# England Rugby Age Grade rules: 2026-27 season

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**The below are variations to World Rugby u19 laws. If something isn't specified below, then it should default to WR u19 laws: https://passport.world.rugby/laws-of-the-game/ and select 'Variations – u19'.**

| | u9s | u10s | u11s | u12s | u13s | u14s | u15s | u16-18s |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Players per team** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 13 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| **Length of match** | 15mins per half<br><br>Match ends = try difference more than six | 15mins per half<br><br>Match ends = try difference more than six | 20mins per half<br><br>Match ends = try difference more than six | 20mins per half<br><br>Match ends = try difference more than six | 25mins per half<br><br>Match ends = try difference more than six | 25mins per half<br><br>Match ends = points diff more than 50 | 30mins per half<br><br>Match ends = points diff more than 50 | 35mins per half<br><br>Match ends = points diff more than 50 |
| **Ball size** | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| **Pitch size** | 60m x 30m | 60 metres x 35 metres | 60m x 43m (+5m in goal)<br>i.e Half a normal pitch<br><br>15m zone (similar function to 22m line and referenced below as '22') | 60m x 43m (+5m in goal)<br>i.e Half a normal pitch<br><br>15m zone (similar function to 22m line and referenced below as '22') | 90m x 60m (+5m in goal)<br>i.e pitch is within the 5m lines on normal size pitch<br><br>22m line in play (and referenced below as '22') | 100m x 70m (+5m in goal)<br>i.e Normal size pitch | 100m x 70m<br>i.e Normal size pitch | 100m x 70m<br>i.e Normal size pitch |
| **Kick offs & restarts** | Free pass for all Defenders 7m back<br><br>No crash ball/running onto pass | No kicking<br><br>Restarts are via a free pass<br>No crash ball/running onto pass | Drop kicks used - Must go 7m (If not = re-kick/scrum option)<br><br>After a score, non-scoring side chose to either kick or receive the restart<br><br>Players in front – scrum on half way<br><br>Kicked into in-goal area and goes or is | Drop kicks used - Must go 7m (If not = re-kick/scrum option)<br><br>After a score, non-scoring side chose to either kick or receive the restart<br><br>Players in front – scrum on half way<br><br>Kicked into in-goal area and goes or is | Drop kicks used - Must go 10m (If not = re-kick/scrum option)<br><br>After a score, non-scoring side chose to either kick or receive the restart<br><br>Players in front – scrum on half way<br><br>Kicked into in-goal area and goes or is | Drop kicks used to start play - Must go 10m (If not = re-kick/scrum option)<br><br>After a score, non-scoring side kicks off<br><br>Players in front – scrum on half way<br><br>Kicked into in-goal area and goes or is made dead – Choice: | WR Laws apply<br><br>TLDO applies | WR laws apply<br><br>TLDO applies |

| | u9s | u10s | u11s | u12s | u13s | u14s | u15s | u16s |
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| | | | made dead – re kick or scrum on half way<br><br>Not kicked 7m (and played by kicking side first) or kicked into touch – re-kick or scrum option<br><br>No Try Line Drop-outs: '22m' restarts for ball kicked dead or kicked into in-goal and grounded by defence<br><br>5m scrum for attacking ball carrier taken into in-goal & held up | made dead – re kick or scrum on half way<br><br>Not kicked 7m (and played by kicking side first) or kicked into touch – re-kick or scrum option<br><br>No Try Line Drop-outs: '22m' restarts for ball kicked dead or kicked into in-goal and grounded by defence<br><br>5m scrum for attacking ball carrier taken into in-goal & held up | made dead – re kick or scrum on half way<br><br>Not kicked 10m (and played by kicking side first) or kicked into touch – re-kick or scrum option<br><br>No Try Line Drop-outs: '22m' restarts for ball kicked dead or kicked into in-goal and grounded by defence<br><br>5m scrum for attacking ball carrier taken into in-goal & held up | re-kick or scrum on half way<br>Not kicked 10m (and played by kicking side first) – Choice: re-kick or scrum option<br><br>Kicked directly into touch – Choice: re-kick or accept kick and have l/o on half way<br><br>22DOs for balls kicked dead or failed PK/DGs at goal<br><br>TLDO as per adult law<br>- for ball kicked into in-goal by attack and grounded by defence<br>- knocked on in in-goal<br>- Ball held up in in in-goal<br>- any other scenario where try isnt scored and ball made dead when attack play/carry it into in-goal<br>(Reg15 change from last season) | | |

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| **Scrum** | None | 3 players – nearest the stoppage<br><br>“Crouch, Bind, Set” engagement<br><br>Only putting in hooker can strike<br><br>No pushing<br><br>Throwing in 9 - puts ball in straight from middle of the gap<br><br>9 must pass ball away, not run<br><br>Defending 9 must stay behind their scrum<br><br>5m backs offside line | 3 players – nearest the stoppage<br><br>“Crouch, Bind, Set” engagement<br><br>Both hookers may strike for ball<br><br>No pushing<br><br>Throwing in 9 - puts ball in straight from middle of the gap<br><br>9 must pass ball away, not run<br><br>Defending 9 must stay behind their scrum<br><br>5m backs offside line | 5 players – nearest the stoppage – set up in 3-2 formation<br><br>“Crouch, Bind, Set” engagement<br><br>Both hookers may strike for ball<br><br>No pushing<br><br>Throwing in 9 - puts ball in straight from middle of the gap<br><br>9 must pass ball away, not run<br><br>5m backs offside line<br><br>Defending 9 – cannot follow round, must stay in middle | 6 players in 3-2-1 formation<br><br>“Crouch, Bind, Set” engagement<br><br>Second rows - no crutch bind - must bind round hips of prop<br><br>Both hookers may strike for ball<br><br>Pushing - 1.5m only (FK for non-compliance). Referees should call “Hold the push/Stop the push”<br><br>If turns 45° scrum is reset<br><br>“Number 8” cannot pick up ball<br><br>9 can pass or pick ball up and run with it<br><br>Throwing in 9 - puts ball in straight from middle of the gap<br><br>5m backs offside line<br><br>Defending 9 – cannot follow round, must stay in middle | 8 players in 3,4,1 formation - must be balanced numbers<br><br>“Crouch, Bind, Set” engagement<br><br>‘Normal’ binding allowed for second rows and #8<br><br>Both hookers may strike for ball<br><br>Pushing - 1.5m only (FK for non-compliance). Referees should call “Hold the push/Stop the push”<br><br>Defending 9 – cannot follow opponent round, must stay in middle<br><br>Throwing in 9 - puts ball in straight from middle of the gap<br><br>If turns 45° scrum is reset - original side put in<br><br>Number 8 can pick up and run with ball<br><br>9 can pass, pick up and run with ball, or kick<br><br>5m backs offside line | 8 players in 3,4,1 formation.<br>“Crouch, Bind, Set” engagement<br><br>Both hookers may strike for ball<br><br>Pushing - 1.5m only (FK for non-compliance). Referees should call “Hold the push/Stop the push”<br><br>If turns 45° scrum is reset (no turnover)<br><br>Throwing in 9 - puts ball with left shoulder on middle line<br><br>Defending 9 – cannot follow round, must stay in middle | 8 players in 3,4,1 formation.<br>“Crouch, Bind, Set” engagement<br><br>Both hookers may strike for ball<br><br>Pushing - 1.5m only (FK for non-compliance). Referees should call “Hold the push/Stop the push”<br><br>If turns 45° scrum is reset (no turnover)<br><br>Throwing in 9 - puts ball with left shoulder on middle line<br><br>Defending 9 – cannot follow round (as per WR Global Law Trial) |
| | u9s | u10s | u11s | u12s | u13s | u14s | u15s | u16s |

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| **Tackle, Ruck and maul** | No rucks/mauls (Free pass)<br><br>Supporting player may rip ball and must then pass<br><br>Tackler cannot rip<br><br>Supporting player may pick ball up from floor but must pass<br><br>If ball carrier stays up but is stopped - call "Tackle" - must pass in 3 seconds<br><br>Cannot score after 'tackle' call<br><br>6 tackles per team in possession - ball is turned over on 7th tackle<br><br>7th tackle - can step and score if 1m from tryline | Ball ripped - must be passed<br><br>Rucks – only 2 players from each side can form a ruck (ball carrier/tackler +1)<br><br>Maul - No more than 2 players from each side can be in a maul<br><br>When ball secured, referee will call "use it" – 5 seconds to do so otherwise free pass to other side | Ball ripped - must be passed<br><br>Rucks – only 3 players from each side can form a ruck (ball carrier/tackler +2)<br><br>Maul - No more than 3 players from each side can be in a maul<br><br>When ball secured, referee will call "use it" – 5 seconds to do so otherwise scrum to other side | Ball ripped - can run or pass<br><br>Normal ruck and maul laws<br><br>Maul = 3 players – ball carrier + 1 from each side<br>Ruck = at least 1 from each side on feet over ball<br><br>No limit on participants<br><br>When ball secured, referee will call "use it" – 5 seconds to do so otherwise scrum to other side<br><br>'9' can pass, or pick and go but not box kick | Normal tackle, ruck and maul laws<br><br>Maul = 3 players – ball carrier + 1 from each side<br><br>Ruck = at least 1 from each side on feet over ball<br><br>No limit on participants<br><br>When ball secured, referee will call "use it" – 5 seconds to do so otherwise scrum to other side<br><br>'9' can pass, or pick and go but not box kick | Normal adult ruck and maul formation, beginning and ending<br><br>5 second rules apply when ball secured.<br><br>Maul - "Use it" call when stationary. Immediate ball away or turnover scrum.<br><br>Ruck: "Use it" call then must be played away in 5 seconds before scrum turnover<br><br>'9' can pass, or pick or box kick | WR Laws of the Game | WR Laws of the Game |

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| **Touch & Lineout** | No lineout - Free pass | No lineouts<br><br>Play restarts with free pass 5m from touch. Ball must be passed before anyone runs (i.e. no charging onto a pass)<br><br>Other side 7m back | No 50:22 or lineouts<br><br>Play restarts with free pass 5m from touch. Ball must be passed before anyone runs (i.e. no charging onto a pass)<br><br>Ball kicked from hand – normal rules apply if kicked from inside/outside '15' zone, or if passed back into 15 and not touched/tackled/maul formed.<br><br>A quick throw can be taken rather than a free pass (if same ball, not been touched by a non-player) | No 50:22 or lineouts<br><br>Play restarts with free pass 5m from touch. Ball must be passed before anyone runs (i.e. no charging onto a pass)<br><br>Ball kicked from hand – normal rules apply if kicked from inside/outside '15' zone, or if passed back into 15 and not touched/tackled/maul formed. No 50:22<br><br>A quick throw can be taken rather than a free pass (if same ball, not been touched by a non-player) | No 50:22<br>No lineouts<br><br>Play restarts with free pass 10m from touch. Ball must be passed before anyone runs (i.e. no charging onto a pass)<br><br>Ball kicked from hand – normal rules apply if kicked from inside/outside 22m zone, or if passed back into 22 and not touched/tackled/maul formed. No 50:22<br><br>A quick throw can be taken rather than a free pass (if same ball, not been touched by a non-player) | No 50:22<br><br>Uncontested lineout (ie throwing in side must win ball - (FK if not))<br><br>Contest for possession can start when catcher has safely returned ball to chest hight.(Pen)<br><br>No lifting/ binding/supporting<br><br>Non-participants must be 10m back<br><br>If not straight, other side have a lineout<br><br>If that isn't straight, scrum to original l/o thrower<br><br>Ends when the ball or a player carrying it leaves the lineout, or the ball goes +15m or into 5m channel or when the attackers support players bind on the catcher | 50:22 applies<br><br>Uncontested lineout (ie throwing in side must win ball - (FK if not))<br><br>Lifting & supporting permitted<br><br>Contest for possession can start when catcher has safely returned to the ground and ball at chest height (Pen) | 50:22 applies<br><br>Contested lineout – lifting & supporting permitted |

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| **Fly hacking – kicking loose ball on floor** | No fly hacking | No fly hacking | No fly hacking | No fly hacking | Fly hack allowed | Fly hack allowed | Fly hack allowed | Fly hack allowed |
| **Kicking** | No kicking | No kicking | No box kicks or dropped goals<br><br>Tactical kicking OK<br><br>A 'Mark' can be called anywhere on pitch from an open play kick (not kick off/22 restart) – Free Kick restart<br><br>A 'knock on' by a player trying to catch a kick in open play kick will result in a scrum to the player trying to catch it | No box kicks or dropped goals<br><br>Players are offside if they are in front of kicker – must stay still or retire (if within 7m of landing spot)<br><br>No 50:22 or TLDO | No box kicks or dropped goals<br><br>Players are offside if they are in front of kicker<br><br>Balls kicked into touch - usual laws apply on gain in ground<br><br>No 50:22 or TLDO | Kicks at goal permitted<br><br>Box kicks and drop goals permitted<br><br>Balls kicked into touch - usual laws apply on gain in ground<br><br>No 50:22<br><br>Offside at kicks as per WR laws | Kicks at goal permitted<br><br>Box kicks and drop goals permitted<br><br>50:22 applies<br><br>Offside at kicks as per WR laws | Kicks at goal permitted<br><br>Box kicks and drop goals permitted<br><br>50:22 applies<br><br>Offside at kicks as per WR laws |
| **Penalties**<br><br>**Note: up to u13s, Free kicks used rather than penalties to prevent kicking to touch to gain free pass in lieu of lineout** | Free pass awarded for kicking ball, a fend with ball, or hand off, foul play, or pulling ball from opponent ball carrier<br><br>No hand offs/fend<br><br>High tackle = anything above base of sternum (belly/tummy or below)<br><br>Ball carrier must not go into contact with shoulders below hips; dip down late and low; or put their | Free pass awarded for kicking ball, a fend with ball, or hand off, foul play, offside, squeeze ball, diving off feet, pushing in scrum, high tackle (= above sternum)<br><br>Opponents to be back 7m<br><br>No hand offs/fend<br><br>High tackle = anything above base of sternum (belly/tummy or below) | Free kick awarded for a fend with ball, or hand off, foul play, offside, squeeze ball, diving off feet, pushing in scrum, high tackle<br><br>Opponents go back 7m<br><br>No hand offs/fend<br><br>High tackle = anything above base of sternum (belly/tummy or below) | Free kick awarded for foul play, offside, squeeze ball, diving off feet, pushing in scrum, high tackle<br><br>Opponents go back 7m<br><br>Hand off – permitted – below armpit<br><br>High tackle = anything above base of sternum (belly/tummy or below)<br><br>Ball carrier must not go into contact with | Free kick awarded for foul play, offside, squeeze ball, diving off feet, pushing in scrum, high tackle<br><br>Opponents go back 10m<br><br>Hand off – permitted – below armpit<br><br>High tackle = anything above base of sternum (belly/tummy or below)<br><br>Ball carrier must not go into contact with | FKs for squeeze ball and for diving off feet<br><br>Pens for<br>Foul play<br>Offside<br>Tackle no release/roll away<br><br>Hand off – permitted – no restrictions but must be safe<br><br>High tackle = anything above base of sternum (belly/tummy or below) | WR Laws of the Game except:<br><br>High tackle = base of sternum (tummy/belly or below)<br><br>Ball carrier must not go into contact with shoulders below hips; dip down late and low; or put their head into the headspace of opponent.<br><br>Pen for Squeezeball | WR Laws of the Game except:<br><br>High tackle = base of sternum (tummy/belly or below)<br><br>Ball carrier must not go into contact with shoulders below hips; dip down late and low; or put their head into the headspace of opponent.<br><br>Pen for Squeezeball |

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| | head into the headspace of opponent. | Ball carrier must not go into contact with shoulders below hips; dip down late and low; or put their head into the headspace of opponent. | Ball carrier must not go into contact with shoulders below hips; dip down late and low; or put their head into the headspace of opponent. | shoulders below hips; dip down late and low; or put their head into the headspace of opponent. | shoulders below hips; dip down late and low; or put their head into the headspace of opponent. | Ball carrier must not go into contact with shoulders below hips; dip down late and low; or put their head into the headspace of opponent. | | |
| **Sin bin length** | Non - referee to manage issues with particular players/actions with coaches<br>Sides remain equal | Non - referee to manage issues with particular players/actions with coaches<br>Sides remain equal | Non - referee to manage issues with particular players/actions with coaches<br>Sides remain equal | Non – referee to manage issues with particular players/actions with coaches<br>Sides remain equal | 5 mins | 5 mins | 6 mins | 7 mins |
| **Subs** | Rolling subs – unlimited allowed (unless specified in individual competition/cup regs)<br>Half Game rule applies | | | | | | | |

**All information gathered is correct as at 1 August 2026, sourced from England Rugby Age Grade Regulation 15, or additional clarity from RFU on in-goal restarts:** https://www.englandrugby.com/governance/rules-and-regulations/regulations

For more information on RFU/England Rugby Age-Grade information: https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/coaching/age-grade-rugby

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