



The San Francisco Fog. R.F.C

The Rookie Primer 2.0

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Chapter 1

Rugby? Wha...?

Rugby is a more than a sport. It's a passion. It's a disease you catch that infects your very core. People will tell you it's a cross between soccer and football, but that doesn't *really* prepare you for rugby. Rugby is its own ass-backwards self. There is *nothing* like it on or off the field.

How did rugby, American football's daddy, originate? There is that tired, hackneyed legend of the young and ever-so-rebellious William Webb Ellis, who one day, during a soccer match at Rugby School in England, decided to pick up the ball and run with it. However, most sports historians postulate that back in the day it was considered amusement for one town to try and carry a somewhat startled young pig to another town's village square. They would employ various methods of dodging, dashing, passing, or just plowing through en masse to achieve this. These primitive contests became refined over time and emerged as rugby and soccer.

To the casual observer of a rugby match today, rugby seems remarkably close to that version of its roots than some picked up soccer ball.

Well, wherever it came from, today's rugby is, at its best, a blend of strategy, strength, speed, and instinct. At its least, it is organized and glorious mayhem. **The object is to score more points than the other team by carrying, passing, and kicking the ball.**

Simple enough . . .

Chapter 2

Pitch, Kit and New Meanings for Words You Already Know

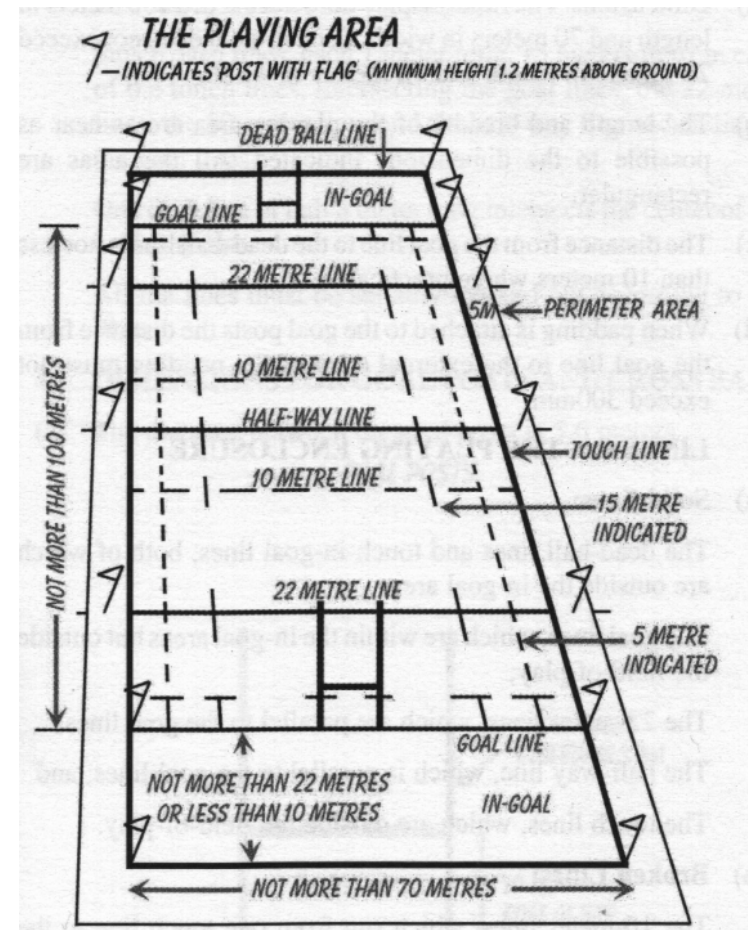
We play on a **pitch**. It looks like a field. And it is a field. But we call it a pitch.

It is preferably grassy and level, but we take what we can get.

As you can see from the diagram on the right, the pitch is 100 meters (110 yards) long and 70 meters (75 yards) wide.

There are four important lines on the pitch:

- The **half-way line**. The half-way line indicates where the pitch divides in half (duh!). Kick-offs to start the match, kick-offs to start the second half and kick-offs after each time a team scores are started here.
- The **22-meter lines** (25 yard-line). The 22-meter line is a strategic point on the pitch. We won't talk about it too much in this guide, but you learn that it is a very important line, especially when it comes to kicking.
- The **goal lines**. The goal lines mark where a player has to cross in order to score. It is similar to the touchdown line in American football.
- The **touchlines**. The touchlines mark where players go out-of-bounds along the length of the pitch. In rugby speak, "**touch**" is what we call the area outside of the playing field. When a player goes out-of-bounds, he is said to be "in touch."



For now one important, but tricky, thing to store in your memory banks is that *the lines are included in what is beyond them*. For example, when a ball or a player goes in touch (out of bounds) both the touchline and the area beyond the line is the out-of-bounds area. Once a player or a ball touches the touchline or the area beyond the line, the ball or the player is "in-touch" or out of bounds.

Similarly, the goal line both marks and is part of the "in-goal"

area. If a player places the ball on the goal line, he scores.

The Kit

Your rugby **kit** is simply what you wear to the pitch. It consists of

- a sturdy rugby jersey (not one of those polyester numbers from Ross or one of those trendier-than-thou versions from Abercrombie & Fitch)
- a pair of rugby shorts (your Daisy Dukes or hootchie-mama shorts won't do)
- matching socks
- cleats (called a **rugby boot**) and
- a mouthguard

...and that's it! Well, maybe a little athletic tape for effect, so you'll look pretty in photographs.

If you need help getting your kit together, consult our *Kit Guide*, which you can download from the team website (www.sffog.org).

A tip for rookies: leave your jewelry at home. Literally thousands of earrings, rings and necklaces have been lost forever in the linty "black holes" of people's pockets. You've been warned...

Quick note about body jewelry: unless you want an extra nipple, belly button or ear lobe ripped for you (OUCH!), take your body piercing out when you play.

You'll also need a ball - a **rugby ball**, of course! It looks like a fat football with more rounded ends. Get your own ball for practice away from practice. (Ruggers.com makes an *excellent*

match ball you can get for \$25.) You'll be glad you did.

Okay, got the pitch and kit down. So how do you play this damn game?

Chapter 3 The Basics

Begin with a Kick-Off

Teams usually line up for cleat inspection and salutations before the game, but the action begins with a kick-off. This is taken at the half-way line.

Like soccer, rugby is a continuous play game—the clock does not stop! The game is divided into **two halves, no more than 40 minutes long**. Unlike American football, there is no stopping to set up plays. **The only time play stops is because a penalty or injury has occurred.**

Any time taken for injury is added on to the half in which it occurs. The halftime break lasts no more than 10 minutes.

Substitutions are limited to seven per team. Substitutions may only be made when the ball is dead and with the permission of the referee. If a player is substituted, that player can't return and play in that match even to replace an injured player—unless his substitution was caused by injury.

The object, of course, is to rack up as many points as possible in those 80 minutes. Usually scoring a **try**—the equivalent of a touchdown in American football terms—does this nicely, but there are other ways. We'll talk more about scoring later.

Playing Rugby

Boiled down to basics, playing rugby is about getting the ball and using the ball while maintaining possession.

Lets say the other team just kicked-off to your team. Any player who is on-side may take the ball and run with it.

Let's say you caught the ball. You have options:

- *You can pass the ball.* But here's the rub: **the ball may only be passed backward or laterally (side-ways)**. If you pass it forward, it's a penalty (called straightforwardly enough, a forward pass). This is the big difference between rugby and American football.
- *You can kick the ball forward*, either on the ground like a soccer ball or in the air. Unlike American football, in rugby, kicking is often an excellent strategic move.
- *You can hand off the ball to another player.* You don't have to pass the ball to get it to another player.
- *You can run with the ball.* This is what most folks do. Preferably towards the other team's goal line but, certain ones on our team have been known to do otherwise (ahem!).

Let's say you passed the ball and the other team intercepted it. (bad rookie, bad!) You can regain possession (and your dignity) by:

- *Tackling the opponent with the ball.* Once you've tackled the guy, the guy must release the ball on the ground (usually placing it towards his teammates). As the tackler you've got to release the guy you tackled, too. **The tackle does not stop play in rugby.** In fact, the whole point of the player releasing the ball is to allow play to continue. Once that ball is released on the ground, it's fair game to be picked up by anyone. You can pick it up too, *if you are on your feet*. If you try to pick up the

released ball before you are on both feet, it's a penalty call "playing the ball on the ground."

- *Ripping the ball from the opponent with the ball.* Hey ,it ain't pretty, but it works.

One thing that confuses rookies is that they think that once the ball is dropped, the ball is dead. It isn't!! **The ball is always alive, even when it's on the ground.** If the ball is on the ground, anyone can pick it up and play it. The only time the ball is dead is when it goes into touch (out of bounds).

Any player may tackle, hold or shove an opponent **holding the ball**. This "holding the ball" bit is important. Unlike American football, if you shove, tackle, hold or block any person who does not have the ball, it's a penalty called **obstruction** and it is *cheating*. You should never cheat. Unless you can cheat well.

As you can see, players have a lot of leeway on the field. Regardless, whatever a player does, it must be in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

Laws? Oh yeah, the rules of the game are called Laws. And just like laws in real life, they are subject to the strict or loose interpretation of those who enforce them. In rugby, that person is the referee.

The Officials

There is one ref and two touch judges in every match who enforce the Laws. The ref is the sole arbiter of the Laws of the Game. His (or her) word is final. There is no appeal. The touch judges are there to call where a player or a ball goes in touch (out of bounds).

The important thing to remember is that there is only one referee. It may seem impossible (or at least improbable) that one lonely ref can see the actions of thirty other people on a huge pitch, but you'd be surprised what a good ref can see.

The important thing to remember with refs is that you can't talk back to them. Not even the coach can talk to the ref. (Bobby Knight, the easily ignitable former Hoosier basketball coach known for arguing with refs, would never survive in rugby.) The only folks authorized to talk to the ref during a game are the captains of each team. This includes foul language—you can be penalized if the ref hears you!

Smart players (and teams) learn to play to the ref—they figure out how the ref is going to call certain offenses and adjust their play to the ref's style. This is particularly true when it comes to how strictly the ref is enforcing the "on-side" laws.

The Concept of "Onside"

Anybody may play the ball. Let's repeat that. **ANYBODY** can play the ball. You may run with it, pass it, kick it, or tackle an opponent who has it - provided that you are **onside**.

Perhaps the most confusing aspect about rugby for players and observers alike is the concept of being on side. Which is unfortunate because it's very simple, generally speaking.

Rookies, this is key: if you are *behind the ball* you are **onside**. If you are *in front of the ball* you are **offside**. And being offside is a big no-no.

You won't be in trouble if you're 50 meters away tying your shoe, or even if you are in 10 meters away. But if you influence play in any way from an offside position or attempt to participate

in the game (attempt to get the ball, tackle someone with the ball, etc.), this is BAD, BAD, BAD. We're talking Penalty City, kids. DON'T DO IT.

The French term for offside is *hors jeu*—literally “out of the game.” That’s a good way to think of it. When you are offside, you are a “non-player” until you get back onside.

The concept of onside can be tricky at first to master, so tricky, that we’ve created a guidebook devote just to this topic (oh joy!). For now, keep these examples in mind.

- Say your teammate has the ball and wants to pass it to you. As he’s getting ready to pass, you move ahead of him. Doh! Now he can’t pass it to you because you are ahead of the ball (not behind it) and offside. Besides, if he threw the ball to you, it will be a forward pass.
- Say your teammate has the ball, and wants to pass it to you. He completes the pass to you. Can you throw it back to him? No, not until he’s behind the ball again.

Okay, so now you have the basics of the game under your belt. Let’s look at who all gets to play in this mess...

Chapter 4 Have We Got a Position for YOU!

To describe the individual positions in rugby, we'll talk about them in the context of one of the unique fixtures of rugby, the **scrum**. A scrum is the name of the formal conglomeration of players who bind together in specific positions when a **scrumdown** is called. It is one of the basic set formations (or **set pieces** or **set plays** in ruggie talk) of rugby. We'll talk about the other set formations later.

You can tell a lot about a ruggie from his position in the scrum. A prop is *usually* a stocky guy, a lock a tall one, a wing a smaller and faster one. A **scrum** occurs after various minor infringements of the law, such as when the ball becomes tied up, and other times you'll learn about later. It is a face-off of sorts, where each team is contesting to get the ball, and a favorite among forwards. Form and timing are more important than brute strength (um, we'll take some brute strength too).

This is what a scrum looks like: (This is the Fog versus the Manchester Spartans.)



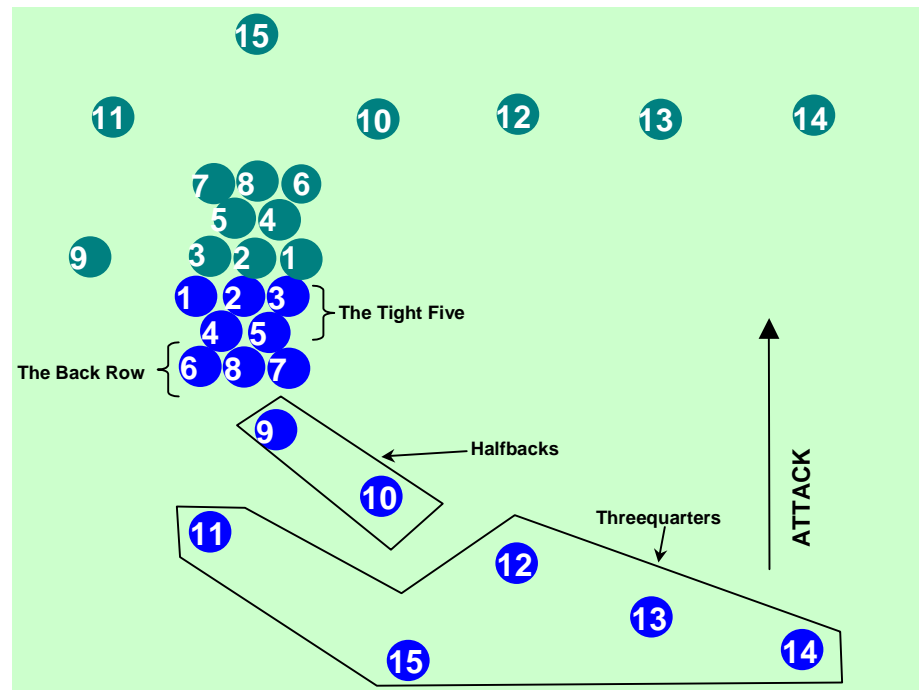
Every position on the team has a specific function. The team is

generally divided into *forwards* and *backs*. Forwards (a.k.a, the pack, Nos. 1-8) tend to be big and strong. Backs (Nos. 9-15) tend to be fast and agile. Forwards win the ball for the backs to use to score.

Traditionally, there's always been a bit of good-natured ribbing between the pack and the backs. But the pack vs back thing is really a bit misleading when you look at how a scrum actually works. The scrum really works as a series of mini-units, each with specific jobs to do.

The team is divided into four mini-units: the Tight Five, the Back Row, the Halfbacks, and the Threequarters.

Here's what a scrum looks like



Here's how the scrum works.

- The forwards from each team line up across from each other, and bind together in three rows: a row of three, a row of two and another row of three players.
- On the referee's mark, the two teams "butt heads." This forms the scrum.
- Starting on the left side of the scrum, the scrumhalf (No. 9) puts the ball straight into the scrum, between the two opposing front rows.
- The hookers (No. 2) from each team try to win the ball, using their feet to kick the ball back. No hands allowed.
- The ball is then channeled back to the Number Eight who lets it out to the scrumhalf (who has already moved to the back of the scrum).
- The scrumhalf passes the ball out to the flyhalf (No. 10), who, along with the other backs (No. 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15) will implement some play to try to score.

Let's take a closer look at each of the mini-units.

The Tight Five

The Tight Five consists of the two props, the hooker and the two locks. These players are primarily ball winners.

Props. There are two props (also called *prop forwards*) in each scrum. In the scrum the props' main role is to provide a solid platform and support the hooker. The loose-head prop (No.1) plays on the left-hand side (loose head=left hand), and the tight-head prop (No. 3) plays on the right-hand side. Props are usually short to average height, stocky and strong, usually with

a short neck and broad shoulders. These are guys that typically enjoy contact.

Hooker. One of the most important roles on the team, the hooker (No. 2) is the main ball winner on the team. In the scrum, the hooker wins the ball by striking it back to the No. 8—we'll spare you the mechanics of how this happens. Players in this position can be almost any shape or size, but generally, he's short to average height, stocky and has long arms.

Lock. The locks (No. 4 and No. 5) are the engine of the scrum, providing a stable source of power for the front row. Typically, they are noted for their height (typically above 6'2") and their power. Players in this position are usually the tallest and strongest guys on the team, and possess superior leg strength.

The Back Row

The Back row consists of the two flankers and the No. 8.

Flankers. The flankers (No. 6 and No. 7) are the most aggressive guys on the team. Typically flankers (also called *wing forwards*) are relentless attackers. Flankers tend to be average height and tend to have an athletic build. Flankers have to have superior cardiovascular fitness. Flankers also have to be good ball handlers because they often find themselves supporting the backs.

No. 8. The No. 8 is a key position on the team. His primary duty in the scrum is to keep the ball at his foot until the scrumhalf is ready to pass it out. The No. 8 has the option to break off the scrum and pick up the ball and run it, so he also has to be a tactician, constantly reading the defense. His physical attributes are similar to those of a flanker: average to

tall height, athletic build, superior cardiovascular fitness, and good ball handling skills.

The Halfbacks

The halfbacks are the scrumhalf, and flyhalf . This duo comprises the two most important positions on the team. These two provide the crucial link between the forwards and the backs. They are typically the most skilled persons on the field.

Scrumhalf. The scrumhalf (No.9) is the second most important position on the team. As the link between forwards and backs, he is the pivot around which the majority of the attacks take place. He has to be a quick decision-maker (pass? kick? run?), and the quality of that decision will affect the entire team. The scrumhalf is also one of the most skilled positions on the team—he has to know a variety of passes, kicks and other techniques that no one else on the team has to master. Physically, he is typically one of the smallest guys on the team, usually short to average height. He's also very fit, as the game demands the scrumhalf do a lot of running.

Flyhalf. The flyhalf (No. 10) is *the* most important position on the team. A team with a good flyhalf is blessed because they are hard to find and even harder to mold. Typically, he's very calm, very clear thinking and very skillful. His position requires him to be able to read the game and anticipate holes in the defense. He has to be a superior tactician. Like the scrumhalf, he has to be excellent at many skills, particularly handling and passing, managing contact and tackles and kicking. The flyhalf determines alignment for the rest of the backs. With the help of the inside center, he also creates space for the threequarters to maneuver in. Typically he is average to tall height, athletic build, very fit and likes contact—he gets tackled a lot.

The Threequarters

The threequarters are also known as the finishers. Once the forwards have won the ball, and the halfbacks have distributed it, it is up to the threequarters to keep the ball alive until there is a try. The threequarters are the two centres, two wings and the fullback.

Centres. There are two centers. The inside centre (No. 12) typically works with the scrumhalf and flyhalf to create the platform on which the rest of the backs will score. The outside centre (No. 13) will usually work more with the wings and the fullback. In both cases, their main job is to create space for the remaining backs to score in. Both centres are usually average height and lean to athletic build with very strong shoulders and lower bodies, the bigger and stronger centre being the inside center, and the leaner and faster being the outside center. They have superior handling and passing skills, and have excellent tackling skills. Centres also have good peripheral vision, and excellent catching and kicking skills.

Wings. The wings (No. 11 and No. 14) are the fastest men on the field. They are usually the guys that score the tries. Wings (a.k.a., wingers, wingmen) must have excellent timing and constantly read the other team's backs for hints of counter attack. There are two types of wings, blind-side wing and open-side wing, and wings will play both during a game, depending on where the scrum is positioned on the pitch (don't worry about figuring it out now). Wingers come in all shapes and sizes, but he is typically on the lean side, but strong in the shoulders and lower body. Speed and agility are the main physical requirements for a wingman. They also have superior passing and handling skills.

Fullback. Another key position on the team, the fullback (No. 15) is the last line of defense. In the modern game, he has become the surprise element, unpredictably entering the backline to help penetrate the defense. A fullback needs many qualities and skills. He has to be brave because he'll take most tackles at full speed. He also has to be able to catch the high kick while under intense pressure. It is usually the fullback who catches/retrieves kicks. The fullback is usually the best kicker on the team. He is also very fast. Also, like centres, he has superior passing and handling skills. Physically, fullbacks are many shapes, but typically he is short to average, athletic build. He needs strong shoulders and lower body.

That's it for the positions. As you can see, there's a practically a place for every type of person on the pitch. Don't worry if you read a description, and it kinda sounded like you, except for one or two things. The great thing about rugby is that if you try out a position and it's not good for you, there's fourteen others just waiting for you!

Next up, we'll get a little bit more into the nuts and bolts of the game.

Chapter 5

Rucks and Mauls

It would be a perfect world if after every scrum you automatically scored. But there's that little pesky thing called defense that usually keeps you from scoring.

Defense is a whole 'nother subject, but suffice it to say that there's three types of defense. There's man-to-man defense, where each player is responsible for guarding one particular guy. There's zone defense, where each player is responsible for a certain area of the field. And there's drift defense, where the defensive line shifts as the ball moves out towards the other team's wing.

So let's assume your team got the ball out to the inside centre (No. 12). He's burning up the field, but unfortunately he got tackled. The inside center is forced to release the ball.

(Remember!: If you get tackled you must release the ball.)

Fortunately, the outside centre (No. 13) is nearby. The outside centre sees he can pick up the ball. He also sees that a couple of your team's forwards will arrive soon. Unfortunately, there's a wall of defenders that will arrive at the same time. If he picks up the ball, he'll only gain a foot. And, shit! the tackler is starting to get on his feet. What should the outside centre do?

He's got two smart options:

- He can form a ruck.
- He can initiate a maul.

A **ruck** is formed when one player from each team in the field of play—both on their feet—shoving each other with the ball *on the*

ground. This is what it looks like:



An example of a ruck. See the ball on the ground?

In our example above, to form a ruck, the outside center would start shoving the tackler that was getting up, who would, of course, shove back. Folks from your team and from the other team would join in, until the scrumhalf came to clear the ball out to the backs again, who have quickly realigned.

So you see, a ruck is simply a stripped down version of a scrum. Instead of 8-on-8, it's more like 2-on-2 or 3-on-3.

A couple of things about rucks. If a player joins a ruck, he must bind on to a teammate. And if teammates join in, they must do so from behind the hindmost player. Also, just like in scrums, **no hands allowed**.

Our outside center in our example above could have also picked up the ball, ran straight into the defender and hope that his teammates came in after him and formed a maul. A **maul** happens when at least one player from each team binds around

a player standing up with the ball in his possession.



An example of a maul.

Just remember, “A maul is tall.”

Rucks and mauls basically give everyone a chance to collect themselves and rally the troops for the next play. In American football speak, it’s sort of like a huddle, only the game is still going on while you’re planning your next attack.

Both backs and forwards need to know how to ruck and maul.

Oh, one more significant no-no. Once a ruck or maul forms, players not participating (by being fully bound - with at least one whole arm) **must remain behind the last person's foot**. This gives players not involved some time and space in which to set up and look for defensive holes. A really great team will be able to do this so quickly that their opponents will be caught with their shorts around their ankles. <Insert obvious joke here>

Phases of Play

The key to understanding the mayhem called a rugby match is understanding the **phases of play** in rugby.

The first phase is always a **set play**, like a kick-off, a scrum or a lineout. We’ll talk more about lineouts in a bit. What you need to know right now is that each of these set pieces involves getting into established formations to fight over the ball. Set play is very organized and somewhat predictable.

Once the ball is out of the set formation (i.e., out of the scrum or lineout) **loose play** begins. Loose play is characteristically spontaneous and exciting. The different stages of loose play are broken up into what are called phases of play.

The different phases in loose play are marked by what are called **breakdowns**. Breakdowns are rucks and mauls, and named so because they break down the continuity of play, the flow of the game. Generally speaking, attacking teams try to avoid breakdowns because it means the defending team has been successful in stopping their advance.

It is not unusual for an attack to have five or six phases before a penalty is called.

Next up: basic skills every rugby player needs to know.

Chapter 6

Skills You'll Know and Love

Backs and forwards alike need to develop certain rugby-specific abilities. These skills are the foundation of all play, simple and complex. **You must never, never, never neglect them.**

The basic skills are passing, handling, catching, kicking, running, tackling and managing contact.

Passing

We will begin with the **pass**. You already know that you can't pass forward. Lateral passing is OK, but a close call. What's left? You guessed it—we pass *backwards*. This explains the odd diagonal line-up of the backs. Technique may vary, but the important concept here is *catchability*.

Using both hands, the ball is passed in an underhand fashion (sort of like you're shoveling) and should arrive in the receiver's hands upright and solid.

You should lead the receiver so that he is bursting on to it and thus gaining yardage even though he starts behind you. Aim for the chest.

The distance between passer and receiver varies depending on how skilled they are, the particular play, and the weather. But generally speaking, a distance of about five meters is usual. The receiver stays at an angle sufficiently deep to receive the ball running at top speed. The passer should always turn his body toward the receiver and *pass the ball a little in front of the receiver* so that he will catch the ball while accelerating onto it. Don't pass until you see the whites of his eyes!

We'll practice passing plenty, so don't worry if it seems awkward or confusing now.

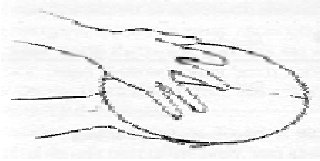
Handling

All rugby players need good ball-handling skills to cope with the different demands of the attacking game: running with the ball, passing and catching at pace (at actual game speed). Great teams have players who can take the fullest advantage of attacking situations. To do this they must keep possession of the ball. To truly succeed as a rugby player, you must be skillful in executing the basic ball-handling techniques.

During play the ball may arrive at different angles, heights, speeds and forces. A ball that arrives at a difficult angle may affect your ability to keep possession. For example, a pass that arrives from behind at knee height may be difficult to catch and bring to your waist while you are running at pace and attempting to maintain balance. Becoming used to the unique shape of the ball early on will give you the confidence to cope with the unexpected when it happens - such as a ball bouncing wildly off the turf or a pass thrown too high or away from you.

It is to your own advantage whenever possible to carry the ball in two hands. This allows you to either pass or keep the ball safe when a tackler grabs hold of you. It also allows you to make a more accurate passes in open play.

When holding or moving the ball around your body, you must grab the ball firmly in your hands with the fingers spread across the seams (see the drawing below). The seams will help you maintain your grip. *Use fingers to control the ball not the palms.*



You will often see a ball carrier will hold the ball along his or her forearm or tuck it into the ribs near the elbow when running in the open field. This is a safe carrying style and allows players to run more quickly because they can pump their arms with a running motion. However, by tucking the ball, your players will make it difficult to readjust the ball in order to pass. When running with the ball tucked in, you must always be prepared to readjust your grip to pass the ball with two hands on the ball.

Kicking

Kicking is another bread'n'buter staple of this game. Rookies, in general, take awhile to incorporate this aspect into their game, so don't feel retarded if it takes you awhile to get the hang of it. But it does open up a world of options to you - so we'll briefly explain the range of fancy footwork.

The **pop kick** is a popular item. It is a short up-in-the air kick that you can field yourself. If some menacing hulk is barreling down on you, why take the hit? If there is no one to pass to, you can just pop it over him and run right past the defender to catch your own kick. You've got the momentum - he'll have to turn around to chase it and you. And remember, he cannot touch you if you don't have the ball.

The **grub kick** is like a hot grounder past the shortstop or a soccer dribble. You punch it along the ground with your foot

and, as always, *pursue* it. Because of the shape of the ball, the grub kick will take some weird hops, making it hard to handle.

All kicking should be done *strategically* and not in a panic. It is important to place kicks in a spot where your team can regain possession.

Longer kicks may be used too, where the ball is kicked to a part of the field that your teammates can get to first or make life miserable for an opponent who does. The ball may also **be punted into touch** (out-of-bounds) for long yardage. We'll explain later what happens after the ball leaves the field, but for now remember this:

If you are BEHIND YOUR OWN 22 METER line and kick it directly to touch (out-of-bounds) on a fly, the ball is brought back in at THE POINT THAT IT CROSSES THE LINE. This is a common strategy that can get you out of hot water when the opposition is breathing down your goal line. This is also true when you have been awarded a penalty kick anywhere on the field.

However, if you kick it directly out when you are AHEAD OF YOUR 22, the ball comes back in from the POINT IT WAS KICKED - meaning no yardage gained.

You can dribble the ball or give it a good whack with your foot anytime it's loose on the ground, but possession is 9/10th of the law in rugby. It's always best to secure the ball for your side.

Tackling

You've got to **tackle**. When you do, your tacklee has no choice but to release the ball, leaving it fair game for either side. No, the play does not stop, but he will. Tackling well and decisively

is vital--although we always keep in mind our lack of padding. You should hit them low, squeeze their legs together, and twist them so you land on top. We will review this thoroughly in practices—but some of you<cough> may already be doing this with your tricks.

The technical definition of a tackle is when a player is held by an opposing player and *at least one knee* is touching the ground. Tripping and falling down by yourself doesn't count.

Rookies: remember, if you are tackled you **must** release the ball, or its **penalty** time once again.

You may pick the ball up immediately upon gaining your feet. You are allowed a split second to place the ball to your team's advantage when tackled.

The art of tackling is one of the more reluctantly embraced skills in rugby (even by the toughest of guys). But when done right, we promise it won't hurt at all. (Hey, you believed your first boyfriend when he told you that...) Seriously, execute a tackle right and you'll have hard time wiping that shit-eating grin of smug satisfaction off your face.

Managing Contact

Managing contact is a key strategic skill. Why? It's about controlling the ball on our own terms. You will want to have a repertoire of skills you can call upon should you find yourself in a situation where you are tackled or restricted.

Managing contact allows us control over how play will develop after contact so that either (1) you can release the ball securely to a teammate and we can continue the attack, or (2) we can give up the ball in a manner that allows us to defend on own

terms.

Making contact with either ground or player is a skill that requires what seems to be difficult and unpleasant work at first. Few people enjoy it at first. For every rookie tackle jockeys who thoroughly enjoy the rough and tumble of rugby, there are five rookie players who take a while to achieve a “confidence in contact” which will stay with them for the rest of their rugby careers. It takes time to build up the courage to confidently take a hit and know what to do once it has happened. It takes courage to tackle someone coming at you at full speed.

Okay, okay. We said all this stuff about positions, skills and rule. But we still haven't told you how you score. We'll go there next.

Chapter 7

You Wanna Win? You Gotta “Try”

OK, so how do we pile up points? There may be fifty ways to leave your lover, but there’s only two ways to score.

Method No. 1

Well, first in our hearts is the **try**. It has similarities to a touchdown in American football, but with a *significant* difference.

A **try** is accomplished by bringing the ball into your opponent's in-goal and *touching it to the ground*.

Control, downward pressure, and simultaneous hand/ball/ground contact are essential. Woe to the rookie who gleefully gallops over the line and in his excitement forgets this key factors, and spikes the ball. Sorry kids, this isn't the NFL; the try won't count that way.

A try is worth **5 points**. The priority is to get the ball over and down, but if possible, you want to *place it near the middle*. The reason for this is that after a try, you have a chance to make it 7 points by kicking the ball through the posts (uprights). This is called a **conversion**. Unlike the field goal kick in American football, the kick is made from *any distance back*, but *in line with where the ball was touched down*. It is far easier for a kicker to make a conversion when he is in front of the posts than at an angle. The kicker may use a **place kick** (where he uses a tee) or **drop-kick** (where he holds the ball with both hands forward, drops the ball, and then kicks it on the rebound).

After a try, the game starts up again with a kick off (a drop-kick)

to the *team who has just scored*. (Brutal, no?) In any case, it's back to the 50 meter line as quickly as the kicking team can collect itself. There is no official game stoppage.

Method No.2

The other way to score is **by going for post** (kicking a field goal). This is worth **3 points**. Most commonly it is made when a **penalty** is called within the range of your team's best kicker. It may be place kicked or drop kicked from the point where the penalty was awarded (the **mark**). Rarer in recreational-level rugby is a spontaneous drop kick through the posts during play. This is allowed at any time but is very difficult to do. Unless you're a retired NFL punter, we don't recommend rookies, or even seasoned players, do this.

If a team should touch the ball down in its OWN in-goal (better you than them), two things can happen.

1. If your team is responsible for bringing the ball in, a scrum, 5 meters back from the try line, will be awarded to the other team (meaning their scrumhalf gets to put it in).
2. If the ball traveled into the in-goal on the other team's impetus, your team will be awarded a 22 meter **drop out**. A **drop out (a.k.a. 22-meter drop kick)** means that your team may drop-kick the ball from any point behind the 22 meter line. The other team must *retreat immediately* to the other side of the 22. Remember this retreating business when the drop out is against you. Also learn to run backwards. You should never take your eyes off the ball!

Chapter 8

Beer Break !!

Phew!

Feel better about your knowledge of the game of rugby? Grab a brew and take a break for a sec.

You may be feeling a little saturated with rugby facts and figures at this point and as you might suspect, there is much, much more. Don't worry if it seems confusing or even ridiculous. Soon that light bulb will pop on, miscellaneous ideas will click and in spite of your best intentions, you'll be a rugby player.

Random Thoughts:

- Rugby is a continuous, flowing game with natural ebbs and surges, but no real time-outs except for injury. It has both premeditation and spontaneity. The faster you can make things happen, the more likely you will be able to score.
- All sizes and shapes of people can play. Just because you're small or lanky or short—or all of the above—doesn't mean you can't play rugby.
- It is an aggressive and physically demanding game. Fitness is mandatory. It's not a sport of your typical weekend warrior—you'll be winded in the first five minutes. It's a wise move to join a gym and commit to a regular fitness regime.
- A couple of little catchwords in rugby are **move forward** and **support**. Confusingly enough, you often have to back up or

pass back to support the surge forward. The overall team direction should always be lustfully aimed toward the goal line.

- This is a team game. The collective effort of 15 people is far more powerful than the individual. When everyone on the field is in sync, it's the coolest feeling in the world. Or at least the top 2 or 3. The best score happens when everyone contributes.

Chapter 9

Line Outs

Line Outs

If the ball is kicked, carried, or otherwise escorted into touch (“out-of-bounds”), its re-entry onto the field is by way of a **lineout**. A line out is kinda like the jumpball in basketball.



A diagram of one side of a line out.

Here's how it works:

Two rows of forwards standing up (one column per team) line up 5 meters in from the touch line and perpendicular to it. A player from the team who *didn't* touch it last before it went onto touch gets to throw the ball in, down the tunnel.



An example of a line out

The ball can be thrown any distance as long as it flies *straight* between the columns. Like catchers to pitchers in baseball, teams use signals to let their players know where the thrower intends to throw it.

Certain players in the line out are designated as **jumpers** (usually 2nd, 4th, and 6th in line). The rest support and protect them in a variety of ways that you will soon be learning. The ball may be thrown beyond the line out or drilled to the first person, but it must travel the initial 5 meters before it may be played. The line out can extend out to 15 meters.

During a line out the backs line up in much the same way as

during a scrum, with one notable exception. In a scrum they must only remain behind the Number Eights or last person's foot. In a line out they (or anyone not participating directly) must remain 10 METERS back until the line out is completely over. No **creeping** (moving in before the line out is over) or it's another trip to Penalty City, kids.

The thrower from the team not throwing in and both scrumhalves (#9) stand where indicated on the diagram. There are short line outs, quick lineouts, and other variations, but that's all for now, folks.

Chapter 10

Penalties

Let's talk a little more about **penalties**.

For minor infractions of the law a simple scrum down will do. A forward pass is one such infringement. The infamous **knock on** is another minor infringement. A knock on is where you drop or bump the ball forward with any part of your upper body. The scrum is awarded to the non-offending team.

A scrum may also be called when a ruck or maul goes too long without the ball coming out, or if the referee judges it to be dangerous. There are other occasions for scrums, as you may have guessed, but later for those.

It might behoove you to learn (at some point) the signals a referee uses to indicate what he or she has called. After the whistle the ref will usually give the **mark** with his foot and indicate, with his arm angled *down* toward one team or the other, who gets to put the ball in. The hookers then usually line up at the mark and the rest of the pack comes in around them.

A **free kick** is awarded for slightly less secure infractions than a penalty kick (hooker striking too early for the ball, for instance). The difference is that you are not allowed to go for post. The referee indicates a free kick by extending a bent arm toward the team who gets to take it.

For a **penalty kick**, the referee extends his arm *upward* toward the team to whom he's awarding it. A penalty kick is commonly given for

- obstruction (blocking someone who doesn't have the ball)
- offsides
- hands in a ruck
- play deemed dangerous by the referee

He'll also award it for any number of things that are extremely naughty. A penalty kick is awarded at the place the infraction occurs (usually). A mark will be given and that is the point through which the kick **MUST** be taken. To execute a penalty kick you must move the ball visibly through the mark with your foot. This could mean anything from a short tap (after which it may be picked up and moved in any legal way) to a long punt (the space directly above the mark counts as the mark). The opposition must **RETREAT** 10 meters immediately when a penalty kick is awarded -- giving you quite an advantage. If you ever hear your teammates screaming at you to get "back 10" it is probable that the other team has just been awarded a penalty kick. Remember: keep facing the ball!

Advantage

Now we will briefly ponder the vast and murky gray area of **advantage**. In most other sports, when an infraction occurs, the flow of the game stops. In rugby, a referee does not have to call a penalty if he feels that the offending team gained no advantage or that the other team was able to capitalize on it.

For example: a referee may see a knock-on occur, but wait to blow the whistle until it becomes apparent who has made subsequent gains. If the **NON**-offending team scoops up the ball and gains 10 meters, the penalty won't be called at all. This is

called "playing the advantage." The advantage law helps to keep the game flowing.

File this for another day, but keep in mind that even if you do spot an infraction, **DO NOT STOP UNTIL YOU HEAR A WHISTLE!** The referee may not have seen it or may be playing the advantage.

The Referee

As long as we're on the subject, let's talk a bit more about the referee.

There is only one ref, and this is a very significant fact. With 30 people careening around the field, one person cannot possibly see everything and thus some unscrupulous players have been known to cheat. Our team is above reproach and would never resort to such cheap tactics. It shocks us to hear that there are teams that do such dastardly deeds. And get caught.

Since you're new, it's wise to follow the rules. When the referee does call something, his word is **LAW**. He may as well be carrying two stone tablets in his hands. In fact, he cannot change a call once made—no video review here, kids. And it is no use arguing. In fact, you can even be penalized if you do. If you do need to make a comment to the referee, for any reason, do so through your captain.

Different referees have different styles. It is a smart rugby player who learns to "play the ref." Many calls in rugby are completely up to the referee's judgment -- especially those concerning foul play.

What exactly constitutes foul play? Alas, this may be the grayest area of all. Basically, there is a spirit of fair play that

governs rugby. With all those people running around, you could do things that aren't nice and not get caught, BUT DON'T! These things have a way of escalating in a game as physically intense as rugby and it's also distracting. If something gets out of hand, go to your captain who can speak to the referee.

A general rule about retaliation. If someone plays dirty with you, DO NOT RETALIATE. Chances are the ref will only see your retaliatory action, and not what instigated it.

Sin Bin and Ejection

The referee is the sole determiner of what constitutes foul play and a good one will keep things clean. Most refs do not put up with dirty play.

Dirty play comes in many malodorous shades. For a player that repeatedly violates the Law, after repeated warnings from the ref, the ref can yellow card him. This means he's out of the game for five minutes. His team has to play short for the duration of the five minutes—no substitute allowed.

A player can be given a red card and ejected from a game as the most severe resolution of a problem. Should this happen, his team CAN'T bring in a substitute, leaving them to play short for the rest of the game. If you get red carded, it is reported to the Northern California Rugby Union and you are not allowed to play for fourteen days. Get red carded again, and you won't be allowed play for a year.

That's it for the mechanics of the game. Next, we'll look at the more social aspects of the sport.

Chapter 9

The Third Half and Other Rugby Traditions

If there is one thing that sets rugby apart from all the other sports you've seen or played, it is that after a match, you lay all differences aside and party. This is traditionally called the **Third Half**.

The Third Half is the embodiment of the traditions of rugby. There are the rugby songs—incredibly misogynistic songs, but they are part of the tradition nonetheless. Then there are the drinking traditions (like “shoot the boot”). Let's give some idea of what's in store for you.

The Zulu

One tradition that every rookie must know is the zulu. Strictly speaking, it's part of the game. You are **REQUIRED** to do a zulu when you score your very first try. At that point, you must run the length of the field. Naked. Yep, kids, you read that right. So don't be bragging about your 10" dick. We'll get to see the proof of that on your first try.

Really, it's not that big a deal. Nudity is an accepted and common part of the rugby. Guys change into their kits on the field all the time, at practices and at games. And the French and the Aussies are notorious for streaking at matches with packed stadiums. Many guys on the Fog Rugby team change on the field before practice—you get used to it, and quicker than you know it, it doesn't even register in your brain that you're half naked as you change into your kit. Do a zulu, and the only thing

that will be shocked are your freezing balls.

Rugby Songs

There are literally thousands of rugby songs. Traditionally, you'd sing these songs in a bar after practices or during the Third Half. A team will usually adopt (or adapt) three or four songs they expect every player to know.

Rugby songs are not for the politically correct. They are characteristically base, ribald and juvenile. And you'll love every minute of singing them.

You might have some questions about some odd behavior that occur when we sing these songs:

Everyone seems to be forming a circle...

Yep, that usually happens at when someone gets the songs started. Either that, or someone is about to zulu (oops! Rookies aren't supposed to know that zulus aren't just for when you score your first try!). No real rugby party is complete without a zulu and a couple of rugby songs.

He's holding his cup/beer bottle to his head...

He's asking for his turn. Most rugby songs have many verses. He's holding that cup to his head to signify that he wants to be the leader, and will choose or sing the next verse.

They all seem to be pointing to him with their elbows...

Even after you put that cup to your head, it's not a given that you get to pick the next verse. Everyone in the circle will point to you with his elbow to tell you that you are the leader.

Here are the most often-sung rugby songs—with a Fog Rugby

twist, of course:

If I Were the Marrying Kind (a.k.a. The Rugby Song)

(This song is required knowledge by every rugger. Practically every team sings it, usually tweaking it to fit the team's personality. Obviously not every verse is sung, because the song would be way too long, but we wanted to give you an idea of the variations. We've made this one a little more "Foggy.")

GROUP:

If I were the marrying kind
Which thank the lord I'm not, sir
the kind of rugger I would wed
would be a rugby

(team points to the hooker. Hooker puts beer on top of head)

HOOKER: Hooker sir!

GROUP: Why sir?

HOOKER:

'cause I'd swipe balls
and you'd swipe balls (*points to the a prop*)
we'd all swipe balls together
we'd be alright in the middle of the night
swiping balls together

GROUP:

If I were the marrying kind
Which thank the lord I'm not, sir
the kind of rugger I would wed
would be a rugby

(*team points to the props. Props put beer on head*)

PROPS: Prop sir!

GROUP: Why sir?

PROPS:

'cause I'd support a hooker

and you'd support a hooker (*points to the other prop*)
we'd all support a hooker together
we'd be alright in the middle of the night
supporting hookers together

(For the following verses change "Prop" with the first line and "support hooker" with the second. You'll get the idea.)

2nd Row : grab Crotch, sniff Butt

Flanker: get off quick

No. 8: hold until you come

Scrumhalf: put it in, grab balls

Flyhalf: whip it out, call shots

Centers: look for the hole, pass out

Wing: go hard, never get it, come too fast, spread it wide

Fullback: kick balls, get fucked, find touch

Any Forward: get stripped

Any Back: get laid

Scrum: go down

Rule Book: get violated

Shorts: go up your butt

Halftime Orange: get sucked

Mouthguard: get licked, get sucked

Spectator: get to watch

Spectator on a rainy day: come in rubber, be wet

Spectator on a sunny day: come again

Goal Posts: get split, stand erect

Cleats: get screwed

Groundskeeper: trim bush, do lines

Whistle: get blown

Boot:: come in boxes, get tied up

Ball: strapped in leather, get touched, get pumped

Pitch: grow weed, be hard

Team from far away: come for hours

Team on a bus: get off

Drunk Team: get fucked up

I Used To Work In Chicago

(Soloist are chosen by the team captain pointing at them. Everyone sings

words in capital letters. Tune is “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow”)

I USED TO WORK IN CHICAGO AT AN OLD DEPARTMENT STORE,
I USED TO WORK IN CHICAGO I DON'T WORK THERE ANYMORE

A YOUNG MAN CAME IN FOR SOME paper
SOME PAPER FROM THE STORE?
Paper he wanted, a ream he got
I DON'T WORK THERE ANYMORE!

I USED TO WORK IN CHICAGO AT AN OLD DEPARTMENT STORE,
I USED TO WORK IN CHICAGO I DON'T WORK THERE ANYMORE

A YOUNG MAN CAME IN FOR SOME jewelry
SOME JEWELRY FROM THE STORE?
Jewelry he wanted, a pearl necklace he got
I DON'T WORK THERE ANYMORE!

And similarly:

Carpet he wanted, shag he got
Nail he wanted, screw he got
Fishing rod he wanted, my pole he got
Meat he wanted, sausage he got
Beef he wanted, porked he got
Coffee he wanted, my cream he got
Helicopter he wanted, my chopper he got
Camel he wanted, hump he got
Stamps he wanted, licked he got
KitKat he wanted, four fingers he got
Fuck he wanted, fucked he got

Yogi
(Soloist volunteer for each verse during the previous by raising their hand,
and are chosen by the team captain (or the consensus) pointing at them.
Everyone sings words in capital letters. Sung to the tune of “Camptown
Races”)

I know a bear that you all know,
Yogi, YOGI,

I know a bear that you all know,
Yogi, Yogi Bear.
YOGI, YOGI BEAR,
YOGI, YOGI BEAR,
I KNOW A BEAR THAT YOU ALL KNOW,
YOGI, YOGI BEAR.

Yogi's got a little “friend,”
Booboo, BOOBOO,
Yogi's got a little “friend,”
Booboo, Booboo Bear.
BOOBOO, BOOBOO BEAR,
BOOBOO, BOOBOO BEAR,
YOGI'S GOT A LITTLE “FRIEND,”
BOOBOO, BOOBOO BEAR.

And similarly:

Yogi's got a “girlfriend,” Suzi, SUZI
Suzi, Suzi Bear.

Yogi's got an enemy, Ranger, RANGER
Ranger, Ranger Smith

Yogi's got a cheesy knob, cammum, CAMMUM
Cammum, Camembert.

Booboo likes it on the fridge, polar, POLAR
Polar, polar bear.

Booboo likes it up the ass, brown, BROWN
Brown, brown bear.

Yogi hates it up the ass, something, SOMETHING
Something he cant bear.

Yogi's dick is long and green, cucum, CUCUM
Cucum, cucumber.

Yogi likes to shave his pubes, grizzly, GRIZZLY

Grizzly, grizzly bare.

Booboo's boyfriend has no teeth, gummy, GUMMY
Gummy, gummy bear

Yogi likes a good beer bust, Lone Star, LONE STAR
Lone Star, Lone Star Bear

Shoot the Boot

Another common rugby tradition is "shoot the boot." This is a rugby tradition that takes place after a rugger's first try. The player, to celebrate his first try score, must drink beer from the largest and dirtiest shoe on the team. Yep, you do a zulu AND you shoot the boot.

When you shoot the boot, the traditional chant everyone sings to "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" as you chug is:

Why were you born so beautiful
Why were you born at all
You're no fucking use to anyone
You're no fucking use at all

You should be publicly pissed on,
You should be publicly shot (bang, bang),
You should be tied to a urinal,
And left there to fester and rot.
So, DRINK, DRINK, DRINK, DRINK, DRINK... (*chant lasts until he finishes*)

Did we mention one of our locks is 6'7" and has a size 15 boot?

Chapter 10

The World of Rugby Football

Rugby is the world's third most popular sport (after soccer and baseball). This section is meant to give you an idea of how our team is connected with local, national and international teams and governing bodies.

Rugby League vs. Rugby Union

The first thing you should know is that –SURPRISE!—there are TWO types of rugby played in the world. The vast majority of folks in the world play rugby *union*. Rugby union is the game we play.

Rugby *league* is distinct, but not *that* different, from rugby union. Rugby league play differs in that

- only 13 people are on a team (no flankers/wing forwards), not 15
- there are fewer scrums and no lineouts.

Scoring is also different:

- a try is 3 points (not 5)
- a penalty kick is 2 points (not 3)
- a drop-kick goal is 1 point (not 3).

A major difference is there is no rucking or mauling. When a player is brought down in possession of the ball, he has to be allowed to stand up face-to-face with an opponent and attempt to tap the ball back to his own teammates with his foot. Hence it is a much faster game, higher scoring and more entertaining to

watch. Scrums may delight forwards, but as a spectator watching them over and over, it gets old quick.

Rugby League Football came about in the 1800s. Due to the strict amateur code in those days, a player getting expense money was not acceptable under the Union code. Thus Rugby League arose to provide elite players a chance to get paid for their playing. So, Rugby League grew to be considered the "professional" game, and Rugby Union, the amateur game.

Well things have changed! In 1997, Rugby Union became an "open" game, meaning players can now be paid to play rugby union. So, now the only thing that separates the two games are the way they are played. The three principal rugby league countries are Australia, England and New Zealand. Ian Roberts, the first openly gay professional rugby player (and quite the hottie—ay papi!) played rugby league for an Australian team.

The Administrative Bodies for Rugby Union Football

There are governing bodies throughout the world that administer the sport. The **International Rugby Football Board (IRB)** is the top level. The IRB has voting members (8) and associate members (the rest). FIRA (Federation Internationale Rugby Association) was created by the French to have the rest of the world represented. Sounds confusing – and you are right.

Here is a list of most of the countries with representative bodies that govern rugby within their national boundaries:

The Americas

Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Caribbean RFU, Cayman Islands, Chile,

Columbia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, French Guyana, Guatemala, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Trinidad-Tobago, Turks and Cacicos, United States, Uruguay, US Virgin Islands, Venezuela

Europe

Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Slovenia , Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Wales, Yugoslavia

Africa

Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Morocco, Namibia, South Africa, Tunisia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Middle East

Georgia, Israel, Saudi Arabia

Asia/Australia/Pacific

Australia, China, Chinese Tapei, Cook Islands, Fiji, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Manu Samoa, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Phillipines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tahiti, Thailand, Tonga, Western Samoa

The Competitions.

To explain the various competitions, we are going to separate competitions in two levels- International and National.

International Level. This level has competitions between countries. The most prominent is the **Rugby World Cup**. The Rugby World Cup occurs every 4 years. Believe it or not, it's a

relatively new competition, first held in 1987. It was last held in 1999.

There are also several international "league competitions" that happen yearly. There are several prominent ones - the oldest is called the "Five Nations". Since 1996 several other "international" leagues have sprung up: Tri Nations, the Super 12, Pacific Rim are examples.

The USA national team, the Eagles compete in the Pacific Rim competition. And just like in soccer, another game America has come to late, we suck. But each year we get better.

One other significant international competition: the Olympics. Rugby was again accepted as an Olympic Sport in April 1998. However, due to politics, it is up in the air if rugby will be played in Athens in 2004. The last time rugby was played in the Olympics was 1928. The last gold medal team is—and you'll never believe this one—the United States, made up of mostly Stanford University ruggers (sorry Cal). So the current Olympic rugby champion is the US.

International Competition	
Six Nations	England, France, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Italy
Tri Nations	Australia, New Zealand, South Africa
Pacific Rim	Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, United States Eagles, Fiji, Western Samoa,
Super 12	ACT Brumbies (Australia), Auckland

International Competition	
(professional teams)	Blues (New Zealand), Canterbury Crusades (New Zealand), Natal Coastal Sharks (South Africa), Wales Waratahs (Australia), North Transvaal Bulls (South Africa), Orange Free State Cheetahs (South Africa), Otago Highlanders (New Zealand), Queensland Reds (Australia), Wellington Hurricanes (New Zealand), Waikato Chiefs (New Zealand), Western Stormers (Australia)
Others	Rugby World Cup, FIRA Youth Rugby World Cup, European Cup, National Provincial Championships (NZ), Currie Cup (South Africa), Epson Cup (Pac Rim nations)

National Level. Each country has its levels of competition. They are separated by sex and age group. In the United States we have 5 basic levels (men's club, women's club, collegiate men, collegiate women, youth). USA Rugby, the governing body for rugby in the United States, divides up governance of rugby clubs into territories governed by Territorial Unions (TU). Each Territorial Union, in turn, is divided up into several local area unions. Clubs must belong to a Local Area Union, a Territorial Union and to USA Rugby—and gets to pay dues to all three!!

USA Rugby offers national championships in Men's Club (1st, 2nd and 3rd division), Women Club, Men's Collegiate (1st and 2nd

division), Women Collegiate (1st and 2nd division), Military, and High School. Each USARFU Territory and/or Local Area Union offers competitions in some or all of these levels. Each of the territories provides some playoff method to determine the representatives to the regional level playoffs. The winners of each region will then compete in the FINAL FOUR competitions.

Territorial Unions	Local Area Unions
Northeast	Metropolitan New York RU, New York State RU, New England RU
Mid-Atlantic	Eastern Penn RU, Potomac RU, Virginia RU
South	Deep South RU, Florida RU, Georgia RU, North Carolina RU, Palmetto RU, Southeast Collegiate Conference
Midwest	Allegheny RU, Chicago Area RU, Illinois RU, Indiana RU, Iowa RU, Michigan RU, Mid-South RU, Minnesota RU, Ohio RU, Wisconsin RU
West	Eastern Rockies RFU, Great Plains RU, Heart of America RU, Missouri RU, Ozark RU, Rio Grande RU, Texas RU
Pacific Coast	Arizona RU, Great Basin RU, Northern California RU, Pacific

Territorial Unions	Local Area Unions
	Northwest RU, Southern California
Independent (No TU affiliation)	Alaska RU, Hawaii State RU, Idaho, Montana RU, North Dakota

There is also a "Super League" competition between the top men clubs in the nation. For several years this competition was not affiliated with the USA Rugby, mainly because of USA Rugby's tendency to micromanage. In May 2000, Super League re-affiliated with USA Rugby.

The Super League	Boston RFC , Chicago Lions , Kansas City Blues , Life University , Old Blue RFC , Philadelphia-Whitemarsh , Potomac Athletic Club , Washington RFC , The Gentlemen of Aspen, Belmont Shore RFC , Dallas Harlequins , Denver Barbarians , Golden Gate/San Francisco RFC , Old Blues RFC (NY) , Old Puget Sound Beach , Old Mission Beach Athletic Club
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The Northern California Rugby Union

The San Francisco Fog is a member of the Northern California Rugby Union (our local area union) and the Pacific Coast Rugby Union (our territorial union), and USA Rugby (our national union).

The Northern California Rugby Union (NCRU) is the nation's

premier local rugby union, and its largest, with over 3000 members. To give you an idea of how good this union is:

- The Berkeley All Blues (women's club team) is the national champion for the past five years.
- The UC Berkeley Men's Collegiate team has been the national champion 19 of the past 20 years.
- Hayward Griffins (men's club team) finished 2nd in the nation last year in its division (Division I).
- The Stanislaus Harlots (men's club team) finished 4th in the nation in its division (Division III).

The NCRU has four divisions for men's club teams: Super League, Division I, Division II, and Division III. Super League is the most elite level, with teams comprised almost completely of professional-quality players. Division I is for teams that choose to play at a highly competitive level, where teams are composed of a high level of elite rugby players and lots of foreigners. D1 teams typically field three to four sides and have huge clubs (usually 60 actively playing members). In Division II, teams play at a competitive, but social level. D2 teams usually field two sides, a competitive and a social side. Division III is a social and recreational level, and usually field only one side. This is the division in which new teams enter the Union. Fog Rugby plays in Division III. We are aiming to move into Division II within five to seven years.

Currently, NCRU has only one division for women's club team. Men's and women's collegiate teams compete in Division I and Division II.

Here are all the teams in the NCRU.

Super League	Golden Gate/San Francisco RFC, Old Blues/Hayward RFC
D1 Clubs	Olympic Club, Sacramento, San Jose Seahawks, San Mateo
D2 Clubs	Fresno, Mission, Olde Gaels, Reno, Santa Rosa
D3 Clubs	Aptos, Chico, Colusa, Stanlislaus Harlots, Humbolt, McGeorge, Oakridge, Petaluma, Redding, San Francisco Fog, Solano
Women's Clubs	BASH (Bay Area Shehawks), Berkeley All Blues, San Francisco
Men's Collegiate	California Maritime Academy, Chico State, CSU Monterey Bay, Humboldt State, Sacramento State, San Jose State, Santa Clara, St. Mary's, Stanford, University of San Francisco, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, University Nevada-Reno, University of the Pacific
Women's Collegiate	Chico State, CSU Monterey Bay, Humboldt State, Sacramento State, San Jose State, Santa Clara, Stanford, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, University of Nevada-Reno

Gays in Rugby and Gay Rugby Teams

The San Francisco Fog is the nation's second gay men's rugby club, founded October 14, 2000. The first gay men's American rugby team to establish itself is the Washington Renegades, founded in October 1998. The very first gay male rugby team in

the world is the Kings Cross Steelers of London England, founded in 1995.

The reception of gay rugby teams has been warm by the rugby community. Rugby, especially in the United States, is largely a sport full of people who fiercely guard their individuality, and respect for the individual is a common trait. Moreover, women's clubs have long been a haven for lesbians. In many ways, lesbians who have been in the game for many years paved the way. When the gay male teams first appeared, ruggers had long been used to dealing with gay issues and gay people. In fact, Rugby Magazine, the nation's authoritative voice on rugby ran an article on the Renegades, praising them for being better organized than most rugby teams, and predicting that in a few years, the team would be a great success.

The San Francisco Fog is a charter member of the International Gay Rugby Association and Board (IGRAB). IGRAB is a network of international gay rugby teams. IGRAB's mission is to bring together gay rugby teams from around the world to promote the sport. The first one will take place in May 2001 in Washington, D.C.

A listing of gay rugby teams appears below:

- King's Cross Steelers (London, England)
- Washington Renegades (Washington, D.C. USA)
- Manchester Village Spartans (Manchester, England)
- Wellington (Wellington, New Zealand)
- Ponsonby Heroes (Auckland, New Zealand)
- Johannesburg, South Africa
- Capetown, South Africa
- Buenos Aires Rugby (Buenos Aires, Argentina)

In addition, new teams are starting to form in Los Angeles,

Chicago, New York and Seattle.

Chapter 11

A Game of Hooligans Played by Gentlemen

The characteristic that sets rugby apart from all other sports is the brotherhood and code of etiquette. There's real rugby on the pitch and rugby off the pitch. The players from each team have a common bond in their love for rugby and use the Third Half as a time to honor the traditions of their sport. The players gather together, sing songs and celebrate beating the crap out of each other. The true essence of rugby lies in being gentlemen who take 90 minutes each weekend to become hooligans.

There is a spirit of camaraderie and sportsmanship among rugby players. After all, it is a weird sport -- nobody gets paid, you travel all around, and get bruises for your trouble. You've GOT to have a passion for it and despite all rivalries, it is a passion shared by everyone who plays it. As the sport is unique and intense, so are its players. Meeting ruggers of all varieties, from all parts of the country, is one of rugby's greatest delights.

Rugby is a lot of things to a lot of people. It is challenging and playful, exuberant and exciting. There are always new things to learn and old limits to push aside. We know you will love it as much as we do.

Appendix 1

The Basics of Rugby

Here are the basics of rugby, all at once:

OBJECTIVE

The object of the game is to advance the ball down the field by running it forward, kicking it ahead, or passing it laterally or backwards to a teammate, who may then run the ball forward in the attempt to score points. At the same time, a team seeks to stop the opposing team from achieving the same results.

SCORING

To gain points, players must score in the following ways:

- Score a try (5 points)—carry the ball over the goal line and touch the ball to the ground in opposition in-goal area (end zone).
- Score a conversion (2 points)—following a try, kick the ball directly through the opposition goal post uprights by means of a placekick or dropkick, the kick must be taken out directly in line from where the try was scored.
- Score a penalty kick (3 points)—following a penalty, kick the ball directly through the opposition goalposts uprights.
- Score a drop goal (3 points)—kick the ball directly through the opposition goalpost uprights at any time during play; the kick must be preceded by the player bouncing the ball off the

ground.

BASIC RULES

The basic rules of rugby are:

- A player must always be beside or behind the ball. Otherwise he is offside and not allowed to be involved with the play.
- A player stops the opposition by tackling them or taking the ball outside the playing area. This is accomplished by kicking the ball or pushing a player in possession of the ball out-of-bounds.
- No dangerous play is permitted (no jumping on other players, no kicking at other players, no tackles that are too high).
- Once a player has been tackled, he must release the ball and cannot play it until he has regained his feet.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS AND GAME LENGTH

A rugby match may vary in terms of players on the field and game length such as

- USUAL: 15s—there are 15 players per team (8 forwards, 7 backs). The game consists of two 40-minute halves.
- VARIATION: 7s—there are 7 players per team (3 forwards, 4 backs). The game consists of two 7-minute halves.

STARTING PLAY

- **Kickoff**—play begins with a kickoff from the center of the field. The ball must have traveled at least 10 meters.
- **Scrum**—after a minor infraction, forwards from both teams bind together in a tight formation. The team that has not omitted the infraction puts the ball into the scrum. Both teams then attempt to hook the ball back to their sides as well as push the opposition back.
- **Lineout**—when the ball goes into touch (out-of-bounds) over the sidelines, forwards from both teams line up beside each other and jump, attempting to tip or catch the ball and win possession for their team. The team that does not have possession of the ball when it went into touch gets to put the ball into play.
- **Penalty kick**—after a major infraction, the non-offending team is given possession of the ball. The opposition must be at least 10 meters back. The non-offending team may then kick the ball downfield, kick or posts, run, pass, or tap the ball and pick it up.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

There are special situations that represent advanced elements of the basic game of rugby.

Ruck

Ruck is the term given to a situation when the ball is on the ground and one or more players from each team are on their feet and in physical contact, closing around the ball between them. The purpose of the ruck is to provide some guidelines for

getting the ball back into play in a congested situation.

In a ruck, players can't

- handle the ball,
- jump on others, fall, or collapse a ruck
- interfere with the ball emerging from the ruck if in a prone position on the ground
- join a ruck from their opponents' side or in front of the ball (players must bind when joining a ruck)
- stand beside the ruck in front of the hindmost foot of his own players in the ruck

Maul

A maul happens when the ball is in the players hands and one or more players from each team are positioned on their feet and in physical contact, closing around the players with the ball. The purpose of a maul is to provide some guidelines for getting the ball back into play in a tackle situation.

In a maul, players can't

- Jump on, fall on, or collapse a maul
- Be offside at the maul (same rules as the ruck above)

Scrum

A scrum is a situation when players from both teams bind together to restart play after a minor infraction has occurred (i.e., the ball is dropped, passed forward or knocked forward).

In a scrum:

- Eight players must be present (three players in the front row)
- Hips must be below shoulders
- Players may bind together
- The ball must be put straight into the “tunnel” that is formed when the two opposing scrums meet.

Lineout

A lineout is called when the ball passes out of the sidelines (out of bounds). When this happens a lineout forms to reenter into play. The team not in possession of the ball when it passed into touch (out-of-bounds) gets to throw the ball into the lineout.

In a lineout:

- The lineout is formed by *at least* two players from each team lining up in single lines parallel to each other and directly out from the sidelines
- The team throwing the ball will determine the maximum number of players from either team who will line up (no more than seven players)
- There must be half a meter between players from the sideline (violation is a penalty)
- All players not directly involved in the lineout must be at least 10 meters back from the lineout until it is over (violation is a penalty)

- The ball must be thrown straight between the opposing lines

Penalty

Penalty is the term given to a situation when a major infraction has occurred (i.e., illegal tackle, offside, etc.)

The rules about penalties in general are:

- The non-offending team puts the ball into play by kicking it any distance from the ground at the location where the penalty occurred
- The non-offending team may kick the ball through the opposition goalpost uprights, kick it into touch or downfield, or kick it lightly then run
- The offending team must retreat 10 meters back from the location where the offense occurred and cannot move forward until the ball is moved from the mark at which the offense occurred.

Appendix 2

Positions: Physical Attributes and Positional Duties

Here's a brief overview of the positions and the physical attributes and positional duties.

FORWARDS

PROP (No. 1 and No. 3)

- Strong upper-body strength (usually this player will be shorter/stockier athlete)
- Effective participation in set pieces (scrummages and lineouts)
- Ability to add to the play in rucks and mauls
- Loose head prop (No. 1) responsible for supporting the hooker and assisting in gain the ball through put-in
- Tight head prop (No. 3) responsible for disrupting the opposition's loose head and hooker

HOOKER (No. 2)

- Possesses attributes/skills similar to those of prop
- Flexibility to allow for greater range of motion
- Ability to effectively and accurately throw the ball into the

lineout

- Ability to deliver a quick strike with the foot to win possession of the ball

LOCK (No. 4 and No. 5, a.k.a. Second Row)

- Size/strength/height (the lock is often the largest player on the field)
- Ability to provide the lineout with height and the scrum with push
- Ability to add to the play in set pieces

BACK ROW (No. 6 and No. 7, a.k.a Wing Forwards, Flankers, and No. 8, a.k.a. Number 8)

- Possesses all-around rugby skills
- Demonstrated speed
- Excellent tackling skills
- Proven ball-winning and retention skills
- Advanced tactical decision-making skills (back-row players will have their hands on the ball often.)

BACKS

SCRUM HALF (No. 9)

- Excellent passing skills, ability to pass quickly and accurately
- Ability to kick in defense and attack
- Ability to defend against back row moves
- Ideally, a player who is left-handed and right-footed since this player follows the ball from left to right in the scrum (the left-hand, right-foot orientation serves to protect the ball when passing)

FLY HALF (No. 10)

- Responsible for initiating team attack and calling plays
- Responsible for organizing and ensuring that centers are up on defense
- Ability to handle and catch the ball cleanly and consistently
- Ability to kick on attack and defense
- Ability to handle the ball while running or while standing still

CENTER (No. 12 and No. 13)

- Ability to pass quickly and accurately
- Ability to tackle effectively
- Ability to handle the ball well in contact
- Ability to find the gap

WINGER (No. 11 and No. 14)

- Demonstrated speed
- Excellent defensive skills (this is an area that the opposition often attacks)
- Ability to counterattack deep kicks
- Ability to cover the fullback position when on the blind side of the field

FULLBACK (No. 15)

- Ability to kick the accurately and handle the high kick
- Ability to enter the back line decisively
- Excellent counterattacking skills
- Excellent open-field tackling skills (fullback is the last line of defense)