

Rugby rules

No idea why half the world is so rugby mad? You might find the following information helpful to understand the game better. The **official rule book** is 196 pages long (see www.irb.com), however a comprehensive study is not required to cheer. Actually, just the incredible physical performance of the players is enough to evoke fascination. Rugby is way more exciting live than on television, it is really advisable to use the opportunity to attend a rugby game during any trip to New Zealand, whether it's the All Blacks or a school boy team!

Rugby in brief

- ⑤ The **rugby field** is 100 m long between the goal posts of both teams and 70m wide.
- ⑤ A maximum of **15 players per team** on the field, up to 7 substitutes can be used.
- ⑤ The **rugby ball** is oval.
- ⑤ **Rugby is incredibly dynamic**, it is important to keep the ball in the team and bring it across the opposing end line, when the ball is put down on the floor by a player then points are won (try). The subsequent kick through the goalposts will be rewarded with more points (conversion).
- ⑤ The match starts with a **kick-off**. At the beginning of the game it is randomly decided which of the two captains can either opt for a kick off or a side. After halftime sides are exchanged and the other team starts play. After a try the other team starts with the kickoff.
- ⑤ A rugby match lasts no longer than **80 minutes** plus lost time and extra time, it is divided into two halves, each no longer than 40 minutes. Halftime lasts no longer than 15 minutes. Lost playing time will be added to the same halftime.



Interesting rugby rules

- ⑤ If **time runs out** and the ball is still in play then the game continues, after a try the conversion can also take place.
- ⑤ Bleeding or openly **wounded players** can be temporarily replaced. Players may not wear any clothing that is contaminated by blood.
- ⑤ The **rugby referees** may consult his assistant referees and assistants with technical devices or video repetitions for his decisions.
- ⑤ The **player in possession** can be stopped and held, pushed down or pressed to the ground. The ball holder may push other players aside with his hands.
- ⑤ The **Law of Advantage** takes precedence over most other rules - the continuous playing with as few interruptions as possible has top priority. Rugby players are encouraged to continue play despite violations from opponents. If the offended team may get an advantage out of the current situation the referee will not whistle, otherwise the game will be restarted from the place of the incident.



- ⑥ **Try:** If an attacking player can press the ball on the floor of the opponent's goal area then his team wins 5 points. If the try is prevented by a foul then the referee will give the opportunity for a penalty try: a kick through the goal posts (also 5 points).
- ⑥ **Conversion:** A conversion occurs after a try when the team has the chance to kick a goal and win 2 more points. The kicker is therefore one of the most important players on the field.
- ⑥ **Players running parallel** to each other may only touch by shoulder, generally one can not stand in the way of other players and thus affect the flow of play.
- ⑥ Even a ball holder must not be tackled dangerously, there are many other **unfair playing practices** which are excluded by law.

Small rugby glossary

- ⑥ **Captain:** the captain is nominated by the team, only he may consult with the referee during the game and select options.
- ⑥ **Goal:** a goal is scored when the ball is shot between the goalposts over the opposing crossbar.
- ⑥ **Pass:** passing the ball to another player.
- ⑥ **Penalty kick:** free kicks can be offered after fouls (3 points if successful). The free kick is located on the line of the try or the place of the foul. All players on the team must be behind the ball. All players of the opposing team must stand behind their goal line until the kick takes place.
- ⑥ **Sin bin:** where the players must sit out their temporary penalty period of 10 minutes.
- ⑥ **Offside:** as a rule, a player is offside if he is in front of a player in possession of the same team.
- ⑥ **Tackle:** when the ball holder is held and brought to the floor by one or more opponents that is a tackle (in the less physical touch rugby a touch can stop the ball holder).
- ⑥ **Throw-in:** a throw-in follows after the ball leaves the playing field. The ball is thrown by the team that had not been in the possession of the ball, in doubt by the attacking team. The ball must be thrown straight for at least 5 meters. The lineout is formed between a distance of 5 meters and 15 meters from the sideline. Between the teams a tunnel is formed. Players that jump out towards the ball may be assisted by lifting from teammates.
- ⑥ **Knock-on:** when the ball is played forward and accidentally falls to the ground, this is followed by a scrum.
- ⑥ **Ruck:** when the ball lies at the feet of the players of both teams and is coming to a stop that is a ruck. If the situation gets deadlocked it is followed by a scrum.
- ⑥ **Maul:** when the ball holder is rounded up by players of both teams and can only move very slowly then this is a maul. If he can not move at all it is followed by a scrum.
- ⑥ **Scrum:** the scrum has the purpose to restart a game quickly, safely and fairly after minor injury or a standstill. Eight players from each team take formation in three rows against the other team. Between the teams a tunnel is created into which the ball is thrown. The two front rows put their heads together (interlock), the scrum begins when the referee calls



"crouch" and then "touch", now the players keep their distance with their arms on the opponent's shoulders. Next is "pause" and then "engage", now the scrum-half throws in the ball. Once the ball touches ground the hookers from both teams try to hook the ball with their feet and bring it to their side and back into play. If a scrum revolves around for more than 90 degrees it is stopped and repeated. For the rugby team a well-rehearsed scrum is very important.

- ⑥ **Front row players:** the three leading players in the scrum, composed of the 'loose-head prop', the 'hooker' and the 'tight-head prop'.
- ⑥ **Loose-head prop:** player on the left in the first scrum row, usually with jersey number 1.
- ⑥ **Hooker:** player in the middle of the first scrum row, usually with jersey number 2.
- ⑥ **Tight-head prop:** player on the right in the first scrum row, usually with jersey number 3.
- ⑥ **Locks:** two players that make up the second scrum row and push the front row forward, usually with jerseys 4 and 5.
- ⑥ **Flanker:** front players on the flank, usually with jersey 6 and 7.
- ⑥ **Number 8:** conducts the scrum for his team from a rear position, usually with jersey number 8.
- ⑥ **Scrum-half (halfback):** player who has been nominated to smash the ball into a scrum, usually with jersey number 9.
- ⑥ **Fly-half:** offense specialist, usually with jersey number 10.
- ⑥ **Wings:** the fastest runners on the playing field, usually with jerseys 11 and 14.
- ⑥ **Inside center:** tackle specialist, probably a little heavier than average, usually with jersey number 12.
- ⑥ **Outside center:** another quick key player, usually with jersey number 13.
- ⑥ **Fullback:** the tactician in the back field, launches attacks with kicks but can also play defensively, usually jersey number 15.



More information about rugby in New Zealand: www.allblacks.com und www.nzrugby.co.nz
Official website about the New Zealand Rugby Weltcup: www.rugbyworldcup.com