



Rookie Rugby



How To Play The Game



USA Rugby is proud to offer **ROOKIE RUGBY** as the new non-contact game and starting point in our nation's **RUGBY FOR ALL** development pathway.

The game of rugby was invented when a young man at Rugby School in England 'picked up the ball and ran with it' over 150 years ago. Today the game of rugby is now played by over 3 million people in 115 countries across 6 continents!

ROOKIE RUGBY is designed with the American athlete in mind. It is a fun, safe, team game that develops a range of ball handling, running and evasion skills. Participants learn the importance of teamwork and respect for opponents, coaches and referees, which are key elements of all athletic endeavors.

The sport of rugby is simple to understand, organize, and teach. USA Rugby has created many tools to help explain the skills, rules and values associated with this special game. Whether you are a former player, long time supporter or new to the game, you too, can be a part of **ROOKIE RUGBY!**

All you have to do is **PICK UP THE BALL AND RUN WITH IT!**



Nigel Melville
USA Rugby CEO and President of Rugby Operations





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Continuum



Rugby is a truly global game played in over 115 countries by over three million players. The Rugby World Cup is the third largest sporting event in the world behind the soccer world cup and the Olympic Games.

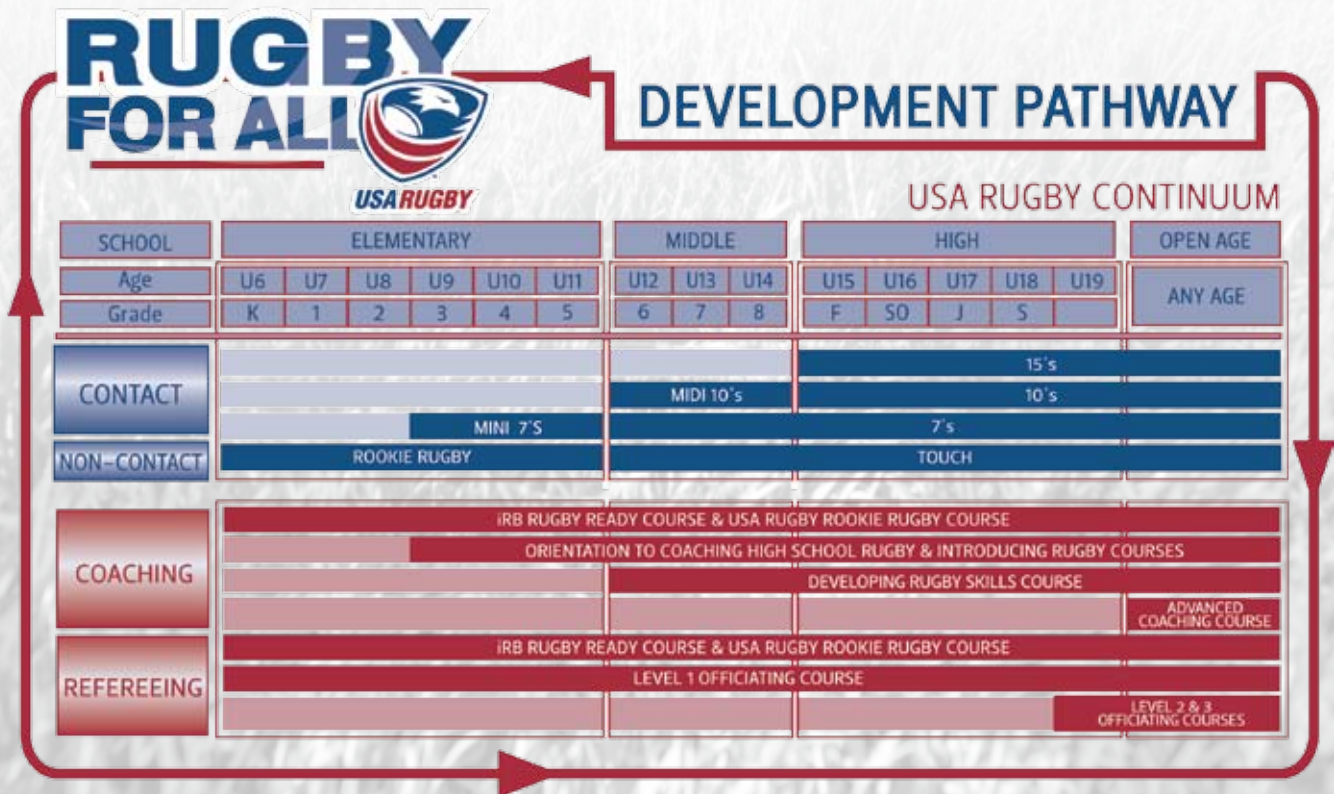
**Rugby now has an opportunity for everyone
- boys, girls, moms and dads.**

The **RUGBY FOR ALL** Continuum has been developed to demonstrate how rugby will captivate America by creating a wealth of opportunities available to you, your family and friends.

Rugby can be played with teams of 15, 10 or 7 players, featuring non-contact and contact games, and offering many refereeing and coaching opportunities - **RUGBY FOR ALL!**

So why not give it a try!

For further information about **RUGBY FOR ALL** please visit www.usarugby.org.



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Honor Code



Supporter/Parent

- 1) Honor the game in action and language
- 2) Use praise and positive recognition with all who are involved
- 3) Allow coaches or officials to correct player mistakes. Resist the urge to give instructions.
- 4) Cheer on good play from both sides
- 6) Acknowledge that all referees perform a difficult task
- 7) Appreciate coaches for their commitment and effort
- 8) Set a good example - think before you act!
- 9) Have fun!

Coach

- 1) Honor the game by adopting a culture that rewards effort, not only outcome.
- 2) Emphasize the letter and spirit of the rules
- 3) Appreciate that a worthy opponent brings out the best in any team
- 4) Aim for fierce competition when the game is on and friendly interaction when time is out
- 5) Respect the officials even when you disagree
- 6) Never do anything, on or off the field, that compromises all player efforts to be the best they can be – think before you act!
- 7) Have fun!

Player

- 1) Honor the game by trying your best
- 2) Put effort into learning both individual AND team skills
- 3) Play according to the laws of the game
- 4) Commit to your team with high attendance, effort and energy levels
- 5) Show respect to all
- 6) Appreciate good play from both sides
- 7) Be an ambassador of the sport – think before you act!
- 8) Have fun!



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Introduction



USA Rugby is delighted to introduce you to **Rookie Rugby**, a very safe, non-contact, easy to play game for both boys and girls.

Rookie Rugby promotes:

- Excellent skill development
- Team work
- Health and Fitness
- Fun

Rookie Rugby is designed to give young players a fun, safe and enjoyable sporting experience. The rules are simple, the game is easy to learn and minimal equipment is required.

This guidebook is designed to enable parents, coaches and teachers to create opportunities for kids to play **Rookie Rugby**.



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Object of the Game



The object of the game is to score a try (5 points) by touching the ball to the ground on or behind the opponent's goal line (Grounding).



For the sake of safety, ball carriers must remain on their feet at all times and they are not allowed to score a try by diving over the goal line. If a player grounds the ball while on their knees, the try should be allowed.



A player may not be prevented from grounding the ball by any physical contact - including placing a hand between the ball and ground.

To prevent a try from being scored the defenders must touch the ball carrier with two hands between the waist and knee. Where flags are used, the defender must remove the flag from the belt of the ball carrier. These actions force the ball carrier to pass the ball.



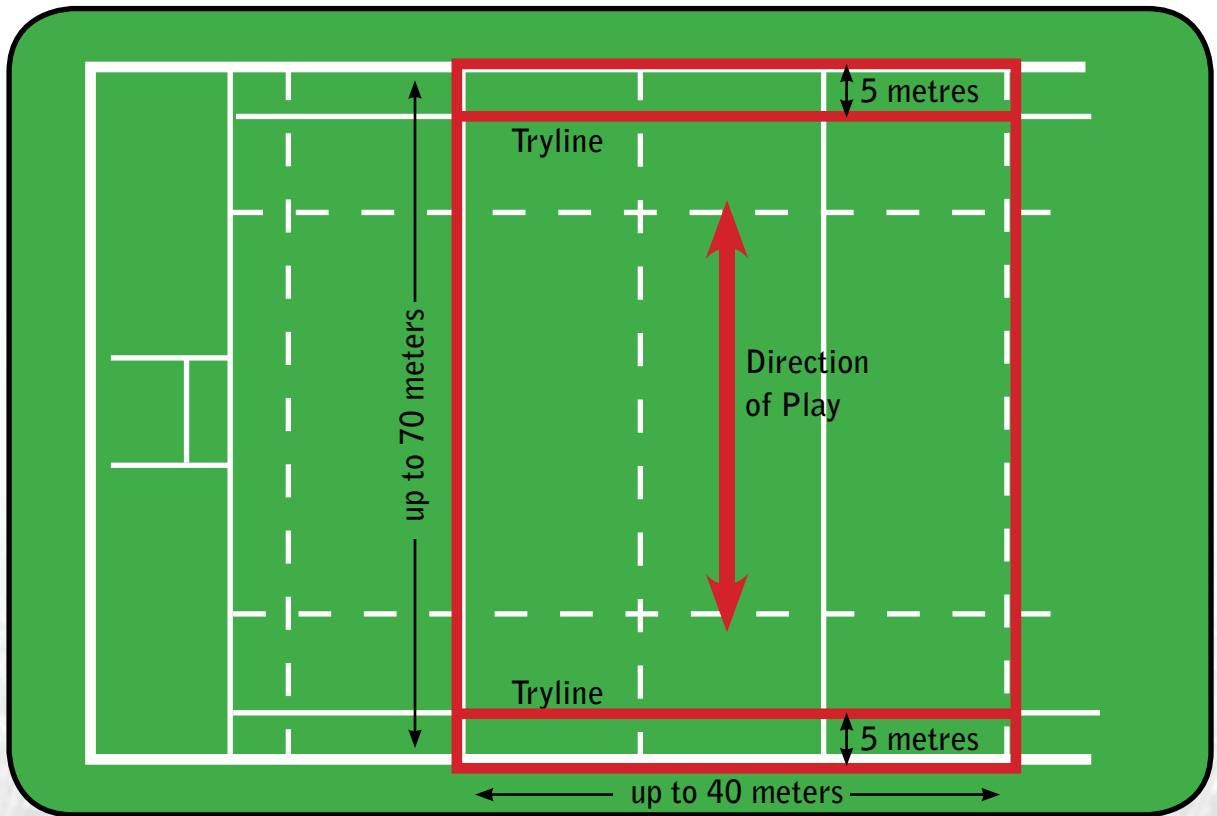
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How to Play



Dimensions of the Field

Rookie Rugby can be played in just about any open space, however a field up to 70 meters in length and 40 meters wide (about 75 X 45 yards) can be marked so that players can easily see the size of the playing field.



Size of the field can be adapted to suit the age and ability of the teams participating.

The try scoring area (in goal area), should be five meters (about 6 yards) deep from the goal line and clearly marked with cones.

Duration of Play

A game is made up of two halves. It is recommended that each half last for as short as 10 minutes or as long as 20 minutes, depending on player's age and ability. Halftime should be two minutes in length.

Teams

Rookie Rugby is played between two teams of equal numbers of players. Each team contains no more than seven players and no less than five. Each team may have an agreed number of substitutes. Substituted players may return to play, but only when play has stopped.





The ball can only be passed sideways or backwards through the air, not handed to another player.

Free Pass

A Free Pass is used:

- At the start or re-start of the match from the center of the half way line at the beginning of each half
- From the touch line (place where the ball went out of bounds) when the ball goes into touch
- From where the referee indicates when a penalty has taken place

The Free Pass must start with the player holding the ball in two hands, and when instructed by the referee, who will declare 'Play', pass the ball backwards through the air to a teammate. The passer and the receiver of the Free Pass should stand 2 meters (about 3 yards) apart.

The player making the Free Pass **MUST** pass the ball and cannot run with the ball when the referee declares "Play".

At a Free Pass, the opponents must be 5 meters (about 6 yards) back from the mark. The opponents cannot start moving until the ball leaves the hands of the passer.

Tag

A Tag is made when an opponent simultaneously touches the ball carrier with both hands anywhere from the waist to the knee, and the referee declares 'Tag'.

If using flag belts, a tag is made when one of the two flags on the ball carriers belt is removed. The defender must then hand the flag back to the tagged player. Failure to do so will result in a penalty.

The ball carrier must then pass the ball immediately, within three strides at most. He or she DOES NOT have to stop, return to the point of the tag or roll the ball between his or her legs.

Six Tags in a row results in the ball being turned over to the opposing team.



Knock-on

When a player drops the ball forward to the ground towards the opponent's goal line it is called a Knock-on. A Knock-on results in a Free Pass awarded to the other team unless an advantage exists.

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Rules of the Game



Offside

Offside occurs when a player is tagged. An Offside line extends across the field from where a tag is made. Players must retreat behind the offside line to remain onside. Failure to do so results in a penalty.

Passing

Rookie Rugby encourages players to pass and run with the ball. The ball can only be passed sideways or backwards through the air. There are no forward passes allowed and the ball cannot be handed to another player. A Free Pass will be awarded as a result of a forward pass.



Kicking

Kicking is not permitted in **Rookie Rugby**.

Advantage

Allowing play to continue when a penalty happens is called advantage. The referee calls 'Advantage' while waiting to see if the non-offending team will benefit. If so, the referee announces 'Play On.'

If no advantage occurs, play re-starts with a Free Pass.



Going to Ground

If the ball carrier goes to ground, or a player dives on the ball, a 'Free Pass' is awarded to the other team.



Foul Play

- a) The ball carrier may run and dodge potential taggers, but must not push off by using a hand or the ball.
- b) Players must not intentionally make contact with opponents. Such contact includes, but not limited to, pushing, pulling, blocking or barging. Such incidents should be penalised and the player reminded about the non-contact nature of the game.
- c) The ball cannot be pulled from the players grasp.
- d) Players must not kick the ball.
- e) Players must not go to ground.



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How to Coach



Coaches are ambassadors of the sport of rugby and must act as such. Coaches need to demonstrate and teach good sportsmanship, create a positive team culture and coach how to play the game. The **Rookie Rugby Honor Code** is the model coaches should follow; on and off the field.

Below are some simple coaching skills and methods that can be used at every level, practices and games, to assist coaches with how to coach.

1. Instruction and Explanation

- ↳ Plan what you say before you speak
- ↳ Gain players' attention before you start
- ↳ Keep the message simple
- ↳ Invite questions and check for understanding

2. Demonstration

- ↳ Position yourself so all can see and hear
- ↳ Focus on 1-2 key points
- ↳ Repeat the demonstration
- ↳ Invite questions and check for understanding

3. Observation and Analysis

- ↳ Focus on each key point one at a time
- ↳ Observe action several times and from different positions
- ↳ Compare observation with correct behavior to find matches and mismatches
- ↳ Determine action: build on strengths, correct errors, or do nothing

4. Feedback

- ↳ Ask players questions to generate self-feedback
- ↳ Limit information to 1-2 key points
- ↳ Give specific & simple information
- ↳ Keep it positive



It is important for coaches to remember at all times that the game is for the players first and creating a fun, positive and all inclusive environment is necessary.

USA Rugby has a number of coaching courses available for any level of coach. For further information, coaching resources and to find out more about USA Rugby coach education and certification go to www.usarugby.org.



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How to Referee



1. Safety comes first

- ↳ Quick whistle for unsafe actions such as:
 - Holding, pushing or shoving
 - Blocking, obstructions
 - Pulling the ball from the ball carrier
 - Players diving on the ball or going to ground

2. Communicate

- ↳ Blow the whistle only when you want play to stop
- ↳ Shout "TAG" when a tag has been made
- ↳ Shout "PLAY" when you want play to resume
- ↳ Signal the team starting play after a penalty by extending your arm toward that team
- ↳ Coach/educate players on rules
- ↳ Have a friendly, positive attitude

3. Maintain space

- ↳ Critical for flow of the game
- ↳ Establish the offside lines at the tag
- ↳ Ensure proper space is allowed after the tag

4. Encourage Continuity

- ↳ Use the advantage rule

5. Be in position to make the calls

- ↳ Need to be level with play
- ↳ Call what you see
- ↳ Blow the whistle only when you want play to stop

It is important to remember that the game is for the players, and that creating a fun, positive and inclusive environment is necessary!!

For information on additional USA Rugby referee training courses or to find out how you can become active in your Local Referee Organization, check out www.usarugby.org.



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More Information



USA Rugby would like to thank you for trying **Rookie Rugby!** There are a number of tools available that will help make your rugby experience the best it can be.

To download or find out how to purchase these new resources please visit USA Rugby at **www.usarugby.org**. USA Rugby can also provide you with contacts in your local area to help you get started.

NOW YOU ARE READY TO PICK UP THE BALL AND RUN WITH IT!

HAVE FUN!





A photograph of a vast field of green grass. In the foreground, there is a distinct path of lighter, possibly mowed or trampled grass that leads towards the horizon. The rest of the field is a dense, vibrant green. The sky is a clear, bright blue, and the overall scene is well-lit, suggesting a sunny day.

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