



Flag Rugby Rules & Regulations

Updated August 18, 2022

1. General

The rules and regulations of flag rugby have been set forth by Girls Rugby and will be used for all Girls Rugby activities. Any question of the rules should be brought to the respective Girls Rugby Program Coordinator or Manager, who can work with Girls Rugby management for review.

1.1 Rules & Regulations

It is the responsibility of each Girls Rugby Program Coordinator or Manager to ensure that all volunteers are up-to-date with the current rules and regulations.

1.2 Player Equipment & Clothing

Every player is required to wear their Girls Rugby uniform provided at registration for matches. Players will be provided flag belts and flags to wear for matches from each location equipment bag. Players are required to wear athletic footwear, either tennis shoes or athletic cleats. Mouth guards are not required, but can be an additional form of protection for accidental contact.

Any jewelry or items that may cause harm to a player or other players should not be worn. The referee should check all players before entering the field.

2. Team & Player Registration

2.1 Player Registration

All participants in Girls Rugby programs must be registered members. Registration takes place prior to each season and occurs online at www.girlsrugbyinc.com. It is the responsibility of Program Coordinators or Managers and volunteers to ensure that all girls participating are registered.

2.2 Player Age Eligibility

Kindergarten - 1

No players enrolled in kindergarten are eligible to register with Girls Rugby. First graders are allowed on a case-by-case basis.

Grades 2-4

At the time of registration, participants in this category should be enrolled in second, third, or fourth grade.

Grades 5-6

At the time of registration, participants in this category should be enrolled in fifth or sixth grade.

Grades 7-8

At the time of registration, participants in this category should be enrolled in seventh or eighth grade.

Open Participation

If enrollment numbers in any category are too low to sustain full teams, those participants will join the next available age category.

3. Match Day Structure & Play

3.1 Rules of the Match

All matches played under Girls Rugby will follow the flag rugby rules as outlined in this document. The rules will be officiated by Girls Rugby volunteers.

3.2 Player Rosters

Volunteers will be responsible for creating rosters prior to match days.

3.3 Match Day Structures

Program Coordinators and Managers will decide the structure of play prior to match days. This includes a round robin format of teams playing each other. No trophies or championship structures will be provided. The purpose of match days is to allow girls the opportunity to play and compete.

4. Playing Rules

4.1 Field Size

The standard playing field will be measured as 40 meters wide x 60 meters long, with field markings for mid field and two try zones, each measuring 5-7 meters deep. Field size may be adjusted for the age and ability of the players, as decided by the coaches. Boundary cones are used to outline fields.

Create a field big enough for one additional channel to the total number of players on a team. For example, if there are 6 players on a team, create a field with 7 channels of about 5 meters each. This will allow enough space without it being too narrow.

4.2 Ball Size

Size 4 balls will be used for all practices and games for all ages.

4.3 Player Numbers

Teams will be made up of 5-7 players, depending on total number of participants in the program. If teams have unequal numbers, allow for substitutions every couple of minutes.

It should be noted that Girls Rugby puts an emphasis on player participation. If teams have an excessive number of participants, an additional team should be created. Large numbers on a team means that players do not get a chance to

carry the ball and often stand around. Try to create participation opportunities. Team sizes can be reduced to 4 v 4 or even 3 v 3 if needed.

4.4 Rock, Paper, Scissors

5 minutes before kick-off of any match, each team will send a player to the referee to compete in a Rock, Paper, Scissors match. This decision will be made from a three-round competition, with the player winning two of the rounds winning the overall match.

The winner of Rock, Paper, Scissors will get to choose either starting as the kicking team for kickoff OR which side of the field they would like to start on. If the player that wins chooses possession, the other player will decide which side of the field their team will start to receive the ball. If the player that wins chooses a playing side, the other team will start as the kicking team for kickoff.

4.5 Point Scoring

It should be noted that scores are not kept or recorded for Girls Rugby games, as the emphasis is on skill development rather than competition. However, should the referee decide to keep score, five (5) points will be awarded for a try. No conversion kicks will take place during Girls Rugby activities.

4.6 Match Duration

Matches will be played across two halves of equal time. Grades 2-4 will play matches of two 10 minutes halves. Grades 5-8 will play matches of two 12-15 minute halves. Because there is no score keeping in Girls Rugby, if a match ends in a tie score, there will be no extra time played. In the event that age grades are combined, the default time should be 10-12 minutes per half.

4.7 Substitutions

Teams should be created to minimize the number of substitute players. Ideally teams will have no more than 2 substitute players for match days. Substitutions can be made during any stoppage in play, at the discretion of the referee. Any coach wanting to make a substitution should inform the referee, who will hold play until the substitution is made. Players who are substituted out may return to play (rolling substitutions).

4.8 Defense with Flags & Flag Etiquette

Defense in flag rugby is played using flag belts. A pulling of the ball carrier's flag will constitute a 'tackle'. The sequence of flag etiquette is as follows:

- The defense pulls the ball carrier's flag, holds it up and yells, "FLAG!"
- The ball carrier takes no more than 3 steps and makes a pass to a teammate
- The former ball carrier returns to collect their flag from the defense
- The defense hands the flag back to the ball carrier and then returns to play
- The former ball carrier replaces the flag on their belt and returns to play

It should be noted that the coaches and referees can help this flag transition in the games by reminding players to pass immediately after a flag pull within 3 seconds. If the ball carriers are slowing down play and not passing, implement a penalty and turnover for delaying the game. Referees can simply manage this by saying, “Flag pull! Pass in 3...2...1...” to encourage players to react quicker.

4.9 Offside

Girls Rugby recognizes that offside can be a difficult concept for young players to grasp. It should be noted that referees and coaches should help manage this.

- The offside line runs through the ball following a flag pull. Attacking players are onside if they are behind the ball carrier. Defensive players are onside if they are in front of the ball carrier. Defensive players may not interrupt an offload following a flag pull.
- Referees can manage this by telling the defensive team to take a few steps back whenever a flag pull is made.

4.10 Kicking

Kickoffs

All matches will start with a kickoff. All restarts after a score will start with a kickoff. The team that scored will kickoff to the opposing team. Kickoffs for grades 2-4 will start with a place kick or punt. For grades 5-8, drop kicks can be used, but place kicks and punts are also acceptable. It should be noted that whichever team receiving the kick should gain possession of the ball. No kicking team should be allowed to recover the ball following a kick (i.e. if the kick does not go very far).

Open Play Kicking

No open play kicking is allowed for any age group.

4.11 Scrums & Lineouts

Scrums and lineouts are advancements of the game and can be used in Girls Rugby programs for older age groups. All scrums and lineouts are uncontested and should only be used when players are of the appropriate age and ability.

Uncontested Lineouts – Lineouts are used when the ball goes out of bounds and replaces a free pass. Lineouts can be made up of 3-4 players depending on team numbers. Teams with 7 players can use 4 players: Thrower, 2 Receivers, and 1 Scrumhalf. Teams with 5-6 players can use 3 players: Thrower, 1 Receiver, and 1 Scrumhalf. It should be noted that no lifting is allowed and opposing players are not allowed to contest for the ball. The team throwing the ball in should win the lineout.

Uncontested Scrums – Uncontested scrums should only be used with older age groups and when teams are 7 v 7. Scrums are made up of 4 players: 3 Front Row Players and 1 Scrumhalf. There is no pushing allowed and the team putting the ball into the scrum should win the ball.

4.12 Infringements/Penalties

All penalties and infringements will result in the infringing team moving back 5 meters from the point of the penalty/infringement mark. Infringements/Penalties will be awarded for the following actions and receive the appropriate result:

Dropped Passes/Knock-Ons

- Play Advantage. If an advantage is gained, play on. If an advantage is not gained, restart with a free pass.

Forward Pass

- All forward passes are turnovers. Restart play with a free pass.

Obstruction, Blocking, Fending Off, Spinning, or Flag Guarding

All of these actions are considered penalties and will result in a turnover to the other team. Play will restart with a free pass to the non-offending team, with the other team set up 5 meters back from the penalty mark.

Diving

Players must not dive to the ground at any point. A dive in the try zone will result in a penalty to the defense 5 meters from the try line and the try will not be awarded. Play will restart with a free pass.

Deliberate Contact

Flag rugby is played without contact. Any deliberate or intentional contact such as hitting or pushing will result in a penalty to the non-offending team. Play will restart with a free pass.

Failure to Release the Ball

Following a flag pull, players must only hold the ball for a maximum of 3 seconds. Referees are encouraged to manage this by coaching players to pass before the time limit. Players that hold the ball longer than 3 seconds will result in a turnover to the other team, restarting with a free pass.

Pulling/Stripping the Ball

An opposing player is not permitted to intentionally “pull” or remove the ball from the ball carrier’s hands. A turnover will occur with the non-offending team being awarded a free pass at the spot of the penalty.

Improper Flag Etiquette

If a player is not following flag etiquette, a penalty can be awarded. This would include pulling flags and throwing them on the ground or not returning them to

the ball carrier. Penalty result is moving the defense back an additional 5 meters and restarting with a free pass to the offense.

Yellow & Red Cards

The use of 'yellow cards' can be used to penalize repeated foul play. Players receiving a 'yellow card' are awarded a 2 minute 'time out'. During this time, the coach should use it as a learning moment and teach appropriate behavior.

Red cards are not used in Girls Rugby, as it eliminates and excludes players from the match. Yellow cards should be used to manage inappropriate behavior when necessary.