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RFU Regulations - u13s – 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 indicate a change from last season's u12s rules**.**

	u13s
Number of players	**13**
Length of match	**25 mins per half** - Match ends if score difference rises to more than six tries
Ball size	4
Pitch size	90m x 60m (+5m in goal) i.e just smaller than normal pitch size - pitch should fit the scrumzone of a full size pitch
Kick offs & restarts	Drop kicks used - Must go 10m (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 – re kick or scrum on half way Not kicked 10m (and played by kicking side first) or kicked into touch – re-kick or scrum option **No Goal Line Drop-outs** **In goal restarts (if no try) -** **Ball kicked dead/grounded in in-goal by defence = 22m DO** **Ball taken in by attack and held up = scrum 5 attacking put in** **Knock on in in-goal = scrum 5 defenders put in**

Scrum	**6 players in 3-2-1 formation** "Crouch, Bind, Set" engagement sequence **- fully contested (strike/push)** Second rows - no crutch bind - must bind round hips of prop. **#8 has to be bound to both 2nd rows** Throwing in 9 - puts ball in straight from middle of the gap Both hookers may strike for ball **Pushing - 1.5m only (FK for non-compliance). Referees should call "Hold the push/Stop the push"** If turns 45° scrum is reset - same side put in **8 cannot pick up ball from base** 9 must pass or pick ball up **or run with it** 5m backs offside line Defending 9 – cannot follow round, must stay in middle until ball is out
Ruck and maul	Normal tackle, ruck and maul laws - 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 maul formed and 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

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Lineout	No lineouts Play restarts with **free pass** 10m from touch. Ball must be passed before anyone runs (i.e. no charging onto a pass) Ball kicked from hand – normal adult rules apply if kicked from inside/outside 22m zone, or if passed back into 22 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	**Fly hack is allowed (kicking loose ball on floor)**
Kicking	Kicking from hand OK No box kicks or dropped goals Players are offside if they are in front of kicker
Penalties	Free kick awarded for foul play, offside, squeeze ball, diving off feet (accidental = scrum), pushing in scrum, high tackle Opponents go back 10m but FK can be taken quickly Hand off/fend – permitted – below armpit **High tackle = anything above sternum (belly/tummy or below)** **Ball carrier must not go into contact with shoulders below hips, or dip down late and low or put their head into the headspace of opponent.**
Sin bin length	5 mins (but manage it!!)
Subs	Rolling subs – unlimited allowed Half Game rule should be in operation

Correct as at 1 August 2026
Author: Keith Lewis - with info taken from Regulation 15 Appendix 7 - u13s & additional clarity from RFU on in-goal restarts:
https://www.englandrugby.com/run/rules-governance/rfu-rules-and-regulations/regulation-15-age-grade-rugby/regulation-15-appendix-7-u13-rules-of-play

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