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RFU Regulations - u12s – Season 2026-27

Note – the TLDO laws do NOT apply until u14s rugby in England. 50:22 does not apply until u15s.
Items in bold are a change to previous year's u11 rules.

	u12s
Number of players	12 per team
Length of match	20 mins per half - Match ends if score difference rises to more than six tries
Ball size	4
Pitch size	60m x 43m (+5m for in goal) i.e Half a normal pitch 15m zone (similar function to 22m line)
Kick offs & restarts	Drop kicks used - Must go 7m (If not = re-kick/scrum option) After a score, non-scoring side chose to either kick or receive the restart Players in front – scrum on half way Kicked into in-goal area and goes or is made dead – option of a re kick or scrum on half way Not kicked 7m (and played by kicking side first) or kicked into touch – re-kick or scrum option '22m' restarts – as per adult law.
Scrum	**5 players – nearest the stoppage – set up in 3-2 formation** "Crouch, Bind, Set" engagement sequence Throwing in 9 - puts ball in straight from middle of the gap Both hookers may strike for ball No pushing 9 must pass ball away, cannot pick and run or kick 5m backs offside line Defending 9 – cannot follow round, must stay in middle

Ruck and maul	Ball ripped - **the ripper can run or pass** Normal ruck and maul laws - no restriction on numbers - Maul = 3 players – ball carrier + 1 from each side - Ruck = at least 1 from each side on feet over ball **No limit on participants** When ball secured, referee will call "use it" – 5 seconds to do so otherwise scrum to other side **'9' can pass, or pick and go but not box kick**
Lineout	No lineouts Play restarts with free pass 5m from touch. Ball must be passed before anyone runs (i.e. no charging onto a pass) 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. A quick throw can be taken rather than a free pass (if same ball, not been touched by a non-player)
Fly hacking (kicking loose ball on floor)	No fly hacking
Kicking	No conversions, penalty kicks at goal, box kicks or dropped goals Players are offside if they are in front of kicker – must stay still or retire (if within 7m of landing spot)
Penalties	Free kick awarded for foul play, offside, squeeze ball, diving off feet, pushing in scrum, high tackle A FK can be kicked into touch, but the free pass is always given to other team. Location of subsequent free pass depends on where kicked from - where ball crossed line (ball bounces out, or if kicked within own 15m area) or in line with where kicked (if goes straight out and ball was kicked outside own 15m area) Opponents go back 7m **Hand off – permitted – below armpit** **High tackle = sternum (tummy/belly or below)**

	Ball carrier must not go into contact with shoulders below hips, or dip down late and low or otherwise place their head into the headspace of opponent.
Sin bin length	Non – referee to manage issues with particular players/actions with coaches Sides remain equal
Subs	Rolling subs – unlimited allowed Half Game rule applies

Correct as at 1 August 2026
Author: Keith Lewis - with info taken from Regulation 15 Appendix 6 - u12s:
https://www.englandrugby.com/run/rules-governance/rfu-rules-and-regulations/regulation-15-age-grade-rugby/regulation-15-appendix-6-u12-rules-of-play

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