



Rookie Rugby (U9 Flag and U12 Flag) Laws to be Used at the June 24, 2017 Alabama State Games



Last updated 6/8/17 by Michael Laney

Introduction:

USA Rugby's "Rookie Rugby" laws allow league directors and tournament directors to choose combinations of various laws and progressions to best suit the participants and the goals of their organizations.

The Rookie Rugby handbook includes these laws and is located at

<https://rookierugby.com/how-to-play-rookie-rugby/>

Be sure to read the larger "full PDF" version, not the lite version.

A set of laws can vary from tournament to tournament to develop different goals. The final say on the exact combination of laws used is up to each tournament director, unless that state's SRO (State Rugby Organization) has set rules and it has been agreed that no variations are allowed.

Below are clarifications on options and progressions to be used at the 2017 Vulcan 7s / Alabama State Games:

1. **Number of Players:** Teams may consist of anywhere from 5 to 7 players on the field each. If one team cannot field 5 or more players, the tournament director can make a judgement call on a match by match basis as long as each team has the same number on the field or the difference between the two teams is no more than 1.
2. **Substitutions:** Substitutions may be allowed during any stoppage, but only if the referee acknowledges and calls the player on. Substitutions are unlimited.
3. **Duration:** Halves will be 7 minutes with a 1 to 2-minute halftime.
4. **Penalties** against the offense will result in a turnover at the spot of the infringement. Penalties against the defense will result in the referee advancing the ball 5 meters from the spot of the infringement.

5. **The advantage rule** is used. Just like contact rugby, the duration of that advantage is up to the referee. The referee is encouraged to verbalize when advantage starts and ends, but is not obligated to.
6. **Red and yellow cards** are allowed and the repercussions will be the same as a typical 7s match, including sin bins.
7. **Point System:** Tries are worth 5 points, unless no goal posts exist for conversion attempts. If there are no goal posts, tries will be worth 7 points.
8. **Tapping the ball through the mark** must be done with the ball on the ground. If this is not done the referee may allow the same player to take multiple attempts from the same location until they get it right or until the referee decides a delay of game penalty should be enforced. A delay of game in this case would result in a turnover.
9. **Kicking** is only allowed for two scenarios. They are conversions (if goal posts exist) and kickoffs. Tapping the ball through the mark is not considered “kicking.”
 - a. **Conversions** are allowed if at least one set of goal posts are in place, even if those posts are not on the try line. The crossbars must be between 7 feet and 10 feet high as long as they are equal for both teams. The goalposts must not be wider than 23 feet and 4 inches (high school standard) as long as they are equal for both teams. Only the player who scores a try may attempt a conversion. A conversion is a drop goal or place kick for two additional points. The conversion may be taken from either direction, and from anywhere on the field. In other words, it may be centered even if the try was not scored in the center. Any single kicking tee or cone is allowed on a conversion place kick.
 - b. **Kickoffs:** Each half begins with a kickoff from the half way line. The kicker may punt or drop-kick the ball. The typical 10 meter rule on kickoffs is changed to 5 meters. Other than those two things, typical rugby 7s kickoff rules apply. The scoring team kicks off.
10. **Accidental Kicking:** Kicking is defined by contact with the foot or leg below the knee. Intent to kick is determined by the referee’s discretion.
 - a. If the ball is kicked and goes backwards, it’s a penalty unless it was unintentional.
 - b. If the ball is kicked and goes forward it’s a penalty if intentional and knock on if unintentional.
11. **Reset Option vs. Turnover Option: Use the reset option.** The rookie rugby handbook reads as follows:

Reset option: If a player fails to pass the ball within three seconds/~~three steps~~ of getting their flag pulled the referee will stop play. Teams MUST reset their lines before play is restarted.

12. **After a flag is pulled**, the referee will say “FLAG” and then start counting three seconds so the players can hear. The ball carrier has 3 seconds (not necessarily 3 steps) to pass the ball, but

does NOT have to. After the pass is made or the 3 seconds is over, he must replace his flag(s) to be involved in the play again. If the flag puller does not hand him the flag he may gather it himself to continue, but the defender should be warned or penalized for poor sportsmanship. **If the ball is not passed within 3 seconds, there is NOT a loss of possession.**

- a. The referee blows the whistle after 3 seconds, points his arm toward the ball carrier's team, and gives the defending team time to get back 5 meters.
 - b. The ball carrier goes back to the referee's mark (where the flag was pulled) and places the ball ON THE GROUND.
 - c. When the referee says "Play" or "Play when ready" the ball carrier restarts by toeing through the mark ON THE GROUND and passing to a teammate. The player who toes the ball must make a pass before running with the ball. Note: One or two quick steps are allowed, but only if the referee deems they were part of the act of passing the ball and not an attempt to gain territory.
13. **Flag Etiquette:** The flag puller is out of the play and must stand still or make every reasonable effort to get out of the ball carrier's way and any passing lanes until the ball carrier passes the ball or the referee stops the play for the 3 second rule or any other reason. At that point the flag puller must return the flag to the opposing player who had it removed. Failure to do so should result in a warning or a penalty.
14. **Unlimited Downs:** Unless otherwise stated, there will be unlimited downs. If all involved coaches agree, the tournament director may change to a 6 down format. This is not mentioned in the Rookie Rugby handbook, but may be necessary in some brackets to make the game flow better. If that happens, after 6 downs, the ball is turned over to the other team.
15. **Going to ground (diving, sliding, or falling) intentionally is a penalty or a turnover, regardless of where on the pitch it happens. Intent is determined by the referee** any argument can result in a call reversal or penalty.
- a. Clarification #1: If the referee deems a player is intentionally pushed or tripped by the other team, the player who committed the act of pushing or tripping will be penalized rather than the player who went to ground due to those actions.
 - b. Clarification #2: When players fall over in the act of scoring a try, referees should pay special attention to intent on the defensive and offensive side. The defense is more likely to unintentionally bump into the ball carrier and make him fall over when he stops to touch the ball down. Also, the ball carrier is more likely to slip in the act of touching the ball down. In many cases, neither player should be penalized even if the ball carrier does go to ground. However, if either the bump or the act of going to ground are deemed intentional by the referee, a penalty should be called. If the penalty is on the offense the try is NOT awarded and there is a turnover at the 5 meter line. If the penalty

is on the defense, the try is awarded and the referee may present a yellow or red card if appropriate.

- c. If a player on offense goes to ground intentionally, it's a turnover to the defense at the spot of the infringement.
 - d. If a player on defense goes to ground intentionally, it's a penalty. Possession remains with the offense. The defense is penalized 5 meters before the restart.
 - e. If a player on offense, then a player on defense go to ground intentionally, it's a penalty. Turnover to the defense. The team that was on defense is penalized 5 meters before the restart.
 - f. If a player on defense then a player on offense go to ground intentionally, it's a penalty. Possession remains with the offense. The team that was on offense is penalized 5 meters before the restart.
 - g. If the referee cannot determine which team went to ground intentionally first, this is a turnover to the defense but the team that was on defense is penalized 5 meters before the restart.
16. **Grabbing** the ball, clothing, hair, or anything other than a flag may result in a penalty or a card even if it is not intentional. This is up to the discretion of the referee.
17. **Stripping the ball** from a ball carrier's hands is not allowed. Result = 5-meter penalty and the original ball carrier's team maintains possession.
18. **Lineouts** will not be taken. If a player runs out of bounds or fumbles the ball out of bounds, the other team will gain possession at the referee's mark one meter from the touch line.
19. **Scrums** will not be done.
20. **Defensive Line at Restarts:** Defenders must be back at least 5 meters for all restarts and may not advance any closer until the ball is PASSED. As soon as the ball leaves the scrum half's hands the defense may advance. For kickoffs, the defense cannot advance any closer than 5 meters until the ball is kicked.
21. **Offsides:** Do NOT use the offsides "progression." There is no offsides except during restarts and kickoffs.
22. **Spinning** (spin move by ball carrier) is allowed
23. **Other basic laws:** For other obvious laws, such as no forward passes or obstruction, consult the "Rookie Rugby – How to Play Manual" at <https://rookierugby.com/how-to-play-rookie-rugby/> Be sure to read the larger "full PDF" version, not the lite version.