



AGE GRADE LAW VARIATION

U9 (P4) Blueprint Laws



Age Grade Law Variations (Blueprint Laws)

Building for the future

The Age Grade Law Variations (AGLVs) have been created to provide players with a fun, inclusive game which layers on the core skills of rugby in line with their physical and social development.

They are also reflective of Scottish Rugby's Blueprint, and coaches should allow players the freedom to explore the game, trying new skills without worrying too much about any mistakes which may arise.

We have added Blueprint 'straplines' for the Micro and Mini game to help focus coaches and parents on the key objectives of the game at that age group.



Blueprint: Change Our Game

The Blueprint is the playing and coaching philosophy for Scottish Rugby, aiming to improve the standard of rugby at all levels of the game.

Developed by Scottish Rugby in conjunction with coaches from the club and school game, the Blueprint's overriding message is 'Change Our Game'. In order for Scottish Rugby to compete and win on the international stage, the game in Scotland needs to further develop and think differently. The intention of the Blueprint is to provide coaches with the tools to create amazing learning environments with the appropriate level of stretch and support to enable players to be tactically adaptable.

The Mini AGLVs are the start of the Blueprint journey, with the focus on helping players to develop a love for the game and the freedom to learn and to try new things.



Our Game: Ethos & Values

Rugby is a game for everyone; all ages, levels of experience and body types. Young people can prosper through rugby in an environment where having fun, learning and building confidence are prioritised.

It is the responsibility of all adults in the game to create an environment that is player-centred, development-driven and competition-supported. This applies to coaches, teachers, parents, volunteers and supporters.

Half Game Initiative

To ensure ALL players can develop and enjoy rugby, the 'Half Game Initiative' will continue in 2023/24 – encouraging all clubs and schools to give at least HALF GAME to ALL players in a squad.

- Put the players at the heart of everything they do and the decisions they make.
- Encourage enjoyment on the pitch through realistic expectations of the players.
- Adults in the game should create a safe, healthy and respectful environment for players to thrive in.
- Champion Scottish Rugby's core values of Leadership, Engagement, Achievement, Enjoyment and Respect.

AGLV (Blueprint Laws)

AGLVs exist to make rugby safe, enjoyable and appropriate for a player's development. The AGLVs for the mini and boys youth game were introduced in the 2018/19 season. Analysis will be carried out to measure the impact of the Blueprint Laws on the development of the fundamental skills of players in line with the Scottish Rugby's Blueprint.

Managing Mismatches

Sometimes, a game may become one sided due to a disparity in the experience and ability of the players on the respective teams. Should a game have a 50-point lead (5 points for a try) think about ways to improve the playing environment and play the remaining game-time as a development match. Options available include but are not limited to:

- Rest stronger players and provide more game-time to less experienced players.
- Play players out of position to help develop different skills.
- Asking individual players to play for the opposition, or mixing teams completely, can provide a different challenge and help develop communication skills.
- Ask the referee to introduce law variations to condition games e.g. minimum number of passes/phases, scoring constraints on certain players.

Scoring System (3-2-1)

A new initiative for the 23/24 season is a change to our scoring system. The first try a player scores is worth 3 points, the 2nd is worth 2 and tries scored thereafter are worth 1 point. Inevitably there will be some players who dominate the game and we don't want to stifle them by not allowing them to score. There will also be other players who may not contribute as much to a teams score. To accumulate more points for the team, encouraging a wider spread of points scorers would be beneficial from a motivational point of view and also providing more purpose to players across the team. Scoring could continue from the first game or reset after each match at a festival.

Other benefits include:

- Facilitation skills
- Support skills
- Teamwork
- Problem-Solving
- Self-organisation
- Selflessness

Putting player first

5 steps to player welfare

**IF IN
DOUBT,
SIT
THEM
OUT.**

If in doubt, sit them out!

If a player is suspected of having a concussion, they must be immediately removed from play.

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions are serious.



Train to prevent injuries

- Nurture players returning from injury - they are at increased risk of injury.
- Undertake higher risk training (contact, sprints) at low risk times (when not fatigued).
- Injury prevention: it's in the balance (exercises).



If they are on the deck, think about the neck

- Don't shake them, don't roll them, don't sit them up.
- Think about the spine, keep it in line and take your time.
- Stop the game and ask about pain.
- An unconscious player has a neck injury until proven otherwise.



Be a lifesaver; know your A-B-C

- A: Airway, B: Breathing, C: Circulation
- Saving a life always starts with A
- If you don't have an A you won't have a B or C
- Airway: open it, clear it, maintain it



Kick infection into touch

- Don't share your blood on clothes and towels; blood spreads infection; wash it or dispose of it
- A wound neglected is a wound infected
- The solution to pollution is dilution - wash the wound with large amounts of water

Active, Purposeful, Enjoyable & Safe

How does this look in practice

APES Key Points		Top Tips
		Mini
Activity	Keep high levels of activity in the session. Ensure every player is receiving the same opportunity to take part.	<p>Avoid Queues.</p> When running skill or technique zone activities, try to minimise the number of people waiting in a queue. Use multiple stations where possible.
Purpose	Have a clear purpose to your session, and stick to the plan. Share this with your players, fellow coaches and parents.	<p>Core skills at the heart of training.</p> Use the Blueprint to ensure you develop competence of core skills before progressing.
Enjoyment	Most of all, above anything else, we need to create a rugby experience which is enjoyed by everyone. Set appropriate levels of challenge for players – too much and it won’t be enjoyable, too little and they’ll be bored.	<p>Understand your players.</p> Players may be under pressures out with rugby – remember that this might be their release. Keep training fun to make sure players stick with rugby.
Safe	Safety is paramount. Do everything you can to minimise the risk of injuries. Ensure there is a safe environment within the team to value everyone as an individual.	<p>ACTIVATE programme.</p> Use the activate warm-up programme to develop players’ physical competence and reduce injury risks.

Remember – If in doubt, sit them out!

Overview

U9 (P4) is the first step on the contact rugby journey in Scotland. The Blueprint Laws for U9 (P4) are focused on developing the foundation skills of running, passing and tackling. Law Variations such as 'Tackle Hold' and 'Knock On-Play On' are in place to recognise that at this formative stage, skill execution will vary – these are in place to allow the game to flow.

In order to aid the transition process into the contact form of the game, we recommend that the first half of the U9 (P4) season to be non-contact, with a training focus on developing confidence around the tackle, before going into games. Developing robust tackling skills and confidence in contact would be a key retention tool.

Confidence in contact and Keep the ball Alive (KBA)	
Players	5v5
Pitch Size	28m x 22m
Ball Size	3
Playing Time	No more than 60 minutes in a festival
Scoring	3-2-1
Tackle*	*Pre Xmas Recommended No – All touches/tags should be waist and below
	*Post Xmas Yes – waist and below (no targeting of the ball) – Or Tackle Hold
Hand off	No
Breakdown	No breakdown – Ball carrier to offload from the floor or present
Handling	Play on from knock ons – 6 phases then turnover to defending team
Scrum	No Scrums – Free pass
Lineout	No Lineouts – Free pass from where the ball went out
Kick Offs / Restarts	Team that scored restarts with any kick
Open Play Kicking	None

Tackle (Post Xmas)	Sanctions	Referee Guidance
All tackles should be on or below the waist or below of the ball player.	Free Kick to non-offending team	As players tire, tackle height may increase – if a tackle is made above the GREEN zone (waist and below) a referee can play on (advantage) as long as the ball isn't prevented from being played (targeting the ball)
No swing tackles: The tackler is responsible for safely bringing the ball carrier to the ground – throwing the ball carrier to ground is not permitted.	Free kick to non-offending team	
Red Zone High tackle, Free Kick No Targeting the ball		
Green Zone Waist or below 'Below ball' 'Belly Tackle' Effective safe tackle		
Tackle Hold	Referee Guidance	
<p>When a tackler attempts to tackle the ball carrier (waist and below) and manages to stop or significantly slow the ball carrier – but doesn't bring the ball carrier to the ground - the tackle is now deemed to be complete.</p>	<p>Wait around 2 seconds to see if the ball carrier offloads – if not call 'Tackle'</p> <p>Tackler must release the ball carrier – all defenders must retreat behind the offside line – a step back from the back foot of the ball carrier.</p> <p>The ball carrier must pass immediate to a teammate – as soon as the receiving player touches the ball, the defence can move up</p>	

Hand off	Sanctions	Referee Guidance
No hand offs by the ball player are permitted	Free Kick to the non-offending team	Encourage the ball carrier to hold the ball in two hands in and near contact situations – this will allow them to have greater control of the ball to pass and offload

Breakdown

Rationale

Tackling is the most important contact skill to develop, so as players move into contact formats of the game it is key that coaches focus on developing confidence around the tackle. The breakdown is a complex area for novice players and can be developed at a later stage.

Post Tackle – Ball Carrier

Once tackled, the ball carrier can either:

- Present the ball for teammate – supporting player must pass the ball
- Offload from the floor to teammate – supporting player can run or pass

Post Tackle – Tackler and Defence

Tackler must release the ball carrier when the tackle is complete (ball carrier to brought to the floor) and must retire to behind the offside line (a step back from the hindmost point of the ball carrier).

Defence can move forward once the first receiver touches the ball (after offload or the clearing pass)

Knock On	Referee Guidance	Sanctions
If the ball carrier attempts to catch the ball with TWO HANDS and drops the ball, play will now continue	'Deliberate' knocks on – i.e. knocks the ball on when trying to catch the ball with one hand	Free pass to the non-offending team at the point the ball was knocked on

Ball Handling	Referee Guidance	Sanctions
Ball Carriers are encouraged to carry the ball in two hands but it is no longer a law requirement	No Hand Offs – encourage the players to have the ball in two hands near contact situations so they have the option to pass	Free pass to the non-offending team at the place where the offence took place

Ball in Touch	Coaching Guidance
<p>No Lineouts</p> <p>Pass into play from the point where the ball went out for the team who didn't put the ball into touch</p> <p>Defending Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be 5m back from the point where the lineout pass is taken • Defensive team can move forward once the ball has been touched by the first receiver 	<p>Encourage the first receiver to find space via evasive footwork or to pass to a team mate in a better position</p>

Restarting the Game

Kick Offs (No applicable, tap and pass)

The game starts with a tap and pass

Defending team:

- must be at least 5m back
- can move once the first receiver touches the ball

After a Try

After a try is scored, the conceding team should restart the game with a tap and pass.

In order to facilitate more activity, it would be beneficial to have a 2nd ball ready on the half way mark after a try

Aim to have the game restarted within 15 seconds of a try!

Free Pass

only for penalty sanctions such as offside, high tackle, hand off etc.

Coaching Guidance

Encourage the first receiver to pass the ball to a team mate

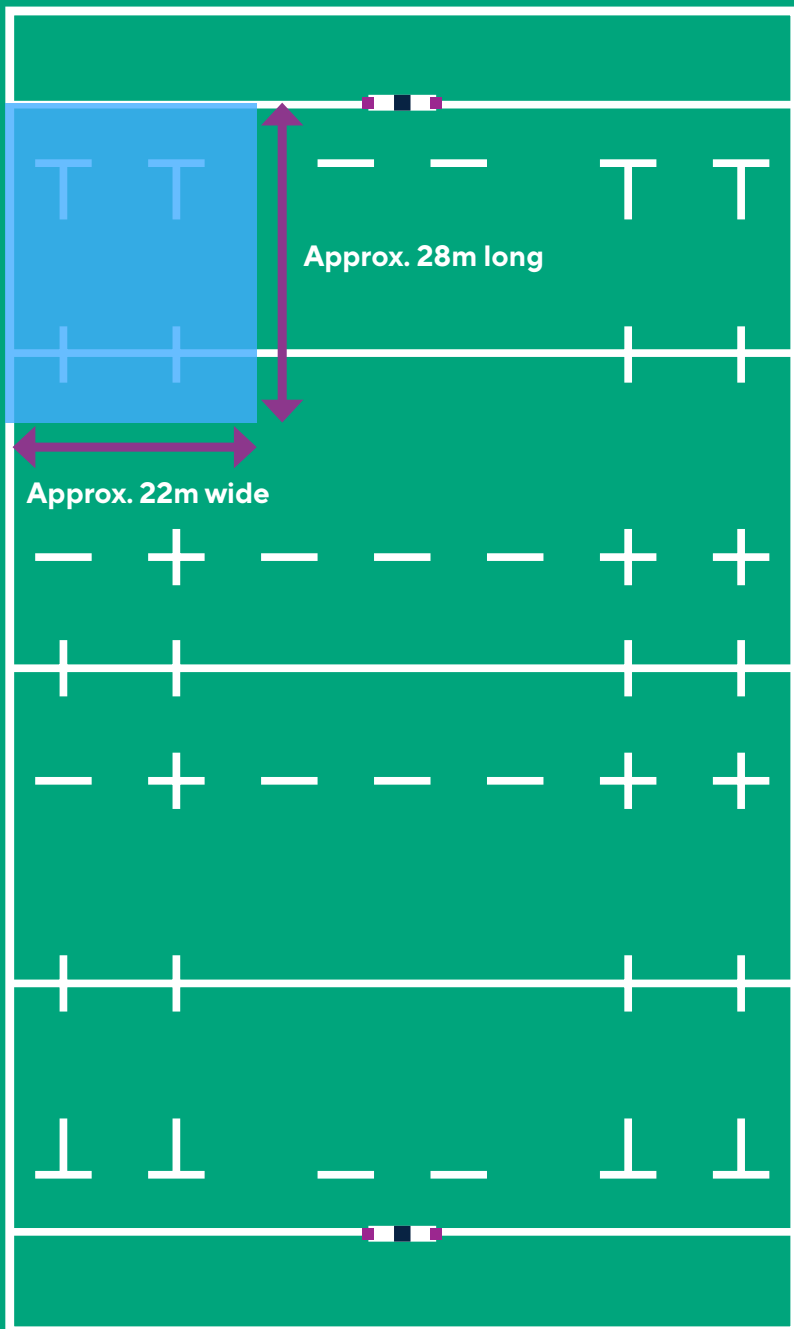
Open Play Kicking

Not permitted

Sanctions

Free Pass to the non-offending team from the point where the ball was kicked

Pitch Set Up for 5-a-side games



Concussion Management

Any player with a suspected head knock or concussion should be immediately removed from play in a safe manner.

They must not return to activity that day. If a neck injury is suspected, players should be removed under the direction of a healthcare professional.

In all cases of suspected concussion, it is recommended that medical advice is sought early. These may include the players' GP or NHS 24 (Dial 111)

Return to sport, once symptom free, should be graduated.

Please visit <https://scottishrugby.org/rules-and-regulations/player-welfare/> or sportscotland.org for more information.



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