

Laws of IRFU Tag Rugby



2012 Edition

*The following is an **overview** of the playing laws of IRFU Tag Rugby and does not supercede in any way the full playing laws of the game.
A full version of the laws can be found on the website: www.irfutag.ie .*

THE BASICS

- Tag Rugby is a non-contact form of rugby where a "tackle" involves removing a "tag" which is attached to the shorts of the ball carrier. Each side has six "tags" to score a try.
- After each "tag", the tagged player stops, places the ball on the ground and rolls it backwards with the foot to a team-mate standing behind. This is called a ruck ball. The team-mate standing behind is called a scrum-half.
- A try is scored in the same way as in other forms of rugby i.e. by touching down the ball on the ground over the tryline while retaining control of the ball.
- If no try is scored after the sixth "tag", the opposition shall gain possession of the ball and they shall restart play with a ruck ball.
- A match shall consist of 2 halves of 20 minutes.
- At the start of the game the referee tosses a coin and the winner of the toss decides whether to kick off or to choose an end.
- The field of play will be a maximum of 70 metres long by 50 metres wide.
- The law of advantage takes precedence over most other laws and its purpose is to make play more continuous with fewer stoppages for infringements. When the result of an infringement by one team is that their opponents may gain an advantage, the referee does not whistle immediately for the infringement but allows play to continue with the option to return to the original offence.

PLAYERS

- A team must have no more than 7 players on the field at anytime. There can be any number of authorised replacements. The maximum number of players per squad for any given match is 15. Any players not playing in at least 3 matches prior to the play-offs/semi-final/finals may not play in those matches.
- In the case of social/mixed league games, the maximum number of male players on the field at anytime is 4.
- If a player has an open or bleeding wound he/she must leave the playing area immediately. The player may not return until the bleeding has been controlled and the wound has been covered. A player may not wear any item that is contaminated by blood.
- A player must not wear any item that is sharp or abrasive. A player must not wear jewellery or glasses.
- All players must wear approved Tag shorts when participating in matches and if a player is not wearing approved Tag shorts the player shall not be permitted to play in the match.

SCORING

- In mixed games, a try scored by a female player shall be worth 3 points and a try scored by a male player shall be worth 1 point.
- Veteran players i.e. players over the age of 50 will be awarded 3 points for each try that they score except in mixed games where they will be awarded 1 point for each try they score.
- A player in possession may not dive or fall to ground in order to avoid being tagged, nor may they dive to score if there is a defender within tagging distance.
- In order to score a try after a ball has been kicked a player must regain possession of the ball prior to carrying it over the tryline.
- In mixed games, a player may not pass the ball to another player after crossing the tryline nor can they run back into the field of play to pass the ball to another player.
- When a try is scored the scoring team shall restart play with a drop-kick from the halfway line.

DEFENCE

- When a tag is removed, the defender must hold it in the air where the tag was made, drop it at that point and assume a marker position (i.e. a position 1 metre directly in front of the player who has been tagged), or return to the defensive line.
- At a ruck ball all defenders must be at least 7 metres from the ruck ball and there may only be one marker.
- A player may defend with 1 or no tags, however if he/she receives the ball he/she must play the ball immediately i.e. pass or kick it taking not more than 1 step.
- A defender must not deliberately obstruct a ball carrier or a member of the other team who does not have the ball.
- At ruck ball situations the defensive line (except the marker) must be at least 7 metres back from the ruck ball. The defensive line must be at least 10 metres back at all penalty and kick-off situations.
- If a defender makes a tag after the tagged player has passed or kicked the ball, the referee may call "Late Tag, Play On" and allow the attacker to progress with only one or no tags until the next tag is made by the defending team or the ball goes out of the Field of Play. An attacker with one or no tags shall be deemed to have been tagged if a defender comes within tagging distance.
- If it is a simultaneous tag and off load, no action is taken and the attacker must replace the tag before being able to attack again. The referee will call "Ball away".
- If an attacker not in possession is tagged before receiving the ball the referee will call

"Early tag". The referee may then play the advantage and penalise the defender if necessary.

- Under no circumstances can the marker run around and retrieve the ball from the scrum half position.

ATTACKING

- A player may pass the ball to a team mate by throwing the ball to another player or handing the ball to another player without throwing it. A pass must be lateral or backwards, but not forwards in which case a turnover will be awarded.
- If a player in possession of the ball falls or dives to the ground and a defender is within tagging distance, a tag shall be counted. A Try will not be awarded if the attacker in possession of the ball falls or dives over the tryline and in doing so prevents a tagging.
- If an attacker in possession of the ball is tagged in the in-goal area before he/she scores a try, he/she shall be asked to conduct a ruck ball five (5) metres out from the tryline.
- If a player in possession is tagged behind their own tryline, his/her team will restart play with a drop-kick from the centre of their tryline.
- The scrum half can pass or kick the ball with only one tag on as long as they do so immediately (one step).
- If the scrum half is not in position within 3 seconds of the ball being played at a ruck ball, a turnover will be awarded to the defending team.
- A player in possession must not attempt to bump or fend off a defender in their attempts to remove a tag nor whilst chasing the ball.



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KICKING

- Kicking is only allowed in limited circumstances in IRFU Tag compared to other forms of rugby.
- Drop-kicks will be used to restart play after scores and at the commencement of each half.
- A tap-kick is used to restart play after a penalty is awarded.
- A grubber-kick (i.e. a kick no higher than 1.5 metres) is permitted in general play.
- Chip-kicks (i.e. kicks that go a maximum of 15 metres and no higher than 5 metres above an opponent's head) are only allowed in the men's' and veterans' games. No up and under kicks/"garryowens" are allowed.
- A defender may call a mark from a chip-kick in the field of play and the game shall restart with a tap-kick by the player who caught the ball.
- All restart/drop-kicks must go at least 10 metres and the kicking team must stay at least 2 metres back from the receiving team while the ball is in the air.
- If a ball bounces in the field of play from a kick and then rolls over the touchline (without being touched) a ruck ball will be awarded to the non-kicking team 5 metres in-field from where the ball crossed the touchline.
- If a ball is kicked, in general play, and a member of the kicking team re-gathers a ball that has not touched a member of the opposing team, play shall continue and the tag count shall continue. If a member of the kicking team gathers or re-gathers a ball that has struck and been played at by a member of the opposing team, play shall continue and the tag count shall be restarted.
- If the ball is kicked and it crosses the receiving team's tryline after it strikes a player from the receiving team who has deliberately played at the ball, a drop-kick from the centre of the receiving team's tryline will restart play.

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KNOCK-ONS

- A turnover will be awarded to the non offending team in the case of a knock-on. A player may not knock-on deliberately and a penalty may be awarded if he/she does so.
- If a player propels the ball in a backward direction play will continue.

PENALTIES

- Penalties are taken by way of a tap-kick in any direction. If a player chooses to use the ruck ball action instead of taking the tap-kick it is still deemed to be a tap-kick.
- The offending team must retire 10 metres from where the penalty is to be taken.
- Further misconduct by the offending team shall allow the referee to advance the mark of the penalty once only, by ten 10 metres.

FOUL PLAY

- In the event of misconduct by a player, the referee shall, at his/her discretion, caution, sin-bin (for 5 minutes) or dismiss the player.
- If a player is sent off he/she shall stand suspended until the referee's report of the incident is received by the I.R.F.U. The incident will then be dealt with according to the I.R.F.U. Tag Rugby Disciplinary Procedure.

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