

JUNIOR PLAYER PATHWAY

Mini Rugby has been designed to focus on the Game principles of Possession, Go Forward and Pressure with greater emphasis on the tactical principle of Support. It also teaches the individual skills of Passing and Receiving; Running and Evasion; Contact; Kicking and Tackling; as well as the game elements of Ruck, Maul, Scrum and Lineout. In refining the traditional approach to Rugby, the playing numbers and size of the ball are modified to suit the younger player.

Summary of the features of Mini Rugby

Playing Area	Max. 70m x 35m (includes in-goal area).
Team Size	Ten (10) players per standard team.
Ball Size	Size Mini.
Playing Time	Two x 20 minute halves.
Scoring	A try is worth 5 points. A kick at goal following a try is worth 2 points. (Taken in front of the posts - if goal posts available.) There are no penalty goals or drop goals in Mini Rugby.
Kick-off	Taken in the form of a "drop kick" or "punt kick". Non-scoring team to kick off. 5 metre "free zone" for receiver.
Restart	"Drop kick" or "punt kick" by non-scoring team after a try. 5 metre "free zone" for receiver.
Kicking in General Play	No kicking is allowed in general play.
Penalty Kick	The "tap restart" or kick for touch are the only options for the team receiving a penalty. (Penalty kicks for goal are not permitted at this age level.)
Drop-out Restart	Taken in the form of a "drop kick" from the mid-point of the 15 m line.
Tackle	A tackle occurs when the ball carrier is brought to the ground and held by an opponent. This includes being on one knee, sitting on the ground or being on another player on the ground. Once tackled the ball carrier must immediately place, push or pass the ball. The tackler must release the tackled player and roll away. No defending player may prevent the ball carrier from playing the ball.

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Ruck	After a tackle players must be on their feet when they play the ball. If the ball in a ruck becomes unplayable the scrum feed will be awarded to the team moving forward immediately prior to the stoppage. Offside line is last feet.
Maul	If the ball in a maul becomes unplayable the scrum feed will be awarded to the team NOT in possession at the commencement of the maul. Offside line is last feet.
Scrum	Scrum are non-contested. ie Only the hooker of the team feeding the ball into the scrum may strike for the ball. Five-player scrum, with three players in the front row and two in the second row. There is no pushing in a Mini scrum. Defending scrum-half can not go past the midline of the scrum Offside line is 5m from last feet for the defending team and from last feet for the attacking team.
Line-out	Line-outs are non-contested. Four players line-out (plus hooker). The lineout is formed 4 metres from the touch line. The thrower stands in line with the Line of Touch. The offside line for players not in the lineout is 5m from the line of touch.
Advantage	Played generously to ensure a free-flowing game.
Off-side	In general play, a player is off-side if they are in front of a team mate who is carrying the ball, or if they are in front of a team mate who last played the ball. Off-side lines exist for scrum, line-out ruck and maul situations. An off-side zone also exists for the tackle. (see relevant sections)
Finals series	No finals series but Premierships awarded for "first past the post" at this age level.

1: The Ground

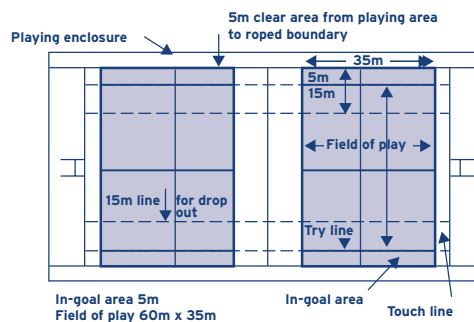
The playing area consists of the field-of-play and the in-goal area.

The field-of-play is bounded by the touch lines and goal lines, but does not include them. The touch line is considered to be "in touch" (see Touch and Lineout). The goal line is considered to be part of the in-goal area.

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The playing enclosure is the playing area and a reasonable area surrounding it and is under the control of the referee. This area should remain clear. It is recommended that the playing enclosure be "roped-off" in such a way as to restrain or confine spectators to an area a minimum of five metres from the side-line and the dead ball line.

Mini Field set-up on Standard Rugby Ground



Playing Area: The maximum playing area for this age group is 70m x 35m
Goal Posts: All goal posts within the playing enclosure must be fitted with goal post pads.

Persons authorised to enter the Playing enclosure:
The referee and players of each team are authorised to enter the field of play.

The touch judges and authorised medical staff are permitted between the playing enclosure and the field-of-play.

The Manager and Reserve Players must remain outside the playing enclosure.

N.B. It is recommended that, for the first half of the season, each team should have a coach or other adult on the field during play at this level. The role of the coach on the field is to assist the Referee to manage the game. The coach does this by directing players on the field.

For example:

- assisting in the efficient formation of lineouts, scrums
- setting of off-side lines for scrums, lineouts, rucks and mauls.

2: Players

A Mini Rugby team comprises a maximum of Ten (10) players who start the match plus any authorised replacements and/or substitutes.

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Replacement: A player who replaces an injured team mate.

Substitute: A player who replaces another player.

In keeping with the Philosophy of the Pathway, teams with more than 10 players available are encouraged to assist the team with less than 10 players, so that the match is played as a 10-a-side game.

If a match is played with fewer than 10 players per team; then teams must play with equal numbers.

Replacements:

An injured player should stop playing and be replaced temporarily. If the player is unable to resume playing, the replacement becomes permanent.

Any player who has an open wound must leave the Field of Play, until such time as the bleeding is controlled and the wound is covered or dressed.

NB. If on medical advice or for any other reason the referee or coach considers it would be harmful for an injured player to continue playing, then the player is required to leave the playing area.

Coaches should particularly note that a player who has suffered definite concussion should not participate in any match or training session for a period of at least three weeks from the time of injury, and then only subject to being cleared by a proper neurological examination.

Substitutions:

In all Mini rugby, it is the intention to "give all players a game". There is no limit to the number of players who may act as substitutes for any match. Players may substitute in accordance with the following procedure:

- Following the scoring of a try, players may substitute prior to the restart
- At other times during the match, substitutions may be made when the ball is dead and with the permission of the referee.

3: Dress and Ball Size

Players must not wear dangerous projections such as buckles, rings, earrings or baseball caps. The wearing of beads in a player's hair is also prohibited. The referee may inspect players before or during a match and require dangerous items to be removed.

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Footwear:	Players shall not play without footwear. It is recommended that footwear with studs, moulded or screw in spikes or blades be worn.
Mouthguards:	It is recommended that a mouthguard be worn.
Head Gear:	The wearing of headgear is optional. Many parents choose to have their children wear head gear as an added safety feature.
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.
NB:	All shoulder pads and headgear must abide by the IRB regulations.
Ball Size:	The Mini Rugby Union Football shall be used for this age group.

4: Time

The match shall be played in two halves of twenty (20) minutes each with a five (5) minute break.

5: The Referee and Touch Judges

The Referee acts as a game manager and teacher. They should be encouraging and educative, positively reward sportsmanship and fair play, and deal quickly and firmly with any dangerous action or unsafe practice.

The touch judges assist the Referee. For the first half of the season, the two coaches on the field also assist the referee.

THE REFEREE

There shall be a referee for each match. The referee shall be appointed by or under the authority of the Union. If no such referee is appointed as mutually agreed between the teams. Failing any agreement, the referee will be appointed by the home team.

The referee keeps the time and the score and has the power to end the game before time has expired if it is believed that the continuation of play would prove dangerous.

During the match the referee is the sole judge of Fact and Law. All decisions are binding on the players.

All players must stop playing at once when the whistle is blown. All players, coaches and

others must respect the authority of the referee and they must not dispute the decision. Infringement of this is regarded as a breach of the Code of Conduct and subject to penalty. This could result in a sending-off.

THE TOUCH JUDGES

Each team must provide a touch judge. The referee has control over the touch judges and may instruct them on their duties and may over-rule any of their decisions.

The touch judge must hold up the touch flag when the ball or a player carrying it has gone into touch and must indicate the place of throw-in and which team will throw-in.

6: Advantage

The referee shall not whistle for an infringement during play that is followed by an obvious advantage to the non-offending team. An advantage must be either territorial or such possession of the ball as constitutes an obvious tactical advantage. A mere opportunity to gain advantage is not sufficient. The Referee has a wide discretion in applying advantage and should be lenient in order to ensure that play at this level continues.

Teams should play to the whistle after an apparent infringement, whether or not the referee calls or signals advantage. This is true for a wide range of infringements from a knock-on to a serious offence. It should be noted that some Laws require the referee to apply advantage only if it occurs very quickly. Examples of this are to be found in the Foul Play Law as it applies to dangerous tackles and the collapsed scrum situation where the safety of the players is paramount.

In fact, outside of immediately dangerous situations, there are only two (2) occasions when advantage is not played:

1. When the ball or the ball carrier touches the referee in the field-of-play.
2. When the ball emerges from either end of the scrum tunnel without having first been touched by the hooker, of the team feeding the ball.

7: Method of Scoring

Try: When an attacking player is first to ground the ball in the opponent's in-goal, a try is scored. (A player grounds the ball in the in-goal area by forcing the ball onto the ground with the hand or hands, arm or arms, or the front of a player's body from waist to neck inclusive even for an instant.)

Penalty Try: If a player would probably have scored a try but for foul play by an opponent, a

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penalty try is awarded between the goal posts. (Mid point of the try line)

Conversion Goal: When a player scores a try, it gives the player's team the right to score a goal by taking a kick at goal. The ball is kicked over an opponents' cross bar and between the goal posts from the field of play. (This also applies to a penalty try.) This kick is a conversion kick. It can be taken in the form of a place kick.

No penalty goals or drop goals at this level.

1. SCORING VALUES:

Try	5 points
Penalty Try	5 points
Conversion Goal	2 points

2. CONVERSION KICK

The kick is taken on a line through the centre of the goal posts from 10 m out from the goal posts. (if posts available)

The scoring team may choose not to take a conversion kick.

a. THE KICKER'S TEAM

All the kicker's team must be behind the ball when it is kicked.

b. THE OPPOSING TEAM

During an attempt at a conversion kick, the defenders must remain quiet and stationary behind their goal line until the kicker has taken the conversion attempt. They may not charge or jump to prevent the goal.

If the defenders do not remain quiet and stationary and the attempt at conversion is unsuccessful, then another attempt may be awarded.

Further movement by the defenders should be treated as Foul Play and subject to a penalty awarded to the scoring team at the centre of the halfway line.

8: Kicking in General Play

Kicking is not permitted in General Play at this age level.

The first time a kick in general play occurs, the Referee should take the opportunity to explain to the players the importance of maintaining possession, rather than kicking it away. Then award a tap restart to the opposition team at the point where the offending team kicked the ball.

9: Foul Play

Foul Play is any action by a player that is contrary to the law and spirit of the game and includes obstruction, unfair play, misconduct, dangerous play, unsporting behaviour, retaliation and repeated infringements.

Foul Play offences result in a penalty kick and can also result in a caution, temporary suspension or sending off, and a penalty try if appropriate.

In general, a penalty is awarded at the place of infringement, except:

- a) for offences in touch, the penalty is awarded 10 metres in from touch.
- b) for offences while the ball is out of play, including in-goal, the penalty is taken wherever the play would otherwise restart.

1. OBSTRUCTION

It is illegal for any player:

- a) who is running for the ball to charge or push an opponent also running for the ball.
- b) who is in an off-side position wilfully to run or stand in front of a team mate who is carrying the ball thus preventing an opponent reaching the ball carrier.

NB There are no circumstances in which the ball carrier can be penalised for obstruction. However this is a common occurrence in this version of the game, thus discretion on intent should be considered.

2. UNFAIR PLAY, REPEATED INFRINGEMENTS

It is illegal for any player to:

- a) deliberately play unfairly or wilfully infringe any Law of the game.
- b) wilfully, knock or throw the ball from the playing area into touch, touch-in-goal, or over the dead-ball line.
- c) repeatedly infringe any Law of the game.

3. MISCONDUCT, DANGEROUS PLAY

It is illegal for any player to:

- a) strike an opponent, even in retaliation.
- b) wilfully trip, hack or kick an opponent.
- c) in the front row of a scrum, charge, punch, wheel, collapse or “pop” an opponent.

4. PLAYER ORDERED OFF

A player who is ordered off shall take no further part in the match. The referee will send a report to the Union or School, naming the player and describing the circumstances. The Union or School will investigate the matter and take such action and inflict such penalty as they see fit.

The player must be replaced for the remainder of the match.

5. TEMPORARY SUSPENSION

- a) A player guilty of Foul Play, misconduct or repeated infringements shall either be ordered off, sent from the field-of-play for a period of 5 mins or else cautioned that they will be ordered off if they repeat the offence.
- b) For a similar offence, after a caution or temporary suspension, the player must be ordered off.
- c) If temporarily suspended the player shall remain with the team manager and must not enter the playing area until permitted to do so by the referee.
- d) Temporary Suspension is not a substitute for ordering off. If the offence warrants a player being ordered off, then the player must be ordered off.
- e) The maximum period of temporary suspension shall not exceed five (5) minutes in any circumstances.
- f) Time is to be counted from when the player leaves the playing area.
- g) If the period of temporary suspension has not expired when half-time or full-time is called, the period is considered to have expired.

10: Off-Side and On-side in General Play

At the start of a game all players are on-side. As the match progresses players may find themselves in an off-side position. Such players are then liable to be penalised unless they become on-side again.

In general play, a player is in an off-side position if they are in front of a team mate who is carrying the ball or they are in front of a team mate who last played the ball.

Off-side means that a player is temporarily out of the game. Such players are liable to be penalised if they take part in the game.

In general play, a player can be put on-side by an action of a team mate or by an action of an opponent.

A. Off-Side in General Play

A player is in an off-side position if the ball has been kicked, touched or is being carried by one of their team behind them.

1. There is no penalty for merely being in an off-side position. Off-side players will only be penalised if they:

- play the ball
- obstruct an opponent
- move forward towards the ball

2. Players can be off-side in their in-goal.

3. A player who receives an unintentional throw-forward is not off-side.

NB. Referees will usually play the advantage with off-side if the non-offending team gains or appears likely to gain advantage.

Penalty: Penalty at the place of the infringement.

B. Being put On-side in General Play

On-side simply means a player is in the game and is not liable to penalty for off-side.

1. PLAYERS MADE ON-SIDE BY ACTION OF THEIR TEAM

a) Players who are off-side in general play become on-side as a result of any of the following actions of their team:

- i) when the off-side player has retired behind the team mate who last kicked, touched or carried the ball; or
- ii) when one of their team mates carrying the ball has run in front of them;

2. PLAYERS MADE ON-SIDE BY ACTION OF THE OPPOSING TEAM

a) Players who are off-side in general play and further away than 10m from an opponent become on-side when:

- i) an opponent carrying the ball has run five metres; or
- ii) an opponent passes the ball; or
- iii) an opponent intentionally touches the ball and does not catch or gather it (eg. Drops a catch).

11: Knock-on and Throw-Forward

A knock-on occurs when a player loses possession of the ball and the ball travels forward, towards the direction of the opponents' dead-ball line; or after striking a player's hand or arm the ball travels forward and touches the ground or another player before it is recovered.

A throw-forward occurs when a player carrying the ball throws, passes or hands it in the direction of their opponents' dead ball-line.

Referees are instructed not to judge a knock-on or throw-forward as an infringement unless clearly so. A knock-on will only be called if:

- a) The infringing team gains an advantage.
- b) The ball is played forward rather than dropped.

These two infringements account for most applications of the Advantage Law. Players should continue playing until the whistle is blown.

These infringements result in a scrum, normally at the place of infringement. The non-offending team will feed the ball into the scrum.

An intentional throw-forward or knock-on results in a penalty.

12: Kick-Off and Restart Kick

A kick-off starts play for each half. The drop restart kick restarts play following the scoring of a try. The kick-off is only semi-contested. This means that the team receiving the kick-off has every opportunity to control the ball and play it by running or passing.

The kick-off is taken in the form of a drop kick or punt kick.

The restart kick is taken in the form of a drop kick or punt kick.

It is taken from the centre of the half way line by the team that has the right to start the match or by the opposing team following the resumption of play after the half time interval.

Following the scoring of a try, the non-scoring team (kicks off) restart kicks from the centre of the half way line.

1. The kick-off/restart kick must be taken from the centre of the half way line and by a drop kick or punt kick; otherwise it shall be kicked again.
2. The kicker's team must be behind the ball when kicked; otherwise the ball shall be kicked off again.
3. The kicker's team must not advance within 5 m of the receiving player until that player has brought the ball under control and run with the ball or passed the ball. If the kicker's team is inside the 5 m area, the kick-off/restart will be taken again. Should the same offence occur with the second kick-off/restart, a penalty will be awarded at the point where the infringement occurred.
4. The receiving team must stand back at least ten metres back from the half-way line. If they are in front of that line or if they move forward before the ball has been kicked, it shall be kicked again.
5. If the ball fails to reach the opponents ten metre line or if it is kicked out on the full it must be kicked off again. Should the second kick/restart fail to travel the required distance or is again kicked out on the full, a scrum will be formed at the centre of the half-way line, receiving team to feed.

6. If the ball crosses the goal line without touching a player, the defenders may either ground the ball or opt to play on. If they do ground the ball, or if it goes into touch-in-goal or over the dead ball line, they will be awarded a scrum at halfway.

13: 15m Drop-out Restart

A Drop-kick is used to restart play after an attacking player has put or taken the ball into the in-goal, without infringement, and a defending player has made the ball dead there (touchdown) or it has gone into touch-in-goal or over the dead-ball line.

The drop-out is only semi-contested. This means that the team receiving the drop-out has every opportunity to control the ball and play it by running or passing. (See point 3 below.)

A 15m drop-out restart is a drop kick taken by the defending team. The drop-out must be taken from the mid-point of the 15 m line.

1. The 15m restart must be taken from the centre of the 15m line and by a drop kick; otherwise the drop-out must be taken again.
2. Following the completion of the tackle, the tackled player must also get up or move away from the ball at once.
3. The kicker's team must not advance within 5 m of the receiving player until that player has brought the ball under control and run with the ball or passed the ball. If the kicker's team is inside the 5 m area, the drop-out must be taken again.

Should the same offence occur with the second drop-out a penalty will be awarded at the point where the infringement occurred.
4. The receiving team must stand back at least five metres back from the 15 m line. If they are in front of that line or if they move forward before the ball has been kicked, the drop-out must be taken again.
5. If the ball fails to travel at least 5 m or if it is kicked out on the full the drop-out must be taken again.
Should the second kick fail to travel the required distance or is again kicked out on the full, a scrum will be formed at the centre of the 15 m line.
6. If the ball crosses the goal line without touching a player, the defenders may either ground the ball or opt to play on. If they do ground the ball, or if it goes into touch-in-goal or over the dead ball line, they will be awarded a scrum at point where the drop-out was taken.

14: The Tackle and Lying With, On or Near the Ball

The defending team attempts to halt the running progress of the attacking team by “tackling” the ball carrier.

A tackle occurs when a ball carrier is held by an opponent and while held is brought to the ground, or the ball comes into contact with the ground. This includes being on a knee, sitting on the ground or being on another player on the ground. A tackle can only take place in the field of play.

This Law aims to give the tackled player a chance to keep the ball alive and thus provide continuity to the game.

NB. When a ball carrier is held by one opponent and not brought to ground, and a team-mate binds onto the ball carrier, a maul has been formed and a tackle cannot take place.

1. When tackled, the ball carrier must release the ball by:

- immediately passing the ball up to a supporting player
- placing the ball on the ground in any direction
- pushing or dropping it away, but not in a forward direction.

NB. At this age level referees are encouraged to have a liberal interpretation of “immediately”. The referee should allow a reasonable amount of time for the ball carrier to “play the ball” as long as the player is obviously attempting to keep the ball alive.

2. Following the completion of the tackle, the tackled player must also get up or move away from the ball at once.

3. The tackler must immediately release the tackled player and get up or move away from the ball at once. However the tackler can compete for the ball as long as they are on their feet prior to the formation of a ruck.

4. Any player who is not a tackled player or a tackler on the ground may gain possession of the ball at the tackle or in close proximity to it, providing that:

- they do so from behind the ball and
- from behind the tackled player or the tackler closest to their goal line and
- they are on their feet.

5. No player may:

a) While lying on the ground, play or interfere with the ball or opponent in any way. (While on the ground a player is considered out of the play.)

b) Voluntarily fall on or over a player or players lying on the ground with the ball near them.

A breach of any of the above will result in a penalty being awarded at the place of infringement.

NB. A try may be scored in a tackle if the tackled player's momentum takes them to the goal-line. It may also be scored where they can reach out and place the ball on or over the line as part of the placing requirement but it must be immediate and in one movement. In this situation a defender is allowed to pull the ball from the tackled player to attempt to stop a try.

Dangerous tackles are regarded as Foul Play. Dangerous tackles include:

- charging or knocking a ball carrier over without any attempt to grasp him;
- jersey slinging tackles;
- early, late or stiff-arm tackles;
- tackles above the level of the chest; or
- any tackle that in the opinion of the referee is dangerous

A dangerous tackle will result in a penalty being awarded to the non-offending team at the place of infringement, and may result in the offending player receiving a caution, temporary suspension or sending off.

15: Ruck

A ruck is a phase of play formed when one or more players from each team who are on their feet and in physical contact, close around the ball on the ground.

NB. Only two opposing players are required as the minimum for a ruck.

A ruck can take place only in the field-of-play, not in the in-goal.

A ruck ends when:

- a) the ball emerges
- b) the ball is on or over the goal line.

1. A player joining a ruck must have their head and shoulders no lower than the hips and must bind with at least one full arm's length (from hand to shoulder) around the body of a team mate.

2. A player must not:

- a) return the ball into the ruck.
- b) pick up the ball in the ruck.
- c) while lying on the ground interfere in any way with the ball in or emerging from the ruck.
- d) wilfully collapse the ruck.
- e) jump on other players in the ruck.
- f) ruck opponents or pull them out of the ruck, even if they are in the way.

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A breach of any of the above will result in a penalty being awarded at the place of infringement. NB Breaches of d-f are considered dangerous play and may also be dealt with under the Foul Play Law.

3. If the ball in a ruck becomes unplayable the scrum feed will be awarded to the team moving forward immediately prior to the stoppage.

4. Off-Side at Ruck

The “off-side line” means a line parallel to the goal-line immediately behind the hindmost foot of the last player/s of each team participating in the ruck. Those players not taking part in the ruck must remain behind the off-side line until the ruck ends.

While a ruck is taking place, players are off-side if they:

- a) join it from the opposition’s side; or
- b) join it in front of the ball; or
- c) unbind from the ruck and do not immediately either retire behind the off-side line or rejoin it behind the last player.
- d) advance beyond the off-side line with either foot and do not join the ruck.

In all cases an infringement results in a penalty where the offending player was off-side.

16: Maul

A maul occurs when a player, carrying the ball, is held by one or more opponents, and one or more of the ball carrier’s team-mates bind on the ball carrier. All players must be on their feet and moving towards their respective goal-line.

A maul can take place only in the field-of-play and not in the in-goal.

A maul ends when:

- the ball is on the ground (it becomes a ruck).
- the ball or ball carrier emerges from the maul.
- the ball in the maul is on or over the goal line.

1. A player joining a maul must have their head and shoulders no lower than the hips and must bind with at least one full arm’s length (from hand to shoulder) around the body of a team mate.

2. A player must not:

- a) jump on players in a maul.
- b) wilfully collapse a maul or attempt to take the legs out from under any player in the maul.
- c) Attempt to drag another player out of a maul.

Offences will result in a penalty, and a caution or sending off if the offence is dangerous.

3. If the ball becomes unplayable or it appears it will probably not emerge without delay the referee should not allow prolonged wrestling for the ball but should order a scrum.

If the ball become unplayable the referee will award the scrum feed to the TEAM NOT IN POSSESSION AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MAUL.

If the referee is unable to determine which team had possession at the commencement of the maul, then the scrum feed will go to the geographically attacking team.

4. If a player in a maul goes to ground, including being on one knee or sitting, then a scrum shall be ordered unless the ball is immediately available. This is to avoid dangerous pile-ups.

5. Referees will penalise any players who charge or drive into the maul in an unsafe manner, particularly where defenceless players are vulnerable. Players who try to collapse a maul will be penalised immediately and may also receive a caution or sending off as this constitutes dangerous play.

6. Off-Side at Maul

The "off-side line" means a line parallel to the goal-line immediately behind the hindmost foot of the last player/s of each team participating in the maul. Those players not taking part in the maul must remain behind the off-side line until the maul ends.

While a maul is taking place, players are off-side if they:

- a) join it from the opposition's side
- b) join it in front of the ball
- c) unbind or leave the maul and do not immediately either retire behind the off-side line or rejoin it behind the last player
- d) advance beyond the off-side line with either foot and do not join the maul.

In all cases an infringement results in a penalty where the offending player was off-side.

17: Touch and Mini Lineout

The Mini lineout is used to introduce the lineout as a game element. It is a non-contested method of restarting play after the ball is carried or passed over the touch-line. The team throwing the ball into the lineout must win it.

TOUCH

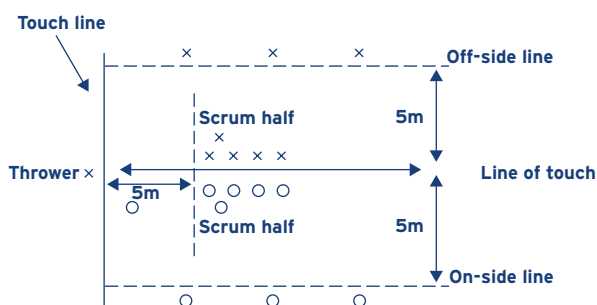
The ball is in touch when the ball or the ball carrier touches the touch-line or the ground beyond it.

LINE OF TOUCH

The line-of-touch is an imaginary line in the field-of-play at right angles to the touchline from the place where the ball went into touch.

1. FORMATION OF THE LINE-OUT

- A line-out is formed by four (4) players from each team standing in a single line parallel to the line-of-touch. Such players are those "in the line-out".
- The thrower stands on the touch line at the point where the ball went into touch.
- The four players from the thrower's team and the four players from the opposing team stand on either side of the Line of Touch, so as to leave a clear space of one (1) metre between the two lines of players, at the shoulders. This space should be maintained at all times. The first player stands 4m in from the touch-line. There is no set distance between team-mates.
- The player from the non-throwing team should stand in the 4m area as indicated on the diagram below.
- The line-out extends from four metres in from touch to ten (10) metres in from touch.



2. THROWING IN THE BALL

- a) The ball must be thrown in along the Line of Touch, at least four metres, and with the thrower's feet entirely in touch.

If the ball is not thrown in correctly, the same team will have a second throw. If this throw is not straight the opposing team will be awarded a scrum, their ball. The scrum is formed 10 m in along the Line of Touch.

3. BEGINNING AND END OF THE LINE-OUT

- a) The line-out begins when the ball leaves the thrower's hands.
- b) When the ball is thrown in, players from the throwers' line jump in an attempt to catch the ball and then direct it to their scrum-half by passing.
- c) Players from the non-throwing team are not permitted to contest the throw.

Once the ball is caught or deflected no player may:

- i) leave the line; or
- ii) tackle or challenge any other player until the scrum-half has passed the ball.

An infringement results in a penalty 10m in, along the line of touch.

- d) The line-out ends when:
 - i) the scrum-half has passed the ball to a player in their backline; or
 - ii) the ball becomes unplayable and play is stopped.

NB It is important for all players not participating in a formed line-out to realise that unless and until a line-out ends in one of these ways, they must not approach within five (5) metres of the line-of-touch.

An infringement results in a penalty 10m in, along the line of touch.

4. RESTRICTIONS ON PLAYERS IN LINE-OUT

- a) Before or during a line-out a player may not:
 - i) be off-side; or
 - ii) push, charge, shoulder, bind or hold in any way another player of either team; or
 - iii) use any player as a support in jumping for the ball.

An infringement results in a penalty 10m in, along the line of touch.

- b) When jumping for the ball a player must use both hands to catch or deflect the ball.

5. LINEOUT SAFETY

There is no supporting or "lifting" in the lineout in Mini Rugby.

6. OFF-SIDE AT LINE-OUT

The players “participating in the line-out” are those in the two lines, the ball thrower and his/her immediate opponent, and the two scrum-halves.

A. OFF-SIDE WHILE PARTICIPATING IN THE LINE-OUT

- a) Participating players are off-side if:
BEFORE the ball has touched a player OR the ground they are in front of the line-of-touch with either foot. The jumper for the ball may step up to the line-of-touch but not step across it in an attempt to jump.
- b) After the throw the thrower and his/her immediate opponent must either remain within four (4) metres of the touch line or retire to the five metres off-side line.

In the case of an infringement, the penalty is awarded 10 m in, along the line of touch.

B. OFF-SIDE WHILE NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE LINE-OUT

A non-participating player is off-side if they move within five (5) metres of the line-of-touch before the line-out is ended. (ie until the scrum-half has passed the ball.)

In the case of an infringement, the penalty is awarded where the offence occurred.

18: Mini Scrum

The Mini scrum introduces the scrum as a game element. It is a non-contested method of restarting play. The team feeding the ball into the scrum must win it.

A scrum can take place only in the field-of-play and is not to be formed closer than five metres to the touchline or closer than five metres to the goal line. Five players from each team join to form a scrum. The middle player in each front row is the hooker, and the players on either side are the props. These players stand side by side and correctly bind upon each other. The remaining two players (locks) bind together and with the prop on their side and form the second row.

The scrum must be stationary, with the middle line parallel to the goal lines at all times. The “middle line” means an imaginary line on the ground directly beneath the line formed by the junction of the shoulders of the two front rows.

1. SCRUM SAFETY

A. The Engagement Sequence

- a) The opposing teams follow the scrum engagement sequence which is verbally managed by the referee:

CROUCH - TOUCH AND HOLD - ENGAGE SLOWLY

- a) This ensures that the correct body positions are adopted and that players gently come to rest shoulder to shoulder with the opposition.
- b) Front rows should not crouch until the scrum-half has the ball and is ready to put it in.

- c) Each scrum must have 5 players in it at all times. (If playing Mini Rugby with less than ten players, the number in the scrum must remain at 5.)
- d) During the scrum each front row player's shoulders must not be lower than the hips. Players must adopt a normal stance, both feet on the ground, with the hooker having all weight firmly on one foot and in a position to hook the ball.

B. ARU Directive

If a scrummage collapses the referee MUST whistle immediately. The MAYDAY procedure must be followed to take pressure off the collapsed players. Please refer to page 86 for details of the procedure

C. Body Shapes

Children with long, thin necks are not suitable to play in the front row and must not be selected in these positions. Even though the laws of Mini Rugby prevent pushing the principle of selecting body types starts at this level.

D. Non-contested Scrums

In Mini rugby only the hooker of the team feeding the scrum may strike for the ball. This maximises stability among the other players participating in the scrum.

2. BINDING PRIOR TO BEGINNING THE ENGAGEMENT SEQUENCE

All front row players must bind firmly and continuously throughout the duration of the scrum. The hooker must bind under the prop's arms, gripping the jersey at the armpit.

The loose-head prop must bind to their opposing tight-head prop with the left arm inside the other prop's right arm.

The tight-head must bind with the right arm outside the left upper arm of their opposing loose-head prop and must not pull downwards.

The two locks must bind around the hips of the prop in front of them and to each other to form the second row

3. THE ENGAGEMENT SEQUENCE:

Once each team has formed their front row and second row and bound the two rows together, the referee will verbally manage the engagement sequence as follows:

CROUCH	This means that each front row bends at the hips and knees and stands "offset" to their opposing front row. Offset means that each player in the front row has their head to the left hand side of their opposing player.
TOUCH AND HOLD	Each prop reaches forward and places their outside hand on the upper arm of their opposite prop, this establishes a safe distance for engagement. Hold means to pause prior to the engage call from the referee, NOT to hold or grip the jersey of your opposition. While waiting, they should look up and sight the space for their

head during the engagement. The referee then checks that all is ready for the scrum to engage.

ENGAGE SLOWLY Each member of the front row places their head under the shoulder of their opposite and looks up.

The following aspects are a list of correct technique and safety considerations for the scrum during the engagement sequence:

- Looking up assists the back to straighten and keep the spine in line.
- Back straight
- Hips bent
- Knees bent
- Weight evenly balanced over feet
- Feet far enough apart to allow correct engagement.

4. PUTTING THE BALL IN

- a) The non-infringing team shall put the ball in.
- b) The ball shall be put in without delay or when ordered by the referee.
- c) Play in the scrum begins when the ball leaves the scrum-half's hands.
- d) If the ball is put in and it comes out at either end of the tunnel it shall be put in again by the same team.
- e) The scrum ends when the ball emerges from the scrum and the scrum-half has as passed the ball. This is the only option for the scrum half. i.e. passing the ball.
- f) The scrum-half shall:
 - i) Stand on the left hand side of their own scum, an arms length from centre.
 - ii) Hold the ball at a level midway between ankle and knee then roll the ball into the centre of the tunnel.
 - iii) Release the ball from the scrum immediately it is controlled at the back of the scrum.
- g) The opposing scrum-half must stand on the same side of the scrum as the scrum-half feeding the ball and is not permitted to move past the middle line of the scrum until the scrum has ended.
- h) If the team putting the ball into the scrum does not win the ball, the scrum is reset.

5. RESTRICTIONS ON FRONT ROW PLAYERS

- a) All front row players must allow a clear tunnel.
- b) When the ball has touched the ground, only the hooker of the team feeding the ball should use their right foot to strike for the ball.
- c) There is no pushing allowed in scrums at this age level.
- d) No player may wilfully:
 - i) Raise both feet off the ground.
 - ii) Take any position or action which is likely to cause the scrum to collapse
 - iii) Lift an opponent off their feet or force them upwards out of the scrum (ie "popping").

iv) Hold the ball in the scrum for a prolonged period.

6. MOVEMENT OF THE SCRUM

- a) The scrum must be stationary. If the scrum wheels unintentionally or moves forward, it will be reset with the same team feeding the ball.

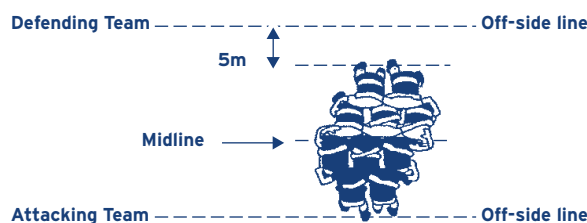
In all other cases above, an infringement results in a penalty awarded at the place where the scrum was set.

7. OFF-SIDE AT THE SCRUM

The “off-side line” means a line parallel to the goal-line 5m from the hindmost foot for the defending backline, and from the hindmost foot for the attacking backline, of the players in the scrum.

- 1. Players in the scrum must not leave the scrum until it is ended.
- 2. Neither scrum-half may remain or place either foot in front of the middle line of the scrum before the ball has been cleared.
- 3. The non-feeding scrum-half is off-side if they stand on the opposite side of the scrum to the put-in.
- 4. The defending backline cannot advance ahead of the off-side line (5m behind hindmost feet) line until the scrum has ended.
- 5. The attacking backline cannot advance ahead of the off-side line (behind hindmost feet) line until the scrum has ended.

In all cases an infringement results in a penalty kick where the scrum was awarded.



19: Penalty Kick

A penalty kick is a Tap restart or Punt kick awarded to the non-offending team as stated by the Laws.

In Mini Rugby, the “Tap restart” and “Punt kick for touch” are the only options for the team receiving a Penalty Kick. Kicks for goal are not permitted at this age level.

The tap restart is taken by placing the ball on the ground at the mark indicated by the referee. The ball must be propelled by the foot a visible distance in any direction from the mark. A mere touch with the foot is not sufficient.

The referee should ask the team receiving the penalty to place the ball on the mark and wait. They then ask the offending team to move back ten metres and when all is ready ask the team taking the penalty to play on.

If the place where the penalty would be awarded to an attacking team is within ten metres of the opponent’s goal line, the mark for the kick shall be ten metres from the goal line. A defending team can be awarded a penalty within one metre of its own goal line.

THE TEAM AWARDED THE PENALTY

1. Players of the team not behind the ball when the “Tap Restart” is taken must continue to retire until they have been put on-side.
2. Having successfully kicked the ball into touch from a penalty kick, the same team will throw the ball into the resultant line-out from the point at which the ball crossed the touchline.

THE TEAM CONCEDED THE PENALTY

1. The opposing team must run without delay to, or behind, a line parallel to the goal line and ten (10) metres from the mark.
2. The opposing team must not prevent or delay the kick or interfere with the kicker in any way, nor wilfully interfere with the ball.

Infringement of any of the above will result in a penalty a further ten metres in front of the original mark.

20: In-Goal

In-goal is the area bounded by a goal-line, touch-in-goal lines and dead-ball line. It includes the goal-line but excludes touch-in-goal lines and dead-ball line.

It is that part of the playing area where players from either team may ground the ball by forcing the ball onto the ground with the hand or hands, arm or arms, or the front of a player's body from waist to neck inclusive even for an instant.

When attacking players are first to ground the ball in the opponent's in-goal, the attacking players score a try.

When defending players are first to ground the ball in their in-goal, the defending players make a touchdown.

Touch-in-goal occurs when the ball or a player carrying it touches a corner post or a touch-in-goal line or the ground beyond it.

1. IN-GOAL INFRINGEMENTS

- a) A penalty try should be awarded when a defender prevents a probable try by Foul Play in-goal.
- b) For other offences in-goal the outcome is the same as for in the field-of-play but the restart/kick or scrum is awarded five metres from the goal line opposite the place of infringement.

2. FIVE METRE SCRUM

A "Five metre scrum" is a scrummage formed when the ball is carried or put into the in-goal by the defending team (including in a ruck or maul) and one of the following actions occurs:

- the defender grounds the ball in-goal or is tackled in-goal; or
- the ball or the defending player crosses the dead ball line or the touch-in-goal line (including the corner post); or Where the ball is put into in-goal by either the attacking team or the defending team and either;
- the ball is held in-goal and cannot be grounded; or
- there is doubt about which team first grounded the ball

The five metre scrum is formed five metres from the goal-line opposite the place where the ball became dead in in-goal, but no closer than five metres from the touch line.

The attacking team shall feed the scrum.

NB A ruck or maul ends when the ball is on or over the goal-line. If an attacker grounds the ball, it is a try.

3. 15m DROP-OUT RESTART

'A 15m Drop-out Restart' is a drop kick taken from the centre of the 15m line after an attacking player carries the ball into the opponent's in-goal and it is then grounded by a defender, or the ball or the player carrying it goes over the dead-ball line or the touch-in-goal line (including touching the corner post).