

Rugby terms for Dummies

Pitch: playing field. In rugby, the pitch is 100yds by 75 yards.

Rugby Team: A rugby team is made up of 15 players. There are 8 forwards, who concentrate on winning possession, and 7 backs, whose chief job it is to advance the ball. All players, though, get involved in offense and defense.

Advancing the ball: Players advance the ball by running with it or kicking it. Forward passes are illegal. All players on a rugby team have the opportunity to run or kick the ball.

Touch: out of bounds

Mark: place of infringement

Call for the mark: Similar to calling for a fair catch in American football. Can only be done behind your own 22 meter line and you must catch the ball and yell “Mark” at the same time.

Lineout: method to resume play after ball has gone into touch

Scrum: method to restart play after a minor penalty or infraction has occurred

Drop out: method to restart play after ball has been grounded by defense in their own goal area

Off side: being in front of the ball when your team is the attacking team

On side: being behind the ball when your team is the attacking team

Penalty kick: method to restart play after a major penalty has occurred. Team awarded the penalty has the option to kick a field goal, kick into touch (and given subsequent throw-in) or decline kick and opt for a scrum. A field goal is worth 3 points.

Kick for touch: To kick the ball directly out of bounds. During normal play, if the kicking team kicks the ball from behind their own 22 meter line. The opposing team gets the lineout awarded where the ball crossed into touch. If the kicking team is IN FRONT of the 22 meter line, the opposing team is awarded the kick from where the player actually kicked the ball.

Tackle: ball carrier is taken to the deck while being wrapped up by the tackler. Tackler must then immediately roll away and tacklee must immediately play the ball.

Ruck: After a tackle, with the ball on the deck, two opposing players meet over the ball. A ruck is then considered formed and players are not allowed to use their hands to push ball back to their side. The off side line becomes the last foot of the last man on each side of the ruck. If the ball does not come out in a timely fashion, the referee will award a scrum to the team that took the ball into the tackle.

Maul: A ball carrier is held up in the tackle (does not go to ground) by an opposing player and one more player from either team joins the fray. A maul is then considered formed and the off side line becomes the last foot of the last man on each side of the maul. Hands are allowed to be used in the maul. If the ball does not come out in a timely fashion, the referee will award a scrum to the team that did not take the ball into the maul.

Game length: There are two 40 minute halves separated by a 10 minute half time. The referee is the sole timekeeper.

Substitutions: 7 substitutions per team. Once substituted, a player cannot retake the field.

Blood bin: If a player has a bleeding wound (nose, cut on head, etc) that player may be temporarily substituted until the bleeding stops and that player can retake the field. This is the only exemption to the substitution rule mentioned above.

Yellow Card/Red Card: A yellow card is awarded for repeated infractions to the rules. The offending player is sent to the "Sin Bin" for 10 minutes while his team must play a man short. Red Cards are usually awarded for very Foul Play and result in the player being ejected from the game. Red Carded players are also suspended from league play for two or more weeks.

Try: A try is scored by touching the ball down, with pressure and under control, in the opposition goal area. Tries are worth 5 points.

Drop kick: A kick for goal taking during open play by allowing the ball to drop to the deck and then kicking it through the goal posts. Drop kicks are rare and are worth 3 points.