

Rugby Basics

[Items in blue are terms to remember.]

Rugby is played in two 40-minute halves (although the halves can be shorter) and the ref is the official timekeeper – no matter what the time clock says.

There are 15 players on the field and numbers on jerseys correspond with position. The first eight players are forwards (they are generally bigger) and their jerseys are numbered 1–8. Their main priority is winning the ball. The ball is won by rucking (pushing) the other team off the ball. Players numbered 10–15 are the backs. They are generally faster and have better ball-handling skills. One player, the number 9, is called the scrumhalf. They are like the quarterback and their job is to lead the forwards (lots of yelling) and get the ball to the backs or to other forwards to run the ball. The positions are:

1 – Loose-Head Prop: Big player, very strong, good rucker, does the heavy pushing work, usually slower

2 – Hooker: Generally shorter, their job is to hook the ball back with their foot in the scrum and throw the ball in for lineouts

3 – Tight-Head Prop: Same as #1

4 & 5 – Lock: Generally tall and strong, keeps the props from falling over in the scrum; good in contact

6 & 7 – Flanker: Constant running and tackling

8 – Eight Man: Experienced, strong, and fast; similar to flanker

9 – Scrumhalf: Leader on the field; quick thinking and acting; best passing skills

10 – Flyhalf: Good catcher; quick ball distributor

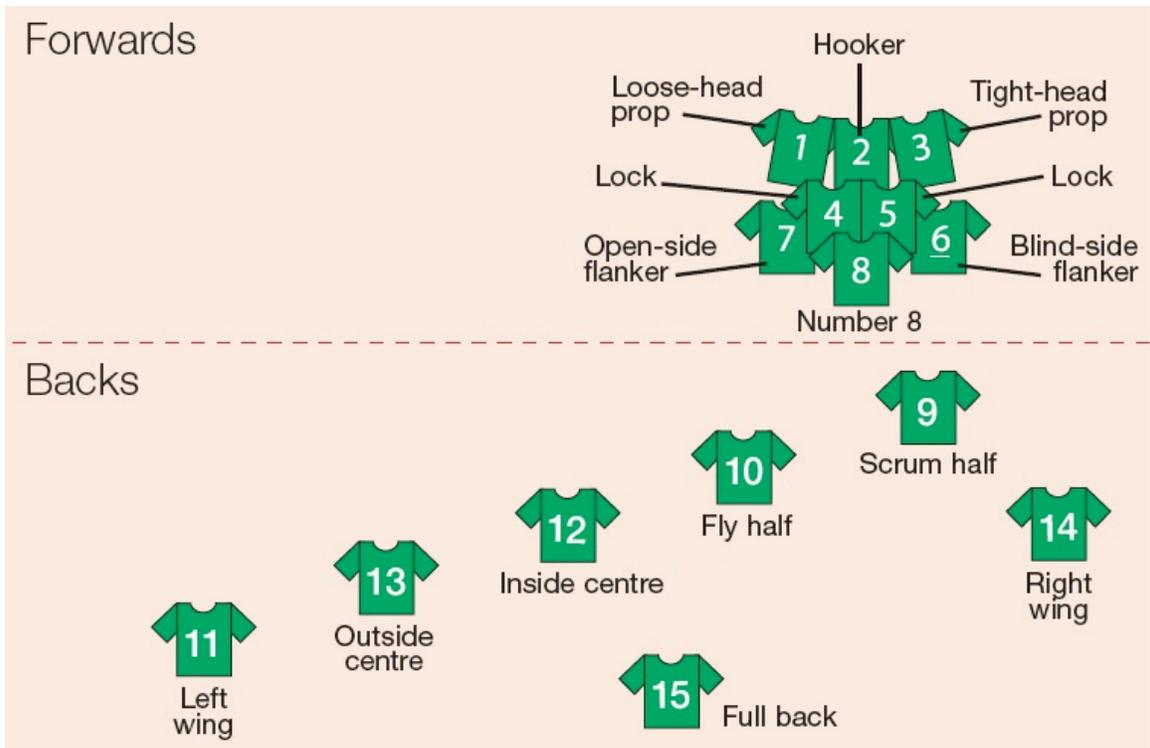
11 – Left Wing: Speedy

12 – Inside Center: Strong and good ball handling; good tackler

13 – Outside Center: Same as Inside Center

14 – Right Wing: Speedy

15 – Fullback: Good kicker, speedy, has ability to catch high kicked balls, good open-field tackler



Scoring

Try (5 points) – The ball is touched down on or over the opponent's **try line**. The ball *must* be touched down to the ground. If a hand gets under it, it doesn't count and is considered **held up**.

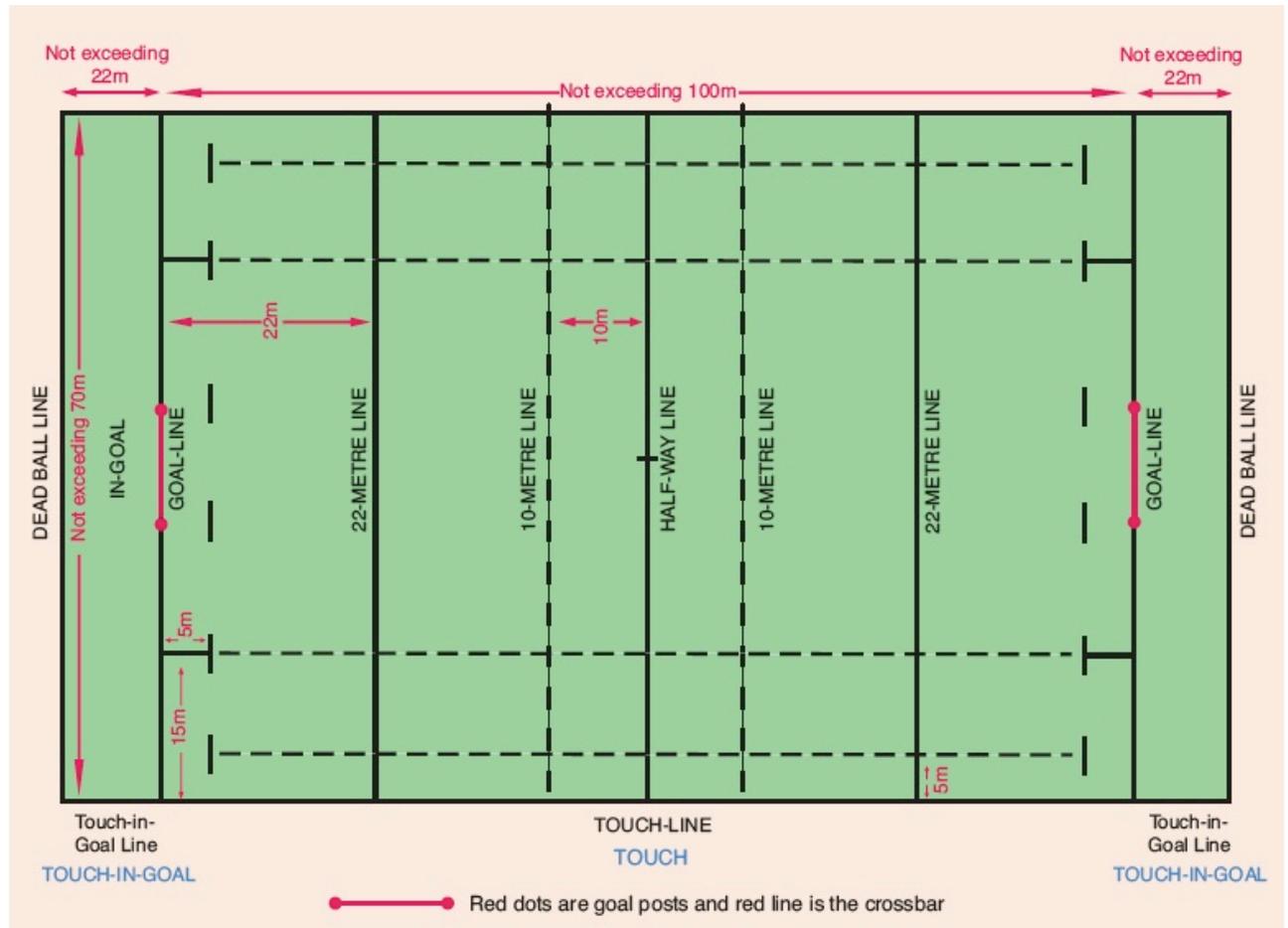
Conversion (2 points) – After scoring a try, that team can attempt to add two more points by kicking the ball through the posts and over the crossbar from a place in line with where the try was scored. This is why you want to score as close to the middle of the **try zone** as possible. If you are on defense, your whole team must stand behind the **goal line** while the other team attempts the conversion kick.

Penalty Kick/Free Kick (3 points) – A team may choose to kick at goal when awarded a **penalty** after an infringement by the opposing team.

Drop Goal (3 points) – A player kicks the ball between the goal posts in open play by dropping the ball to the ground and kicking it on the half-volley.

The Pitch

The field that rugby is played on is called a [pitch](#).



The ball can only be thrown/passed [backward](#), but you can kick it forward.

If the ball bounces forward or is passed forward, it's called a [forward pass](#) or a [knock-on](#). A knock-on is a minor infraction that can result in a [scrum](#).

The scrum (or [scrum-down](#)) is a method of restarting play and is performed by the forwards (players 1 through 8).

In a scrum, the players [bind](#) on to another player's body between the shoulders or at the hips, depending on the player's position. The scrumhalf then rolls the ball into the channel between the teams (while they push against each other) and the hookers attempt to hook the ball backward so that it emerges between the eight man's feet. The scrumhalf will pick the ball up from there.



← Scrum

A [lineout](#) is the method of resuming play when the ball has gone [out of touch](#) (out of bounds). The forwards line up in two parallel lines and the hooker throws the ball into the channel between the lines with one team winning possession by being lifted into the air and catching the ball.



← Lineout

A **ruck** is formed if the ball is on the ground and one or more players from each team (who are on their feet) are close around it. You cannot handle the ball in the ruck and must use your feet to drive the other team off of it so that the ball emerges – then it can be picked up.



←Ruck

A **maul** occurs when the ball carrier is held up by one or more opponents and their teammates are binding on to them as well. The ball must be off of the ground.



←Maul

More rules and other items to remember:

- You cannot play with jewelry in. This includes any and all mouth piercings.
- You cannot have rugby boots that have a toe cleat on them.
- You must wear a **mouth guard** in games. This is something you *want* to do.
- **Do not** argue with the ref – no matter what. This is called **chirping**. Don't do it.
- You can only **tackle** the person with the ball. You want to tackle low.
- You cannot tackle someone who is in the air.
- **Obstruction**: A player must not stand in front of a teammate carrying the ball, preventing opponents from tackling the ball carrier. There is **no blocking** in rugby. Penalty: penalty kick.
- Sometimes, if there is a penalty, the ref will let you continue to play to see if the team that didn't cause the infraction gains the **advantage**. **Do not stop play if you see an infraction**. If that team does not gain the advantage, the ref will blow the whistle and resume play where he/she originally called the advantage.
- **Red Card/Yellow Card**: A yellow card is a warning and you get **sin-binned** (your team has to play down one player for 10 minutes). Red card, you get kicked out of the game.
- If you are tackled, you must release the ball. If you can get to your feet quickly, you may pick it up again. If your knees are on the ground, you cannot play the ball.
- You are **offside** if you are not behind the kicker or behind the last foot of the scrum or ruck. You can be put **onside** once the kicker passes to you or anyone that was behind the kicker.
- If a player is injured or a **sub** comes in for them, they cannot get back in the game. If there is a **blood injury** (a player is bleeding but can still play), the player must leave the field but has 15 minutes to get back in or they are considered permanently replaced.
- **Do not** stand in the **passing lane** between the scrumhalf and the flyhalf or the scrumhalf and the first receiver.
- If a penalty is called against your team, you have to back up 10 meters from the penalty.
- You can **block a kick** with your hands – this is NOT considered a knock on. If you are on defense and you block a pass and it goes forward, you can get called for an **intentional knock on**. So just try and catch the ball.