



FUNDAMENTALS

Rugby 101

What the game is, why it is safe, and how it earns its place in your school.

A PRESENTATION FOR SCHOOL LEADERS & ATHLETIC DIRECTORS



What Rugby Is

Rugby at its Absolute Simplist

Rugby is a game in which the object is to carry the ball over the opponents' goal-line and touch it to the ground to score points. How teams make that happen is the beauty within the game

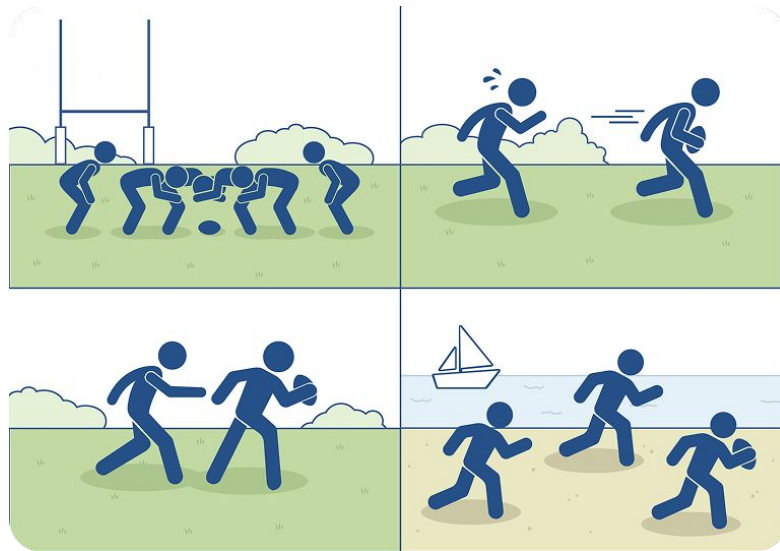
The Many Forms of Rugby

Rugby has various formats. Alongside the full contact game with 15 players on each team, there is a shorter 7 a side game that has become an Olympic sport. Rugby also has a non-contact version that teaches the basics first. A school can start wherever it is comfortable and grow from there.

Non-contact

Small-sided

Full contact





BREAKDOWN

How the Game Works

Objective

Advance the ball into the opponent's end of the pitch and touch it down for a try.

Passing Rules

Players may only pass backwards or sideways, and they cannot block opponents.

Moving Forward

Passing backwards and running into space moves the ball forward. Kicking forward is allowed and is a tactical way to move the ball down the field. However, you would possibly lose possession, so use wisely.

Continuous Play

Possession is contested continuously on the field and can change around often, therefore its chess played at speed. Teams must move from offence to defence immediately.

Phases of Play

The game keeps running even after a tackle. Few stoppages, constant motion. When the ball does go outside the field of play, the game is restarted through "set pieces" such as lineouts and scrums.

Scoring

Try	5
Conversion	2
Penalty goal	3

Most points at full time wins.



TERMINOLOGY

Six Terms to Know

SCORING

Try

This is the big aim of the game! It's when a player runs with the ball and touches it down on the ground in the other team's end zone, which is called the tryzone. A try is worth 5 points!

SCORING

Conversion

After a team scores a try, they get a chance to score more points by kicking the ball through the goalposts. If they make the kick, they get 2 extra points. In Rugby Sevens, players have to kick the ball just after it bounces off the ground, called a "drop-kick."

CONTACT

Tackle

When a player with the ball is brought to the ground by an opponent. The player with the ball has to place it back right away for the game to continue. Unlike American football, the game doesn't stop after a tackle.

RESTART

Ruck

This happens after a tackle when the ball is on the ground. Players from both teams contest the ball to try to push the other team away and win possession.

RESTART

Scrum

It is a way to restart the game after a small mistake. The forwards from both teams lock their arms together and push against each other. The ball is rolled into the middle, and the players use their feet to try to get it back to their own side.

RESTART

Lineout

When the ball goes out of bounds, the game restarts with a lineout. The forwards from both teams form two lines facing each other, and one player throws the ball in. The players in the line can be lifted up by their teammates to catch the ball.



PROTOCOLS

Safety is Built into the Game

Rugby carries a duty of care written into its laws. Without pads or helmets, players are taught to tackle low and with technique rather than collision, and dangerous play is penalised immediately at every level. The safety sits on top of the culture: the game is competitive without being antagonistic.



COACHING

Certified Coaches

Every coach completes age grade tackle technique and SafeSport certification before running a session.

THE LAWS

Modern Tackle Laws

Recent law changes lowered the legal tackle height and forbid head contact at every level of the game.

MATCH DAY

Qualified Medical Cover

First aid or medical staff on site for every fixture and tournament, with return-to-play protocols.

PROGRESSION

Graduated Contact

Contact is introduced by age, with law variations that limit it for younger players. Programs can start fully non-contact.

Yellow Card



Off the field for a set period; the team plays a person short.

Red Card



Removed from the match, plus a suspension that can run for weeks.

THE CASE

Why Rugby Belongs in Schools

By aligning rugby's core values (teamwork, discipline, respect, and resilience) with the educational mission of developing well-rounded individuals, the sport integrates naturally into academic environments.

This synergy enriches student experiences through the sport, fosters long-term community enrichment, broadens access, and builds a diverse team of outstanding humans.





What Rugby Gives a School

01

A place for every body

Tall, short, fast, strong. The positions are built so that different athletes all have a position on the team.

02

Respect is in the rules

Only the captain speaks to the referee. Discipline is not culture-building around the sport. It is the sport.

03

Low barrier to start

No pads or helmets. A field, a set of balls, and a trained coach starts a program.

04

A path beyond school

College programs, national pathways, and an Olympic sport.



CORE VALUES

**Teamwork · Discipline ·
Respect · Resilience**



CULTURE

Character on the Field

Rugby's laws and traditions are built around respect. These are World Rugby's core values, and they are enforced on the field rather than printed on a wall.

Respect

Only the captain speaks to the referee, and calls are not disputed. It is a tradition unique among sports.

Teamwork

Every position depends on every other. Rugby is the ultimate team game.

Discipline

Structured tackle technique and phase play reward composure over recklessness.

Resilience

Players get back up, reset, and go again, physically and mentally, every phase.



The safety is there because the culture demands it. Competition without antagonism, and a responsibility to the player opposite you.



PATHWAY

A Pathway for Every Age

One program, three stages, and a clear progression from a first pass to competitive play and beyond.

AGES 6 TO 10

Elementary

- Non-contact, flag-based introduction
- Fundamentals: passing, running lines, spatial awareness
- Every child plays every position

AGES 11 TO 13

Middle School

- Graduated introduction to contact and tackling safely
- Coached to World Rugby & USA Rugby standards
- Small-sided games build decision-making

AGES 14 TO 18

High School

- Competitive fixtures build spirit and school pride
- Captaincy and leadership development
- Pathway into club and national player pools
- College scholarship and financial aid opportunities



COMPARISON

How Rugby Compares

WHAT MATTERS	Rugby	Football	Soccer	Hockey
Continuous playing time	Yes	Offense and defense units	Yes	Short shifts
Range of builds needed	All shapes and skill sets	Position-specific	Lean build favored	Power favored
Full-body conditioning	Every player	Position-dependent	Aerobic focus	Aerobic and power
Season equipment cost	Low: mouthguard and cleats	High: pads and helmet	Low: shin guards and cleats	High: pads and sticks

Sources: World Rugby player welfare research; USA Rugby membership data; Aspen Institute State of Play 2025.



CALENDAR

How it Fits the School Year

Introduce & recruit

PE units and lunch sessions in the non-contact format. No conflict with fall sports.

Train coaches

Certify staff, register the club, and run indoor skill sessions through the off-season.

Play the season

The traditional competition window: matches, festivals, and regional play.

Camps & pathways

Camps, small-sided tournaments, and selection into regional pathways.

What a school needs to begin

- Any open grass field, roughly the size of a soccer pitch
- A set of balls, cones, and tackle pads, with no helmets or padding
- One certified coach, plus registration and insurance through USA YHS

NEXT STEPS



Let's get rugby in your school.

