

U14 CONTACT

FOR JUNIORS RUGBY CLUBS ONLY

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 14.

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:

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 thirteen players on the field, six (3/2/1) 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. Substituted players can only enter the field of play when the game is stopped while you are in possession of the ball. Substitutions will always be made with the referee's knowledge.

1.3 STARTS:

(a) The match is started or restarted from the centre of the field with a drop kick and after a penalty, with a free pass. The starter's team must be behind the ball (i.e. nearer their own try line than the starter). Before the kick is taken, the opposing team must be 10 meters away, nearer their own goal line. On penalty restarts, a quickly taken free pass whilst the opponents are retiring is permitted.

(b) At the penalty, the ball is to leave your hands as it is tapped through the mark, and is passed through the air to a team member. 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*);

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

(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: As per IRB regulations

(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.

Note: however, that if a player releases the ball by placing it on the ground and his team mates drive over the ball to prevent the opposition gaining possession, a ruck will generally be formed and in this case the ball may not be picked up by hand until the ball has left the ruck. **Penalty:** As per IRB regulations

1.5 TACKLING:

(a) Any player who has the ball and is on their feet (except in a maul) can be tackled.

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 Junior Rugby may teach or coach or encourage Under 14 players to use the 'Squeeze ball' technique. **Penalty:** As per IRB rules and regulations

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:** As per IRB rules and regulations

Note:

(1) NO advantage shall be played;

(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. This will create proper rucks and mauls through encouraging players from each team to remain on their feet.

1.6 MAULS:

(a) A maul occurs when one or more opponents and one hold a player carrying the ball or more of the ball carrier's team-mates bind on to the ball carrier. It is helpful if the referee calls 'maul formed'. All the players involved are on their feet.

(b) Once a maul is formed, other players may only join the maul from behind the foot of their hindmost team-mate in the maul. Players joining the maul from in front of this e.g. from the side are offside and should be penalized. **Penalty:** As per IRB rules and regulations

(c) A maul ends successfully when either the ball or a player with the ball leaves the maul or the ball is on the ground or the maul is on or over the goal line (when the ball may be grounded for a try).

(d) A maul ends unsuccessfully if the ball becomes unplayable or the maul collapses (not as a result of foul play) and a scrum is awarded. Should a maul collapse, the referee must immediately act to prevent a pile-up from developing.

(e) When a maul remains stationary or has stopped moving forwards for more than 5 seconds, but the ball is being moved and the referee can see it, a

reasonable time is allowed for the ball to emerge. If it does not emerge within a reasonable time, a scrum is ordered. It is helpful in all maul situations if the referee calls “use it or lose it” prior to awarding a scrum.

(f) When a maul has stopped moving forward it may start moving forward again providing it does so within 5 seconds. If the maul stops moving forward for a second time, and if the ball is being moved and the referee can see it, a reasonable time is allowed for the ball to emerge. A scrum is awarded if it does not emerge within a reasonable time.

(g) In the case of a scrum following a maul, the team not in possession of the ball when the maul began will throw the ball in at the subsequent scrum. If the referee cannot decide which team had possession, the team moving forward before the maul stopped throws in the ball. If neither team was moving forward, the attacking team throws in the ball.

(h) Any player at any stage in a maul who has or causes an opponent to have his shoulders lower than his hip joint must immediately be penalized by awarding a free pass. The object of this rule is to prevent the collapse of a maul. 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.

(j) The new experimental law variations are in effect.

1.7 RUCKS:

(a) A ruck occurs where one or more players from each team, who are on their feet, in physical contact, close over the ball on the ground. It is helpful if the referee calls “ruck formed”. Players are rucking when they are in a ruck and using their feet to try to win or keep possession of the ball, without being guilty of foul play.

(b) Once a ruck is formed, other players may only join the ruck from behind the foot of their hindmost team-mate in the ruck. A player may join alongside this hindmost player. Players joining the ruck from in front of this e.g. from the side are offside and should be penalized. **Penalty:** As per IRB rules and regulations

(c) Players must not use their hands to pick up the ball while it is still in the ruck.

Penalty: As per IRB rules and regulations

(d) A ruck ends successfully when the ball leaves the ruck, or when the ball is on or over the goal line (when the ball may be touched down for a try).

(e) A ruck ends unsuccessfully when the ball becomes unplayable and a scrum is awarded. Should a ruck collapse, the referee must immediately act to prevent a pileup from developing.

(f) Scrum following ruck: The team that was moving forward immediately before the ball became unplayable in the ruck throws in the ball. If neither team was moving forward, or if the referee cannot decide which team was moving forward before the ball became unplayable in the ruck, the team that was moving forward before the ruck began throws in the ball. If neither team was moving forward, then the attacking team throws in the ball. Before the referee blows the

whistle for a scrum, the referee allows a reasonable amount of time for the ball to emerge. If the ruck stops moving or if the referee decides that the ball will probably not emerge within a reasonable time, the referee must order a scrum.

(g) Any player at any stage in a ruck who has or causes an opponent to have his shoulders lower than his hip joint must immediately be penalized by awarding a free pass. The object of this rule is to prevent the collapse of a ruck. 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.

1.8 SCRUMS

(a) The scrum will be made up of six players from each team. (The second row must be in the lock position and the number 8 their body engaged between the 2 second rows and not in the flanker position)

(b) At Under 14, 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 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

1.9 LINE-OUTS:

(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 all forwards from each team (who stand between 5 and 15 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) At Under 14, the line-outs are contested by both sides however players cannot be lifted.

(d) In contested line-outs, the ball must be thrown into the line out (i.e. between 5 and 15 meters) and not beyond it, i.e. the ball must be played by one of the players within the lineout.

(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) When a ruck or maul develops in a lineout and both feet of all the players in the ruck or maul move beyond the line-of-touch; 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 10 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 1.9(b)) is 10 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 10 meters to the touchline, the goal line is the offside line.

KICKING

Kicking as under the IRB rules and regulations is allowed in its entirety. There are **no** kicking variations for U14.

REPLACEMENTS

At the U14 age grades unlimited substitutions are permitted.

1.10 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.

1.11 FIXTURES & FESTIVALS:

In the Rugby Continuum:

(a) A Fixture is the playing of **JUNIOR RUGBY** between teams of different Schools or Clubs, not more than three Schools or Clubs being involved together on any one day. Where three Clubs or Schools are involved, these are sometimes referred to as “**Triangular Fixtures**”.

(b) A Festival is the playing of **JUNIOR RUGBY** between more than three teams of different Schools or Clubs, normally to establish a winner, all matches being part of one event.

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

(d) Fixtures and Festivals must all comply with the regulations contained in the Rugby Continuum, however, Festival organizers may impose additional conditions on participation including maximum squad sizes which should not be less than 13 players (although this should not prevent teams from participating with less than this number should they so wish).

1.12 UNDER 14 AGE GRADES:

(a) Eligibility is determined by their **YEAR OF BIRTH**. (i.e. -An Under 14 player will therefore only turn 14 during the course of the season)

(b) During the course of a season players may only play rugby with other Under 14 players unless they are permitted to play with players from a different age grade under special dispensation refer to section 1.13.

(c) When participating in Fixtures or Festivals, the Club/School must inform the coaches and match officials of opposing teams of any dispensation being applied and identify each player concerned.

1.13 UNDER 14 AGE GRADE DISPENSATIONS:

The following general dispensations apply as exceptions to the age grade rules contained in Section 1.12. 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.

Special Dispensation: The vast majority of children, with correct coaching, can play in their correct age grades but in exceptional cases where child safety may be compromised due to a ***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 and should be accompanied by documentary evidence and/or signed statements confirming the player's physical developmental or disability. Such dispensation will only last for one season. 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.

1.14 LIMITATIONS ON FIXTURES:

(a) Each player in the Under 14 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 14 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 referred to in Section 1.14

1.15 MATCH DURATIONS:

A match is made up of two 25-minute halves with half-time lasting 2 minutes with a maximum playing time of 90 minutes in a day.

1.16 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.

1.17 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.

1.18 FIELD SIZES:

It is recommended to play on a regulation size field.

Alberta Minor Rugby Association