



rugby 101

your guide to
understanding the game

Borrowed from IRB's **A Beginner's Guide to Rugby**

Legend has it that in 1823, during a game of school football (soccer) in the town of Rugby, England, a young man named William Webb Ellis picked up the ball and ran towards the opposition's goal line.

Two centuries later, rugby football has evolved into the world's second most popular sport, with millions of people playing, watching and enjoying the game.

At the heart of rugby is a unique ethos which it has retained over the years. Not only is the game played to the laws, but also within the spirit of the laws.

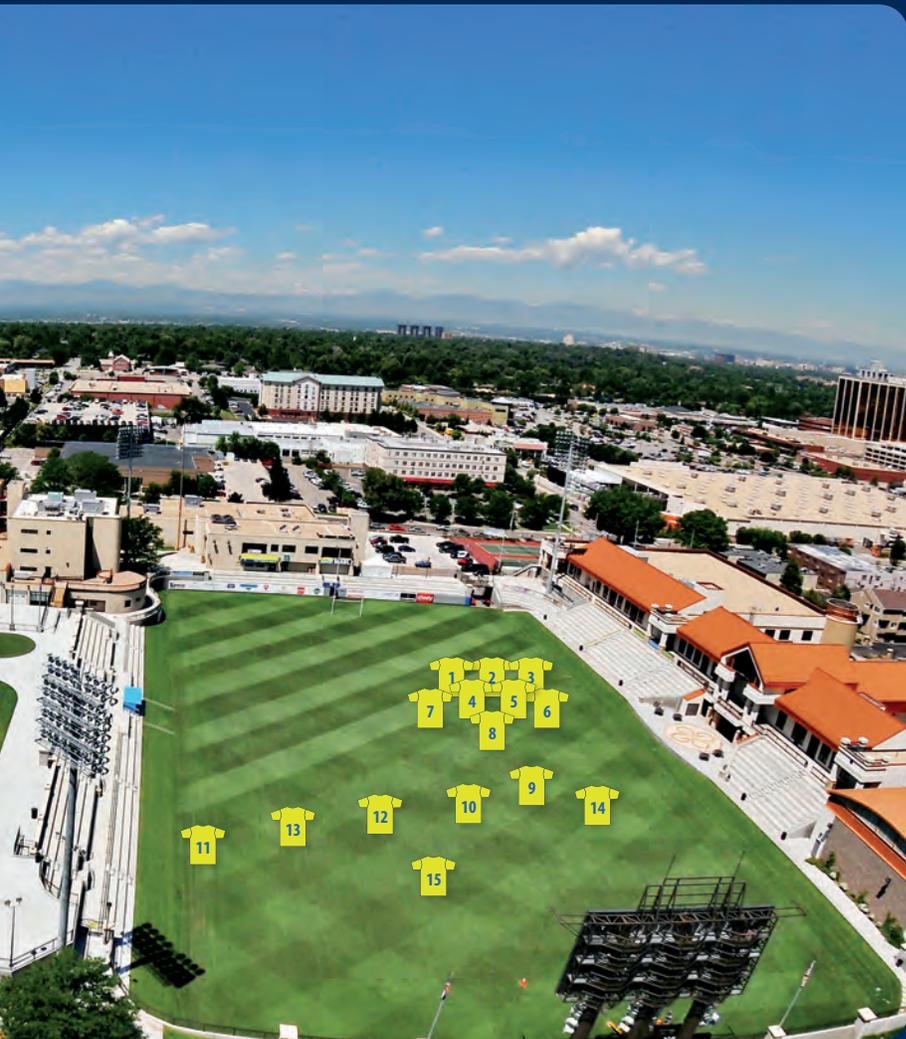
Through discipline, control and mutual self-respect, a fellowship and sense of fair play are forged, defining rugby as the game it is.

From the school playground to the Rugby World Cup final, rugby union offers a truly unique and thoroughly rewarding experience for all involved in the game.

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rugby 101

Rugby is a game in which the object is to carry the ball over the opponent's goal line and force it to the ground to score.

The above description may sound simple - but there is one catch. In order to go forward, the ball must be passed backward. The ball can be kicked forward, but the kicker's teammates must be behind the ball at the moment the ball is kicked.

This apparent contradiction creates a need for fine teamwork and great discipline, as little can be achieved by any one individual player. Only by working as a team can players move the ball forward toward their opponent's goal line and eventually go on to win the game.

Rugby has its unique aspects, but like many other sports, it is essentially about the creation and use of space. The winners of a game of rugby will be the team of players who can get themselves and the ball into space and use that space wisely, while denying the opposing team both possession of the ball and access to space in which to use it.

the field/pitch:

100 meters long by 70 meters wide

number of players:

Rugby Union is 15 players per side. Positions are defined by their numbers, shown below.



props

Their primary role is to anchor the scrummage and provide lifting strength and support for the lineout jumpers. Also, they are pivotal in rucks & mauls.



hooker

The hooker has two unique roles on the pitch, one as the player who wins possession in the scrum and also usually throws the ball in for the lineout.



locks

Locks win the ball from lineouts and restarts. They drive forward momentum in the scrum, rucks and mauls providing a platform for attack.



flankers

The flankers key objective is to win possession through turn-overs, using physicality in the tackle and speed to the breakdown.



number 8

The Number 8 must secure possession at the base of the scrum, carry the ball in open play, provide the link between the forwards and backs in attacking phases and defend aggressively.



scrum half

The scrum half provides the link between forwards and backs at the scrum and lineouts. A true decision-maker, the 9 will judge whether to distribute a quick ball to the backs or keep it close to the forwards.



fly half

As the player who orchestrates the team's performance, the 10 will receive the ball from the 9 and choose to kick, pass or make a break based upon quick interpretation of the phase of play.



centers

The centers are key in both defense and attack. In defense they will attempt to tackle attacking players and while in attack they will use their speed, power and creative flair to breach defenses.



wings

The wings are on the pitch to provide the injection of out-and-out pace needed to outrun an opponent and score a try. Also, it is important to be solid in defense.



full back

Generally perceived as the last line of defense, the full back must be confident under a high ball, have a good boot to clear the lines and enjoy the physicality required to make try-saving tackles.

the scoring system:

try - 5 points A try is scored by touching the ball to the ground in the opponent's try zone.

conversion kick - 2 points After a try, a team has the right to score points by placekicking the ball through the goalposts.

penalty - 3 points When a team is awarded a penalty, it gives that team the right to a penalty kick at the goalposts.

drop goal - 3 points A drop goal is scored by drop-kicking the ball through the goalposts in open play.



did you know?

Glendale, CO was named the official rugby capital of Colorado by Mayor Hickenlooper.

loose play:

maul A maul occurs when a player carrying the ball is held by one or more opponents, and one or more of the ball-carrier's teammates bind on the ball-carrier.

ruck A ruck happens when one or more players from each team, who are on their feet and in contact, close around the ball on the ground. Once a ruck is formed, players can't use their hands to get the ball, only their feet.

the set piece:

The set piece is a means of restarting the game.

scrum A contest for the ball involving eight players who bind together and push against the other team's eight for possession of the ball.

line-out Looks somewhat like a jump-ball in basketball, with both teams lining up opposite each other, but one team then throws the ball down the middle of the tunnel.

why did the whistle blow?

offside Rugby's offside law restricts where on the field players can be, to ensure there is space to attack and defend. In general, a player is in an offside position if that player is further forward (nearer to the opponents' goal line) than the teammate who is carrying the ball or the teammate who last played the ball. Being in an offside position is not, in itself, an offence, but an offside player may not take part in the game until they are on-side again. If an offside player takes part in the game, that player will be penalized.

forward pass or knock on Sometimes an attack which seems to be heading towards the try line will be stopped by the referee's whistle. If a pass has gone forwards, or a handling error has resulted in a knock-on, a scrum will have been awarded to the non-offending team.

failure to release player or ball After a tackle, the tackler must immediately release the ball carrier, and the ball carrier must immediately release the ball. Failure on either of these counts limits a fair contest for possession. If release does not occur within a reasonable time frame, the referee will award a penalty to the non-offending team.

failure to roll away Any players on the ground when a ruck or maul is formed must immediately roll away from the ball, so as to allow continuity of play for the team in possession. Failure to do so will result in the award of a penalty to the non-offending team.

joining ruck/maul from the side When joining a ruck or maul, all players must do so from behind the feet of the last teammate. If they join from the side, they are in an offside position and taking part in the game, then this will immediately be penalized, then a penalty will be awarded to the opposing team.

un-playable ball in ruck or maul If the ball becomes un-playable in a ruck or maul, e.g., underneath players on the ground, but neither team is at fault, the referee will award a scrum to the team who was in possession before the ruck or maul was formed.