

# RUGBY FOR DUMMIES CHEAT SHEET

Whether it's the World Cup or a local club game, playing rugby satisfies the soul like nothing else. This Cheat Sheet explains key rugby terms, rugby positions and scoring, and the laws of rugby, as well as listing important tournaments worldwide. Rugby is a game of passion that's full of action, excitement, and beauty, as well as unpredictable moments and dramatic resolutions on the field, but making sense of it can be intimidating for the first time viewer or player.

**KEY RUGBY TERMS-** For the first time rugby player or viewer, the sport can appear to be a chaotic collection of indecipherable movements and haphazard collisions. In reality, rugby is highly technical and organized with specific laws governing all aspects of play. To get you on the right track early, here are the four most important parts of rugby to familiarize yourself with before watching a match.

**Lineout:** Looks somewhat like a jump-ball in basketball, with both teams lining up opposite each other, but one team then throws the ball down the middle of the tunnel. Line-outs restart play after the ball, or a player carrying it, has gone out of bounds.

**Maul:** Occurs when a player carrying the ball is held by one or more opponents, and one or more of the ball-carrier's teammates bind on the ball-carrier. All the players involved are on their feet and moving toward a goal line. Open play has ended.

**Ruck:** One or more players from each team, who are on their feet and in contact, close around the ball on the ground. Once a ruck has been formed, players can't use their hands to get the ball, only their feet.

**Scrum:** A contest for the ball involving eight players who bind together and push against the other team's assembled eight for possession of the ball. Scrums restart play after certain minor infractions.

## RUGBY POSITIONS AND SCORING

Like most sports that didn't originate in North America, the game of rugby can be difficult to comprehend at first glance because of the large number of players involved, the seemingly random

calls of the referee, and the wide variety of strategies employed by different teams to score points and get wins.

The following sections outline who all the players are, explain what the referee is generally looking for during the rugby match, and spell out the basic skills required to be successful on the pitch.

## RUGBY POSITIONS

A rugby team has 15 positions. Each one wears a specific number and has individual responsibilities:

- 1 and 3 are the props
- 2 is the hooker
- 4 and 5 are the locks
- 6 and 7 are the flankers
- 8 is, conveniently enough, the eightman

This group is collectively referred to as the *pack* or the *forwards*. This group's main goal is to win possession of the ball. These players are usually the heavyweights of the team, using their bulk and strength to try to overpower their opponents.

A rugby team has another group as well — the *backs* or *back line*:

- 9 is the scrumhalf
- 10 is the flyhalf
- 11 and 14 are the wings
- 12 and 13 are the inside and outside centers
- 15 is the fullback

To get a feel for what each player is charged with doing on the rugby pitch, see Chapter 4.

## RUGBY SCORING

The aim of rugby is to score more points than the opposition. This is done in four different ways:

- **Try:** The most valuable play is to score a *try*, which means touching the ball down in the opponent's in-goal area or on their goal line. Doing so is worth five points and earns that team the right to attempt a conversion kick.

- **Conversion kick:** This kick is worth an additional two points. The conversion kick is taken from a spot in line with where the ball was originally grounded, so scoring as close to the posts as possible is best.
- **Penalty kick:** Penalties for various infractions can be used to take a kick at goal, which is worth three points.
- **Dropped goal:** A dropped goal, which occurs when the player drops the ball on the ground and then kicks it just as it bounces, is worth three points if it goes through the uprights.

## TACKLING THE LAWS OF RUGBY

Rugby is governed by laws, not rules. The laws of the game are designed to produce an entertaining and free-flowing contest for possession in an attempt to score the most points.

The laws of rugby are constantly evolving and are the same all over the world, wherever the game is played. In general, the laws governing play are straightforward about what's allowed, but three crucial parts can be somewhat confusing: the tackle situation, advantage, and offside:

- In a nutshell, when a tackle is made in rugby the requirements are that the tackler releases the tackled player, who then releases the ball so that players who are on their feet can use it.
- Advantage simply means that when one team makes an error the other team can try to capitalize on it, instead of the referee immediately stopping the action. If the players can't capitalize on the error, play restarts where the original mistake took place.
- Specific offside laws exist for different phases of play, but essentially players can't be involved if they're in front of a teammate who last played the ball or are behind the ball when the opposition has it.

From: <http://www.dummies.com/sports/rugby/rugby-for-dummies-cheat-sheet/>

Below is a link to a good 12 minute video about Rugby:

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### *Common Mistakes:*

- **Offside:** A player is offside in general play if he is in front of a teammate who is carrying the ball, or in front of a teammate who last played the ball. It is also illegal to kick the ball to a teammate that is down-field from the kicker.
- **Forward pass:** An illegal pass to a player who is ahead of the ball; a player is not allowed to pass the ball forward to a team-mate.
- **Knock on:** If a player drops the ball 'forward' – that is, towards the opposing team's tryline – or loses possession of the ball and it goes forward, a scrum is set, with the non-offending team getting the scrum feed.
- **High Tackle:** Tackling the ball carrier above the collar, it is illegal to tackle around the ears
- **Playing the Person:** Tackling or interfering with someone who is not carrying the ball
- **Shepherding:** Interfering with an opponent who is trying to tackle the ball carrier
- **Failure to Release:** Not letting go of the ball when tackled
- **Foul play:** Play deemed by the referee as being dangerous, obstructive, unfair play or misconduct. The offending player is penalized, possibly sent to the sin bin or even sent off.

## RUGBY VOCABULARY:

**Blindside** - from a set piece, this is the short side of the field

**Cap** - anytime a player plays in a match he/she is technically awarded a cap

**Drop Goal** - a kick at the posts taken at anytime a side is close to their own try line- if successful it scores three points but the ball must hit the ground before being kicked

**Garryowen** - a kick which is high in the air

**Grubber** - a kick of the ball which cause the ball to bounce and roll along the ground

**Knock On** - losing, dropping, or knocking the ball forward from a player's hand resulting in the ball being awarded to the other team in a scrum

**Mark** - a location on the pitch designated by the referee as the location a scrum should come together

**Offsides** - during rucks, scrums, lineouts, and mauls an imaginary line is present over which any player crossing before the set piece is completed commits a penalty

**Penalty** - any number of infractions or violations which award the other team a kick

**Penalty Try** - the awarding of a try due to a flagrant violation by an opposing side that prevents an obvious try from being scored

**Place Kick** - a kick of the ball resting on the ground, placed in an indention in the ground, from a small pile of sand, or from a kicking tee

**Referee** - the sole judge and timekeeper of the game

**Restart** - the kick restarting play after a half or after points are scored

**Touch Judge** - an official posted on each side of the pitch to mark the spot where balls go out of touch and to judge kicks at goal



**Ruck:** One or more players from each team, who are on their feet and in contact, close around the ball on the ground. Once a ruck has been formed, players can't use their hands to get the ball, only their feet. A ruck ends when the ball emerges from the ruck or when a scrum is ordered by the referee.



**Lineout:** Both teams line up opposite each other (similar to a jump ball in basketball), but one team then throws the ball down the middle of the tunnel. Line-outs restart play after the ball, or a player carrying it, has gone out of bounds.



**Maul:** One or more players from each team on their feet and in physical contact closing around a player who is carrying the ball. A maul ends when the ball is on the ground, a ruck, or the ball or a player carrying it emerges from the maul or when a scrummage is ordered by the referee.



**Scrum:** A set piece formed by the front eight players of each team. The ball is thrown into the middle of the group and each team pushes against the other team's assembled eight men to contest for possession of the ball. Scrums restart play after certain minor infractions. The scrum ends when one team gains possession of the ball and moves down the field.

**RUGBY POSITIONS:** A rugby team has 15 positions. Each one wears a specific number and has individual responsibilities.

**Forwards/ Scrummers:** These guys tend to be the heavyweights of the team because they do a lot of the pushing, pulling, and scrambling and use their bulk and strength to win possession of the ball.

- 1: Loose-Head Prop
- 2: Hooker
- 3: Tight-Head Prop
- 4: Second Row Lock
- 5: Second Row Lock
- 6: Blind-Side Flanker (not in 12s)
- 7: Open-Side Flanker (not in 12s)
- 8: Eighth Man (not in 12s)

**Backs:** These are the smaller, faster players that run or kick the ball down the field once possession is gained.

- 9: Scrumhalf
- 10: Flyhalf / Stand-off
- 11: Left Wing
- 12: Inside Center
- 13: Outside Center
- 14: Right Wing
- 15: Fullback



## **FORWARDS.**

Loose Head Prop (No 1) – A loose head prop is at the front of each scrum. They are traditionally very strong, sometimes quite short and squat. They possess very good neck, back, leg and arm strength, as they are the foundation of the scrum.

Hooker (No 2) – A hooker is the person who packs down in the middle of the front row of the scrum. They traditionally throw the ball in at the lineouts, and like props are very strong in the neck, back, legs and arms. However, hookers are normally slightly smaller than props and have to be flexible because, as their name implies, they hook the ball back with a leg or foot when the scrum half puts the ball in to a scrum. This takes considerable flexibility in the hips and shoulders.

Tight Head Prop (No 3) – Same attributes as the loose head but packs down the tight head side (right hand) of the scrum, which requires different scrummage technique to a loose head (left hand)

Lock or Second Row (No 4&5) -This position is referred to as the “engine room” second rows provide the push in the scrum and generally are the persons who jump for the ball in the lineout. Second rows are normally tall, very athletic and have an excellent standing jump along with good strength.

Flankers or Wing Forwards (No 6&7) – Considered the position where the player should have all round attributes, speed strength fitness handling skills amongst other skills. Flankers are always involved in the game, as they are the real ball winners once play has commenced. Flankers can be broken down into open side and blind side. The open side being normally smaller, faster and more mobile as he starts play nearer to the potential action and needs to be the first person to arrive. The blindside being larger as he has a more physical role to play at the lineout and may well be used as a jumper.

No 8 (No 8) – Packs down at the rear of the scrum and therefore controls the ball out of the scrum. A very influential position and is often used to attack with a pickup of the scrum. Normally tall and athletic and used as an option to win the ball in the lineout.

## **BACKS.**

Scrum Half (No 9) – The person who is the link between the forwards and the backs. Normally acts as the ‘General’ for the forwards and is always in the hub of the action. A scrum half is normally quite small but with a high degree of vision and speed off the mark, and pound-for-pound is very strong. They have to be able to react to situation very quickly. A key player on any team.

Fly Half (No 10) – Often considered the most influential person on the field the fly half is the person who makes the key decision during a game. Responsible for deciding whether to kick or to run the ball, the fly half should be very fast, able to kick off both feet and operate in pressurized situations.

Center (No 12 & 13) – Centers provide the cutting edge to a side. They are the “Rapier” that are given the ball normally via the fly half to make breaks through the opposition backs or can also act as decoys for other attacking options for the backs. A Center should be very strong fast and able to pass with pinpoint accuracy.

Wing (No 11 & 14) – The wingers are the finishers of the game. The idea being that the space should be created by the forwards and backs inside the wingers so once they receive the ball they have a clear run to use their speed and agility to score tries. Need to be very fast and able to link and side step to finish off scoring situations.

Full Back (No 15) – This player should possess great courage as he is likely to be the person who will be required to catch the high kicks referred to as “up and unders” or “bombs”. The Full Back is also an essential part of any side’s attacking option; a full back will appear in the back line as an extra man or as a decoy to provide space for the wings. Like all backs, the Full Back should have good speed and very good kicking skills.

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## SCORING:

The aim of rugby is to score more points than the opposition. This is done in four different ways:

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