

A Brief Introduction to Rules and Terminology of Rugby

Virginia Tech has had a Men's rugby team since the fall of 1968, although it is believed that the first rugby game at Tech was played in 1891. Rugby is a sport that involves fifteen players on each team. The goal of the game is to score more point than the other team by placing the ball in the opponents "tryzone" or by kicking for points. Play is continuous and only stops for certain things such as penalties or when the ball goes out of bounds. In this regard, it is somewhat like soccer. You don't need any materials to play. Usually the only things you need are a mouth guard, ball, and cleats. Certain players like to wear some additional protective padding. This document tries to introduce and explain simple rules and terminology.

Rugby is played on a field called a "pitch". It is usually about 100 meters long and 70 meters wide. Each player has his own position with distinct responsibilities and a corresponding number that helps the referee. These are listed below:

1 and 3 Props: Typically the largest player on the team . Key responsibilities include being in the front row of scrums, lifting during line-outs , and rucking during gameplay.

2. *Hooker:* It is the job of the hooker to try to "hook" the ball back towards his own team during scrums using only his feet. He also throw the ball in during line outs.

4 and 5. Second rows: These pack members help drive the props and hooker (the props and the hooker all together form the front row).

6 and 7. Flankers: These two players drive on the side of the scrum to keep it straight. They are usually some of the more aggressive players on the field.

8. *"8-man":* The eight man is usually a larger, athletic player, who resides at the back of the scrum. He helps push the second rows and protect the ball from the opposing teams scrum-half.

9- Scrum half: A player who handles the ball in many situations on the field. He makes passes out of rucks, calls plays, and controls penalties. He is similar to the quarterback in American football.

10- Fly half: The fly half is typically the first player to get the ball on the wing. His job is to pass the ball to other players and create plays. It is important that he is a good kicker.

11- Inside Center: Usually a powerful runner. This player stands next to the fly half.

12- Outside center: A player whose job is to run the ball and look for passes.

13, 14- Wings: These two players each have one side of the field. It is a strong side if he is in formation with the rest of the team. Weak side occurs when he must protect the open field.

15- Fullback: The full back stays behind the rest of the team often. His job involves protecting deep kicks and making tackles on his opponents when they break through his team's defense.

Players can run, pass, or kick the ball at any time. It is important to note that you cannot be

ahead of the ball. If a player does go in front of the ball when his team has it, an “offsides” penalty results. Instead, players must be behind the player with the ball on their own team. The other team tries to get the ball from the other team. This can be achieved through several different situations. If the ball is free and no one has possession of it, then any player can take it. At certain times, there will be groups of opposing players pushing on each other in a specific formation to win the ball. These are known as “rucks” and “scrums” and are ball possession is contested constantly.

There are a variety of penalties in rugby. These include high tackles, offsides, and knock-ons, along with several others. Typically this results in a scrum. A scrum is where eight players get into a specific arrangement and push upon each other according to the referee’s cadence. A player called the “scrum half” feeds the ball and the “hookers” from each team try to use their feet to move the ball back towards their own team. If a player commits a more severe penalty, he may receive a yellow card and have to leave the field to spend time in the “sin bin”.



The game continues for two halves of forty minutes each. The team with the highest score wins. To register to play, please visit our website at vtrugby.org! All players are welcome.

Glossary

Pitch: The field of play in rugby. It usually measures 100 meters in length by 70 meters in width. There is a tryzone at each end with field goal posts.

Offsides: When a player is in front of the most forward player on his team with the ball. This results in a penalty played out in the form of a scrum.

Jumper: The player that gets lifted into the air to compete for the ball during a line-out.

Scrum: An ordered formation of players, used to restart play, in which the forwards of a team form up with arms interlocked and heads down, and push forward against a similar group from the opposing side. The ball is thrown into the scrum and the players try to gain possession of it by kicking it backward toward their own side.

Scrum-half: A player who handles the ball in many situations on the field. He makes passes out of rucks, calls plays, and controls penalties. He is similar to the quarterback in American football.

Lifter: The player(s) that pick up another player into the air so that he can try to compete for the ball during a line-out.

Line-out: Players of both teams line up in two lines parallel to the goal line and at least one meter apart, and one player standing out of bounds throws the ball between the lines. The two teams then compete for the ball.

Knock-on: A knock-on is when a player loses possession of the ball which then goes forward off the hands or arms of a player and hits either the ground. It results in a scrum with the put-in to the opposition.

Ruck: A ruck occurs on the ground when two opposing players meet over the ball. The offside line becomes the last foot of the last man on each side of the ruck and players compete for the ball by attempting to drive one another from the area and to 'ruck' the ball backwards with their feet.

Maul: A ball carrier is held by a player from the opposing team without going to the ground. Players from both teams can enter each respective side, but only from behind the foot of the last player.

Try: A player physically touches the ball to the ground of the opposing teams tryzone, five points are awarded.

Drop kick: The ball must touch the ground before being kicked in one sequential motion. This is used on kick offs and to kick the ball through the field goal posts at anytime a player wishes to try to do so.

Yellow card: Certain penalties can cause the player to receive a yellow card. This means that the player must leave the field for 5 minutes and spend time in the "sin bin."

Sin bin: A penalty box where players spend their time after committing certain fouls.

Step by Step Instructions:

1. Play always begins with a kick off where one team has all of its players line up on the 50 meter line in the middle of the field, usually in a straight line. The other team is arranged in a formation to receive the ball. As soon the player acting as kicker completes a drop kick, the kicking team runs to try and tackle. The kicking team can retain the ball if they can get to it first, otherwise it stays in receiving teams possession.



2. After the kick, the players begin trying to run, pass, and kick the ball forward. Commonly, a player will be tackled and a ruck is formed. The two teams send players in and try to push the other team back enough so that they can take the ball. Once a player enters the ruck, he cannot pick up the ball. Typically, the scrum-half is responsible for coordinating the offense and throwing the ball out.



3. Often a scrum will occur for a variety of different reasons. This could include a variety of penalties such as a knock on, offsidess, or playing the ball when you aren't supposed to. The two

teams create a specific formation and push on each other in an effort to drive the other group away from the ball, making it easier for the hooker to secure the ball for his team. It is important that to meet safely, and if the formation is not stable, the referee will blow the whistle and make the teams reattempt it.



4. Another interesting aspect of the game is the line out. This where two equal groups of players from each team line up parallel to one another with a one meter gap in between them. Another play from the team retaining possession throws the ball in an effort to safely give it to another person on his team. The other team can try to get the ball, but they must not go before the ball is thrown. It is important for the lifters to safely place the jumper back on the ground.



5. After the ball is caught and brought back into the field of play by one of the teams in the lin-out, the game continues. The idea is to utilize different players and formations to out maneuver the other team and eventually score. Players must stop the person with the ball through tackling, mauling, or stealing the ball.

6. If any player makes it into the tryzone, he must place the ball onto the ground the for score to count. In the picture below, the player will force the ball onto the ground, and the points will be scored.



7. After a try is scored, the team that scored can send any player to kick the ball from a tee to attempt to make the extra points. Just like in football. The angle of the kick is dependent on where the ball was touched down in the tryzone. If he makes it, it is worth an additional two points



8. This continues until time expires, and hopefully your team has the high score at the end. Shake hands with the other team, and live to play another day.

