



GET IN TOUCH

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Rugby Football Union (RFU), the national governing body of the game in England.

THIS IS RUGBY.

- TEAMWORK
- RESPECT
- ENJOYMENT
- DISCIPLINE
- SPORTSMANSHIP

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Introduction

There's a tremendous way to keep fit which doesn't involve the gym, a great way to enjoy a team sport, which doesn't involve countless rainy Saturdays, or hours on a team bus, a game that can include boyfriends, girlfriends and former team mates. It's a sport called touch rugby.

Modern lifestyles mean making choices and more and more people are choosing to play touch rugby rather than turning their back on the sport they love or to get involved in a team game without being tied down to training every week and playing every weekend.

Touch rugby is a fun, dynamic sport enjoyed by both genders and all ages. It perfectly reflects rugby's Core Values of Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship and brings something all of its own to the rugby philosophy. Rugby clubs are at the centre of their communities and touch rugby is becoming central to our clubs, with the sport rapidly growing and adapting, so that it is truly a sport for all and for all lifestyles.

Touch rugby can be whatever we want it to be, festivals and tournaments catering for teams out to have fun and teams intent on seizing the silverware. It's for men and women, experienced sport players and complete novices. It can be played across half a rugby pitch at the local club or at the park or beach.

This is a sport that adds more than a touch of fitness, fun and friendship to life. So take a look at touch and visit rfu.com/leisurerugby to discover how to get involved.



Why touch rugby?

What began as a warm-up game is now played as a game in its own right with mixed sex teams of all ages and abilities. It is simple to learn and all you need is a group of friends or family, some green space and a rugby ball.

Fun - touch rugby is

- a fun game for the local park or even the beach
- a minimal contact, recreational sport with a social atmosphere
- ideal for employee or sports and social club team building

Flexibility - touch rugby is

- suitable for men and women, beginners or experienced players
- a good way of meeting new people or involving partners or friends
- adjustable to suit levels of fitness and enthusiasm

Fitness - touch rugby is

- easy to learn and a great way to get in shape.
- useful within warm ups and in pre-season training
- helpful in building new teams and club spirit

Finance - touch rugby is

- one way to keep club facilities open all year round
- great for introducing new players and keeping members involved
- an attractive way of gaining local business sponsorship

Coaching Benefits

This is a game that builds the fundamental skills of many sports, while developing the basic principles of attack and defence, without the need for contact. Touch rugby develops the core skills of running, dodging, chasing, passing and catching, as well as decision making, communication and support play.



What is touch rugby?

A fast paced game, touch is similar to conventional rugby but without the tackle, scrum, ruck, maul, lineouts or kicking.

The object is to score the most tries, each being worth one point, and to prevent the opposition scoring.

The team that wins the toss chooses the direction of play and starts with a tap from the middle of the pitch, the opposition being back ten metres.

The ball is passed backwards as in rugby. It may be passed, knocked or handed between players who must stay on side, behind the ball carrier.

Defending players stop them by touching the ball carrier. After a touch all defenders must be back five metres from where the touch was made and after six touches the attacking team must hand the ball to the other side.

When a point is scored play resumes with a tap in the middle of the field from the team that didn't score.

The dummy half (scrum half equivalent) is not allowed to score and loses possession if caught with the ball, the opposition restarting play with a rollball, backwards between the player's feet.

The length of the match can be varied but is often two ten minute halves and the size of the pitch can vary, with matches frequently played across half a rugby pitch (ie 70metres long by 50metres wide).

Each team comprises six players on the pitch at any one time. Squads can be anything up to 14. However, smaller squads enable maximum involvement. In a mixed competition, the gender balance can be adapted appropriately ensuring that both genders are represented at all times.



Principles of Play

Go forward: to score tries, although it can be tactically advantageous to move towards the sidelines making space for attacking play. Using miss passes and quick hands moves the ball forward before a touch is made.

When defending, deny your opponents time and space by moving forward and making the touch. The faster you move up, the less ground they can make.

Support the ball carrier: giving more options in attack and keeping possession. Close support saves passing the ball a long way back to a teammate.

The speed of getting the ball off the floor following a rollball is crucial and the ball carrier should always know where support players are. A flat pass directly sideways can often be effective.

Frequent Interchange: a fresh set of legs can be the difference between winning and losing. Interchange players while your team is on the attack. Once you have scored, it is a good idea to get a whole new set of players on the field for maximum intensity.

Team communication: is vital, both talk on the field and overall understanding of what the team is trying to do and how to affect it.

Running with the ball in two hands: reduces the risk of dropping it. The ball must be run over your opponents' try line and touched firmly down, the referee confirming the score.

Simplified playing rules for touch

1) Passing

The ball must be passed backwards or directly sideways at all times. A forward pass results in a penalty to the other team. A touch and pass, when a touched player passes the ball after the touch, results in a penalty.

2) The Touch

A touch can be made on any part of the body, ball, clothing or hair. Minimum force is to be used at all times. The team in possession is entitled to six touches.

3) Rollball

Restarts play from a touch, the player on the mark and facing their opponents' defending line rolls the ball backwards between their feet a distance of not more than one metre. This player may not pick the ball up. The player picking it up is the dummy half.

4) The Dummy Half:

The dummy half is the player who picks up a rollball but may not score.

5) Offside

An attacking player is offside when forward of another attacking player who either has possession or who last had possession of the ball.

A defending player is offside when not retreating 5 metres for a rollball or 10 metres for a penalty or restart of play. Defending players cannot move forward until the dummy half has touched the ball.

6) Scoring

A point is awarded when a player places the ball on or over the scoreline before being touched.

7) The Tap

The tap restarts play from a penalty, the ball being placed on the ground at the mark, where the touch was made, releasing it from both hands and tapping it with either foot a distance of not more than one metre before picking it up cleanly. Any player from the attacking team may take the tap.

8) Possession

A change of possession occurs when

- the ball is dropped to ground.
- The dummy half is touched while in possession.
- The sixth touch occurs.
- The dummy half places the ball on or over the scoreline.
- A rollball is performed incorrectly.
- A tap is performed incorrectly.
- The player in possession steps on or over the touchline

At a change of possession play is restarted with a **Rollball**.

9) Penalty

When a player/team is penalised the opposition restarts play with a tap taken at the mark, the defending team retiring ten metres from the mark. Play restarts with a tap when the following infringements occur:

- Forward pass.
- Touch and pass.
- Performing a rollball prior to a touch being made.
- Performing a rollball off the mark.
- Using more than the minimum force to effect a touch.
- Claiming a touch when the touch was not effected.
- Defenders offside at the rollball (5 metres).
- Defenders offside at the tap (10 metres).
- Incorrect substitution
- Falsely claiming a touch
- Misconduct
- Playing more than the allowable number of players
- Deliberately delaying play
- Obstruction - defending players must not obstruct/interfere with attacking players supporting the ball carrier.



10) Substitution

Teams may interchange players at any time but substitutes may not enter the pitch until the replaced player comes off and must start in an on-side position. The only exception is following a touchdown, when players may change over without having to wait for the substituted player to leave the pitch.

11) Defence dropping 10m

The defending team will have to retreat 10 metres, in a straight line, from the team with the ball at the start of the game and after a penalty (tap ball). If the defending team concedes a penalty, the referee will insist they are back the full 10 metres and will call the players back until satisfied.

12) Defence dropping 5m

The defending team will frequently have to retreat 5 metres, in a straight line, from the team with the ball. This occurs after each touch and subsequent roll ball. When defending players don't have time to retreat the full 5 metres they must allow the attackers to run unimpeded for 5 metres before affecting the touch. The referee will let the defenders know where the 5 metre point is.



13) Extra Time (The Drop Off)

Should a knock-out match be a draw at full time, in a period of extra time:

- Each team loses one player.
- Play restarts with a tap from the centre by the team who won the toss at the start of the game.
- After two minutes, the hooter sounds, the referee stopping the game at the next touch or dead ball. Each team then loses one more player.
- Once teams have only three players each, play continues until a touchdown is scored. If a team has a player sent off or sin binned at this point, they forfeit the game.
- During the drop off, for a winner to be declared, both teams must have had possession. If a team scores straight from the restart at the beginning of the drop off, the other team should restart as normal, and play until they either score or lose possession.
- In a mixed competition, the gender balance can be adapted appropriately while keeping both genders represented at all times.

Rules and regulations

Marking Out the Pitch

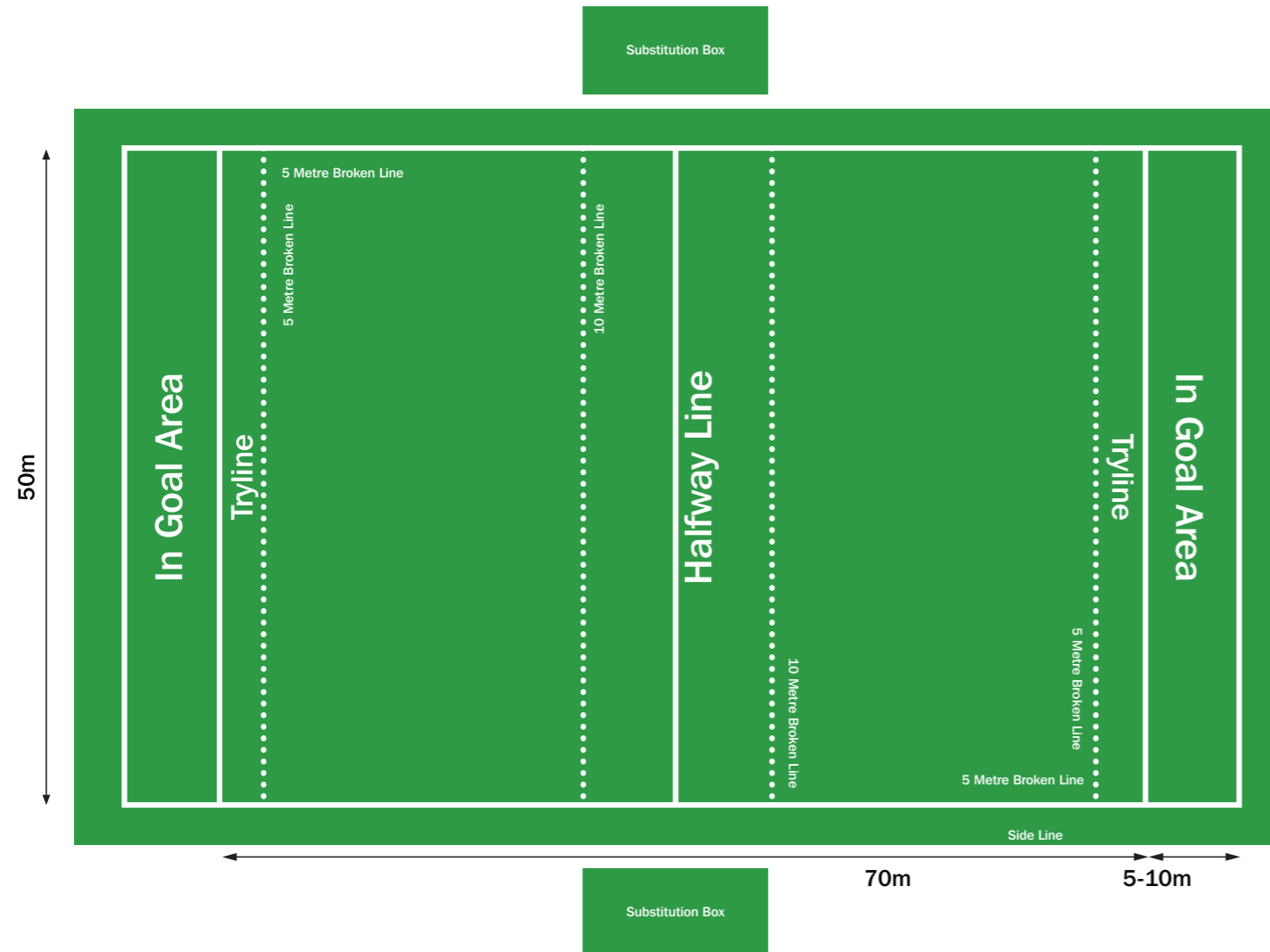
Markers/cones are placed at the intersection of trylines/sidelines and halfway line/sidelines. It is recommended that markers/cones are not placed on the five (5) metre broken lines or on the In Goal Area lines.

The Ball

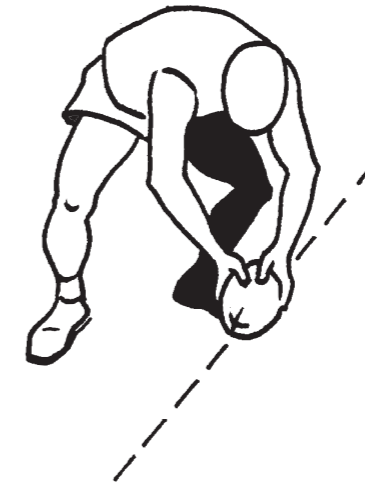
The recommended ball size is Size 4, or smaller for junior competitions.

Footwear

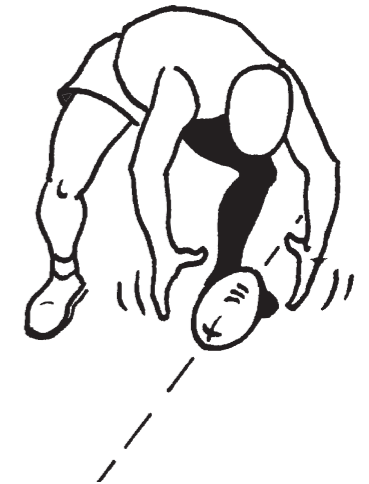
Boots with moulded studs and trainers are permitted.



The Tap



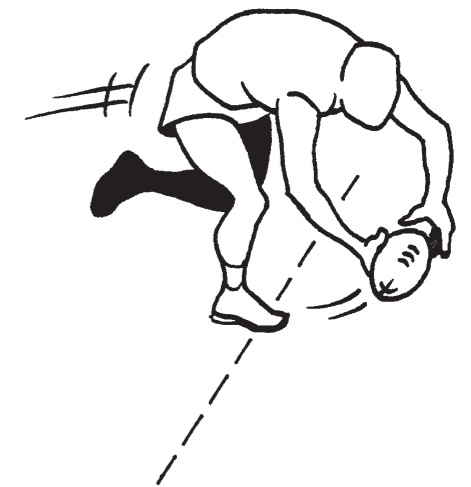
The ball must be placed on the mark.



The ball must be released from both hands.



The ball is tapped with either foot in any direction, a distance of not more than one (1) metre.



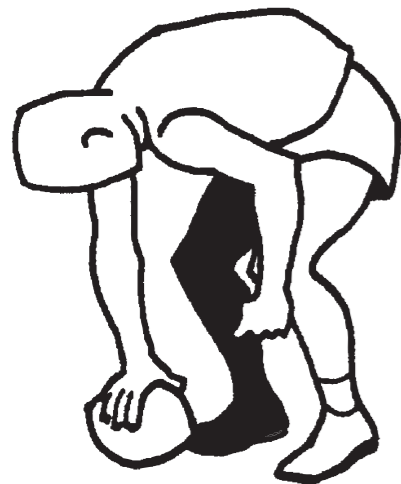
The ball must be picked up cleanly.

The Rollball

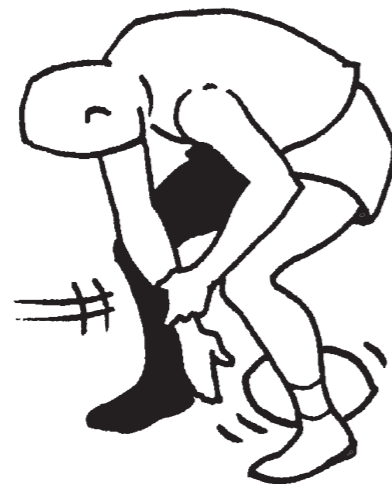


The touch is made by either the defending player or by the player in possession.

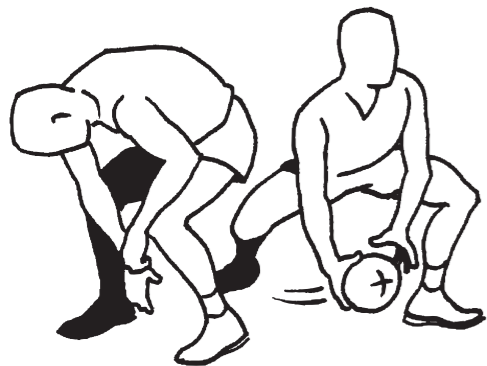
The player in possession must stop, return to the mark to perform a rollball.



At the mark the player must perform the rollball without delay. They must face their opponents defending scoreline.



The ball must be picked up cleanly.



The Dummy Half is the person who picks the ball up after his/her team mate has performed the rollball. The ball must be picked up without delay.

Different Types of touch rugby

Touch rugby can be modified to suit training needs or to give a gradual introduction to contact rugby.

Many variations exist to increase players' enjoyment, for example some matches involve:

Doing away with rollball in favour of after a touch being made, passing or setting up mini rucks, mauls or scrums. Lineouts can also be introduced, as well as kicks or kicking out of hand to restart.

Beach or street rugby operates similar rules to normal touch but is usually on a smaller pitch. It is a fast moving game, the team in possession having three players on the pitch and being allowed three touches against an opposition of two defenders. After the third touch the team now defending drops a player and the team in possession brings another on in attack.



Refereeing

Anyone can referee touch rugby at a social level providing the basics are understood.

The Referee is responsible for ensuring the match is played in a safe and controlled environment, on a suitable ground and with no player wearing equipment or jewellery that could cause injury.

The Referee communicates rulings through using the whistle, verbal information and with common hand signals, the basic signals being:

- Starting the match
- 5th Touch
- 6th Touch
- Dummy half touched in possession
- Touch & Pass
- Touchdown
- Penalty
- Forward Pass



Start of the Match



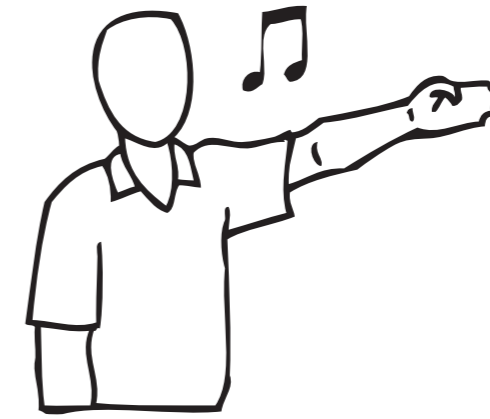
5th Touch



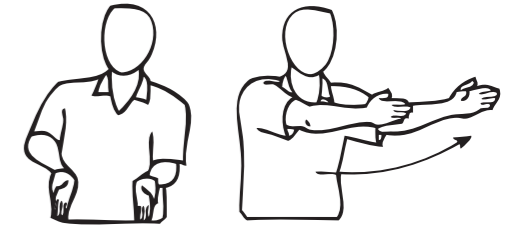
6th Touch



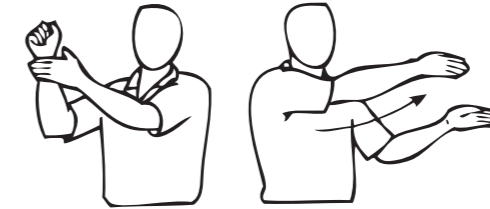
Dummy Half Touch in Possession



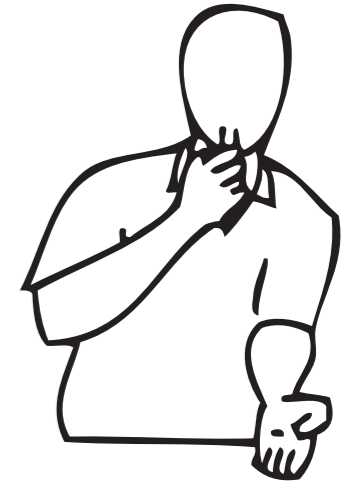
Penalty



Forward Pass



Touch & Pass



Touchdown

Running a touch event

The amount of planning depends on the size of the event but these considerations should be included.

- Venue should be risk assessed even if it is at your local club or playing field which hosts regular matches.
- Key staff site visit to resolve any issues.
- Ensure pitch marking equipment does not create a risk.
- Large scale tournaments require local council notification, access routes suitable for numbers involved and sufficient parking.
- Ensure appropriate event insurance cover by completing event notification process via leisurerugby@therfu.com
- Ensure adequate First Aid cover and appoint a qualified First Aider from your rugby club (ideally with the 'First Aid at Work' qualification), or from a public charity or private company, such as St John's Ambulance.
- Warn all players registering about potential exertions and advise GP consultation if they have any doubt about their ability to play, especially if not recently physically active.
- Consider Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults issues, and structure the event accordingly, with different changing facilities for adults and children and separate male and female facilities. Ensure that you have parental/guardian playing & photographic permission for participating children.

You will want to consider: Attendance, General Safety & First Aid, Sanitation & Waste Management, Traffic Management, Catering & Liquor Licence, Security, Emergency Management, Plans & Maps, Public Liability Insurance and Consultation.

Staffing

Ensure there are sufficient staff to run the event. You may need: Tournament/Site Director, Competition Manager, Referee Co-ordinator, Scorer/Timekeeper, Pitch Manager for each pitch, Pitch Runners, Announcer, Catering Staff, Photographer, Media Liaison Officer, Child Welfare Officer, First Aid.

Make staff readily identifiable, if budget permits provide volunteer T-shirts.

Referees

An event needs enough referees to allow them rest time. If using Society referees, get in touch early or approach your local club, schools or colleges, where sports students may be learning to referee different games.

Consider holding a pre-event training session for less experienced referees and appoint someone to liaise with referees, provide rules and regulations and to assist them on the day.

Provide a referee rest area and a briefing with the referee co-ordinator, who will allocate fixtures ensuring rotation and suitable experience for matches.

Tournament/Festival Format

A tournament or festival can be single sex or mixed, or divided into age categories (open, 30+, 35+). Catering for all categories will significantly increase the tournament size.

- Open and Social Divisions: allow for a variety of playing experience: the Open Division for more competitive teams and the Social Division for the social sides.
- Match Duration: is flexible. A day long tournament tends to have 10-15 minute matches and teams usually expect to play a minimum of four games each.
- Competition Format: Plan a pool format determining the number of teams you can accommodate in the time available. Pool stages are usually followed by a knockout phase, with different levels allowing for contest in Cup, Plate, Bowl etc. Alternatively, teams can be placed in new pools reflecting performance.



Entries & Registration

- Advertising: will attract entries. Use the Leisure Rugby section of rfu.com by contacting: leisurerugby@therfu.com with a completed Event Notification Form. Contact your RFU regional press officer (details under useful contacts) for pre and post event publicity advice.
- Team Entries: by phone, email, post or a combination. If you are charging, it's advisable to take a deposit so that teams to turn up. Send out game rules and competition regulations including the event format. Close entries well in advance if possible to allow schedules to be finalised. Have a contingency plan to allow for teams dropping out.
- Trophies/Medals: You may like to award trophies and to recognise effort as well as performance, with a fair play reward.

On the day

- Arrive early, set up before teams start arriving and revisit risk assessment to ensure nothing has changed.
- Have programme of events, with timings, available, even if sent out beforehand. Site signage can help teams find their way to key locations.
- Brief team captains at least 30 minutes before the first game on site and emergency procedures, tournament structure, game rules and competition regulations and hand out event fixtures.
- Games can be controlled using a central timer and hooter, with pitch managers keeping time.
- Team captains agreeing each result by signing scorecards avoids dispute.
- In latter stages having dual referees can improve the quality of officiating.

Scoring / order of play

Each team plays 4 games of 8 mins each way. Overall winner decided by game points.

- Win 4 points
- Draw 2 points
- 5 or more tries 1 point

If teams tie:

- Winner of the match in which the two tied teams played each other is higher ranked;
- Team with the best difference between tries scored for and tries scored against in all its pool matches, higher ranked;
- If still unresolved, an elected member from each team may toss a coin or alternative game of chance.

How many matches?

The number of matches will be governed by number of teams, pitches and time available. Below are the formats for 3-20 team events.

3 TEAMS, 1 PITCHES

Pitch 1
1 v 2
3 v 1
2 v 3

4 TEAMS, 1 OR 2 PITCHES

Pitch 1	Pitch 1	Pitch 2
1 v 2	1 v 2	3 v 4
3 v 4	1 v 3	2 v 4
1 v 3	1 v 4	2 v 3
2 v 4		
1 v 4		
2 v 3		

5 TEAMS, 2 PITCHES

Pitch 1	Pitch 2	Team Resting
1 v 2	3 v 4	5
5 v 1	2 v 3	4
4 v 1	2 v 5	3
3 v 1	4 v 5	2
2 v 4	3 v 5	1

6 TEAMS, 3 PITCHES

Pitch 1	Pitch 2	Pitch 3
1 v 2	3 v 4	5 v 6
1 v 3	2 v 5	4 v 6
1 v 4	2 v 6	3 v 5
1 v 5	2 v 4	3 v 6
1 v 6	2 v 3	4 v 5

(or two pools of three teams as in 3 teams, 1 pitch above)

7 TEAMS, 3 PITCHES

Pitch 1	Pitch 2	Pitch 3	Team Resting
1 v 2	3 v 4	5 v 6	7
7 v 1	2 v 3	5 v 4	6
6 v 1	2 v 4	3 v 7	5
1 v 5	2 v 7	3 v 6	4
1 v 4	2 v 5	6 v 7	3
3 v 1	4 v 6	7 v 5	2
2 v 6	3 v 5	4 v 7	1

(or one pool of four and one pool of three)

7 TEAMS, 3 PITCHES

Pitch 1	Pitch 2	Pitch 3	Team Resting
1 v 2	3 v 4	5 v 6	7
7 v 1	2 v 3	5 v 4	6
6 v 1	2 v 4	3 v 7	5
1 v 5	2 v 7	3 v 6	4
1 v 4	2 v 5	6 v 7	3
3 v 1	4 v 6	7 v 5	2
2 v 6	3 v 5	4 v 7	1

(or one pool of four and one pool of three)

8 TEAMS, 4 PITCHES

Pitch 1	Pitch 2	Pitch 3	Pitch 4
1 v 2	3 v 4	5 v 6	7 v 8
3 v 1	4 v 2	7 v 6	8 v 5
1 v 4	2 v 3	5 v 7	6 v 8
5 v 1	6 v 2	7 v 3	8 v 4
1 v 6	2 v 5	4 v 7	3 v 8
7 v 1	5 v 3	6 v 4	8 v 2
1 v 8	2 v 7	3 v 6	4 v 5

(or two pools of four)



9 TEAMS

2 pools of 3 (3 pitches) or 1 pool of 4 and 1 pool of 5 (3 pitches)5 (3 pitches)

10 TEAMS

2 pools of 5 (2 pitches, or 4 pitches needed if you are going to play 2 games in each pool at once)

11 TEAMS

1 pool of 6 and 1 pool of 5 (5 pitches) or 2 pools of 4 and 1 pool of 3 (3 pitches)

12 TEAMS

3 pools of 4 (3 pitches) or 2 pools of 6 (4 or 6 pitches)

13 TEAMS

2 pools of 4 and 1 pool of 5 (minimum of 3 pitches, ideally 4 pitches)

14 TEAMS

2 pools of 5 and 1 pool of 4 (minimum 3, ideally 5)

15 TEAMS

3 pools of 5 (minimum 3, ideally 6 pitches)

16 TEAMS

4 pools of 4 (minimum of 4 pitches)

17 TEAMS

3 pools of 4 and 1 pool of 5 (minimum 4, ideally 5 pitches)

18 TEAMS

3 pools of 6 or 2 pools of 5 and 2 pools of 4 (minimum 6 pitches)

19 TEAMS

4 pools of 4 and 1 pool of 3 (5 pitches) or 3 pools of 5 and 1 pool of 4 (7 pitches)

20 TEAMS

5 pools of 4 (5 pitches) or 4 pools of 5 (8 pitches)

Useful Contacts and Information Details

Further information on events and touch rugby can be found via rfu.com/touch or email leisurerugby@therfu.com or Tel 020 8831 6510

RFU Rugby Development Staff
via rfu.com/rdt or email communityrugby@therfu.com

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