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RFU Regulations - U16-u18s – Season 2026-27

Note – **Items in bold** indicate a change from last season's u15s rules/laws**.**

	u16s-u18s
Number of players	15
Length of match	**35 mins per half** **-** Match ends if points difference rises to more than 50
Ball size	**5**
Pitch size	100m x 70m - i.e Normal size pitch
Kick offs & restarts	Usual WR laws for kicks and restarts inc: Try Line Drop-outs as per adult law: (if no try when attack carry in, or ball kicked in to in-goal) - - Ball grounded in in-goal by defence - Ball taken in by attack and held up - Knock on in in-goal - Ball carrier tackled out over touch in goal/dead ball 22m Drop-outs for: ● Failed kicks at goal from PK or DG ● Ball kicked in open play which goes dead through in-goal without being touched 5m scrums for: ● Knock ons from field of play which go into in-goal - defence throw in ● Defence play/take/carry ball into own in-goal and the ball doesn't come out - attack throw in
Scrum	Pushing - 1.5m only (FK for non-compliance). Referees should call "Hold the push/Stop the push" Throwing in 9 - throws ball in with left shoulder on middle point **Defending 9 – must stay at tunnel - cannot follow round** (new WR Global Law trial for all rugby)
Ruck and maul	Normal WR laws - including new **Global Law Trials around protection for player acting as scrum half as ball being passed away**
Lineout	**Contested lineout – lifting & supporting permitted for both sides** (WR Laws apply - including **Global Law Trial where deemed play on if not straight and no defenders contest in the air**) The 50:22 is allowed - when a side kicking from their own half kick the ball and it bounces into touch in their opponents 22m area, the kicking side throw into the lineout.

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	If the ball is passed back into the half and there hasn't been a tackle, ruck, maul or an opponent has touched the ball, the defending side throw the ball into the subsequent lineout
Fly hacking (kicking loose ball on floor)	Fly hack allowed
Kicking	Kicks at goal permitted Box kicks and drop goals permitted
Penalties	WR Laws of the Game except: No squeezeball - Penalty High tackle = base of 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	**7 mins**
Subs	Rolling subs – unlimited Half Game rule applies

Correct as at 1 August 2026
Author: Keith Lewis - with info taken from Regulation 15 Appendix 9:
https://www.englandrugby.com/run/rules-governance/rfu-rules-and-regulations/regulation-15-age-grade-rugby/regulation-15-appendix-9-u15-u18-variations-to-the-laws-of-the-game

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