

Kids' Pathway Rugby Laws :: a pre-match primer for referees involved with the under 6 to under 12 age groups

Pathway Rugby consists of five different types of game, each with its own subtle law variations and intricacies. To ensure consistency it is suggested that, prior to match day, referees run an eye down the colour coded columns below to ensure that the Laws they're about to apply are correct for the age group in question. Referees might also review the "Guiding Words" on the last page of this document.

Game Element	Under 6	Under 7	Under 8	Under 9	Under 10	Under 11	Under 12
Team Size - Number of Players: (Teams must share players to ensure equal playing numbers)	7 players		7 players	10 players	12 players		15 players
Playing Area:	Quarter Field (40 metres x 25 metres)		Half Field (60 metres x 35 metres)		Full Field less 5 metres width on each side (i.e. full field less 10 metres width in total) (100 metres x 60 metres)		Full Field (100 metres x 70 metres)
Playing Time:	2 x 10 minutes	2 x 15 minutes	2 x 15 minutes	2 x 20 minutes	2 x 20 minutes		2 x 25 minutes
Ball Size:	Size 2		Size 3		Size 4		Size 4
Conversion Kicks: (following the scoring of a try)	Not Allowed		Optional if goal posts available; Drop Kick or Place Kick 10m out and directly in front of goal mouth; Players from non-scoring team must not charge the kick attempt;		Opposite place where try scored but not beyond the normal 15 metre line (i.e. 10m from the U.10/U.11 touch line); Players from non-scoring team must not charge the kick attempt;		Opposite place where try scored but not beyond the 15 metre line; Players from non-scoring team must not charge the kick attempt;
Kick Off: (at the start of each half)	Punt Kick at centre of halfway line; An imaginary 5 metre radius circle "exclusion zone" applies until a player from the receiving side catches or picks up the ball; If the kick off is not carried out correctly (e.g. wrong type of kick, ball fails to travel 5 metres, ball goes dead, etc), further chances are provided until the kick off is completed successfully;		Punt Kick or Drop Kick at centre of halfway line; An imaginary 5 metre radius circle "exclusion zone" applies until a player from the receiving side catches or picks up the ball; If the kick off is not carried out correctly (e.g. wrong type of kick, ball fails to travel 5 metres, ball goes dead, etc), further chances are provided until the kick off is completed successfully;		Drop Kick at centre of halfway line; If the kick off is not carried out correctly (e.g. wrong type of kick, ball fails to travel 10 metres and is not played by an opponent, ball goes dead, etc), a second chance is provided. If the second kick off is also incorrect, a scrum is awarded to the opposing team at the centre of the half way line.		Drop Kick at centre of halfway line (standard kick off laws apply – no second chance allowed)

Game Element	Under 6	Under 7	Under 8	Under 9	Under 10	Under 11	Under 12
Restart Kicks: (after a score or a touchdown)	Tap Kick at centre of halfway line following a try; Tap Kick 5m out by defending team if the ball becomes dead in in-goal;		Tap Kick at centre of halfway line following a try; Tap Kick at centre of 15m line in lieu of a dropout;		Drop Kick in accordance with standard law. Second chance allowed as in “kick off” above if the restart kick is not taken correctly.		Drop Kick in accordance with standard law (no second chance allowed)
Kicking in General Play:	Not Allowed (U.6 tap kick; U.7 scrum)		Not Allowed (scrum)		Allowed (standard laws apply)		Allowed (standard laws apply)
Tackle:	No tackling or fending allowed; A two handed tag only on the shorts takes the place of a tackle; A tagged player should stop as quickly as possible then turn and pass the ball to a team mate; No offside line at tag;		Tackling allowed (in accordance with standard tackle laws); Slinging tackles are not allowed and are penalised as dangerous play; Fending an opponent above the line of the shoulders (i.e. to the head, face or neck) is not allowed and is penalised as dangerous play;		Tackling allowed (in accordance with standard tackle laws); Slinging tackles are not allowed and are penalised as dangerous play; Fending an opponent above the line of the shoulders (i.e. to the head, face or neck) is not allowed and is penalised as dangerous play;		Tackling allowed (in accordance with standard tackle laws); Slinging tackles are not allowed and are penalised as dangerous play; Fending an opponent above the line of the shoulders (i.e. to the head, face or neck) is not allowed and is penalised as dangerous play;
Lineout - General:	<p>No lineouts in U.6 age group</p> <p>If the ball is in touch, play re-starts with a tap kick 5 metres in from touch opposite where a lineout would normally have taken place.</p> <p>The tap kick is taken by the team who would normally have thrown-in to that lineout.</p>		<p>No quick throw-ins allowed;</p> <p>No “short lineouts” allowed;</p> <p>Both teams must have a “receiver” at every lineout;</p> <p>No lifting of players allowed;</p> <p>Lineouts are uncontested (i.e. the team throwing the ball in to the lineout must win possession);</p> <p>If the lineout is not carried out correctly (e.g. the wrong team catches the ball, the receiver fails to pass, players are offside, etc), further chances are allowed until the players complete the lineout successfully;</p> <p>Lineout ends when the ball is played by the five eighth or it touches the ground after being passed by the receiver at that lineout;</p>		<p>No quick throw-ins allowed;</p> <p>No “short lineouts” allowed;</p> <p>Both teams must have a “receiver” at every lineout;</p> <p>No lifting of players allowed;</p> <p>If the lineout is not carried out correctly (e.g. not thrown straight), a second chance is provided.</p> <p>If the second chance is also incorrect, a scrum feed is awarded to the non-throwing team.</p> <p>Lineouts are a contest for possession and end in accordance with the standard lineout laws;</p>		<p>No quick throw-ins allowed (re-set);</p> <p>No “short lineouts” allowed (re-set);</p> <p>Both teams must have a “receiver” at every lineout (re-set);</p> <p>No lifting of players allowed (FK);</p> <p>Lineouts are a contest for possession and end in accordance with the standard lineout laws;</p>
Lineout – Number of Players: (all forwards must participate in every lineout)	No lineouts in Under 6	2 players (player at front stands 3 metres from touch line)	2 players (player at front stands 4 metres from touch line)	4 players (player at front stands 4 metres from touch line)	5 players (standard lineout laws apply to player at front)		7 players (standard lineout laws apply to player at front)

Game Element	Under 6	Under 7	Under 8	Under 9	Under 10	Under 11	Under 12
Lineout – Receiver: (must be present at every lineout)	No lineouts in Under 6	Must pass the ball (otherwise re-set lineout to allow players to complete action correctly);			Standard run, pass or kick laws apply;		Standard run, pass or kick laws apply;
Offside Line for Backline Players: (i.e. the players who are not taking part in the lineout)	No lineouts in Under 6	5 metres from the line of touch (otherwise re-set lineout to allow players to complete action correctly);			10 metres from the line of touch (i.e. standard lineout offside law applies)		10 metres from the line of touch (i.e. standard lineout offside law applies)
Scrum – General:	No scrums in U.6 age group After a minor infringement, play restarts with a tap kick by the non-offending team at the place of infringement.	Scrums are uncontested (i.e. no pushing and the team feeding the scrum must win possession at that scrum); The scrum ends when the ball is played by the five eighth or it touches the ground after being passed by the scrum half; If a player is offside at a scrum, the scrum is re-set with the same team throwing in the ball (repeated if necessary until the scrum is completed correctly);			Scrums are contested but must not be pushed more than 1 metre (FK); The No. 8 cannot detach and pick up the ball at the base of the scrum (i.e. only the scrum half may clear the ball from the scrum); (FK) The scrum ends when the ball is completely out of the scrum (i.e. standard scrum law applies);		Scrums are contested but must not be pushed more than 1 metre (FK); The scrum ends when the ball is completely out of the scrum (i.e. standard scrum law applies);
Scrum – Number of Players:	No scrums in Under 6	3 players	3 players	5 players	6 players		8 players
Scrum – Scrum Half:	No scrums in Under 6	The feeding (i.e. winning) team scrum half must pass the ball to a team-mate (otherwise re-set the scrum to allow the players to complete action correctly); The non-feeding scrum half cannot follow the ball through the scrum; The non-feeding scrum half must remain within 1 metre of the scrum on the feeding side of scrum;			Winning team scrum half may pass the ball, run with the ball or kick the ball (i.e. standard laws apply); Non-winning scrum half cannot follow the ball through the scrum (PK); Non-winning scrum half must remain within 1 metre of the scrum on the feeding side of scrum (re-set);		Winning team scrum half may pass the ball, run with the ball or kick the ball (i.e. standard laws apply); Non-winning scrum half cannot follow the ball through the scrum; Non-winning scrum half must remain within 1 metre of the scrum on the feeding side of scrum (re-set);
Penalty Kicks & Free Kicks: (awarded to the non-offending team for an infringement by their opponents)	Penalty kicks and free kicks must be taken as a tap kick only. If the “tap kick” made is not a “kick” as defined in the Laws, the player should be asked to take the kick again but this time correctly; The opposition team must immediately retire 5 metres from the mark;				Standard penalty kick and free kick laws apply; Opposition team must immediately retire 10 metres from the mark;		Standard penalty kick and free kick laws apply; Opposition team must immediately retire 10 metres from the mark;

Some Guiding Words for Referees and Player Coaches Involved in the Kids' Rugby Pathway Program

Coaching

The essential feature of Pathway Rugby is one of enjoyment. The desirable qualities of Rugby — sportsmanship and fair play — are to be positively rewarded. At all times player safety must be a paramount consideration.

The concept of positive reinforcement of the ideals of the game and skills of the players cannot be over-emphasised. Satisfaction should be gained from participation, improvement and competitive performance - without any emphasis on winning at all costs. Players should be allowed to develop skills and learn the game without the presence of external pressure to win premierships.

Coaches must ensure that the skills of the game are correctly taught and that the success achieved by each player is acknowledged and encouraged. It is vital that each and every player receives the same opportunity to develop in an environment of friendliness and cooperation.

Refereeing

Unlike the more senior levels of Rugby where the referee's role is to interpret, judge and decide, Pathway Rugby requires a different philosophy from the referee. Taking a purely technical refereeing approach to the Laws is contrary to the spirit of the Pathway game. It is recommended that at all times referees adopt an encouraging and educative approach to Pathway matches (rather than perhaps being punitive and whistle-happy).

Again, the desirable qualities of Rugby — sportsmanship and fair play — should be positively rewarded. This might best be done by a quiet word to a player or an open comment to all, rather than by penalising without explanation. Of course, any dangerous action by a player should be quickly and firmly dealt with, but the emphasis should be on the educative approach.

In summary, coaches and referees should aim to:-

- keep things simple, free-flowing and enjoyable;
- let the players develop skills in safety;
- discourage any dangerous action or unsafe practice;
- adopt an educative, positive re-enforcement approach;
- ensure that all players receive equal opportunity to participate, regardless of their ability.

About This Document

This laws summary has been assembled as a pre-match refresher for referees who move between the various Pathway age groups. Its basic aim is to ensure refereeing consistency. Player coaches and others involved in the Kids' Rugby Pathway may also find it useful. The document is part of a range of referee-related material that can be found on the [Sydney West RRA website](#).

It should be noted that this document does not contain the full set of Kids' Rugby Pathway laws. Rather, it concentrates on those areas we know from experience are most significant to the refereeing of Pathway Rugby matches. The full set of Kids' Pathway laws and supporting documents can be found on the [Kids' Rugby page of the Rugby Australia website](#). The Rugby Australia documents contain full details of every law modification applicable to each stage of the Kids' Rugby Pathway.

Should you come across any errors in this document — or you have any suggestions that might help to improve it — please feel free to draw those matters to attention. The association can be contacted quickly and easily via the [Contacting Us](#) page of our website.

[Sydney West Rugby Referees' Association Inc.](#)

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