



U8 Mini Tag Rules Summary

Key Elements

- Team numbers: 5 or 6-a-side
- *Maximum* pitch size: 45 metres x 22 metres
- Ball Size: 3
- Scoring: Players permitted to go to ground to score tries
- No tackling
- No kicking, scrums or lineouts

General

- ❖ **The object of the game is to score a try** by placing the ball with downward pressure on or behind the opponents' goal line.
 - A **penalty try** is awarded if a try would probably have been scored but for foul or prohibited play by an opponent.
- ❖ The **sanction for all infringements** is initially a free pass (see *Free Passes*).

Teams

- ❖ Tag Rugby is played between **teams of equal numbers of players**, each team containing **five or six players** on the pitch at any one time.
- ❖ **Rolling substitutions are permitted** and substituted players can return at any time.
 - Substitutions can only take place when the ball is dead and always with the referee's permission.

Pitch Size

- ❖ The **maximum pitch size** is 45 metres by 22 metres, plus 5 metres for each in-goal area.
 - **Reduced pitch sizes are acceptable** provided this is agreed between the referee and coaches, and the smaller pitches do not materially increase the risk of injury to players.
 - **Adjacent pitches** should be no closer than 5 metres.

Passing

- ❖ The ball may only be passed sideways or backwards (but not forwards) through the air.
- ❖ A **free pass** is awarded to the non-offending team
 - if:
 - the **ball is handed** to another player, or
 - the ball is **passed forwards** or **knocked forwards** towards the opponents' dead ball line.
 - *...unless advantage occurs to the non-offending team.*
 - In order to **keep the game flowing**, referees may **play advantage wherever possible**.

Free passes

- ❖ The sanction for all infringements is initially a free pass.
- ❖ A **free pass** is also used:
 - **To start the match** at the beginning of each half from the centre of the pitch
 - From the side of the pitch **when the ball or ball carrier goes into touch** at the point where the ball or ball carrier went out of play
 - From where the referee makes a mark **when an infringement has taken place**
 - **After a try is scored**, to restart the match by the non-scoring team from the centre of the pitch
 - If **the ball is pulled from the ball carrier's grasp**.
- ❖ At a free pass:
 - The player must **start with the ball in both hands** and, when the referee calls "Play", **pass the ball backwards** through the air to a member of their team.
 - For safety reasons, no player may run until the pass is made.
 - The **opposition must be 7 metres back** from the mark.
 - The **opposition cannot start moving forward until the ball leaves the hands** of the player passing the ball.
- ❖ If an infringement takes place (or the ball goes into touch) **over the goal line or within 7 metres of the goal line**, then
 - the free pass must be awarded to the non-offending side **7 metres from the goal line**. This gives more space for both attacking and defending teams to play in.

The Tag

- ❖ Players must wear a tag belt around their waist with **two tags** attached to it by Velcro **positioned over each hip**.
- ❖ The tags must not be the same colour as the players' shorts or shirts.
- ❖ A "Tag" is the removal of one or two tags from the ball carrier's belt.
 - Only the ball carrier can be tagged.
 - The ball carrier can run away from and dodge potential taggers.
 - The **ball carrier cannot fend off** using their hands or the ball.
 - The **ball carrier cannot guard or shield their tags** in any way.
 - The **ball cannot be pulled out of the ball carrier's hands** at any time.
- ❖ If a player does not have two tags on their belt, one on each hip,
 - **they will be penalised if they become a ball carrier or if they tag an opponent**
 - a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending team at the place of infringement (i.e. where the infringement was noticed).

Actions by the ball carrier

- ❖ When the ball carrier is tagged:
 - The **ball must be passed** to a team mate **within 3 seconds**.
 - The **ball carrier must attempt to stop** as soon as possible; **within approximately 3 strides**, but the ball can be passed in the act of stopping.
 - If the pass takes **longer than 3 seconds** or the player takes **more than approximately 3 strides**, a **free pass is awarded to the non-offending team at the place where the tag occurred**.
- ❖ After a ball carrier has been tagged,
 - **that player must go to the tagger, retrieve their tag** and place it back on their belt before re-joining play.
 - **If the player continues to play and influences the game** without collecting their tag, a **free pass is awarded** to the non-offending team at the place of infringement (i.e. the point at which that player had influence).
- ❖ Players are only allowed one step to score a try after being tagged.
- ❖ If the ball carrier is tagged whilst standing inside the opponents' in-goal area, they must ground the ball immediately in order to score.
 - Referees may assist by advising the ball carrier "Touch the ball down and I'll award the try", or similar.

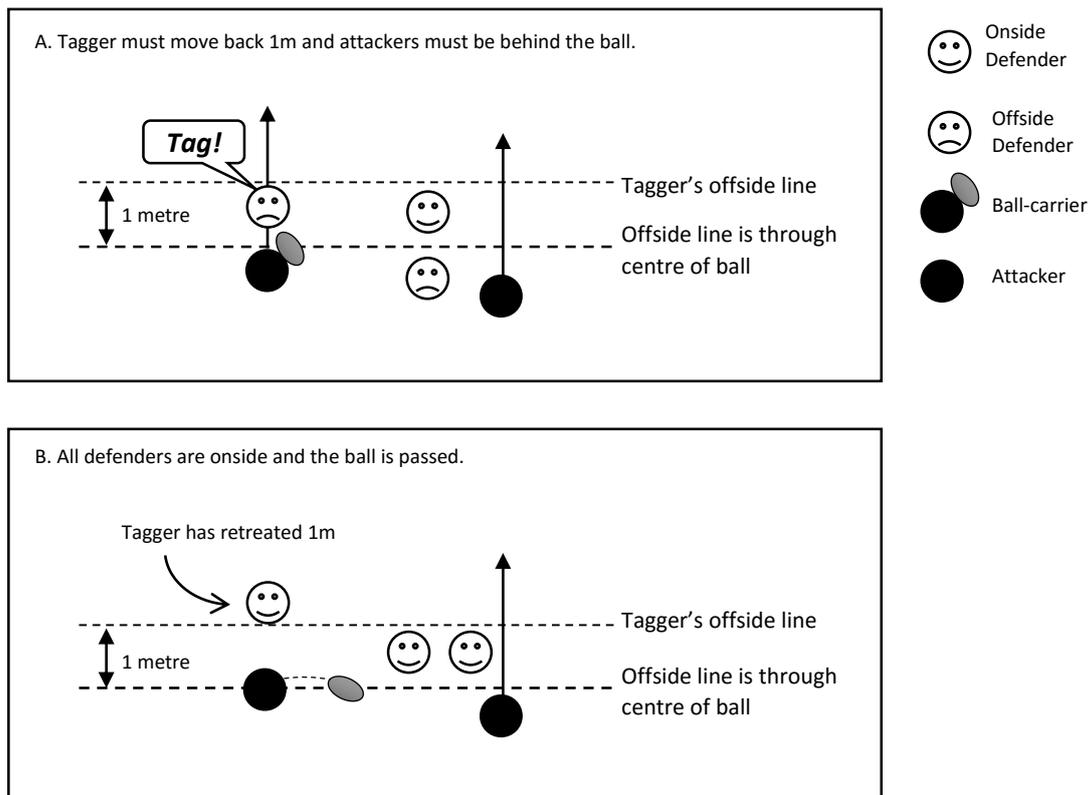
Actions by the tagger

- ❖ When a tag is made,
 - the **tagger must stop running**, hold the **tag above their head** and **shout, "Tag"**.
 - At this stage the referee must call, "Tag – Pass".
- ❖ If the ball carrier stops running **within 1 metre of the tagger**,
 - **The tagger must move back towards their own goal line, at least 1 metre**, to allow room for the ball to be passed. If the tagger fails to retire at least 1 metre before re-joining the game, they are to be considered offside and a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending team at the place of infringement (i.e. where the infringement was noticed).
- ❖ **Once the ball has been passed, the tagger must hand back the tag** to the player and *cannot re-join the match until this has been done*.
 - If a **tagger continues to play** and influences the match with an opponent's tag in their hand, **or throws it to the floor**, a **free pass is awarded** to the non-offending team at the place of infringement.
- ❖ 7th Tag Rule
 - The **team with the ball can only be tagged a maximum of 6 times** before scoring a try.
 - At the 7th tag the ball turns over at the position of the tag. (Free pass)
 - Why?
 - It rewards good defence.
 - It encourages the attacking team to keep the ball alive by passing before being tagged.

- A try scored on or after the 7th tag is always disallowed.
- Coaches can, by agreement, reduce the number of allowable tags to provide more of a challenge.

Offside

- ❖ Offside only occurs at the time of the TAG and subsequent pass – not in open play.
- ❖ The offside line passes through the centre of the ball.
- ❖ Defenders must retreat behind the offside line and allow the ball-carrier to pass the ball.
- ❖ The tagger has his own offside line one metre further back.



- ❖ If a player in an offside position, intercepts, prevents or slows down a pass from the tagged player to a team mate, a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending team.
- ❖ However, a **player can run from an onside position to intercept a floated pass** before it reaches the intended receiver.

Ball on the Ground

- ❖ Players of Mini Tag Rugby must be encouraged to stay on their feet, with the ball in hand.
- ❖ If the ball goes to ground (but not forward), play continues and either team can pick up the ball.
- ❖ Players **must not dive to the floor** to recover the ball.
- ❖ If the ball is **knocked forward** or **passed forward**, the ball turns over and a free pass is awarded at the point of the pass/knock-on.
 - The exception is when this happens over the goal line, in which case the free pass is awarded 7 metres from the goal line.
- ❖ Where the ball is on the ground **over the goal line**:
 - If the team defending the goal line have dropped the ball over the goal line and:
 - If their **opponents have fallen on it** or touched it down
 - a **try shall be awarded** to the ball carrier's team.
 - If the **defenders have touched it down** or fallen on it
 - a **free pass** shall be awarded **to the ball carrier's team 7 metres from the goal line**.
 - If the team attacking the goal line have dropped the ball **forward** over the goal line, and:
 - there is no advantage to their opponents
 - a free pass shall be awarded to the defending team 7 metres from the goal line.
 - If the team attacking the goal line have dropped the ball **backwards** over the goal line and:
 - the **attackers have touched it down** or fallen on it
 - a **try shall be awarded**.
 - their opponents touch the ball down or fall on it
 - a **free pass** shall be awarded **to the defending team 7 metres out from the goal line**.

Prohibited Play

- ❖ The following actions are prohibited and should be penalised with a free pass:
 - Tackling.
 - Contact (other than removing a tag from the belt of the ball-carrier).
 - Shirt-pulling.
 - Running in front of the ball-carrier.
 - Barging into the ball-carrier (contact).
 - Forcing the ball-carrier into touch.
 - Pulling from the ball-carrier's grasp.
 - Kicking of any kind.
 - Handing-off (pushing away) or fending-off (arm outstretched to prevent approach).
- ❖ Deliberate contact should result in the offender being warned of the rules before the free pass.