

# Rugby League Ireland Touch

These rules were developed by RLI to promote the game of Rugby League in Ireland

## 1. SPIRIT OF THE GAME

RLIT is a social version of Rugby League.

The aim of RLIT is to provide a fun and enjoyable environment in which to play a non-contact version of 'rugby', whilst emphasising that the differences between RLIT and other social 'rugby' games are what makes RLIT specifically Rugby League.

## 2. FIELD DIMENSIONS

Fields will vary depending on the location but as a general guide, each field will have a width of at least 40 metres and a length of at least 65 metres.

## 3. UNIFORMS

When playing in an informal setting, Uniforms are unnecessary, although it is advisable to have 2 different colours to help differentiate team mates.

In a more formal competition setting:

3.1. Teams are to be in the same colour jerseys/shirts. Which should, if possible, be badged with a RLIT and/or RLI badge.

3.2. Teams should have numbers on these jerseys/shirts.

## 4. TEAM COMPOSITION

4.1. Mens: 6 people on the field; plus up to 7 reserves (13 players total)

4.2. Mixed: 7 people on the field; plus up to 6 reserves (13 players total). Ideally, A maximum of 4 on-field players can be male, dependant on the make up of the squads. Teams should try to match numbers of males and females on the pitch at the same time, or have no more than 1 extra male or female if possible

4.3 On field player numbers can be reduced if the field is considered to be too small

## 5. REGISTRATION

5.1. All players must register with their RLIT club in order to play.

Registration of all players and their details is the responsibility of the RLIT club secretary, and is important not only for insurance purposes, but also to assist RLI in assessing participation rates

## 6. INSURANCE

6.1. Insurance – All registered players are covered by RLI's insurance policy. In the event of injury, an incident report form must be completed and signed by the player involved, any witnesses and the club secretary.

6.2. A failure to report the injury at the time of the incident may void that player's right to make a claim.

## **GAME RULES**

### **7. DURATION**

Standard games are to run for 45 minutes in total (2 x 20 minute halves with 5 minutes for half-time). But this can be flexible and changed by agreement of the teams.

### **8. IN-GAME POINTS**

8.1. Scoring is by tries only. 1 point per try for male tries (Mens and Mixed) and 2 points for female tries (Mixed only).

8.2. A try is scored by placing the ball down over the opponents try line without being touched.

8.3. 'NFL Touchdown rule' A try can also be scored even if the ball has not been touched down, but if the ball carrier has managed to get both feet on the ground over the try line. This reduces the risk of collisions with defenders and fencing when scoring a try.

8.4. As a player cannot be tackled in the air, a try is also awarded if a kick is caught by a player who lands with both feet in the in-goal area.

8.5. Males can pass to females before crossing the try line in order to score the extra point. But he cannot attempt a pass from inside the in-goal area, as he has already scored.

### **9. SAFETY**

9.1. All jewellery and watches should be removed.

9.2. Fingernails should be trimmed.

9.3. Any player that experiences a loss of blood will need to clear or remove the blood in order to return to the game.

### **10. MISCONDUCT**

RLI Touch is to be played in a friendly co-operative manner. The referee and/or captains should deal with misconduct. Any action that is not considered in the spirit of the game, such as, over zealous or a heavy-handed touch or verbal abuse, should not be tolerated.

### **11. SUBSTITUTION**

Unlimited substitutions can be made, but these must be made from the middle of the field and on one side of the field between the two substitution markers on half-way. Players coming onto the field must not enter onto the field until the other player has crossed the sideline. A failure to abide by these rules may result in a penalty to the non-infringing team on halfway (or where they have the ball – whichever provides the most advantage).

### **12. THE TOUCH**

12.1. A touch will be affected once the defensive player has made contact with the ball carrier and called 'touch'. Even if not called, where the 'touch' is obvious to all parties involved, the touch is deemed to have been made.

12.2. A deliberate touch can only be made with the hand or upper part of the body. You can not deliberately make a touch with your foot or leg and doing so is considered dangerous.

12.3. A collision of two players will be deemed 'touch on contact'. A 'touch on contact' can involve any part of the body, if non-deliberate. However, if the ball carrier initiates the touch with his/her hand, this will be deemed a 'voluntary touch' (see note 13) and results in a penalty, turn over.

12.4. "Phantom Touches" when a player calls a 'touch' and then admits there was not a touch, this results in a penalty to the team in possession. Honesty is to be encouraged, and even though 'rule bending' is a part of most games, it is to be discouraged in RLIT.

12.5. If a player is touched and then passes the ball it will be deemed a 'Touch, Pass' and this results in a penalty, turnover. The same rule applies to a kick after the touch, i.e 'Kick, Pass'.

### **13. VOLUNTARY TOUCH**

13.1. If the ball carrier puts his/her hand out and touches the defending player, this will be deemed a voluntary touch. The result will be a turnover of possession and a tap penalty to the other team. (this is different to other forms of touch)

13.2. If a player is in possession of the ball but not moving (or on the ground) and puts his/her hand out to more or less protect themselves from an oncoming collision, this will not be a 'voluntary touch'.

13.3. If the ball carrier puts his/her hand out and touches the defending player who is in an off-side position, by touching that player, the ball carrier has made that defending player onside. This contact counts simply as a tackle, the defender is not penalised for off-side and ball carrier is not penalised for a 'voluntary touch'.

### **14. PLAY-THE-BALL**

14.1. The play-the-ball should be made by rolling the ball back with the hand, and if necessary pushing the ball back to the dummy-half, with the foot. The touched player must be standing on one foot and the other foot must appear to be assisting the ball backwards to the dummy-half. A failure to be standing on one foot will result in a penalty, turn over.

14.2. The play-the-ball must also be made on the mark (point of being touched) or within one step of the mark. Players will be penalised for running off, or not returning to the mark before playing the ball (i.e. more than one step off the mark).

14.3. The defending team cannot advance forward from the off-side line (8m point) until the dummy-half has picked up the ball. However, the dummy-half must pick up the ball without delay. If the dummy-half delays to try to draw the defenders offside, he/she should be penalised.

14.4. The player playing the ball must do so as soon as practically possible after being touched. As a guide, it is expected that the player playing the ball does so within 2 seconds of being touched. An unnecessary delay in playing the ball can be penalised.

14.5. If the ball is played with no dummy-half present, as long as a player from the same team is attempting to get to the ball, the defensive line will still not be allowed to move off the line until the ball is picked up. If there is no effort from the attacking team to get to the ball, the referee may blow a penalty for "dummy half delaying".

### **15. MISS-HANDLING**

15.1. An accidental forward pass, or dropped ball, whether it travels forward or not results in a turn

over play-the-ball, zero tackle.

15.2. The restart of a new set of six is to be started upon the ref's whistle or captains' call. Quick restarts are to be discouraged so that scoring opportunities are created from good tactics and not simply taking advantage of an unprepared defence.

15.3. Kicks may touch the ground.

15.4. 'Advantage' will apply if a forward pass or a fumble is caught by the opposition provided the ball does not hit the ground. If the ball is subsequently dropped before an advantage has been taken, the first offence is deemed to be the error and the team that committed the first offence will lose possession.

## **16. RESTARTS**

16.1. The game starts and restarts after a try with a 'tap' in the centre of the field. Any tap technique will do, i.e if the ball is on the ground it can be touched with the foot and then picked up, the ball can be held in the hands and touched off any part of the leg, below the knee. A rugby union style tap penalty, whilst legal, is to be discouraged because of the risk of dropping the ball.

16.2. The opening tap-off will be decided by a coin toss or other appropriate means.

16.3. Tap-offs after a score are performed by the non-scoring team.

16.4 A tap restart takes place after a 'penalty, turn-over' or 'penalty' has been called, at the place where the offence occurred

16.5 A 'Zero tackle play-the-ball' restart takes place at the site of any miss-handling errors or when the sixth tackle has been completed and the ball has been turned over to the opposition.

## **17. KICKING IN GENERAL PLAY**

17.1. Kicking the ball is permitted in RLIT at any time during the set of six.

17.2. Kicks can go any height and any distance.

17.3. If a kick goes out of play on the full, the non-kicking team will be awarded a 'zero tackle, play-the-ball' from where it was kicked.

17.4. If the kicker re-gathers his/her own kick, he/she cannot score. He/she must pass the ball to another player or kick for another player in order for a try to be scored.

17.5 If a kick is successfully caught by a member of the kicking team, with both feet over the try line a try will be awarded, even though the ball has not been touched down.

17.6 If a kick is successfully caught by a member of the non-kicking team, with one or both feet over the try line the kick is deemed to have been 'diffused' and a tap turnover will be awarded, to take place centre field, 5 meters out from the try line.

17.7. If the ball is kicked 'dead' (over the dead-ball line), the non-kicking team is awarded a tap turnover, centre field, 5meters out from the try line.

## **18 OTHER IN-GOAL RULES**

18.1. If in general play a player in possession is touched whilst either foot is behind their own try line, they must perform a dropout from centre field on their own try line. (which cannot be re-gathered by the kicking team).

18.2. Even if the dropout bounces in field and rolls over the sideline, the kicking team loses

possession and the receiving team restarts the game with a 'zero tackle, play-the-ball' 5 meters in-field from where the ball went out.

18.3. If the dropout goes over the sideline on the full, it is a tap to the receiving team on the 5m line in the centre of the field.

18.4. In the unlikely event that the dropout goes the full length of the field and out over the dead-ball line at the other end of the field, the other team must perform a dropout.

18.5. A try is awarded even if the ball carrier is touched over the try line, provided that the ball carrier has had both feet over the line (NFL Touchdown rule). If the ball carrier is touched between the 5metre line and the try line, before they have touched the ball down, the play-the-ball takes place back on the 5 metre line, unless it is the last tackle, in which case a turnover play-the-ball takes place on the 5 metre line.

## **19. OBSTRUCTION**

19.1 A player cannot deliberately use a teammate to shield themselves from being touched. If however a defenders direct route to a ball carrier is blocked by an attacking player without the ball, as long as that attacking player does not deliberately move to obstruct the defender there is no infringement. A deliberate obstruction results in a penalty turnover.

19.2 If a kicked ball is loose on the ground in the in-goal area, the kicker (who cannot score) cannot shield the ball to enable a team mate to score. This is obstruction and results in a penalty turnover, centre field on the 5metre line.

## **20. DEFENSIVE LINE & OFFSIDE**

20.1. The defensive team must retreat 8 metres back from the mark of the play-the-ball as quickly as possible. The team must make it back to the referee or captain who is setting the on-side line. However, if they are offside when the play-the-ball takes place, if they continue to retreat so that they get back 8 metres from the mark, they are then on-side. Retreating/defensive players who do not retreat directly, are not attempting to get on-side as quickly as possible, and can be penalised for being off-side.

20.2. Advantage can be played and the ball carrier can ignore the touch of an off-side player and continue. If the advantage does not result in a try, and the attacking team are touched, a penalty is still awarded. This is in effect a 'free play', as the attacking team will still be awarded a tap penalty and a new set of six.

20.3. Repeated off-side infringements can result in a sin-binning. However, this is a last resort and it is not in the spirit of the game

## **21. DUMMY HALF**

Dummy half CAN get touched and CAN score (this is different from other forms of touch).

## **22. PLAYING AT A BALL THAT HAS BEEN PASSED OR KICKED**

22.1. If a pass is thrown and a defensive player makes a play at the ball knocking it to the ground, the passing team will receive a new set of six. Starting with a zero tackle play-the-ball.

22.2. If a pass is thrown and a defensive player is merely going for the touch and the ball touches them, the passing team is responsible for the error, and this results in a turnover and zero tackle play-the-ball.

22.3. Because a kicked ball is still in play after it has hit the ground, it is important to determine

whether it has been cleanly recovered, in which case it is play on, or played at and dropped. If the ball is played at but then hits the ground, that team loses possession, and the opposition restarts play with a zero tackle play-the-ball.

22.4. A Chargedown is considered a play at the ball

### **23. DISCIPLINE AND REFEREEING**

23.1. Control of the game can be done by an appointed referee, or by captains' agreement.

23.2. 'Captains' agreement' means that a player from each team sets the on-side and calls out the tackle count, and calls out any miss-handling errors or infringements. Each team will also appoint a vice-captain.

23.3. Most infringement are obvious, but if there is a dispute between the two captains, the decision is made by a vice-captain from one of the teams. This decision is undisputable. The right to make this indisputable decision switches from team to team on each occasion.

23.4. The game is always meant to be played in a spirit of co-operation and fun. But in cases of repeated deliberate infringements or dissent, a player can be sin-binned for 5 minutes, or sent-off for the rest of the game.