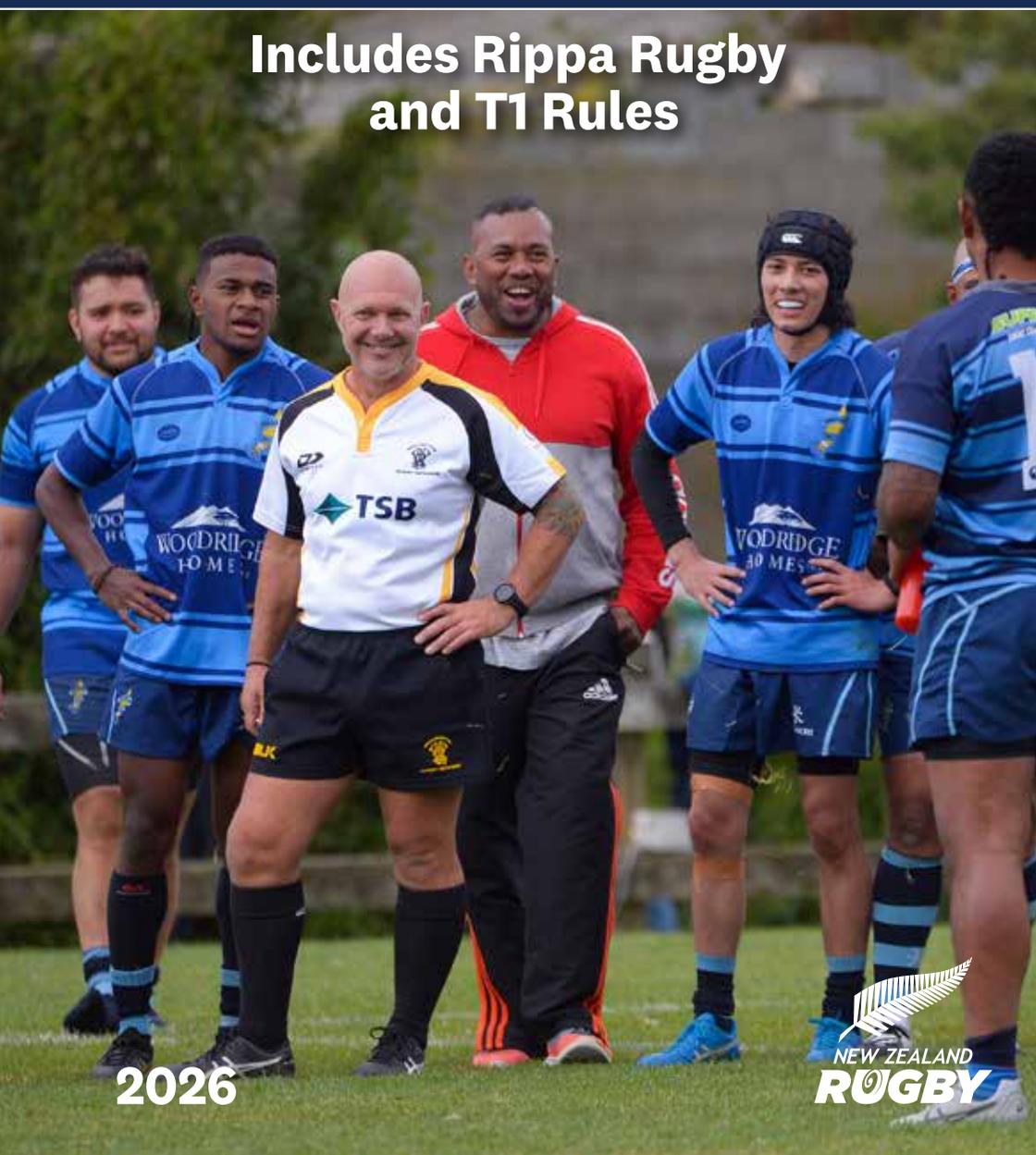


NEW ZEALAND DOMESTIC SAFETY LAW VARIATIONS & SMALL BLACKS LAWS

Includes Rippa Rugby
and T1 Rules



2026


NEW ZEALAND
RUGBY

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DOMESTIC SAFETY LAW VARIATIONS (DSLVS)

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the World Rugby Laws of the Game, a Match Organiser is the administrative body responsible for a rugby match (or a series of rugby matches organised under a tournament or competition) and may be World Rugby, a national rugby union, a group of national rugby unions or any organisation approved by a national rugby union or World Rugby.

NZ Rugby is the Match Organiser for international rugby matches played in New Zealand.

NZ Rugby is also the Match Organiser for the following national rugby competitions:

- Bunnings Warehouse NPC;
- Farah Palmer Cup, presented by Bunnings Warehouse;
- Bunnings Warehouse Heartland Championship;
- Bunnings Warehouse Super Rugby Next Gen;
- Under 85kg National Club Cup; and
- Any other national rugby competition approved by the NZ Rugby Board.

NZ Rugby approves organisations (e.g., the New Zealand Schools' Rugby Union) as Match Organisers for specified rugby matches, tournaments and/or competitions played within specified boundaries. Such organisations may not approve third parties as Match Organisers.

NZ Rugby approves each Provincial Union as the Match Organiser for the provincial rugby matches, tournaments and competitions played in their respective regions.

NZ Rugby delegates to each Provincial Union the authority to approve third parties as Match Organisers for other rugby matches, tournaments or competitions played in the region of the Provincial Union subject to the following conditions:

- The requirement for the participants to be registered members of an affiliated rugby club, school, or approved rugby entity.
- The appointment of suitably qualified match officials (see Law 6).
- Compliance with the New Zealand Domestic Safety Law Variations.
- Compliance with NZ Rugby National Participation Policies, Regulations and Rules.
- Compliance with the NZR Disciplinary Rules (noting the Provincial Union will have jurisdiction and must agree to hear and determine any disciplinary proceedings that arise).
- Any other Provincial Union requirements (eg timing of offering) provided they are not inconsistent with the above requirements.

DOMESTIC SAFETY LAW VARIATIONS

The NZR has approved a number of Domestic Safety Law Variations, from the International Laws of the Game.

These Variations are applicable as set out below:

LAW	TITLE	APPLICATION
Law 3	Team	All levels of Domestic Rugby
	NZR Half Game Rule	All levels of rugby below Secondary School 1st XV including all representative rugby U16 and below
	Sevens Variations	Regional & National tournaments
Law 4	Players' Clothing	All levels of Domestic Rugby
Law 5	Time	All levels of rugby Under 19 years of age and below
Law 6	Match Officials	All levels of Domestic Rugby
Law 8	Scoring	All levels of Domestic Rugby
Law 18	Touch, Quick Throw and Lineout	All levels of Domestic Rugby grades Under 13 and below
Law 19	Scrum	All levels Under 19 and below
		All grades of women's rugby below Premier Grade. At designated levels of adult rugby as determined by the Union having jurisdiction over the competition
	NZR Directive	All levels of Domestic Rugby
Law 20	Penalty and Free-kick	All levels of Domestic Rugby
Appendix 1	Game On	As determined by Provincial Unions

APPLICATION TO VISITING TEAMS FROM OVERSEAS TO NEW ZEALAND

- (a) New Zealand Provincial Unions are encouraged to ensure that the requirements of (b), (c) and (d) below are understood by overseas teams well in advance of their accepting any invitation to play matches in New Zealand.
- (b) All visiting overseas teams (Designated) Premier Grade and above, including teams equating to the New Zealand Under 20 and Provincial Colts, must play under the International Laws of the Game.
- (c) All visiting overseas teams below (Designated) Premier Grade must play under the New Zealand Domestic Safety Law Variations, excepting matches involving National Representative teams, Under-19 and below.
- (d) Re (c) above, all visiting National Under 19 and below tour matches must be played under the World Rugby Under 19 Variations, regardless of the status of the New Zealand team: eg Japan Secondary Schools v Avondale College.

NZR DOMESTIC SAFETY LAW VARIATIONS

LAW 3 Team

APPLICATION

Applicable to all levels of New Zealand domestic rugby.

Does not apply to International and Super Rugby.

DEFINITIONS

Temporary Replacement: A player who temporarily replaces another who leaves the field to have bleeding controlled and/or an open wound covered, or who replaces a front row player who has been temporarily suspended or required to leave the field to obtain a mouthguard.

Permanent Replacement: A player who permanently replaces an injured player or a front row forward who has been ordered off or a player who has been shown a Blue Card.

Secondary School Rugby: All grades of rugby from U14 to U19 inclusive, including all grades played by teams comprising secondary school students (whether representing schools or clubs).

Designated Premier Grade Competitions: Rugby competitions that have been designated as such by the Provincial Union/s (or other organisation, such as a regional secondary school sports authority) having jurisdiction over that competition. For the avoidance of doubt more than one grade may be designated as a Designated Premier Grade Competition.

Game On Provisions: means the provisions set out in Appendix 1.

NUMBERS

2. When a team participating in a Designated Premier Grade Competition is unable to provide at least 15 players for a match (including the number of trained front rowers required by Law, that team shall forfeit the match, and the opposition team will be deemed to have won the match and will receive the winning competition points (without any bonus points). The match may still be played in accordance with the Game on Provisions (without impact on the official match result or competition points).

When a team or teams participating in a competition that is not a Designated Premier Grade Competition or are unable to provide at least 15 players for a match (including at least 3 players who are trained to play in front row positions), but both teams have at least 10 players, the game will proceed in accordance with the Game On Provisions, without any consequence to the match result.

Provincial Unions may vary team numbers in regulations for competitions that are not Designated Premier Grade Competitions to enable teams to participate without the required number of players who are trained to play in front row positions.

DOMESTIC SAFETY LAW VARIATIONS

8. The replacement of a front row forward must come from suitably trained and experienced players who started the match or from the nominated replacements. A player other than a nominated front row player is permitted to play in the front row only when Uncontested Scrums are being played and there are no available front row replacements.

If a team in a Designated Premier Grade Competition nominates 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 or 20 players, it must have a minimum of 3 players trained to play in the front row positions. The 3 nominated players to play in the front row must consist of a Tight Head Prop, a Loose Head Prop, and Hooker.

If a team in a Designated Premier Grade Competition nominates 21 players, it must have a minimum of 4 players who are trained to play in front row positions. The 4 nominated players to play in the front row must consist of a Tight Head Prop, a Loose Head Prop, and Hooker to start the game. The 4th front row player must be able to at least cover 1 or more of these positions. The position or positions that the 4th front row player can cover must be advised to the referee prior to the commencement of the match.

If a team in a Designated Premier Grade Competition nominates 22 players, it must have a minimum of 5 players who are trained to play in front row positions. The 5 nominated players to play in the front row must consist of a Tight Head Prop, a Loose Head Prop, and Hooker to start the game. One of the 2 reserve front row players must be able to at least cover the Hooker position, whilst the other reserve front row player, must be able to at least cover 1 or more of the propping positions. The position or positions that the other front row player can cover must be advised to the referee prior to the commencement of the match.

Provincial Unions may vary the requirement for contested scrums in regulations for competitions that are not Designated Premier Grade Competitions to enable teams to participate without the required number of players who are trained to play in front row positions.

When a team or teams participating in a competition that is not a Designated Premier Grade Competition and is unable to provide sufficient players who are trained to play in front row positions for a match in accordance with (8), the match will proceed with Uncontested Scrums in accordance with the Game On Provisions, without any consequence to the match result.

Prior to the match, in the interests of safety, the referee must have a pre-match briefing with all front row players. Each team must advise the appropriate match officials of their front-row players and possible front-row replacements and which position(s) in the front row they can play. Only these players may play in the front row when the scrum is contested and only in their designated position(s)

10. Prior to the commencement of a match, each team must advise the match officials of the total number of players in their team; the players who are trained to play in front-row positions, and identify the front row positions each of their front-row players can play. Only the front row players advised to match officials pursuant to this law may play in the front row when the scrum is contested. Front row players may only play in the front row position(s) advised to match officials pursuant to this law.

Prior to a match, in the interests of safety, the referee must have a pre-match briefing with all front row players and clarify the scrum set-up and engagement process.

UNCONTESTED SCRUMS

16. If after a front row player has been sent off or during the time a front row player is temporarily suspended or absent from the field to obtain a mouthguard, and there are no further front row players available from the nominated team, then Uncontested Scrums will be ordered. It is not the responsibility of the referee to determine the suitability of trained front row replacements nor their availability, as this is a team responsibility.
- 19-20. After a front row player is sent off or during the time a front row player is temporarily suspended or absent from the field to obtain a mouthguard, the referee, upon awarding the next scrum, will ask that player's captain whether or not the team has another player on the field of play who is suitably trained to play in the front row. If not, the captain chooses any player from that team who then must leave the field of play and be replaced by a suitably trained front row player from the team's replacements. The captain may do this immediately prior to the next scrum or after another player has been tried in the front row.

PERMANENT REPLACEMENT

(THE REFEREE'S POWER TO STOP AN INJURED PLAYER FROM CONTINUING)

- 22.d If the referee believes a player has been concussed or suspects a player has been concussed, the referee must order that player to leave the playing area. That player must not return and play in that match.

PERMANENT REPLACEMENT – RECOGNISE AND REMOVE

24. Without limiting 22.d above, in grades in which Blue Card Concussion Initiatives apply, if the referee believes a player has been concussed, or suspects a player has been concussed, the referee must show a Blue Card to that player, and that player will be required to leave the Playing Area, and not return and play in that match. Further, the player shown a Blue Card may not return to play in any future match without first meeting the requirements for a Graduated Return to Play, as set out in the protocols applicable to the Blue Card Concussion Initiative.

DOMESTIC SAFETY LAW VARIATIONS

Full details of the protocols can be found in the NZR Booklet titled: 'Concussion Management in Community Rugby: (corresponding year)'. Blue Card Concussion Initiative: Protocols & Implementation Procedures for Provincial Unions

33. TACTICAL REPLACEMENTS – JOINING THE MATCH

- A player may be used as a Tactical Replacement only once.
- A tactically replaced player may be used as a permanent or temporary replacement.

Provincial Unions may allow rolling tactical replacements up to 12 for competitions that are not Designated Premier Grade Competitions. The administration and rules relating to rolling replacements are the responsibility of the Provincial Union.

NZR HALF GAME RULE

APPLICATION

Applicable at all levels of domestic rugby below but not including Secondary School 1st XV grades. Includes all representative rugby at Under-16 level and below.

All players in a squad of 22 players or less must play a minimum of half a game each match.

NB: Application of the Half Game Rule is a Team Coach responsibility. Team coaches not complying with the Half Game Rule will be subject to the following sanctions.

Sanction: to be determined by each individual organising body/Provincial Union. New Zealand Rugby recommends:

1. First offence. Formal letter to individual/organisation informing that any future breach will result in disciplinary action.
2. Second offence. Disciplinary hearing with starting point being a one week stand down from coaching for the offender.

LAW 3 VARIATIONS – SEVENS

Team

The NZR Regional and National Sevens tournaments are played under International Sevens Law. International Law assumes the use of the HIA protocol. This HIA protocol does not apply for NZR tournaments, however the Blue Card Concussion Initiative is in place. To this end, the NZR player movement protocol is as follows:

- each team may nominate up to 5 replacement players
- each team may make up to 5 replacements during the match

In addition to the 5 replacements, each team may replace a player who:

- has an open or bleeding wound
- has been injured due to foul play
- has been removed from the field of play having been issued a Blue Card

LAW 4 Players' Clothing

APPLICATION

Applicable to all levels of New Zealand domestic rugby.

Does not apply to International and Super Rugby.

- 3.f The wearing of a mouth guard in an approved manner is compulsory for all players at all levels of New Zealand Domestic Rugby

Sanction:

- The first player observed not wearing a mouth guard is to be penalised under Law 9.7.a (A player must not intentionally infringe any law of the game) and will be issued a Yellow Card.

At this time the referee is to speak to the captain and advise that any further players not wearing a mouth guard will be issued with a Red Card.

- The player Yellow Carded can return to the Field of Play upon expiry of the Temporary Suspension period, but only if the player is wearing a mouth guard.
- If the offending player is unable to return wearing a mouth guard, then that player can be replaced. This will be deemed to be a replacement, and the offending player will not be permitted to return to the field of play under any circumstances.
- If subsequent players from the same team are observed not wearing a mouth guard these players will be issued a Red Card in accordance with Law 9.8 (A team must not repeatedly commit the same offence).
- Any player issued with a Red Card for failing to wear a mouth guard will receive an automatic one match suspension.

DOMESTIC SAFETY LAW VARIATIONS

Note: If a player produces a medical certificate stating they should not wear a mouth guard that player will be exempt from the requirement.

For further information relating to Law 4 Player's Clothing, refer to World Rugby Regulations 17-19 of this book.

LAW 5 Time

1. At Under-19 level and below, each half of a match lasts 35 minutes playing time. Play in a match lasts no longer than 70 minutes. After a total of 70 minutes playing time, the referee must not allow extra time to be played in the case of a drawn match in a knock-out competition.

N.B: 90 minutes is the maximum playing time permitted in one day for players in all grades of rugby Under 19 and below (World Rugby Guideline)

VARIATIONS IN DURATION OF MATCH

The duration of matches in competitions that are not Designated Premier Grade Competitions, that proceed in accordance with the Game on Provisions, may be varied in accordance with Appendix 1, Game On Provisions.

Provincial Unions may reduce the duration of matches in its regulations for competitions that are not Designated Premier Grade Competitions for the purposes of participation development.

LAW 6 Match Officials

Appointment of Match Officials

The match officials must be appointed by the Match Organiser and must all be registered and qualified in accordance with the NZ Rugby Referee Development Framework to control the matches to which they have been appointed.

The authority to appoint the match officials may be delegated to a third party (eg the Provincial Union's Rugby Referees' Association (or equivalent)) by the Match Organiser.

A match official who has not been appointed by the Match Organiser or a delegate of the Match Organiser (as above) has no authority to control the relevant match.

No Match Officials Available

In the event that appointed and registered match officials are not available; the two teams must agree on a referee (who must be qualified in accordance with the NZ Rugby Referee Development Framework) to control the match.

If they cannot agree, the home team appoints a referee (who must be qualified in accordance with the NZ Rugby Referee Development Framework) to control the match.

LAW 8 Scoring

APPLICATION

Applicable to all levels of New Zealand domestic rugby.

Does not apply to International and Super Rugby.

CONVERSION

8.c The use of an approved kicking tee is compulsory for all place kicks at goal.

PENALTY GOAL

24. The use of an approved kicking tee is compulsory for all place kicks at goal.

DOMESTIC SAFETY LAW VARIATIONS

LAW 18 Touch, quick throw and lineout

APPLICATION

Applicable to all levels of New Zealand domestic rugby grades Under 13 and below.

FORMING A LINE-OUT

19. At all levels of domestic rugby grades Under-13 and below, supporting or lifting of the jumper at the lineout is not permitted.

Sanction: Penalty Kick on the 15-metre line

20. Players must not jump before the ball has left the hands of the player throwing in.

Sanction: Free-kick

LAW 19 Scrum

APPLICATION

Applicable to all levels of New Zealand Domestic Rugby grades Under 19 and below.

Applicable to all grades of women's rugby below Premier Grade.

The application of World Rugby International Scrum Laws in adult rugby is at the discretion of the Provincial Union in which the competition is being played.

NZR Guideline:

International scrum law may apply in grades Under 20 and above. It would be normal to expect that teams playing in grades in which this law is applied, are able to comply with requirements at this level of the game. Specifically teams should regularly be able to provide a squad of 22 players, with a minimum of 5 players who are trained to play in the front row.

Secondary Schoolgirls Rugby:

Secondary Schoolgirls competitions may apply contested scrums in all grades including tens and sevens competitions, provided the coaches and front rowers have attended a Front Row Factory course.

FORMING A SCRUM

5-7. In an 8 person scrum the formation must be 3-4-1, with the single player (normally the Number 8) shoving on the 2 locks. The locks must pack with their heads on either side of the hooker.

Exception: A team must have fewer than eight players in its scrum when they cannot field eight suitably trained players due to either not fielding a complete team, or a forward player being sent off or temporarily suspended, or a forward player leaving the field because of injury.

Even allowing for this exception, each team must always have at least five players in a scrum.

If a team is incomplete and it cannot field eight suitably trained players in its scrum, the scrum formation must be as follows:

- If a team is without one forward player, then both teams must use a 3-4 formation (i.e. no No.8).
- If a team is without two forward players, then both teams must use a 3-2-1 formation (i.e. no flankers).
- If a team is without three forward players, then both teams must use a 3-2 formation (i.e. only front rows and locks).

DOMESTIC SAFETY LAW VARIATIONS

- When a normal scrum takes place, the players in the three front row positions and the two lock positions must have been suitably trained for these positions.
- If a team cannot field such suitably trained players because:
 - either they are not available, or
 - a player in one of those five positions is injured or
 - has been sent off or temporarily suspended and no suitably trained replacement is available, then the referee must order Uncontested Scrums.

In an Uncontested Scrum, the teams do not compete for the ball. The team putting in the ball must win it. Neither team is allowed to push the other team away from the mark.

OFF-SIDE AT A SCRUM

APPLICATION

Law Variation 19:30 OFF-SIDE AT A SCRUM only applies to domestic rugby grades Under-13 and below.

30. Once play in the scrum begins, the scrum-half of the team not in possession:
- a. Takes up a position in front of the middle line with either foot while the ball is still in the scrum, that player is offside.

Sanction: Free Kick.

DANGEROUS PLAY AND RESTRICTED PRACTICES IN A SCRUM

38. Other restricted practices at a scrum include:
- g. **Maximum 1.5 metres push.** A team in a scrum must not push the scrum more than 1.5 metres towards their opponents' goal line.
Sanction: Free Kick.
 - h. **Ball must be released from scrum.** A player must not intentionally keep the ball in the scrum once the player's team has heeled the ball and controls it at the base of the scrum.
Sanction: Free Kick.
 - i. **No wheeling.** A team must not intentionally wheel a scrum.

Sanction: Free Kick.

If a wheel reaches 45 degrees, the referee must stop play. If the wheel is unintentional, the referee orders another scrum at the place where the scrum is stopped. The same team throws in the ball.

NZR DIRECTIVE

APPLICATION

All levels of domestic rugby

It is a team responsibility to advise the referee through the Captain if players are trained to play in the front row. If the referee is advised that a player is not trained to play in the front row, then the referee will apply Uncontested Scrums. However in circumstances where a referee is advised that a player is trained to play in the front row and in the opinion of the referee the player is unable to maintain a suitable and safe body position then the referee must in the interests of player safety apply Uncontested Scrums laws. This Directive applies to a front row player who started the match or a replacement front row player.

Penalty: If any of the Uncontested Scrum laws are not complied with, a Penalty Kick must be awarded immediately to the non-offending team.

Contested scrums may be applied in all fixtures refereed by Playing Rugby accredited coaches in the Under-12 grade and Under-13 grade.

NZR Associate Referees are permitted to referee contested scrums in accordance with the laws applicable at all levels of New Zealand Domestic Rugby grades Under 19 and below.

DOMESTIC SAFETY LAW VARIATIONS

LAW 20 Penalty and free-kick

APPLICATION

Applicable to all levels of New Zealand domestic rugby.

Does not apply to International and Super rugby.

TAKING A PENALTY OR FREE KICK

8. The kicker may punt, drop-kick or place-kick (other than for touch) the ball.

The use of an approved kicking tee is compulsory for all place kicks at goal.

APPENDIX 1 – GAME ON PROVISIONS

1. Game On is a flexible game format designed to enable games to proceed with meaningful outcomes despite teams being unable to meet normal team number and/or front row considerations. It applies to all adult club and secondary school rugby competitions that are not Designated Premier Grade Competitions.
2. Game On is only to be used when a team(s) has less than 15 players and/or insufficient players trained to play in front row positions to commence the match.
3. The rules to apply to matches under the Game On Provisions are determined as follows:
 - a. Team Size (when one or both teams has less than 15 players). Playing numbers (from 10 to 15 aside) are determined by agreement between the Teams. In the event of no agreement, the playing numbers will match the number of players of the team with the fewest players.
 - b. Rolling Replacements (Grades above Secondary School Rugby only). Rolling Replacements will be permitted in all games played under the Game On Provisions unless the teams agree that Rolling Replacements will not be used, and notify the referee prior to kick-off. Half Game rule applies to Secondary School Rugby below 1st XV grades.
 - c. Contested or Uncontested Scrums. Subject to availability of a minimum of three players trained to play in front row positions to start in each team, the match will commence with contested scrums, but for the avoidance of doubt will revert to Uncontested Scrums if any of those trained players leave the field.
 - d. Length of match. To be agreed between the teams (with 40 minutes being the minimum and 70 minutes being the maximum for Secondary School Rugby, and 80 minutes being the maximum for grades above Secondary School Rugby). If no agreement is reached, the match duration will be based on team size as follows:

Number	Time	Maximum
10 a side	2 x 20 min halves	40 min
11 aside	2 x 25 min halves	50 min
12 a side	2 x 30 min halves	60min
13/14 a side	2 x 35 min halves	70 min
15 a side	2 x 40 min halves	80 min
(Secondary School Rugby 70 mins max)		



WORLD RUGBY REGULATIONS

SCHEDULE - SPECIFICATIONS RELATING TO PLAYERS' DRESS.

LAW 4 – Players' Clothing

1 ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF CLOTHING

(a) **Shin Guards**

A player may wear shin guards worn under the socks with padding incorporated in non-rigid fabric with no part of the padding thicker than 0.5cm when compressed.

(b) **Fingerless Mitts**

Coverage of the fingers and thumbs be permitted to the outer joint but no further. The mitt zone of coverage should not continue beyond the wrist.

The body of the mitt should be of a stretch type material with the grip material being made of a soft rubber/synthetic compound not exceeding a depth of 1mm.

No part of a mitt should contain buttons or potentially dangerous items.

(c) **Shoulder Pads***

A player may wear shoulder pads, made of soft and thin materials, which may be incorporated in an undergarment or jersey provided that the pads cover the shoulder and collar bone only. No part of the pads may be thicker than 1cm when uncompressed. No part of the pads may have a density of more than 45 kilograms per cubic metre.

(d) **Headgear***

A player may wear headgear made of soft and thin materials provided that no part of the headgear is thicker than 1cm when uncompressed and no part of the headgear has a density of more than 45 kilograms per cubic metre.

(e) **Playing Monitoring Devices**

A player may wear a player monitoring device which complies with the requirements as set out in the World Rugby Performance Specification for Player Monitoring Devices.

2. SPECIAL ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR WOMEN

Breast Padding*

Besides the previous items, women may wear breast pads made of soft and thin materials which may be incorporated as part of a garment provided that the pads cover the shoulder and/or collar bone and/or chest only with no part of the pads thicker than 1cm when uncompressed and no part of the pads having a density of more than 45 kilograms per cubic metre.

3 STUDS

Studs of players' boots must conform to the "Safety Aspects of Rugby Boot Sole Design" set out below. (Schedule 2 hereto)

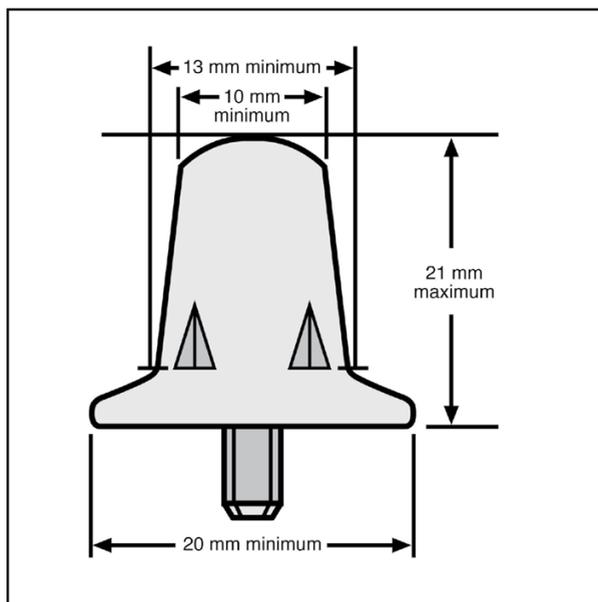
4 BANNED ITEMS OF CLOTHING

- (g) A player must not wear any item of which any part is thicker than 0.5cm when uncompressed or is denser than 45 kilograms per cubic metre unless specified within this Regulation 12/Law 4. Where this overall thickness consists of padded material covered by fabric, 0.5cm is the maximum measured thickness for the combination of the uncompressed padding and the fabric. The fabric can contribute up to a maximum measured thickness of 1 mm on each side of the padding.

SCHEDULE 2

Figure 1. Correct size of stud

Acceptable dimensions for conical or cylindrical studs/ cleats



Also the minimum diameter values together with the maximum length value also defines a "comparator" stud/cleat, made in aluminium, that can be used in performance tests to evaluate alternatively shaped studs/cleats.

EXPERIMENTAL DSLVs

EXPERIMENTAL DSLVs

NZR introduced Several Experimental Domestic Safety Law Variations (EDSLVs) as trial laws in the 2022 season, which Provincial Unions had to implement. These EDSLVs have been approved for a further two years of trial. This aligns with World Rugby and many other rugby playing nations globally.

SMALL BLACKS

TACKLE

Trial

All tackles must target, and initially contact below the sternum. i.e., “the tummy” or below – Sanction PK

If a second tackler arrives, this player will be subject to the Small Black high tackle rugby law (below the line of the armpits of the ball carrier) – Sanction PK

If two or more tacklers arrive at the same time, at least one must target, and initially contact below the sternum i.e., “the tummy” or below, whilst the other/s will be subject to the existing Small Black high tackle rugby law (below the line of the armpits of the ball carrier) – Sanction PK

Why

The lowering of the tackle height is intended to reduce the incidence of injuries in the tackle.

Community rugby participants have told New Zealand Rugby they want improvements made to the tackle. Feedback from community grades trialling the reduced tackle height in the 2022 season found that 78% of participants believed it improved the tackler’s safety, 72% thought there were more opportunities for offloads and 73% felt it made the game faster.

Potential Benefits

Improved safety for both the tackled player and tackler, greater confidence when taking contact for tacklers and tackled players, more effective tackle technique, more opportunity for the defensive side to contest for the ball after the tackle has been made.

More offloads in the tackle and, consequently, a faster game

Who

All Small Blacks grades that tackle.

TEENAGE

TACKLE

Trial

All tackles must target, and initially contact below the sternum. i.e., “the tummy” or below – Sanction PK

If a second tackler arrives, this player will be subject to the standard high tackle rugby law (no higher than the shoulder line of the ball carrier) – Sanction PK

If two or more tacklers arrive at the same time, at least one must target and initially contact below the sternum i.e., “the tummy” or below, whilst the other/s will be subject to the existing high tackle rugby law (no higher than the shoulder line of the ball carrier) – Sanction PK.

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Improved safety for both tackled player and tackler, greater confidence when taking contact for tacklers and tackled players, more effective tackle technique, more opportunity for the defensive side to contest for the ball after the tackle has been made.

More offloads in the tackle and, consequently, a faster game

Who

All secondary school and teenage rugby grades.

OFFSIDE AT SCRUM

Trial

If the halfback of the team not in possession of the ball at a scrum opts to stay in a position at the tunnel, they must remain within 1 m of the scrum and may not advance past the tunnel until the scrum has ended – Sanction PK

Why

Promote positive play

EXPERIMENTAL DSLVs

Potential Benefits

Provides faster and cleaner ball, without disruption and allows No. 8 and 9 moves to take place more freely

Who

All grades of secondary school/teenage rugby

SENIOR/CLUB

TACKLE

Trial

All tackles must target, and initially contact below the sternum. i.e., “the tummy” or below – Sanction PK

If a second tackler arrives, this player will be subject to the standard high tackle rugby law (no higher than the shoulder line of the ball carrier) – Sanction PK

If two or more tacklers arrive at the same time, at least one must target and initially contact below the sternum i.e., “the tummy” or below, whilst the other/s will be subject to the existing high tackle rugby law (no higher than the shoulder line of the ball carrier) – Sanction PK.

Why

The lowering of the tackle height is intended to reduce the incidence of injuries in the tackle.

Community rugby participants have told New Zealand Rugby they want improvements made to the tackle. Feedback from community grades trialling the reduced tackle height in the 2022 season found that 78% of participants believed it improved the tackler’s safety, 72% thought there were more opportunities for offloads and 73% felt it made the game faster.

Potential Benefits

Improved safety for both tackled player and tackler, greater confidence when taking contact for tacklers and tackled players, more effective tackle technique, more opportunity for the defensive side to contest for the ball after the tackle has been made.

More offloads in the tackle and, consequently, a faster game

Who

All senior/club grades.

OFFSIDE AT SCRUM

Trial

If the halfback of the team not in possession of the ball at a scrum opts to stay in a position at the tunnel, they must remain within 1 m of the scrum and may not advance past the tunnel until the scrum has ended – Sanction PK

Why

Promote positive play

Potential Benefits

Provides faster and cleaner ball without disruption and allows No. 8 and 9 moves to take place more freely.

Who

All grades of senior/club rugby.

SCRUM 1.5m PUSH

Trial

1.5m maximum push unless within 5m of the goal line – Sanction FK

Why

Improve scrum stability and reduce the frequency of resets.

Potential Benefits

Reduced risk of scrum injuries, reduced ability to scrum for penalties, and increased ball in-play time.

Who

All adult non-premier designated rugby

EXPERIMENTAL DSLVs

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ON THE TACKLE

Note 1: WR high tackle process applies. (Also see Note 3.)

Note 2: All players attempting to make a tackle must attempt to grasp the tackled player i.e., use the arms to “wrap” and grasp the player while making the tackle.

Note 3: Where the ball carrier lowers their torso into the tackler and foreshortens the tackle zone available to a front-on tackler, the ball carrier is deemed to have significantly lowered their body height. The requirement on the tackler is to ensure there is no contact with the neck or head of the tackled player.

LAW 9 Foul Play

30. If a player receives a Red Card, they may be replaced after 20 minutes by another player. The 20 minutes from when a player is Red Carded to when they may be replaced is measured as "game time". This follows the same measurement of time already in place for a Yellow Carded player in the sin bin (which means the sin bin clock is stopped when the game clock is stopped).

If a player receives a Yellow Card and is temporarily suspended for 10 minutes, then returns to the field after serving their 10 minutes and subsequently receives a second Yellow Card which equates to an automatic Red Card, after a further 20 minutes, the Red Carded player can be replaced.

A player who has been tactically replaced, is able to return to the field to replace a Red Carded player. If there are unused replacements (e.g. #22) still sitting on the bench, they do not have to be used to replace a Red Carded player before using players who have already been replaced tactically (e.g. #12).

If a player receives a Red Card and all 7 replacements have already been used, then any players who have been tactically replaced can then replace the Red Carded player after 20 minutes (note players replaced due to injury are not permitted to replace a Red Carded player).

SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL LAWS

INTRODUCING THE SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

THE WAY TO PLAY

Rugby is a dynamic and exciting sport that is a whole lot of fun, and helps develop friendships that can last a lifetime. Small Blacks Rugby field sizes and team sizes are expertly scaled to create a safer, more exciting game where kids enjoy more touches, more action, and more fun. This approach ensures skill development grows in step with how young players learn, move, and engage — helping every child build confidence, develop their skills, and stay in the game for years to come

DIFFERENT AGES, DIFFERENT STAGES

These Laws clearly explain the Small Blacks Development model for coaches, parents and Small Blacks players. It contains easy to follow guidelines on how the game is to be played at each age. The Model has been designed to ensure that all kids who graduate from the Small Blacks programme have the best possible skill set to take them through their rugby career.

NZR HALF GAME RULE

NZR has introduced a half game rule at all levels of domestic rugby below but not including Secondary School 1st XV grades. Refer DSLV Law.

At all levels of Small Blacks Rugby all players must play a minimum of half a game (this is to include two full quarters). In Small Blacks Rugby the referee may allow a replacement break half way through each half. This replacement break should be no longer than one minute and the time taken will be added on at the end of each half. The replacement break should normally be taken after a score or when the ball is out of play near the half way line.

CODES OF CONDUCT

PLAYER CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

- 1 Play for enjoyment.
- 2 Play hard but fair.
- 3 Play by the laws of the game.
- 4 Be committed to your team.
Attend all practices and matches.
- 5 Never argue with the referee.
Control your temper at all times.
- 6 Work equally hard for yourself and your team.
- 7 Be a good sport. Applaud all good play whether by your team or your opponent.
- 8 Remember the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good.

COACH CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

- 1 Positively reinforce the actions of players.
- 2 Lead by example.
- 3 Be honest with yourself and players.
- 4 Create an enjoyable environment in which to play the game.
- 5 Develop team respect for referees.
- 6 Give all players the opportunity to participate in the game.
- 7 Insist on fair play and discipline.
- 8 Be reasonable on the demand on players' time, energy and enthusiasm.
- 9 Encourage sportsmanship.

SPECTATOR/PARENT CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

- 1 Applaud the performance of both teams.
- 2 Be positive with the referee.
- 3 Acknowledge the efforts of the referee.
- 4 Let players play their game, not your game.
- 5 Praise efforts, not results.
- 6 Set an example for the players.

BEGINNING RUGBY LAWS YEAR 1/ UNDER 6 - YEAR 2/UNDER 7

These laws complement laws outlined in the Small Blacks Development Model.

SCORING/RESTART

- A try is scored by grounding the ball on or over the goal line.
- The non-scoring team will restart play with a tap kick at halfway.
- The opposing team will be back five metres from halfway.

TACKLE

- A tackle occurs when a tag is ripped/removed from an opponents waist. (Rippa Rugby.)
- The ball carrier must pass the ball within three steps of the tackle/rip occurring.
- The referee will penalise the player if they continue to run after a tackle/rip.
- NO FENDING, BARGING OR PUSHING PERMITTED.

OFFSIDE

- In general play, players are in an offside position when they are in front of the ball when it was last played by a teammate.
- The referee will encourage the ball carrier to continue when players tackle/rip from an offside position.

PENALTY TAP KICK

- The referee will award a penalty tap kick for pushing, fending, taking the ball from the ball carrier's hands, or continuing to run after a tackle/rip. (Free pass for Rippa Rugby.)
- The defending team will be back five metres from the infringement mark.
- The ball must be passed from the tap.
- All penalties are tapped on the ground.

KNOCK-ON, FORWARD PASS

- Referees are to apply the advantage law generously to foster a free-flowing game.

APPOINTMENT OF THE REFEREE

- The home team will provide a referee or Beginning Rugby referee to officiate.
- If no referee or Beginning Rugby referee from the home team is available, then a referee or Beginning Rugby referee from the visiting team will officiate.
- It is recommended that one referee control the entire match.

COACHES ON FIELD

A maximum of two coaches per team will be permitted on the field at any one time.

SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL YEARS 1 & 2 / UNDER 6 & 7

SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

YEARS 1 & 2 / UNDER 6 & 7

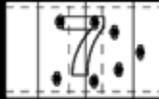
FIELD SIZE

¼ field = 40m x 27.5m max. Use small post at ends if available.



NUMBERS PER TEAM

7-a-side. If a team doesn't have enough players to start a game, it should then be played with equal numbers.



GAME LENGTH

4 x 10 minutes maximum.



REFEREE

Beginning coach.



BALL SIZE

Size 2.5 or 3 balls.



KICKING

No kicking in general play.



TACKLE (RIP)

When 'rip' is made, player passes the ball. Ripper flags should be 33cm x 5cm.



RESTART

Tap and pass to be rotated through all players.



PENALTY

Tap and pass.



TRY

If score blow-outs are occurring (ie 35+ at halftime), both coaches MUST meet and come to an agreement as to how they can generate a more even contest. Try = 5 pts.



LEARNING RUGBY LAWS YEAR 3/UNDER 8

These laws complement laws outlined in the Small Blacks Development Model.

SCORING/RESTART

- A try is scored by grounding the ball on or over the goal line.
- Tap and pass to be rotated through all players
- Under 8 only - The non-scoring team will restart play with a tap kick from halfway.
- The opposing team will be back five metres from halfway.

TACKLE

- A player must not tackle an opponent whose feet are off the ground.
- The tackled player must release the ball when either the player or the ball is grounded.

RUCK AND MAUL

- Players must not join from the side.
- Players must be bound to the maul or behind the last player.
- Players must not collapse a maul.

PENALTY TAP KICK

- The defending team will be five metres back from the infringement mark.
- All penalties are tapped on the ground, except U11 grade, where normal laws apply.

RUGBY LAWS

- All other domestic safety law variations apply.

APPOINTMENT OF THE REFEREE

- The home team will provide a referee or Learning Rugby referee to officiate.
- If no referee or Learning Rugby referee from the home team is available, then a referee or Learning Rugby referee from the visiting team will officiate.
- It is recommended that one referee will control the entire match.

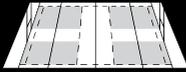
SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL YEAR 3 / UNDER 8

SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

YEAR 3 / UNDER 8

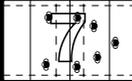
FIELD SIZE

¼ field = 40m x 27.5m max. Use small post at ends if available.



NUMBERS PER TEAM

7-a-side. If a team doesn't have enough players to start a game, it should then be played with equal numbers.



GAME LENGTH

2 x 25 minutes maximum.



REFEREE

Beginning coach.



BALL SIZE

Size 3 balls.



KICKING

Encourage running and passing play.



TACKLE

No fending to the head, face or neck regions. Tackle must be below the sternum.



RESTART

Tap and pass to be rotated through all players.



PENALTY

Tap and pass.



TRY

If score blow-outs are occurring (ie 35+ at halftime), both coaches **MUST** meet and come to an agreement as to how they can generate a more even contest. Try = 5 pts.



SUBS

All players must play a minimum of half a game (this is to include at least two full quarters). Rolling substitutions are not permitted. Substitutions may be made at half or quarter time.



LEARNING RUGBY LAWS YEAR 4/UNDER 9

These laws complement laws outlined in the Small Blacks Development Model.

SCORING/RESTART

- A try is scored by grounding the ball on or over the goal line.
- Tap and pass to be rotated through all players
- Under 8 only - The non-scoring team will restart play with a tap kick from halfway.
- The opposing team will be back five metres from halfway.

TACKLE

- A player must not tackle an opponent whose feet are off the ground.
- The tackled player must release the ball when either the player or the ball is grounded.

RUCK AND MAUL

- Players must not join from the side.
- Players must be bound to the maul or behind the last player.
- Players must not collapse a maul.

PENALTY TAP KICK

- The defending team will be five metres back from the infringement mark.
- All penalties are tapped on the ground, except U11 grade, where normal laws apply.

RUGBY LAWS

- All other domestic safety law variations apply.

APPOINTMENT OF THE REFEREE

- The home team will provide a referee or Learning Rugby referee to officiate.
- If no referee or Learning Rugby referee from the home team is available, then a referee or Learning Rugby referee from the visiting team will officiate.
- It is recommended that one referee will control the entire match.

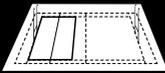
SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL YEAR 4 / UNDER 9

SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

YEAR 4 / UNDER 9

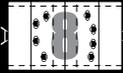
FIELD SIZE

Goal to 10m (across the field). Portable goalposts recommended. Full size posts on sideline need bolsters.



NUMBERS PER TEAM

9-a-side. If a team doesn't have enough players to start a game, it should then be played with equal numbers.



GAME LENGTH

2 x 25 minutes maximum.



REFEREE

If no Learning Rugby referee, no tackling.



BALL SIZE

Size 3 balls.



KICKING

Encourage running and passing.



TACKLE

No fending to the head, face or neck regions. Tackle must be below the sternum.



RESTART

Tap and pass to be rotated through all players.



PENALTY

Tap and pass.



TRY

If score blow-outs are occurring (ie 35+ at halftime), both coaches MUST meet and come to an agreement as to how they can generate a more even contest. Try = 5 pts.



SUBS

All players must play a minimum of half a game (this is to include at least two full quarters). Rolling substitutions are not permitted. Substitutions may be made at half or quarter time.



LEARNING RUGBY LAWS YEAR 5/UNDER 10

These laws complement laws outlined in the Small Blacks Development Model.

SCORING/RESTART

- A try is scored by grounding the ball on or over the goal line.
- Tap and pass to be rotated through all players
- Under 8 only - The non-scoring team will restart play with a tap kick from halfway.
- The opposing team will be back five metres from halfway.

TACKLE

- A player must not tackle an opponent whose feet are off the ground.
- The tackled player must release the ball when either the player or the ball is grounded.

RUCK AND MAUL

- Players must not join from the side.
- Players must be bound to the maul or behind the last player.
- Players must not collapse a maul.

PENALTY TAP KICK

- The defending team will be five metres back from the infringement mark.
- All penalties are tapped on the ground, except U11 grade, where normal laws apply.

RUGBY LAWS

- All other domestic safety law variations apply.

APPOINTMENT OF THE REFEREE

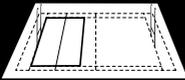
- The home team will provide a referee or Learning Rugby referee to officiate.
- If no referee or Learning Rugby referee from the home team is available, then a referee or Learning Rugby referee from the visiting team will officiate.
- It is recommended that one referee will control the entire match.

SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

YEAR 5 / UNDER 10

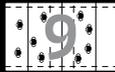
FIELD SIZE

Goal to 10m (across the field). Portable goalposts recommended. Full size posts on sideline need bolsters.



NUMBERS PER TEAM

9-a-side. If a team doesn't have enough players to start a game, it should then be played with equal numbers.



GAME LENGTH

2 x 25 minutes maximum.



REFEREE

If no Learning Rugby referee, no tackling.



BALL SIZE

Size 3 balls.



KICKING

Encourage running and passing.



TACKLE

No fending to the head, face or neck regions. Tackle must be below the sternum.



RESTART

Tap and pass to be rotated through all players.



PENALTY

Tap and pass.



TRY

If score blow-outs are occurring (ie 35+ at halftime), both coaches **MUST** meet and come to an agreement as to how they can generate a more even contest. Try = 5 pts.



SUBS

All players must play a minimum of half a game (this is to include at least two full quarters). Rolling substitutions are not permitted. Substitutions may be made at half or quarter time.



LEARNING RUGBY LAWS YEAR 6/UNDER 11

These laws complement laws outlined in the Small Blacks Development Model.

SCORING/RESTART

- A try is scored by grounding the ball on or over the goal line.
- The scoring team will restart play with a punt or drop kick from halfway.
- The opposing team will be back five metres from halfway.

TACKLE

- A player must not tackle an opponent whose feet are off the ground.
- The tackled player must release the ball when either the player or the ball is grounded.

SCRUM

- The side throwing the ball in to the scrum wins the ball, i.e. no contest and no pushing.
- The opposing team cannot advance until the halfback has played the ball.
- There is an offside line five metres behind the hindmost feet of the scrum.
- The opposing halfback must not advance past the middle line i.e. tunnel.

LINEOUT

- The side throwing the ball in to the lineout wins the ball, except the U11 grade. If the ball is not caught or goes over the back, the ball becomes "fair game".
- If the throw isn't straight, advantage applies to the non-offending team, otherwise normal law applies.
- The two lines of players must be one metre apart.
- Backlines must stand five metres from the line of touch (centre line).

RUCK AND MAUL

- Players must not join from the side.
- Players must be bound to the maul or behind the last player.
- Players must not collapse a maul.

PENALTY TAP KICK

- The defending team will be five metres back from the infringement mark.
- All penalties are tapped on the ground, except U11 grade, where normal laws apply.

RUGBY LAWS

- All other domestic safety law variations apply.

APPOINTMENT OF THE REFEREE

- The home team will provide a referee or Learning Rugby referee to officiate.
- If no referee or Learning Rugby referee from the home team is available, then a referee or Learning Rugby referee from the visiting team will officiate.
- It is recommended that one referee will control the entire match.

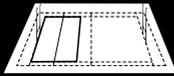
SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL YEAR 6 / UNDER 11

SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

YEAR 6 / UNDER 11

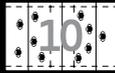
FIELD SIZE

Goal to 10m (across the field). Portable goalposts recommended. Full size posts on sideline need bolsters.



NUMBERS PER TEAM

10-a-side. If a team doesn't have enough players to start a game, it should then be played with equal numbers.



TACKLE

No fending to the head, face or neck regions. Tackle must be below the sternum.



PENALTY

Tap and pass.



BALL SIZE

Size 3 balls.



GAME LENGTH

2 x 25 minutes maximum.



REFEREE

If no Learning Rugby referee, no tackling.



KICK-OFF

Punt or drop kick by scoring side. Kick offs to be rotated through all players.



KICKING

Encourage running and passing.



LINEOUT

Always 5 in lineout. There is to be no lineout lifting at any level.



SCRUM

Always 5 in scrum. No contest and no pushing.



TRY

If score blow-outs are occurring (ie 35+ at halftime), both coaches MUST meet and come to an agreement as to how they can generate a more even contest. Try = 5 pts.



SUBS

All players must play a minimum of half a game (this is to include at least two full quarters). Rolling substitutions are not permitted. Substitutions may be made at half or quarter time.



PLAYING RUGBY LAWS YEAR 7/UNDER 12 - YEAR 8/UNDER 13

These laws complement laws outlined in the Small Blacks Development Model.

SCORING/RESTART

- A try is scored by grounding the ball on or over the goal line.
- The non-scoring team will restart play with a drop kick from halfway.
- The opposing team will be back 10 metres from halfway.

TACKLE

- A player must not tackle an opponent whose feet are off the ground.
- The tackled player must release the ball when either the player or the ball is grounded.

SCRUM

- The opposing team cannot advance until the halfback has played the ball.
- The opposing halfback must not advance past the middle line i.e. tunnel.
- There is an offside line five metres behind the hindmost feet of the scrum
- The push is limited to half a meter maximum.

LINEOUT

- The two lines of players must be one metre apart.
- Backline must stand 10 metres from the centre line.
- If the throw isn't straight, advantage applies to the non-offending team, otherwise normal law applies.

RUCK AND MAUL

- Players must not join from the side.
- Players must be bound to the maul or behind the last player.

- Players must not collapse a maul.

PENALTIES

- The defending team will be 10 metres back from the infringement mark.

RUGBY LAWS

- All other domestic safety law variations apply.

APPOINTMENT OF THE REFEREE

- The home team will provide a referee or Learning Rugby referee to officiate.
- If no referee or Playing Rugby referee from the home team is available, then a referee or Playing Rugby referee from the visiting team will officiate.
- It is recommended that one referee will control the entire match.

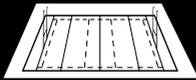
SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL YEARS 7 & 8 / UNDER 12 & 13

SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

YEARS 7 & 8 / UNDER 12 & 13

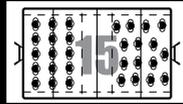
FIELD SIZE

15s must be full field.



NUMBERS PER TEAM

15-a-side. If a team doesn't have enough players to start a game, it should then be played with equal numbers.



GAME LENGTH

2 x 30 minutes maximum.



LINEOUT

Always 8 in a lineout. There is to be no lineout lifting at any level.



BALL SIZE

Size 4 balls.



KICKING

Encourage running and passing.



REFEREE

If no Playing Rugby referee, no tackling.



KICK-OFF

Normal.



PENALTY

Normal options apply.



TRY

If score blow-outs are occurring (ie 35+ at halftime), both coaches **MUST** meet and come to an agreement as to how they can generate a more even contest. Try = 5 pts.



TACKLE

No fending to the head, face or neck regions. Tackle must be below the sternum.



CONVERSION

Conversions not to be taken further out than the 15m line.



SUBS

All players must play a minimum of half a game (this is to include at least two full quarters). Rolling substitutions are not permitted. Substitutions may be made at half or quarter time.



SCRUM

Always 8 in scrum. Contest and pushing. The push is limited to half a metre maximum. Safety is paramount. A 'Scrum Factory' must be carried out by all U12 coaches.



NZR RIPPA RULES

RIPPA RULES

These rules are the official New Zealand Rugby Rippa Rules enforced and applied at the New Zealand Rugby Rippa Championship. It is understood and appreciated that there is a need for flexibility at this level and form of the game, particularly in the playing of club competitions. Accordingly, the recommended variations for club competitions are identified. However at local qualifying tournaments for the NZ Rippa Rugby Championship all Provincial Unions must strictly enforce and apply the New Zealand Rugby Rippa Rules.

Club competition recommended variations:

RULES FOR THE PLAYING OF RIPPA RUGBY

1.0 PLAYING AREA

- 1.1 The playing area will not exceed 70 metres in length and 40 metres in width.
- 1.2 The playing area will be clearly marked.
- 1.3 The seven players on a team will be the only people entitled to be on the playing area during a game. Coaches, substitutes and spectators must not be on the playing area during a game.

2.0 DURATION OF PLAY

- 2.1 A game is made up of two halves of seven minutes (15 minutes) each.
- 2.2 There will be a two minute interval between the two halves.
- 2.3 After half time the teams will change ends.
- 2.4 A half can only end at the next stoppage in play after seven minutes.
- 2.5 A half cannot end on a penalty. If a penalty is signalled the team awarded the penalty shall be entitled to a free pass and the game will continue until the next stoppage in play.
- 2.6 A rip is not a stoppage in play.

3.0 NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- 3.1 There will be no more than ten players in each team.
- 3.2 Each team must contain five boys and five girls (Variations may apply in club competitions).
- 3.3 Games will be played with seven players on the playing area at any one time.
- 3.4 At least three girls must be on the playing area at all times. (Variations may apply in club competitions).

3.5 Except in the case of injury or a sending off, every player must play at least one half of each game.

4.0 SUBSTITUTES

4.1 Substitutes can only be made at half time except in the case of injury defined in 4.2. *(In club competitions substitutions can be made in either half, but only when the ball is out of play)*

4.2 An injured player can be substituted but only once the injured player has left the playing area. Any substitution of an injured player must be approved by the referee, and an injured player who has been substituted cannot rejoin the game.

4.3 Players who are substituted at half time may rejoin the game when replacing an injured player under Rule 4.2.

5.0 REFEREES

5.1 The referee for each match will be appointed by the tournament organiser.

5.2 The referee will carry a whistle.

5.3 The referee will shout, "PASS!" when a rip has been made, and "TURNOVER!" after a sixth rip.

5.4 The referee will blow the whistle to signal the start of the two halves or when play is to stop.

5.5 The referee will signal to the team who is starting with a free pass, by pointing with an outstretched arm towards that team.

6.0 THE RIPPA BELT

6.1 The belt is adjusted to fit the waist of the player and fastened so that two flags hang, one from each side.

6.2 Velcro attaches the flags so they are positioned one on each hip.

6.3 Care needs to be taken to ensure that for safety the tail of the belt is tucked away.

6.4 Each team is distinguished by the colour of the flags they wear.

6.5 The belt must be worn outside the clothing, shirts tucked in and flags free so they can be ripped off.

6.6 If a player accidentally loses a flag when they have the ball, the game will be stopped to allow the player to replace the flag. Once the flag has been replaced the game will restart with a free pass by the player in possession. The stoppage will not count towards the rip count.

NZ RUGBY RIPPA RULES

7.0 ATTACKERS

- 7.1 The ball carrier cannot fend defenders off using their hands, or the ball.
- 7.2 The ball carrier cannot guard or shield their flags in any way.

8.0 DEFENDERS (RIPPERS)

- 8.1 There is no contact in Rippa Rugby. Defenders (Rippers) ripping the flag off the belt of the ball carrier stops the ball carrier's progress.
- 8.2 Defenders (Rippers) cannot physically touch the ball carrier.

9.0 STARTING PLAY

- 9.1 One team starts each half of the game from the centre of the field with a free pass.
- 9.2 When a try is scored, the non-scoring team starts at the centre of the field with a free pass.

10.0 FREE PASS

- 10.1 To make a free pass, the player making the pass starts with the ball on the ground, moves the ball slightly forward using the side of their foot, then picks up the ball and passes the ball backwards to a member of their own team.
- 10.2 The Defenders (Rippers) must remain five metres back from the player making the free pass. They cannot start moving forward until the ball leaves the hands of the player making the free pass.
- 10.3 A free pass is also used to restart play at any time that play has halted and needs to be restarted.
- 10.4 If the ball travels out of the field of play, the game is restarted with a free pass to the opponents of the side that was last to touch it immediately prior to the ball travelling out of play.
- 10.5 Free passes cannot take place less than five metres from the try line.
- 10.6 A free pass is also awarded to the non-offending team when their opposition infringes the rules, such as a forward pass, an offside or for not returning the flag to the ripped player.

11.0 RIP

- 11.1 To complete a rip one of the two flags from the ball carrier's belt must be removed.
- 11.2 The only person who can be ripped is the ball carrier.
- 11.3 The Defender (Ripper) must stop, hold the flag above their head and shout "RIP!"

- 11.4 The ball carrier must then pass the ball immediately (within three strides). He or she does not have to stop, return to the mark or roll the ball between their legs.
- 11.5 Six rips in a row leads to a turnover in possession.
- 11.6 After the ball carrier has passed the ball the Defender (Ripper) must hand the flag back to the player who then reattaches it to their belt before they rejoin play. If either of these players doesn't adhere to this, they will be penalized and a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending team at the place of the infringement.
- 11.7 If a player is ripped before the try line and doesn't pass before they get over the line, they restart play five metres out from the try line with a free pass.
- 11.8 Restarting the rip count occurs when there is a turnover or when either team is penalised.
- 11.9 If a player is 'in the act' of scoring a try and is ripped, the try is counted.

12.0 KNOCK ON

- 12.1 When a player knocks the ball towards the opponents' try line and does not regain control of the ball before it touches the ground, another player or the referee, a free pass is awarded to the non-offending team unless an advantage occurs.

13.0 OFFSIDE

- 13.1 Offside only occurs at a rip.
- 13.2 When a rip is made, all players from the Defender's (Ripper's) team must get back until they are behind where the rip was made. Failure to do so results in a free pass to the team in possession and the rip count will restart at zero.
- 13.3 If a player is offside and they intercept, prevent or slow down a pass, they will be penalized and a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending team, unless an advantage can be played.

14.0 PASSING THE BALL

- 14.1 The ball can only be passed by the ball carrier in a backwards direction.
- 14.2 Attackers must not pass the ball forward, towards the Defenders' (Rippers') try line.
- 14.3 Attackers cannot hand the ball to another Attacker.
- 14.4 A free pass will be awarded to the opposition if an Attacker passes the ball forward or hands the ball to another Attacker.
- 14.5 If the ball is not caught to conclude a pass but is not knocked on, play can continue.

NZ RUGBY RIPPA RULES

15.0 KICKING

15.1 There is no kicking of any kind in Rippa Rugby.

16.0 ADVANTAGE

- 16.1 Not stopping the game when an infringement happens is called 'advantage'.
- 16.2 Referees should play 'advantage' to the non-offending team if there is any chance that team may gain an advantage by there being no stoppage in play. i.e. if the non-offending team gains possession of the ball or retains the ball in circumstances that are more favourable than if the referee ruled a free pass.
- 16.3 The referee should call 'advantage' followed by 'advantage over' if an advantage is deemed to have occurred.
- 16.4 If no advantage occurs within a reasonable period, play restarts with a free pass.

17.0 GOING TO GROUND

- 17.1 Subject to 17.2, if the ball carrier intentionally goes to ground or a player dives on the ball, a free pass is awarded to the opposition.
- 17.2 Players can dive for a try or dive on the ball for a try.

18.0 FAIR PLAY

- 18.1 All players must play games in a positive spirit following the principles of good sportsmanship.
- 18.2 In instances of verbal abuse, physical abuse, poor sportsmanship, intentional offending, repeated offending or any other actions deemed unfair play, dangerous play or misconduct, a referee may send a player from the playing area.
- 18.3 If a player is sent from the playing area by the referee under 18.2 they must remain off for the remainder of that game. However, that player can be replaced by another player who has not been sent off.
- 18.4 There shall be no intentional physical contact between players.

KEY POINTS

- Referees clearly call the “RIP” and the rip number
- Players must pass within three steps of a rip
- Ball must be passed backwards
- A knock on or forward pass results in a handover to the other team
- Penalties and restarts start with a free kick
- The ball must be forced on the ground for a try, just like rugby
- Play as much advantage as possible
- Free kicks to restart play must have the ball placed on the ground, released and tapped with the foot
- Spinning to avoid a rip is ok but continuous spinning is not allowed

Rip Rugby Rules

RULES FOR RIP RUGBY RULES

1.0 PLAYING AREA

- 1.1 The playing area will be approximately 70 metres in length and approximately 40 metres in width.
- 1.2 The playing area will be clearly marked.
- 1.3 The seven players on a team and the referee will be the only people entitled to be on the playing area during a game. Coaches, substitutes and spectators must not be on the playing area during a game.

2.0 DURATION OF PLAY

- 2.1 A game is usually made up of four quarters of five minutes each. 20 minutes in total. (In Small Blacks grades, follow the time set for each age band).
- 2.2 There will be a one minute interval at each quarter for substitutions.
- 2.3 After half time the teams will change ends.
- 2.4 A quarter can only end at the next stoppage in play .
- 2.5 A half cannot end on a penalty. If a penalty is signalled, the team awarded the penalty shall be entitled to a free pass and the game will continue until the next stoppage in play.
- 2.6 A rip is not a stoppage in play.

3.0 NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- 3.1 The game is played between teams of equal numbers of players.
- 3.2 Seven is ideal.
- 3.3 Except in the case of injury or a sending off, every player must play at least two quarters of each game.

4.0 SUBSTITUTES

- 4.1 Substitutions must be made at quarter time except in the case of injury defined in 4.2.
- 4.2 An injured player can be substituted but only once the injured player has left the playing area.

Any substitution of an injured player must be approved by the referee, and an injured player who has been substituted cannot re-join the game.
- 4.3 Players who are substituted at any quarter time may re-join the game when replacing an injured player under Rule 4.2.

5.0 REFEREES

RIP RUGBY RULES

- 5.1 The referee for each match will be agreed upon and appointed by the two teams.
- 5.2 The referee should have a whistle.
- 5.3 The referee will shout, "PASS!" when a rip has been made, and "TURNOVER!" after a fourth rip.
- 5.4 The referee will blow the whistle to signal the start of the four quarters or when play is to stop.
- 5.5 The referee will signal to the team who is starting with a free pass by pointing with an outstretched arm towards that team.

6.0 THE RIP RUGBY BELT

- 6.1 The belt is adjusted to fit the waist of the player and fastened so that two flags hang – one from each side.
- 6.2 Velcro attaches the flags so they are positioned on each hip.
- 6.3 Care needs to be taken to ensure that for safety the tail of the belt is tucked away.
- 6.4 Each team is distinguished by the colour of the flags they wear.
- 6.5 The belt must be worn outside the clothing, shirts tucked in and flags free so they can be ripped off.
- 6.6 If a player accidentally loses a flag when they have the ball, the game will be stopped to allow the player to replace the flag. Once the flag has been replaced the game will restart with a free pass by the player in possession. The stoppage will not count towards the rip count.

7.0 ATTACKERS

- 7.1. The ball carrier cannot fend defenders off using their hands, or the ball.
- 7.2. The ball carrier cannot guard or shield their flags in any way. A player can spin once (360) in a movement (no helicopters).

8.0 DEFENDERS (RIPPERS)

- 8.1 There is no contact in Rip Rugby. Defenders (Rippers) ripping the flag off the belt of the ball carrier stops the ball carrier's progress.
- 8.2 Defenders (Rippers) cannot physically touch the ball carrier.

9.0 STARTING PLAY

- 9.1 One team start/restarts the match from the centre of the field with a punt kick if U9 above, otherwise it's a tap and pass. Great if Kick-offs rotated through all players.

- 9.2 Kick must travel in a forward direction 5 metres minimum.
- 9.3 Kick not making the 5 metres – free pass on half-way to the receiving team.
- 9.4 When a try is scored, the team that scored starts at the centre of the field with a punt kick or tap and pass to those who didn't score.

10.0 FREE PASS

- 10.1 To make a free pass, the player making the pass starts with the ball on the ground, moves the ball slightly forward using the side of their foot, then picks up the ball and passes the ball backwards to a member of their own team.
The player who taps the ball **MUST** pass and cannot run with the ball.
- 10.2 The Defenders (Rippers) must remain five metres back from the player making the free pass.
They cannot start moving forward until the ball leaves the hands of the player making the free pass.
- 10.3 A free pass is used to restart play at any other time that play has halted and needs to be restarted other than with a lineout or scrum.
- 10.4 Free passes cannot take place less than five metres from the try line.
- 10.5 A free pass is also awarded to the non-offending team when their opposition infringes the rules, such as an offside or for not returning the flag to the ripped player. A free pass or kick for touch as in normal rugby applies here.

11.0 RIP

- 11.1 To complete a rip one of the two flags from the ball carrier's belt must be removed.
- 11.2 The only person who can be ripped is the ball carrier.
- 11.3 The Defender (Ripper) must stop, hold the flag above their head and shout "RIP!"
- 11.4 The ball carrier must then pass the ball immediately (within three strides). He or she does not stop, return to the mark or roll the ball between their legs.
- 11.5 Four rips in a row leads to a turnover in possession.
- 11.6 After the ball carrier has passed the ball the Defender (Ripper) must hand the flag back to the player who then reattaches it to their belt before they re-join play. If either of these players doesn't adhere to this, they will be penalised and a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending team at the place of the infringement.
- 11.7 If a player is ripped before the try line and doesn't pass before they get over the line, they restart play five metres out from the try line with a free pass.
- 11.8 Restarting the rip count occurs when there is a turnover or when either team is penalised.

RIP RUGBY RULES

11.9 If a player accidentally loses a tag when they have the ball, stop the game, replace the tag and restart with a free pass.

12.0 KNOCK ON

12.1 When a player knocks the ball towards the opponents' try line and does not regain control of the ball before it touches the ground, another player or the referee, a scrum is awarded to the non-offending team unless an advantage can be played.

13.0 OFFSIDE

13.1 Offside only occurs at a rip.

13.2 When a rip is made, all players from the Defender's (Ripper's) team must get back until they are behind where the rip was made.

Failure to do so, results in a free pass to the team in possession and the rip count will restart at zero.

13.3 If a player is offside and they intercept, prevent or slow down a pass, they will be penalised and a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending team, unless an advantage can be played.

14.0 PASSING THE BALL

14.1 The ball can only be passed to the ball carrier in a backwards direction.

14.2 Attackers must not pass the ball forward; towards the Defenders' (Rippers') try line.

14.3 Attackers cannot hand the ball to another Attacker.

14.4 A scrum will be awarded to the opposition if an Attacker passes the ball forward or hands the ball to another Attacker.

14.5 If the ball is not caught to conclude a pass but is not knocked on, play can continue.

15.0 KICKING

15.1 There is kicking in Rip Rugby.

15.2 If you are 'Ripped' – you cannot kick the ball.

15.3 If a kick in general play crosses the dead ball line, it is a free pass at the mark from where the kick was made.

15.4 Normal off-sides from kicking situations apply.

15.5 There are no conversions or shots at goal.

16.0 ADVANTAGE

16.1 Not stopping the game when an infringement happens is called 'advantage'.

- 16.2 Referees should play 'advantage' to the non-offending team if there is any chance that they may be advantaged by there being no stoppage in play, for instance if the team gets the ball or retains the ball in circumstances that are more favourable than if a free pass was called.
- 16.3 The referee should call 'advantage' followed by 'play on' if an advantage is deemed by the referee to occur.
- 16.4 If no advantage occurs within a reasonable period play restarts with a scrum, penalty or free pass.

17.0 GOING TO GROUND

- 17.1 Subject to 17.2, if the ball carrier intentionally goes to ground or a player dives on the ball, a free pass is awarded to the opposition.
- 17.2 Players can dive for a try or dive on the ball for a try.

18.0 THE SCRUM

- 18.1 These consist of three players from each side.
- 18.2 No pushing – win your own ball.
- 18.3 Follow the ref's calls to 'crouch – bind - set'.
- 18.4 Both halfbacks must stand next to the scrum and can't advance past the middle of the tunnel.
- 18.5 Players who are not in the scrum and who are not the team's halfback, are offside if they remain in front of their offside line or overstep the offside line which is 5 metres behind the hindmost player of each team in a scrum.

19.0 THE LINEOUT

- 19.1 If the ball is carried or kicked out of the field of play, the game is restarted with a lineout with the non-offending side throwing the ball in.
- 19.2 The lineout must consist of three forwards from each team and a scrum half.
- 19.3 Lineouts follow contested laws to appropriate age. Lineouts not to be contested until U11 grade.
- 19.4 There is no lifting the jumper in Small Blacks grades.
- 19.5 The player catching the ball should hopefully pass it back to the player that threw it in as they run round to pass to the backs, but usual lineout law applies.
- 19.6 For players not taking part in the lineout, the offside line is 5 metres behind the line of touch or their goal line, if that is nearer.

20.0 FAIR PLAY

- 20.1 All players must play games in a positive spirit following the principles of good sportsmanship.
- 20.2 In instances of verbal abuse, physical abuse, poor sportsmanship, intentional offending, persistent reoffending or any other offending, a referee may send a player from the playing area.
- 20.3 If a player is sent from the playing area by the referee under 20.2 they must remain off for the remainder of that game. However, that player can be replaced by another player who has not been sent off.
- 20.4 There shall be no intentional physical contact between players.

T1 Rugby Rules

T1 is a non-contact version of rugby designed to look like rugby, feel like rugby, and be played by anyone. It is recognised that flexibility is required depending on participants, environment, and purpose. Any agreed variations should be confirmed before play begins.

1.0 PLAYING AREA

- 1.1 The playing area will not exceed 60 metres in length and 35 metres in width.
- 1.2 The playing area must be clearly marked.
- 1.3 Only players on the field and the referee may be on the playing area during a game.

2.0 DURATION OF PLAY

- 2.1 A match consists of two halves of up to 15 minutes.
- 2.2 Half-time interval length should be agreed before the match.
- 2.3 Teams change ends at half time.
- 2.4 Play uses running time unless agreed otherwise.

3.0 NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- 3.1 Teams consist of seven players on the field.
- 3.2 Up to five substitutes are permitted per team.
- 3.3 Games may be played with mixed genders and ages by agreement.
- 3.4 Both teams must have the same number of players on the field.

4.0 SUBSTITUTIONS

- 4.1 Substitutions are rolling and may be made at any stoppage in play.
- 4.2 Substituted players may return to the game.

5.0 EQUIPMENT

- 5.1 Ball size: Size 4.
- 5.2 Shirts or bibs must clearly identify teams.
- 5.3 Appropriate footwear must be worn.
- 5.4 Mouthguards are recommended.

6.0 REFEREE

- 6.1 The referee controls the match and applies the laws fairly.
- 6.2 The referee should call "Touch" and the phase count (1, 2, 3, etc.).
- 6.3 The referee should encourage flow and play advantage where possible.

7.0 STARTING AND RESTARTING PLAY

- 7.1 Play starts with a kick-off from halfway by the scoring or nominated team.
- 7.2 The kick may be a drop kick, punt, or kick from the ground.
- 7.3 The kick must travel at least 5 metres and is uncontested.
- 7.4 After a try, the scoring team restarts play from halfway.
- 7.5 If the restart kick goes dead, the non-kicking team chooses:
 - * A re-kick, or
 - * A scrum restart at halfway with their put-in.

8.0 OBJECTIVE AND SCORING

- 8.1 A try is scored by grounding the ball on or over the try line.
- 8.2 A try is awarded if a player is touched while airborne (diving) in the act of scoring.
- 8.3 A try is worth one point.
- 8.4 There are no conversions or shots at goal.

9.0 ATTACK

- 9.1 The attacking team has seven phases to score a try.
- 9.2 A phase is completed when the ball carrier is touched below the shoulder by a defender.
- 9.3 On the 7th touch, possession turns over and play restarts with a tap and pass by the opposition.
- 9.4 After being touched, the ball carrier may take up to three steps, then must:
 - * Turn toward their team, and
 - * Present the ball to a teammate to form a breakdown.
- 9.5 Failure to present the ball correctly results in a penalty.

10.0 DEFENCE

- 10.1 Defence is made by a one- or two-handed touch below the shoulder.
- 10.2 No tackling, grabbing, pushing, or fending is permitted.
- 10.3 A defensive breakdown triangle must be formed by:
 - * The toucher, and
 - * Two additional defenders touching the shoulder either side of the toucher.
- 10.4 The defensive triangle sets the offside line.
- 10.5 A turnover occurs if the defensive triangle is formed before the halfback gets two hands on the ball.

11.0 THE BREAKDOWN

- 11.1 A breakdown consists of five players:
 - * Two attackers, and
 - * Three defenders.
- 11.2 The halfback must place two hands on the ball before passing, running, or kicking.
- 11.3 The halfback has five seconds to play the ball.
- 11.4 The halfback cannot be touched by defenders in the breakdown.
- 11.5 If the attack plays away before defence is set, there is no sanction.
- 11.6 If defenders do not attempt to form the triangle, a penalty may be awarded.

12.0 PASSING

- 12.1 The ball must be passed backwards or sideways.
- 12.2 Forward passes result in a scrum restart, unless advantage applies.

13.0 KICKING

- 13.1 Kicking is permitted in general play.
- 13.2 Normal offside laws apply for kicks.
- 13.3 Care must be taken to avoid contact when contesting a kicked ball.
- 13.4 If the ball is kicked dead in open play, the opposition restarts with a tap and pass 15 metres from the try line.

14.0 SCRUMS

- 14.1 Scrum are 3 v 3, uncontested, and passive.
- 14.2 There is no engagement, pushing, or contest.
- 14.3 The scrum-half may take up to three steps before passing or kicking.
- 14.4 Defending players must remain 5 metres back.

15.0 LINEOUTS

- 15.1 Lineouts are 3 v 3 with no lifting.
- 15.2 The catcher must pass to a teammate or the thrower-in.
- 15.3 The catcher cannot be touched while in possession.

16.0 PENALTIES

- 16.1 Penalties are taken by tap and pass, scrum, or kick to touch.
- 16.2 The phase count resets after a penalty.
- 16.3 Penalty offences include:
 - * Contact of any kind
 - * Contact above the shoulder
 - * Obstruction
 - * Offside
 - * Diving on the ball
 - * Overstepping the allowed three steps

17.0 ADVANTAGE

- 17.1 The referee should play advantage where a clear benefit exists.
- 17.2 The referee should call “Advantage” and “Play on”.
- 17.3 If no advantage occurs, play restarts with the appropriate sanction.

18.0 FAIR PLAY

- 18.1 T1 Rugby is non-contact and must be played in good spirit.
- 18.2 Dangerous play, misconduct, or repeated infringements may result in a player being removed.
- 18.3 Respect for players, officials, and the game is expected at all times.

GRADUATED RETURN TO PLAY

REHABILITATION STEP	RECOMMENDED ACTIVITY	MINIMUM TIME PER STAGE
1. Relative rest	Activities of daily living and reduced screen time. (Complete inactivity is not suitable for concussion recovery).	Days 1-2
2. Light to moderate exercise.*	Symptom-guided low to moderate intensity activity such as walking, or jogging.	Days 2-14 Min of 24 hours between stages before progressing. Symptoms should be progressively improving.
3. Individual sport specific exercise.*	Individual training (e.g. running, change of direction, burpees). NO risk of head impact	If symptoms worsen, drop back a stage.
Start this step only if you have had no symptoms for the past 14 days.		
4. Non-contact training drills.*	Include more challenging drills (e.g multi player training, passing). Re-introduce weight training.	Days 14-18
SEEK MEDICAL CLEARANCE		
5. Build to full contact training	Build into participating in normal training activities, including contact drills.	Day 18-20
6. Return to play	If symptom free through step 5, then eligible for match participation after a minimum of 24 hours.	Earliest Day 21

* If symptoms persist, seek medical advice
