

Walking Rugby Guidelines

Ethos: Walking Rugby is a non-contact version of the game aimed at players of all genders, of differing rugby playing experience and physical ability. It aims to be less prescriptive with a manner of play that maintains safety and fun, whilst providing physical and mental wellbeing. It is particularly aimed at providing an opportunity for players aged 50+ to continue their involvement in the game – however it is open to adult players of all ages.

Walking is defined as moving by lifting and setting down each foot in turn, never having both feet off the ground at once (note: a standing jump to catch a high ball is NOT permitted even if the jumper takes off and lands at the same spot).

T – Teamwork : R – Respect : E – Enjoyment : D – Discipline : S - Sportsmanship

Guidelines

These are guidelines - not prescriptive laws or rules (the latter can only be established by the governing body). Local and session discretion should apply given the demographic of the playing group. For matches/festivals/tournaments, it is recommended that the host club applies these guidelines for consistency.

1. The Pitch - Pitch size: depends on the number of players per team:

- a. Up to half a pitch (maximum): Suggestion, allow 5 to 7 metres width per player.
- b. Pitch to be square or even wider than long, depending on mobility and skill of players (Suggestion - 40 metres wide and 30 metres long for 7 players).
- c. In winter: indoor (e.g. a sports hall) or Astro turf.

2. Match Ball - Size 4 (i.e. suitable for any adult size hands).

3. Teams - Each team shall have the same number of players (typically not more than 7 for festivals/tournaments) in the playing area during play. If space allows or is restricted, numbers can be flexed up or down.

- a. For playing numbers of 6 or more-a-side, teams may agree to implement uncontested scrums.
- b. If extra players are available, then unlimited rolling substitutes can be employed so that all players can be involved. Substitutions can only be made when play has stopped and the referee has been informed. (Suggestion – player squads for festivals/tournaments should be limited to a maximum of 10)
- c. Substitutes should wear bibs when on the side lines.

4. Playing Clothes - Team members should all wear a sports strip or sports bibs that identify them as one of the team. Watches, jewellery, etc. must be removed or covered. Appropriate footwear for the playing surface should be worn.

5. Time – A game consists of:

- a. Two halves each of seven minutes, unless agreed otherwise beforehand.
- b. A half time interval of up to two minutes.

6. Match Officials - The referee is the sole judge of both fact and law.

- a. A neutral referee is highly desirable.
- b. Otherwise, refereeing by a team member or self-refereeing may be necessary.

c. Only the nominated captain of each team on the pitch may converse with the referee.

7. Advantage - If a team gains a clear and real advantage following an infringement by an opponent and the ball has not gone to ground, the referee should allow play to continue in an effort to keep the game flowing.

8. Score - A try is scored when the ball is carried by an attacking player over the opposition try-line from in-field with both feet on or over the try-line before the player is tackled, there is NO requirement to touch the ball to the ground. A penalty try shall be awarded if an offence by an opposition player prevents a probable try being scored.

9. Foul Play - The following are considered foul play and appropriate action shall be taken for any repeat offender or repeat offences. Where a try would otherwise probably have been scored, a penalty try should be awarded.

a. A deliberate knock-down by a defender.

b. Offside and interfering with play.

c. A defender preventing the ball carrier from making a pass after the tackle.

d. Any robust or high or low tackle.

e. The ball carrier handing off, leading with the head/shoulder or walking into or backing into a defender.

f. Snatching/ripping the ball from the ball carrier.

g. Repeat offences should be punished with:

i. Temporary exclusion (2 minutes duration) - Yellow Card.

ii. Permanent exclusion (for the remainder of the game) - Red Card.

10. Offside and Onside in Open Play - Any tackle, touch, penalty, turnover or scrum sets an offside line - one metre for a tackle and three metres for a touch, penalty, turnover or scrum - closer to the offender's try-line and parallel to the try-lines.

a. An offside player must not interfere with play - penalty.

b. An offside player can only be put onside by:

i. Retiring behind the offside line; or

ii. An onside team-mate of that player moving past the offside player within the playing area.

c. An offside player cannot be put onside by an action of an opposition player.

Open Play - All players in open play are onside until a tackle or an offence occurs. Any onside player can intercept a pass or tackle a player from any position in open play.

11. Knock on - A knock on can occur anywhere in the playing area.

a. If the ball is knocked on or dropped – scrum to the non-offending team (turnover if scrums are not being played).

b. A deliberate knock on and the ball hits the ground – penalty (but a knock up and catch by the same player (interception) is legal, play on unless tackled).

12. Starts and Restarts - At the start of a half or after a score, play starts with a tap (with the thigh, knee or foot) and pass at the centre of the pitch. The ball carrier may not move with the ball.

- a. After a score, the re-start is by the team that did not score.
- b. All defenders must be three metres back from the centre line.
- c. Onside defenders may advance once the ball has been tapped by the ball carrier.

13. Player or Ball to Ground

- a. Player going to ground - referee must stop play immediately - restart with tap and pass to the team in possession.
- b. Ball hitting the ground:
 - i. Ball goes backwards to ground – turnover to non-offending team.
 - ii. Ball goes forwards to ground – scrum to non-offending team (turnover if scrums are not being played).

14. Tackle - A defending player can arrest an attack with a simultaneous two-handed light touch to the ball carrier in the area between the shoulders and the waist (including the torso and arms) of the ball carrier; it should be accompanied by a call of “TACKLE” or “TOUCH”. The tackler must NOT push the ball carrier in any way.

- a. A tackle sets an offside line which is one metre from the point of tackle, parallel to the try-lines. **If the tackle occurs within two metres of the try line, the offside line is the try line and the ball carrier (and their teammates) must retreat to at least two metres from the try line.**
- b. When tackled, the ball carrier must pass the ball correctly within one pace and without delay (i.e. within three seconds unless impeded).
- c. When tackled, the ball carrier must retreat to the point of tackle if they travel more than one pace (travelling) before passing the ball.
- d. A defender must not prevent the ball carrier making a pass in any way and all defenders must retire to at least the offside line after a tackle.
- e. A defender who is offside and interfering with play should be penalised unless an advantage to the non-offending team applies.
- f. **Any** robust or high or low tackle must be penalised.
- g. The ball carrier handing off, leading with the head/shoulder or walking straight into or backing into a defender must be penalised.
- h. A defender shall not attempt to take the ball from the ball carrier (snatch/rip).

15. Turnover - A turnover shall be awarded for any of the following (and for scrum offences, if scrums are not being played):

- i. Ball going backwards and hitting the ground. Re-start from the point where the ball hit the ground.
- ii. Ball or ball carrier going into touch. Re-start from the touchline.
- iii. Delayed pass after a tackle (unless impeded by a defender).
- a. The turnover shall be taken at the point of the offence as indicated by the referee.
- b. A turnover is taken by tapping the ball with the thigh, knee or foot and passing immediately. The ball carrier may not move with the ball.
- c. As soon as the ball carrier has tapped the ball, any onside defender may advance.

- d. The turnover may be taken quickly.
- e. At a turnover, the offside line is three metres closer to the offender's try-line.
- f. No turnover shall be taken closer than three metres from a try-line by either attack or defence.
- g. All defenders in front of the offside line must retreat behind the offside line before taking any further part of the game.
- h. If an offside defender interferes with the taking of the turnover, then a penalty shall be awarded.

16.Touch - If the ball or ball carrier goes into touch, a turnover is awarded.

- a. A touch sets an offside line three metre closer to the offenders' try-line at the point of touch, parallel to the try-lines.

17.Scrum - Uncontested scrums will only be played if there are at least six players in each team AND both teams have agreed. Otherwise, a scrum offence shall be treated as a turnover. A scrum shall be awarded for any of the following:

- i. Forward pass.
 - ii. Ball hitting or touching a player and going forward.
 - iii. Dropped ball or knock on.
 - iv. Ball passed back, hitting the referee.
 - v. Accidental crossing/obstruction.
 - vi. Ball carrier tackled or makes a forward pass behind their try line.
- a. A scrum shall be a minimum of three metres from any boundary of the playing area (i.e. try and touch lines); when the scrum is three metres from the try-line, the defending team's offside line is the try-line.
 - b. The **three closest players** from each side shall make up the scrum; **two players will be in the scrum and one will be the scrum-half.**
 - c. The scrum shall be uncontested, i.e. no pushing by either team and no striking for the ball by the defending team. The 'players' should then loosely touch, but not grip, their opponent's shoulders
 - d. Each team shall have a 'scrum-half'. The defending scrum-half must stay directly behind their players in the scrum. The other scrum-half puts the ball into the scrum.
 - e. The scrum-half puts/rolls the ball in and **any player** of their team must hook/play the ball with their feet back between their legs.
 - f. The scrum ends when the attacking scrum-half picks up the ball behind the scrum.
 - g. At a scrum:
 - i. The non-offending team's offside line will be behind the rearmost foot of their scrum.
 - ii. The offending team's offside line will be three metres back from the rearmost foot of their scrum.
 - h. Players in the scrum must remain in the scrum and the offending team's scrum-half must remain behind the scrum until the referee calls "Scrum Over".

18.Penalty - A penalty shall be awarded for:

- i. A player running at any time during a game, with or without the ball.

- ii. Illegal pass, e.g. ball handed on. It must be a clear and obvious pass through the air.
- iii. Defender preventing the ball carrier making a pass after a tackle.
- iv. Defender **failing to retire to the offside line after a tackle** and influencing play.
- v. Ball carrier handing off, leading with the head/shoulder, walking into or backing into a defender.
- vi. Robust, or high or low tackle.
- vii. Offside and interfering with play.
- viii. Deliberate knock-on and ball hits the ground.
- ix. Defender failing to retire three metres at a penalty or turnover.
- x. After a tackle, ball carrier not retreating to the point of tackle before passing if they travel more than one pace (travelling).
- xi. Pushing by either team or defender striking in the scrum.
- xii. Defending scrum half moving from behind the scrum before "Scrum Over" is called.
- xiii. Deliberate obstruction.
- xiv. After a tackle, **within two metres of the try-line**, ball carrier **not stepping back a minimum of two metres from the try-line before passing the ball.**
- xv. Any infringement while the ball is dead.

19. General unsporting conduct.

- a. A penalty shall be taken at the point of the offence as indicated by the referee.
- b. No penalty shall be taken closer than three metres from a try-line by either attack or defence.
- c. The penalty taker must tap the ball with their thigh, knee or foot and may then walk or pass immediately.
- d. Once the ball has been tapped, any onside defender may advance.
- e. The penalty may be taken quickly.
- f. At a penalty, the offside line is three metres closer to the offender's try-line.
- g. All defenders in front of the offside line are offside and must retreat behind the offside line before taking any further part of the game.
- h. If an offside defender interferes with the taking of the penalty, then a further three metre advance (or penalty try) should be imposed.

19.In Goal a. When the ball carrier is tackled before the try-line and travels over the try-line (in goal), the ball carrier must step back into the field of play to at least two metres from the try-line before passing. The defenders must be on or behind the try line – Penalty.

- b. When the ball carrier is tackled behind their own try-line (i.e. in goal) or makes a forward pass from behind their own try-line (i.e. in goal) – scrum (or turnover if scrums not being played) three metres into the field of play from the try-line in line with the point of the offence.