

# Basic Guide to Rugby

## Rules of Play

Although to the naked eye a game of Rugby Union resembles a carefully orchestrated riot between 2 sets of thuggish gentlemen - this is not actually the case. There are some rules that govern and bind the orchestrated riot.

The game of rugby is played over 80 minutes, split into two 40-minute halves.

Each team has 15 players who assume various positions, which play critical parts in the teams play.

The ball can be moved by carrying it in the hands, or kicking at any time during play, but under no circumstances can the ball be passed or made to go forward by the ball carrier other than by kicking the ball with the foot or shin. If the ball is hit or passed forward without it being kicked, it is called a "knock-on" and is a penalty which results in a scrum to the opposition.

The aim of a team is to score as many points against your opponent whilst conceding none. Points are scored by the following methods;

**Tries** - A try is worth 5 points and is scored by a player touching the ball down into the opponents 'try-area' (between the try line and dead-ball line). Tries can also be awarded as Penalty tries (where an attacking player was illegally blocked by the defending team, and pushover try (when an attacking pack, push the scrum over the oppositions try line).

**Conversions** - A conversion is awarded when a try is scored and allows the attacking team to gain 2 more points by kicking the ball over the posts of the rugby goal. The conversion is usually taken from the line in the field where the try was scored.

**Penalty** - A penalty kick scores 3 points and is awarded if a serious foul has been committed.

**Drop-goal** - A drop-goal scores 3 points and is a kick at goal during the run of play, where the ball is kicked just after touching the ground. These are usually scored by fly-halves.

## The Positions

Within Rugby Union there are 15 players who take to the pitch, they will either fall into the two following categories; forwards and backs.

**Forwards** - There are 8 forwards who form the scrum. These are the guys that get stuck in and primarily are there to defend their territory and win any scrums, rucks and mauls. They can usually be identified by their 'cauliflower' ears, flat noses and missing teeth.

**Backs** - In contrast to the forwards, the backs are the players with speed and flair. These are the players who control the running game, and amongst this motley crew will be your try scorers.

Both the backs and the forwards are joined together by your scrum half and fly half, who act as the tacticians of the game. These two positions control the flow of play between the pack (forwards) and the backs.

### **1 - Loosehead Prop**

Brute No.1, usually the stockiest player on the pitch essential to winning scrums and line-outs.

**2 – Hooker** A front row forward getting stuck in, but essential to winning scrums, as his job is to hook the ball out to the scrum-half and is positioned between the two props.

**3 - Tighthead Prop**

Brute No.2, with the Loosehead Prop will support the hooker in the front row. Similar to his prop colleague another key function is to scare opponents!

**4 - 2nd Row**

You have two 2nd row forwards. These guys tend to be the tallest on the pitch, and therefore come in handy during lineouts.

**5 - 2nd Row**

Another big man just as described above.

**6 - Blindside Flanker**

Flankers fit on to the sides of the scrum, and are looking to win any loose ball that comes from scrums. As part of the 3rd row of the pack these are the forwards that are also looking to score tries, from scrum and line-out situations.

**7 - Openside Flanker**

The openside flanker is a ball winner, who can support backs on forward runs. His other key job is to knock seven shades of seaweed out of the opposition's fly half.

**8- Number 8**

Appropriately named the number 8, the number 8 sits at the back of the pack and, like flankers, will be looking for loose balls and then supporting his backs when going forward. Plus they are the ones you see controlling the ball with their feet at the back of the scrum.

**9 - Scrum Half**

A key position on the pitch. The scrum half feeds the ball from scrums to his fly half or backs. Although usually one of the smallest players on the pitch, he also has to be one of the most physical, as he'll be getting into the thick of it throughout the game.

**10 - Fly Half**

The key decision-maker amongst the backs whose role is to distribute the ball. The fly-half is a guaranteed point scorer for your side as he will be the prominent kicker and drop goal specialist.

**11 - Left Wing**

Out on his own on the blindside, the left wingers job is to run like hell when he receives the ball, gain territory and score tries.

**12 - Inside Centre**

The centres tend to perform the defensive roles for the back, and are intricate to the ball getting to the more fast-footed wingers.

**13 - Outside Centre**

Good try scorers, the last man before the wingers. If these guys see an opportunity they

go for it!

**14 - Right Wing**

Like the left wing, the right winger's job is to hang around on the periphery until he gets passed the ball when he will hopefully explode upfield and score a try.

**15 - Full Back**

The full back is the last line of defence. Traditionally a very athletic player, he can make 50-60 yard dashes to score tries, but also need to be able to kick well from deep.