

1. OBJECT

The object of the game is to score a try by placing the ball with a downward pressure on or behind the opponents' goal-line.

For the sake of safety, the ball carrier 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 but, afterwards, all players should be reminded that they should stay on their feet. A player may not be prevented from grounding the ball by any physical contact (including placing a hand between ball and ground).

Where Tag Rugby is played indoors or in restricted areas, a try can be scored by the ball carrier crossing the vertical plane of the goal-line without grounding the ball. This allows players to have their head up and be aware of their surroundings at all times.

When a try is scored, the game is restarted by a free pass from the centre of the pitch by the non-scoring team.

2. TEAMS

Tag Rugby is played between teams of equal numbers of players, each team containing five to eight players (agreed beforehand). Each side can have an agreed number of substitutes. Substituted players can be re-used at any time.

3. TECHNICAL INFORMATION

The maximum pitch size is 60m x 30m, plus 5m for each in-goal (scoring) area. The size of the ball should be size 4 for age groups up to and including Under 14s.

5. PASSING

The ball can only be passed sideways or backwards through the air, not handed to another player. If the ball is handed to another player or passed or knocked forwards (towards the opponents' goal-line) then a free pass is awarded to the non-offending side, unless advantage occurs. In order to keep the game flowing, referees should play advantage wherever possible.

6. FREE PASSES

- (a) A free pass is used to start the match at the beginning of each half from the centre of the pitch, from the side of the pitch when the ball goes into touch at the point where the ball went out of play and from where the referee makes a mark when an infringement has taken place.
- (b) At a free pass, the opposition must be 7m back from the mark. For safety, the receiver must be stationary and within 2m of the passer prior to the pass, but can start moving forward before the ball leaves the hands of the passer. At a free pass, the player must start with the ball in both hands and, when instructed by the referee who will call "PLAY", pass the ball backwards through the air to a member of their team. For safety reasons, no player may run until the pass is made.
- (c) If an infringement takes place or the ball goes into touch over the goal-line or within 7 m of the goal line, then the free pass must be awarded to the non-offending side 7 m from the goal-line. This gives more space for both attacking and defending teams to play in.

7. THE TAG

- (a) All players wear a tag belt around their waist with two tags attached to it by Velcro positioned over each hip. Tag belts are to be securely fastened and any excess belt is to be tucked away so that this cannot be pulled by mistake. Tag belts are to be worn outside of shirts and not obscured in any way. Referees are to be watchful for tags being wrapped around the belt preventing them from being pulled off.
- (b) The standard dimensions for a tag are 38cms in length by 5cms in width although slight variations of a few mms should not be cause for concern. They should be made of a flexible plastic or plastic/canvas material. Tag colours should be chosen so that they stand out against the player's strip e.g. teams with yellow shirts or shorts should not use yellow tags. Teachers are reminded that the tags are to be positioned on the hips, not at the front or back. Placing a knot in between the two Velcro pieces on the belt often brings the tags into the correct position.
- (c) A "tag" is the removal of one of the two tags from the ball carrier's belt. Only the ball carrier can be tagged. The ball carrier can run and dodge potential taggers but cannot fend them off using their hands or the ball and cannot guard or shield their tags in any way. The ball cannot be pulled out of the ball carrier's hands at any time.
- (d) If a player does not have two tags on their belt, one on each hip and they become a ball carrier or if they tag an opponent, a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending side at the place of infringement.
- (e) Actions by the ball carrier:
 - (i) When the ball carrier is tagged, the ball must be passed to a team mate within 3 seconds. This includes stopping time. The ball car-

rier must attempt to stop as soon as possible; within 3 strides is a reasonable guide for referees, but the ball can be passed in the act of stopping. If the pass takes longer than 3 seconds or the player takes more than 3 strides they must be penalised and a free pass awarded to the

non-offending side at the place where the tag occurred.

(ii) After the ball has been passed, the player must go to the tagger, retrieve their tag and place it back on their belt before re-joining play. If the player continues to play and influences the game without collecting their tag, they must be penalised and a free pass awarded to the non-offending side at the place of infringement.

(iii) Players are however only allowed one step to score a try after being tagged.

(iv) If the ball carrier is tagged whilst standing inside the goal area they must ground the ball immediately in order to score. Referees should help this part of the game along by advising the ball carrier "Touch the ball down and I'll award the try", or similar.

(v) If the ball carrier dives to ground to score a try it will be disallowed and a free pass will be awarded to the defending side 7m out from the try-line.

(f) Actions by the tagger:

(i) When a tag is made, the tagger must stop running, hold the tag above their head and shout, "TAG". At this stage the referee must shout, "TAG - PASS".

(ii) If the ball carrier stops running within 1m of the tagger, the tagger must move back towards their own goal-line, at least 1m, to allow room for the ball to be passed. If the tagger fails to retire at least 1m before rejoining the game, they are to be considered "offside" and a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending side at the place of infringement.

(iii) Once the ball has been passed, the tagger must hand back the tag to the player and cannot re-join the match until this has been done. If a tagger continues to play and influences the match with an opponent's tag in their hand, or throws it to the floor, they must be penalised and a free pass awarded to the non-offending side at the place of infringement.

8. OFFSIDE

Offside occurs only at the time of the tag where the offside line is through the centre of the ball, except for the tagger for whom it is 1m further back. When a tag is made, all the other players from the tagger's team must attempt to retire towards their own goal-line until they are behind the ball. If a player, in an offside position, intercepts, prevents or slows down a pass from the tagged player to a teammate, a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending side. A player can, however, run from an onside position to intercept a floated pass before it reaches the intended receiver.

9. OBSTRUCTION

(a) The ball carrier can run and dodge potential taggers but cannot fend them off using their hands or the ball and cannot guard or shield their tags in any way.

(b) Similarly, the ball carrier or a potential tagger must not deliberately make contact with an opponent.

(c) If such contact is made the game must be stopped, the players spoken to, reminded of the non-contact rules of tag and a free pass awarded to the non-offending side.

(d) If the ball is pulled from the ball carrier's grasp, a free pass is awarded to the ball carrier's side.

10. BALL ON THE GROUND

Players play Tag Rugby on their feet, with the ball in hand. If the ball goes to ground, players can pick it up but they must not dive to the floor to recover the ball. If they do a free pass is awarded to the non-offending side and the following rules will apply:

(a) If the ball was lost forward, a free pass is awarded to the non-offending side unless advantage occurs to the non-offending side.

(b) If the ball carrier falls to the ground with the ball then a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending side.

(c) If the passed ball rolls into touch a free pass will commence from the touchline to the non-passing side.

11. NO CONTACT

The only contact allowed between the two teams is the removal of a tag from the belt of the ball carrier. Any other type of contact on the ball carrier, such as shirt pulling, running in front of or barging the ball carrier, forcing the ball carrier into touch, etc must be penalised with a free pass and the players reminded of the rules.