

U12 CONTACT FOR JUNIORS RUGBY CLUBS

This Section contains the rules of play, regulations and recommendations (including modifications to the IRB Laws of the Game), which apply to players in the Under 12 age grade.

RUGBY CANADA - REGULATIONS

Failure by Clubs or Schools, their match officials and coaches to observe the following regulations may invalidate the compulsory insurance cover provided by the RUGBY CANADA:

Under the Alberta Junior Rugby Associations Rules and Regulations all Under 12 Rugby will be played as non-contact FLAG rugby for the first 2 weeks of the scheduled season (Please refer to Under 10 flag rules). On week 3 of the scheduled season all games will then switch to contact under the following rules.

SPECIAL NOTE: AT U12 THIS IS THE FINAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MIXED GENDER CONTACT RUGBY IN ACCORDANCE WITH IRB REGULATIONS.

RULES OF PLAY

Players and match officials must endeavour to ensure the IRB Laws of the Game, modified by the following playing rules, are observed when playing rugby at Under 11 and Under 12:

1.1 OBJECT:

The object of the game is to score a try (5 points).

1.2 TEAMS:

The game is played between teams having a maximum of nine players, three of whom will be forwards and form the scrum, with the remaining players forming the back line. Positions should be interchangeable and coaches are encouraged to rotate players around the positions so they all get experience in different roles. Each side can have an agreed number of substitutes. Substituted players can be re-used at any time. Substitutions may only take place when the ball is 'dead' or at half time and always with the referee's knowledge.

THERE WILL BE NO RUCKS & MAULS AT U12.

There will be uncontested scrums and lineouts.

Tackling must be one on one player with no more than one other defender

becoming involved in assisting his/her team-mate; this will ensure that there is no contact area for others to get involved with therefore preventing a ruck or maul, taking place. When the tackled player is grounded on the floor she/he will stand up and position the ball for the supporting player to distribute. NOTE: (the ball may not be contested by the opponents). The defensive line must withdraw 5 meters from the point of where the ball is placed. The referee will direct play to have the support player pass the ball to have continuity or restart the game.

To reward good defence and to promote the attacking side keeping the ball alive by passing the ball before being tackled, the side in possession of the ball will only be allowed to be tackled a maximum of 6 times before scoring a try. At the 7th tackle, the referee will stop the game and give the ball to the other side by awarding a scrum at the point that the tackle took place. A lineout will be the result of a ball being passed/knocked backwards into touch or a player being tackled into touch.

1.3 STARTS:

(a) The match is started or restarted from the centre of the field or after a penalty, with a free pass. If both teams agree a drop kick to restart may be allowed in Alberta Junior Rugby. The starter's team must be behind the ball (i.e. nearer their own try line than the starter). Before the pass or kick is taken, the opposing team must be at least 5 meters away, nearer their own goal line. On penalty restarts, a quickly taken free pass whilst the opponents are retiring is not permitted. If the place for the free pass is given within 5 meters of the goal line, the free pass is to be taken at or behind the mark on a line through the mark at least 5 meters from the goal line.

(b) If a free pass is used, the ball is held in two hands, off the ground and is passed through the air to a team member. The referee is to ensure that the opposition are at least **5 meters** back before indicating that play is to commence. The receiver of the free pass must start no more than 2 meters from the passer. The passer must not run with the ball or dummy pass. Normal play resumes as the ball leaves the hand of the passer.

(c) Following an infringement for:

(1) **Offside;**

(2) **High or late tackle;**

(3) **Hand off/fend off** (a hand off being the placing of an open palmed hand by the ball carrier against an opponent's face or body while a fend off is an outstretched arm by the ball carrier towards an opponent to discourage that person making a tackle); Note that players should be encouraged to carry the ball in two hands to reduce the temptation to hand-off/fend off with a free hand.

(4) **Kicking** (including fly-hacking i.e. kicking a loose ball on the ground); or

(5) Obstruction; the game is restarted at the point at which the infringement occurred with a free pass to the non-offending team

(d) After any stoppage not covered elsewhere in this Section, the match restarts with a scrum to the team moving forward or, if neither team was moving forward, to the team last in possession of the ball.

1.4 GENERAL PLAY:

(a) In general play, the ball can only be passed sideways or backwards - defined as 'towards the player's own try line'. If the ball is passed forward or knocked on, a scrum is awarded to the opposition.

(b) Offside in general play is penalized in accordance with the IRB Laws of the Game. A player offside in general play is to be penalized for being offside unless that player is making an obvious attempt to return to an onside position. Penalty: A free pass restarts to the non-offending side.

(c) If a player carrying the ball goes to ground in general play or if a player goes to ground to gather the ball in general play, the player must immediately do one of three things (or he/she will be penalized):

- (1)** Get up with the ball;
- (2)** Pass the ball to another player; or
- (3)** Release the ball for another player to pick up.

1.5 TACKLING:

(a) Any player who has the ball and is on their feet can be tackled by one (or two) maximum other players.

Following a tackle:

(1) The tackler must immediately release the tackled player and get up or move away from the tackled player and the ball. The tackler must get up before playing the ball.

Note 1: Any tackle level with or above the armpit is to be considered a high tackle

Note 2: The scrag-type tackle (i.e. swinging the player round by the shirt) must be considered dangerous play and must be penalized

(2) The tackled player must immediately pass or release the ball and must get up or move away from the ball. The tackled player may put the ball on the ground in any direction, or may push the ball along the ground in any direction, except forward (towards the opposition try line), providing this is done immediately.

(3) At a tackle, or near to a tackle, other players who play the ball must do so from behind the ball and from behind the tackled player, or the tackler closest to those players' goal line.

(4) Any player who first gains possession of the ball at the tackle or near to it may be tackled by an opposition player, providing that player does so from behind the ball and from behind the tackled player or tackler nearest that

player's goal-line.

Infringement of any of the above will result in a free pass being awarded to the non-infringing team.

(b) If, after a tackle, the ball becomes unplayable, a scrum is awarded. The scrum is awarded to the team that was moving forward immediately prior to the tackle or, if no team was moving forward, to the attacking team (the team in the opponents' half of the pitch).

(c) No player shall use the technique known or referred to as '**Squeeze-ball**' (**The 'TURTLE' in Canada**) and no person involved in the teaching or coaching of Mini Rugby may teach or coach or encourage Under 10 or Under 12 players to use the 'Squeeze ball' technique. Penalty: Free pass.

Note: 'Squeeze ball' is a technique where the ball carrier goes to ground, head forward (touching or close to the ground), irrespective of immediate contact with opponents, usually keeping parallel to the touchline, holding and protecting the ball close to the chest and, when on the ground, pushes the ball back between the legs.

(d) It is illegal for any player to voluntarily fall on or over a player lying on the ground with the ball in his possession or to voluntarily fall on or over players lying on the ground with the ball between them or near them. Penalty: Free pass.

Note:

(1) NO advantage shall be played because of concerns for safety;

(2) A player is assumed to have fallen voluntarily unless the referee is absolutely certain the fall was accidental;

(3) In the very rare instances when the fall is accidental, play must be stopped and a scrum awarded to the side previously in possession.

The object is to keep players on their feet and to prevent them from falling to the ground, thus removing a dangerous area of play.

1.6 SCRUMS:

(a) The scrum will be made up of 3 front row players only.

(b) Under 12, the scrum is uncontested by both sides: the team awarded the scrum will throw the ball into the scrum and must be allowed to win it without contest. Opponents cannot push or strike for the ball. If they do, a free pass restart is awarded to the team throwing the ball into the scrum.

(c) The players from each team will bind together approximately half a meter apart. Each prop will touch the upper arm of his opponent and then pause before the engagement. The referee will talk the players through the engagement procedure in the sequence **Crouch, Touch, Pause and Engage**. On the grounds of safety, it is important that the referee manages the engagement of every scrum in this way.

(d) Front rows must not be allowed to charge at each other. If they start to engage too close together and with necks and backs bent, they must be stopped and the scrum reformed. Props' body positions must be parallel to the touchline (not boring in). There must be no downward pressure exerted by hands or arms. Shoulders must always be above the level of the hips.

(e) If the scrum collapses, the whistle must immediately be blown and the appropriate penalty awarded, or the scrum reset. If a player is persistently involved in collapsing or illegal binding they must be replaced. If a player's lack of technique or strength is a danger then they must be replaced. All players involved in scrums, including replacements, should be suitably trained and experienced.

(f) Any player at any stage in a scrum who has or causes an opponent to have his/her shoulders lower than his/her hip joint must immediately be penalised by awarding a free pass. The object of this rule is to prevent the collapse of a scrum. It is to help the coach to teach good technique and the referee to penalize bad technique. Any player who has his shoulders lower than his hip joint can only move downwards unless he has very great strength. The force through the shoulders should be directed forwards and upwards; all players should remain on their feet, thus preventing a pile-up and possible injury.

(g) The back lines of both teams must remain at least **5 meters** behind the scrum until the ball emerges or the scrumhalf places his hands on it. Until this happens, the opposing scrumhalf must remain directly behind his scrum, in the pocket edged by the two props.

(h) If a scrum is awarded within 5 meters of the goal line, the scrum is to be taken at a mark such that the middle line of the scrum is 5 meters from the goal line. In this case the defending backs must stay on or behind the goal line

1.7 LINEOUTS:

(a) If the ball or player carrying the ball goes out of play, a lineout will take place at the point at which the ball or players crossed the touchline. If a lineout is awarded within 5 meters of the goal line, the lineout is to be taken at a mark such that the line of touch parallel to the goal line is no closer than 5 meters from the goal line. The opponents of the team who carried or last touched the ball before it went into touch throw the ball in. A quick throw-in is not permitted.

(b) The line-out will be made up of 2 players from each team (who stand between 2 and 7 meters from the touchline) plus the player throwing the ball in and an immediate opponent (who must stand within 2 meters of the touchline) and one player from either side in a position to receive the ball (i.e. scrum-half). Both the thrower-in and his immediate opponent are able to take an active role in the lineout as soon as the ball has been touched by one of the players in the

lineout. Players not taking part in the lineout must stay behind the offside line until the lineout ends.

(c) The lineouts are uncontested by both sides and the team throwing the ball in must be allowed to catch and win the ball without any interference from the opposition. The uncontested phase of the lineout continues until the lineout has ended and the catcher is therefore protected from contact from the opposition unless he/she decides to instigate it.

(d) In uncontested lineouts, the ball must be thrown into the line out (i.e. between 2 and 7 meters) and not beyond it, i.e. the ball must be played by one of the players within the lineout. Should the ball be thrown beyond 7 meters, the opposition will be awarded the throw. Should the opposition then throw beyond 7 meters, a scrum will be awarded to the side originally throwing in.

(e) The lineout begins when the ball leaves the hands of the player throwing it in. The lineout ends when the ball or a player carrying it leaves the lineout. This includes the following:

(1) When the ball is thrown or knocked out of the lineout;

(2) When a lineout player hands the ball to a player who is peeling close to and parallel to the line;

(3) There are **NO** rucks or mauls; and

(4) The ball has been passed or carried out of the lineout or if the catcher decides to drive through the lineout.

(g) When the ball becomes unplayable in a lineout, play restarts with a scrum to the team moving forward or, if neither team was moving forward, to the team last in possession of the ball. The scrum will take place 7 meters in from the touchline opposite the point where the lineout took place.

(h) All 'peeling off' movements must be close to and parallel with the lineout. Players must keep moving. ***Lifting/supporting is prohibited at this level*** (i.e. a player may not bind to a jumper until they return to the ground). The player designated to receive the ball (i.e. the scrum half) may not enter the lineout to compete for the ball. "Peeling off" occurs when a player leaves the lineout to catch the ball knocked or passed back by a team-mate.

(i) The offside line for all players not participating in the lineout (all players other than those described under Section 1.7(b) is 7 meters back from the line of touch, parallel to the goal line, and they must remain behind that offside line until the lineout has ended. If the lineout is closer than 7 meters to the touchline, the goal line is the offside line.

1.8 COACHING:

(a) RUGBY CANADA & Alberta Junior Rugby recommends that at a Fixture, a coaching session SHOULD precede each match.

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

(c) During the match, coaches can direct and develop play, in a coaching sense, from the touchline.

(d) The emphasis must be on enjoyment and the players must be encouraged

to enjoy the physical skills of running, passing and evasion.

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

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

1.9 UNDER 12 AGE GRADE DISPENSATIONS:

The following general dispensations apply as exceptions to the age grade rules contained in Section 4.15. Particular attention is drawn to the need to ensure that player safety is not compromised when applying any of these dispensations since players of different age grades and development will be playing together and the duty of care owed to players means it may not always be appropriate to allow a player to take advantage of a dispensation.

(a) Team Dispensation: Under 11 players may play down in an Under 10 team if Clubs or Schools do not have enough players to complete an Under 10 team, however, this dispensation is subject to strict observance of the following qualifications:

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

(2) NO Under 12 players or above may play in an Under 10 team in any circumstances. This dispensation will also apply if a Club or School does have one or more full Under 10 teams, but needs extra players to field a further team.

(b) Training Dispensation: During internal Club/School training, players permitted by the Rugby Continuum to play in Under 11 and Under 12 squads may train together and play internal training matches together, however, no Under 12 squad player may play with any Under 10 player playing in an Under 11 team under a dispensation.

(c) Special Dispensation: The vast majority of children, with correct coaching, can play in their correct age grades but in exceptional cases where child safety may be compromised due to ***physical developmental or disability (physical or behavioural)*** an application must be made to the provincial union's developmental committee for an individual dispensation permitting a player to play down one age grade. Such dispensation will only last for one season. Application for such a dispensation should be submitted to the Director of Development at RUGBY CANADA and should be accompanied by documentary evidence and/or signed statements confirming the player's disability. For the avoidance of doubt, special RUGBY CANADA dispensations to play outside of their true age grade will not be granted to players merely because they appear to have skills inferior or superior to their team-mates.

2.0 LIMITATIONS ON FIXTURES:

(a) Each player in the Under 12 age grades is limited to playing in not more than:

(1) 17 Club Fixtures and/or Festivals during a season in addition to any Fixtures and/or Festivals played by them for their Schools;

(2) 17 School Fixtures and/or Festivals during a season in addition to any Fixtures and/or Festivals played by them for their Club;

(3) One Festival during the same weekend; and

(4) 5 games at a Festival.

(b) Clubs and Schools must maintain a record of how many Fixtures and Festivals are played by each Under 12 player during a season to ensure they are not exceeding these limits.

(c) Where Clubs or Schools have large squads, additional Fixtures/Festivals may be arranged, provided that no player plays in more than the maximum number.

2.1 MATCH DURATIONS:

A match is made up of two 10-minute halves with half-time lasting 2 minutes. Matches are limited to the following durations:

2.2 DURATION OF COACHING OR TRAINING SESSIONS:

Fixtures, coaching and training sessions must last no longer than 90 minutes, inclusive of time devoted to match play. At a Festival, time spent on training and matches must not total more than 90 minutes.

2.3 EQUIPMENT:

(a) A size 4 Ball should be used.

(b) Players may only use studs and other clothing during training sessions and matches that are in accordance with the IRB Laws of the Game. Eye-glasses may not be worn during training or in matches.

RECOMMENDED FIELD SIZE FOR UNDER 12 RUGBY

Alberta Junior Rugby Association