

Official Laws of the Game for Masters of Rugby League

Rugby League International Federation – Masters of League Working Group Appendix 1

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INTRODUCTION

The Masters Rugby League is a game specifically designed with rules that cater for players who are over 35 years old and no longer wish to play competitively. The Laws and the spirit of how the game is played are modified to allow players to play in a safe and enjoyable manner and with regard for the safety of both team mates and opponents alike.

The Principles of Masters Rugby League

- The game is for players over the age of 35 years
- The game is totally non-competitive. Scores are not kept; there are no results and no competitions.
- All the Laws and modes of play are designed to remove potentially dangerous elements of the game to allow players of all age groups to participate together.
- All players are reminded that the safety of team mates and opponents is paramount and therefore any over-aggressive or inappropriate rough play is forbidden.
- The emphasis is on safe and enjoyable play with all players who come onto the pitch being able to leave the pitch together
- All Players, Team Officials and Referees commit to participate according to the letter and the spirit of the laws.
- All games are subject to and played under the Code of Conduct/Fair Play pertinent to the local Governing Body

The International Laws of Rugby League apply in full with the following exceptions for MASTERS RUGBY LEAGUE.

SECTION 1 Playing Field

At the start of a game, the size of the playing area may be reduced in agreement between the team captains and the referee. In the case of Festivals/Carnivals the size of the playing area may be reduced in accordance with the event rules.

SECTION 2 Glossary As per International Laws

SECTION 3 Ball As per International Laws

SECTION 4 Player and Players' Equipment

1. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- The game is played with teams of a maximum of 13 players per team from a maximum squad of 20 players per game.
- Unlimited interchanges are allowed.
- Interchanges may occur at any time.
- In the spirit of Masters, where teams have an unequal number of players at the start of a game or at any time during the game, the other team is required to reduce their number of players on the field to the corresponding number or to loan players to the other team to ensure balanced teams.

2 AGE GROUPS

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Players will wear different coloured shorts to clearly define their age group. The mode of play applied to each age group will differ according to the colour of the shorts. Players are permitted to wear shorts designated for older players should they wish to in order to participate with less contact and greater safety and enjoyment. **In order to avoid accidental, over-robust contact, players should not play in shorts designated for a younger age group.**

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. Age 35 to 49 | White |
| 2. Age 50 to 59 | Red Shorts |
| 3. Age 60+ | Gold Shorts |

No other coloured shorts can be worn

SECTION 5 Mode of Play

1. RUNNING WITH BALL

- Players may run as hard as they wish, but are not allowed to try and run over the top of other players. If in the opinion of the referee a player has deliberately run directly at an opponent in an overly-aggressive manner, he will be penalised and may be removed from the game
- Players are not allowed to fend or hand off.

2. SIXTH TACKLE

- There are no turnovers.
- Sixth tackle results in a scrum to the defending side.

3. KICKING

- Kicking in general play is only allowed on the last tackle.
- For all kicks, including kick-offs and goal line dropouts, the receiving team must receive the ball. **The receiver must not be challenged and must be allowed to run at least 5 metres.**
- 40:20 rule does not apply.

IF, in the unlikely event that the receiving team makes no attempt to claim the ball and kicking team players are onside, the referee may call “play on” and the kicking team may re-gather the ball.

Referee will only call “play on” when he is certain there is no risk of player collision.

SECTION 6 Scoring

KICKS AT GOAL

- There are no kicks at goal at all.

SECTION 7 Timekeeping

DURATION OF GAMES

- A game is normally of 50 minutes (2 x 25 minutes) duration. There will be a half time interval of 5 minutes.
- The two teams and the referee may chose to vary the duration of the game by mutual agreement but it must not exceed 50 minutes maximum duration.

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- In the case of multiple game Festivals/Carnivals the duration of play is reduced to a maximum of 30 minutes (2 x15 minutes) duration with a five minute half time break.

SECTION 8 Kick-off and Drop-out

From kick offs and goal line dropouts, if the ball bounces out untouched by the receiving team, the scrum goes to the receiving team.

SECTION 9 Touch and Touch in-Goal

As per International Laws

SECTION 10 Knock-on and Forward Pass

As per International Laws

SECTION 11 Tackle and Play-the-Ball

1. TACKLING

- All tackles should be modified to remove any element of “drive” or lifting. No tackles should be made above the arm-pits.
- There are a maximum of two players allowed in any tackle, any more will be punished with the award of a penalty

Tackling by age group (Making the tackle)

- **WHITE** short players tend to tackle each other normally.
- **RED** short players must attempt to physically stop the ball carrier by a grip tackle between the waist and the shoulder. The ball carrier should respond immediately to the **HELD** Call from the referee. If in the opinion of the referee the **RED** short player has made sufficient contact, he will call **HELD**. Players should not attempt to drive through the tackle.
- **GOLD** short players must make a **TOUCH** tackle only. Once touched the ball carrier must return to the point of the touch to play the ball.

Tackling by age group (Being tackled)

- **RED** short players should be tackled by a grip tackle between the waist and the shoulder to stop progress.
- Under normal circumstances **RED** short players should not be taken to the ground. If this occurs deliberately the tackler will be penalised.
- **RED** short players should not attempt to drive through the tackle
- **GOLD** short players should only be **TOUCH** tackled and this should be done with great caution. Once touched the tackler should call the **TOUCH** and hold the mark, the ball-carrier must return to the point of the Touch to play the ball

All tackles are to be made safely and in the Spirit of Masters in order to stop progress not to attack the ball carrier.

- In all cases the player must respond immediately to the held call.
- There are no lifting or throws allowed
- The ball shall not be stolen from the ball carrier at all

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There can be no “drag down” tackles from behind of any kind

2. PLAY THE BALL

- Markers must remain passive and must not move until the first receiver has caught the ball or the dummy half has started to run.
- All other defenders must retire 5 metres minimum at the play the ball.
- Dummy half may run with the ball or pass, however if tackled in possession the ball will be handed over and a scrum formed
- The dummy half may not run and score.

SECTION 12 Scrum

- In the 13 a side game all scrums consist of 6 forwards, in smaller sided games to number of players in the scrums should be reduced as follows:
 - 12 a-side 5 forwards
 - 11 a-side 5 forwards
 - 10 a-side 3 forwards
 - 9 a-side and below 3 forwards
 - All scrums are uncontested with the team feeding the ball re-gaining possession.
 - The defending halfback must not follow attacking halfback around the base of the scrum.
 - The loose forward cannot break off the base of the scrum with the ball, the scrum half must receive the ball from the scrum
- **ADVANTAGE**
 - There is no advantage. All knock-ons and forward passes result in scrums.

SECTION 13 Penalty Kick

PENALTIES

- All penalties are a tap kick on the mark, given by the referee, at point of the infringement.
- All defenders must retreat 5 metres.

SECTION 14 Offside

As per International Laws

SECTION 15 Misconduct

Sin Bin

The referee may choose to send a player to the sin-bin for 5 minutes for foul play. The player should stand in his in-goal area behind the posts

A player in the Sin Bin may be replaced by a substitute.

Sending off

The player is excluded for rest of the match and/or Festival/Carnival. Sent off players may be replaced by a substitute.

SECTION 16 Referee and Touch Judges

The Match Officials should referee according to the Laws of the Game and also with reference to the Principles of the Game as outlined above.

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At all time, player's safety should be paramount in any decision making.

SECTION 17 Referee's Signals

As per International Laws