IRFU

MINI & RUGBY PRIME REGULATIONS 2025/26

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IRFU Age Grade Rugby Mini and Rugby Prime (LTPD Stage 1)- "Growing from 6 to 6 Nations"

Mini and Rugby Prime (Leprechaun Rugby) Mission Statement

"The ethos of Mini and Rugby Prime is to foster and develop young players (boys & girls) of all ability in the game of rugby in a safe, ***non-competition**, enjoyable environment through activities which ensure progressive skill development for all participants in line with the IRFU LTPD (Long Term Player Development) pathway, Child Welfare Policy and Traditions of Rugby Union"

**** non-competition meaning no Leagues/Cups and Blitzes and/or events resulting in play-off matches or finals. Streaming of players is not allowed.***

Safeguarding

All those working **regularly and continuously** with young people should complete the necessary vetting checks. For those who are supervised and/or assist occasional, they should complete the Declaration of Intent .

Full list of Downloadable Vetting documents can be found here:

www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/development/safeguarding/recruitment.php

Code of Conduct

All participants in Mini Rugby are to adhere to all aspects of the ***IRFU Code of Conduct*** for Players/ Coaches/ Parents/ Spectators and Referees

Download *Code of Conduct* document here: Code of Conduct

Download *Referee Code of Conduct* document here: Referee Code of Conduct

Match Officials

Any form of abuse towards match officials is not allowed and coaches, players or spectators breaching this regulation will be removed from the playing area.

Correspondence

Any correspondence from a club, school or individual regarding Mini Rugby must be directed to the relevant Provincial Branch contact.

Procedure to report issues relating to Codes of Conduct

Internal:

Report to Mini Rugby Coordinator & Club Child Welfare Officer – liaise with relevant provincial branch welfare officer.

Issues of Significant harm:

Report to Club Welfare Officer who in turn will report to mandated person within the IRFU.

Maximum playing time

Consideration must be given to clubs/teams with small numbers and or no reserves to prevent/avoid exhaustion and or the risk of injuries.

Wearing of glasses/ Sports goggles

World Rugby has approved an amendment to the laws of the game that will allow the wearing of Raleri goggles at all levels of the game.

The IRFU reminds all players, coaches, referees and parents that only the Raleri goggle is allowed to be worn, and in accordance with the laws of the game, no other eyewear will be permitted, for health and safety reasons, in contact forms of the game.

Anyone wishing to purchase the goggles should go to www.raleri.com.

Fixtures

Competitions (meaning Leagues/ cups & Blitzes ending with play-off matches or finals) are not allowed and Festivals / Events must be arranged according to the National Festival Day format. These must be registered with the respective Branch prior to taking place and all Festivals/Events including matches involving teams from other Unions, must adhere to the IRFU Mini and Leprechaun Rugby regulations.

Festival Guidelines can be downloaded here: ***Festival Guidelines 2025/2026***

Registration

It is the responsibility of Clubs/ Schools to ensure all their players are properly registered with the Club/ School, Branch and IRFU.

Eligibility

- Mini Rugby is a participation sport - any boy or girl registered with a club and/or school may take part in line with IRFU health and safety regulations.
- Date of eligibility for participants is that which is approved by the IRFU Rugby Committee (currently, the 1st January).
- Where Mini and Rugby Prime (Leprechaun rugby) are part of the school curriculum, eligibility is based the year/ class the player is in. This may include a P1 that has not yet reached 5 years of age.
- Concerns regarding eligibility must be raised through the Club/School to the Branch or if required the IRFU.
- In Festival settings, national age regulations will apply.

Date of Eligibility

Age Groups	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028
Under 6	***Born in: 2020***	***Born in: 2021***	***Born in: 2022***
Under 7	2019	2020	2021
Under 8	2018	2019	2020
Under 9	2017	2018	2019
Under 10	2016	2017	2018
Under 11	2015	2016	2017
Under 12	2014	2015	2016

Players playing at a higher age category

In the event of clubs not having sufficient numbers, players can play in two age categories – the year a player is eligible for and one year up e.g. U10 playing also at U11. It is the club's responsibility to ensure all players get the opportunity to participate in mini rugby. Best practice is to play in their own age grade. No U11 player is allowed to play up if the U12 team are playing Stage 4 mini rugby.

Procedure for allowing U12 players to play at U13

- (Only) in instances where clubs have a concern regarding numbers e.g. not enough U13 players in the club, a club may apply to their Branch Youth Committee with supporting documents explaining the reason(s) to allow this. This to only apply to players who are U12 - no U11 player playing at U12 allowed to play up.
- Branch Youth Committee to ensure that the decision does not affect playing opportunities of the U12 team(s).
- Girls Mini Rugby teams play in a two year age band i.e. U8, U10 & U12. The next available age band is U14. It is not permissible for a player in the U12 age band to play at the U14 age band.

Rugby Prime / Intro to Mini U6 - U7 or P1 to P3 (Ulster)

Mini Rugby U8/ U9/ U10/ U11 and U12 or P4; P5; P6; P7 and Year 8 (Ulster)

Regulations and Laws regarding Mini Rugby (LTPD Stage 1)

Due to variations in the physical, mental, social and emotional developments of young children, **players under the age of 7 are not allowed to play full contact games.** Players in this age group should be introduced to Rugby Union through the non–contact game of Rugby Prime (Leprechaun Rugby).

Mini and Rugby Prime have been broken down into distinct stages which progressively introduce and develop the fundamental skills of Rugby Union.

- No limit on number of players to play in club days or events – emphasis on enjoyment and participation for all. For safety reasons, players should play within their own age group and may not play for a lower age group.
- Rugby Prime and Mini 1 – one coach per team allowed on the pitch, coach must stay behind players

Age group(s) - Age on 1st January

Rugby Prime (Leprechaun Rugby)	Under 6/ Under 7 or P1 to P3
Mini Rugby 1	Under 8's or Ulster P4
Mini Rugby 2	Under 9 / U10 or P5 & P6
Mini Rugby 3	Under 11/U12 or P7
Mini Rugby 4	Under 12 or Year 8. All players must be U12 and have progressed through the mini rugby stages.

Rugby Prime (Leprechaun Rugby)

Rugby Prime has been developed to introduce the Game of Rugby Union to young players new to the Game.
The non-tackling and soft contact nature of Rugby Prime contains all the running and handling skills of Rugby Union. It is a game, which is designed to be FUN

Number of players
Can vary from 4-a-side to 8-a-side and or 10-a-side games and the emphasis is on the introduction of the skills, inclusion of all participants; safety and enjoyment.

Playing area
Depends on the number of participants and vary from 10m x 20m to 30m x 40m and or 50m x 70m.

Duration of games
Depends on the time available and can vary from 5 min. each way to 10 min. or 15 min. each way. Young players (beginners) playing non-contact rugby can only play a maximum amount 60 min. of rugby per day.

Start of play
The game starts by a pass-off with the referee indicating the mark.
The opposition must be 5 to 10 m away depending on the size of the playing area and the size of the teams.

Attacking team
The attacking team carries the ball downfield, running, passing (or handling) back to score try by placing the ball over or behind the opposition goal line. The ball can only be transferred to a player behind the ball carrier. No forward (handling) or passing allowed.

Tagging and ball take
To tag, a player must contact the ball carrier with two hands (one on each side of the hips). The ball carrier must then (immediately) pass backwards within a maximum of 3 steps. Any attempt to deliberately gain territory without trying to pass, will result in loss of possession. **OR**
If the ball carrier can't see anyone to pass to, he/she should (immediately) stop, turn and present the ball immediately to a support player. The support player must then take the ball and pass to another player without running.

Defending team
The defending team attempts to halt the running progress of the attacking team by tagging the ball carrier.

Off-side
Applies only to the pass-off and the ball take.
The defending team can gain possession as follows:

Intercepting the ball
An opposition pass can be intercepted.

Gathering a dropped ball

If the attacking team drops or throws the ball to the ground, the defending team can pick up the ball and play on.

Knock on

If the attacking team knocks the ball on (dropping a pass forward) the defending team will restart with pass-off.

Forward pass

Forward passes are not allowed and a pass-off is awarded to the non-offending team.

Ball in touch

If the ball or attacking player carrying the ball crosses the touchline, play is restarted by a pass-off awarded to the non-offending team.

Penalties

All penalties are taken with a pass-off. A player from the non-offending team taps the ball on the ground with his foot and then passes to a teammate. Opposing players must be 5 to 10 m back depending on the size of the team and or the pitch.

Reasons for penalties

- Ball carrier hands-off a player.
- Interference by a defending player not allowing a transfer, pass or ball take immediately after a tag.
- Ball carrier makes further ground after a tag without passing, transfer or ball take.
- A defending player takes the ball from the ball carrier.
- Deliberate obstruction of an opponent.
- A defending player is offside.

In all instances the opposition must be 5 to 10m back depending on the size of the teams or the pitch.

Mini Rugby 1

Ball size	3
Maximum time per half – Single match	15 minutes
Maximum time per half – Festivals/ Events	7 minutes
Maximum time a squad/ team is allowed to play per day/ event	60 minutes
Minimum time allowed for half time	1 minute
Max no of players per team	Recommended 8
No of forwards	Not applicable
No of backs	Not applicable
Safety zone between pitches	6 metres
Tackle height	Waist high. Penalty for tackles above the waist.
Ripping / Tackling the ball	Not allowed and will be penalised.
Hand off	Not allowed, Players should be encouraged to carry the ball in two hands.
Time allowed for rucks & mauls	The 5 seconds "Use it or Lose it" rule applies. It is illegal to collapse a maul Referee/Coach should count down "5, 4, 3, 2, and 1" from moment ruck/maul is formed.
Maul – number of players	No more than 3
Ruck – number of players	Max 1 player from each team are in contact, on feet, over the ball. 1 v 1
Kicking in Play	Not allowed
Start match	Pass-Off: Must be off the ground and after the referee's whistle
Method of scoring	Try
Line-Out	No
Scrum	No

Discipline

No sending off in Mini Rugby. Only compulsory substitutions to ensure same numbers on the pitch at all times.

Start of Match and/or Restarts

All starts and restarts are by pass-off (from the ground) and must be after the referee's whistle. The opposition must retire 10m from the ball and can only move once the scrum half/passer passes the ball. The first receiver must start no more than 2m back from the scrum half/passer.

At the start of both halves and after a try, the pass-off from the centre of the pitch will be used to restart the game.

Penalties: No quick tap penalties allowed

Penalties are taken by a pass-off (from the ground) and after the whistle, the opposition being 10m back from the mark (or behind the goal line). Penalties must be taken through the mark. To play the ball, it must be first tapped with the foot before being passed off the ground. The first receiver must start no more than 2m back from the scrum half/passer.

Kicking - Not allowed

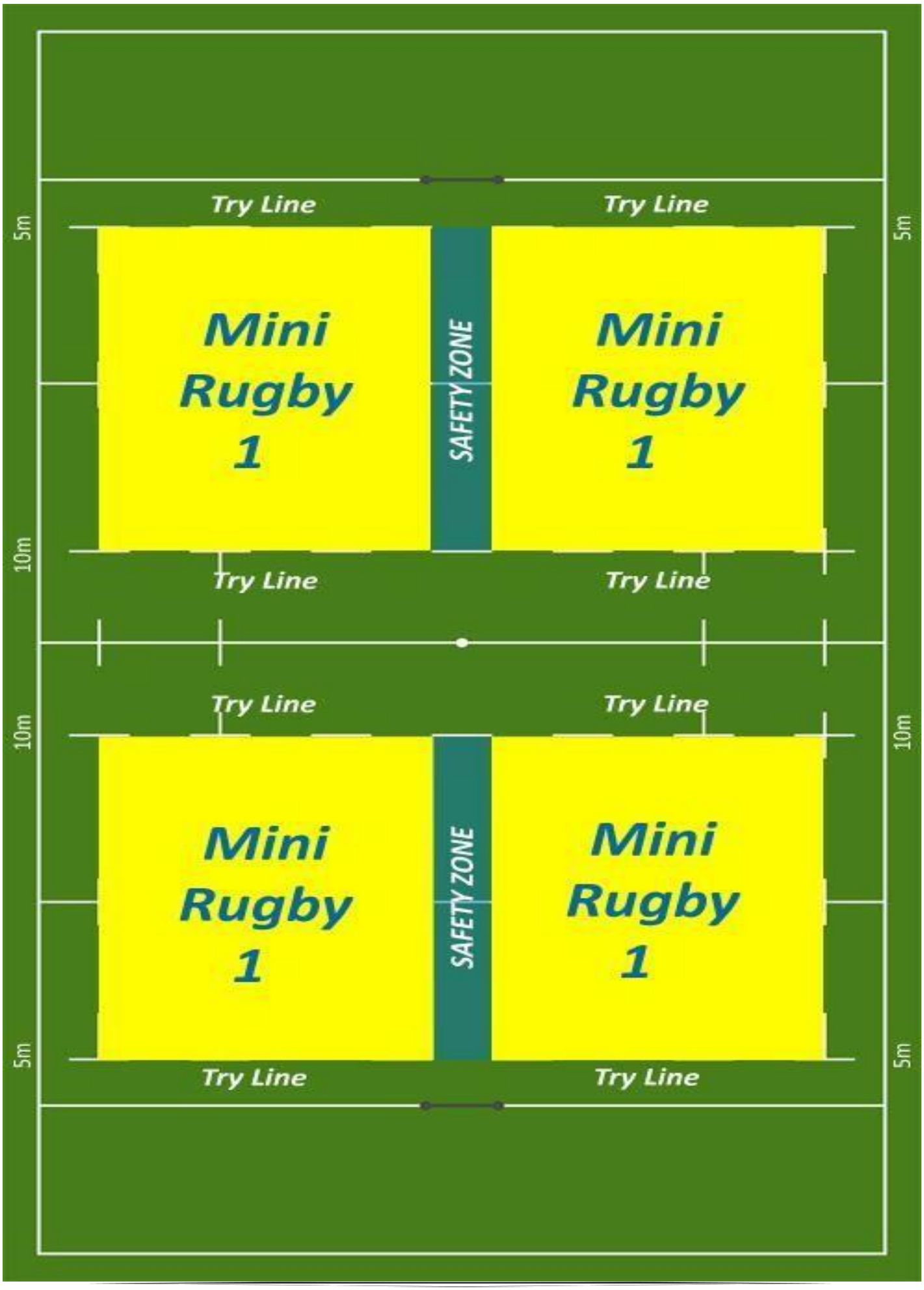
Hand Off- Not allowed

Punching/Kicking of an opponent

No verbal warning – immediate compulsory substitution and the player is not allowed to participate in next match or rest of the day's event.

Dangerous Tackles: High /Swing and Dump Tackles

Player to receive 1 (one) verbal warning from the referee. If the player offends again, compulsory substitution to be made by coach on request by the referee. Player is allowed to participate in next match/ rest of the day's event unless there is a repeat of the offence.


Try Line
Try Line
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Mini Rugby 1
SAFETY ZONE
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Mini Rugby 1
SAFETY ZONE
Mini Rugby 1
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Try Line
Try Line

Mini Rugby 2

Ball size	3
Maximum time per half – Single match	15 minutes
Maximum time per half – Festivals/ Events	7 minutes
Maximum time a squad/ team is allowed to play per day/ event	70 minutes
Minimum time allowed for half time	1 minute
Max no of players per team	8
No of forwards	3
No of backs	5
Safety zone between pitches	6 metres
Tackle height	Waist high. Penalty for tackles above the waist.
Ripping/ Tackling the ball	Not allowed and will be penalised.
Hand off	Not allowed, Players should be encouraged to carry the ball in two hands.
Time allowed for rucks & mauls	The 5 seconds "Use it or Lose it" rule applies. This starts from the moment ruck/maul is formed. It is illegal to collapse a maul Referee/Coach should count down "5, 4, 3, 2, and 1" from moment ruck/maul is formed.
Maul – number of players	No more than 3
Ruck – number of players	Max 1 player from each team are in contact, on feet, over the ball. 1 v 1
Kicking in Play	Not allowed
Start match	Pass-Off: Must be off the ground and after the referee's whistle
Method of scoring	Try
Line-Out	3 Players including the thrower. All 'Forwards' must be involved in the lineout. No lifting allowed.
Scrum	3 Players No contest Players must stay bound until scrum is over

Discipline

No sending off in Mini Rugby. Only compulsory substitutions to ensure same numbers on the pitch at all times.

Start of Match and/or Restarts

All starts and restarts are by pass-off (from the ground) and must be after the referee's whistle. The opposition must retire 10m from the ball and can only move once the scrum half/passer passes the ball. The first receiver must start no more than 2m back from the scrum half/passer.

At the start of both halves and after a try, the pass-off from the centre of the pitch will be used to restart the game.

Penalties: No quick tap penalties allowed

Penalties are taken by a pass-off (from the ground) and after the whistle, the opposition being 10m back from the mark (or behind the goal line). Penalties must be taken through the mark. To play the ball, it must be first tapped with the foot before being passed off the ground. The first receiver must start no more than 2m back from the scrum half/passer.

Kicking - Not allowed

Hand Off - Not allowed

Scrum

1. All players stay bound until ball has emerged.
2. No push or contesting allowed; ball must be put in straight.
3. Opposition scrum half behind his forwards – no follow around allowed.
4. Scrum is over when ball is in the hands of the attacking scrum half.
5. Scrum half must pass the ball – no break allowed.
6. Both back lines 5m back from scrum.
7. Always 10m from touch line and 5m from goal line.

Line out:

1. 3 players including the Thrower
2. Line out 2m from touch line.
3. No contest.
4. No Lifting allowed
5. No quick throw allowed
6. Ball must be caught and delivered to scrum-half - Line out is over when the scrum half passes the ball.
7. Both throwers must be at the front of the line-out and both scrum halves behind their forwards.
8. Scrum halves must pass the ball. No break allowed.
9. Both back lines 5m back from Lineout.
10. Ball must be thrown straight into the line-out – no over throw.
11. No catch and drive allowed.

Rucks and mauls

Referee/Coach should count down "5, 4, 3, 2, and 1" from moment ruck/maul is formed.
The "Use it or Lose it" rule should be strictly applied. The ball must be passed away, no pick and go.
It is **ILLEGAL to COLLAPSE** a Maul.
Players arriving at a Ruck or Maul must do so in a safe and legal manner**, e.g. no shoulder-charging, diving off feet etc.** Squeeze ball and Bridging are **Not Allowed**

Dangerous Tackles: High /Swing and Dump Tackles

Player to receive 1 (one) verbal warning from the referee. If the player offends again, compulsory substitution to be made by coach on request by the referee. Player is allowed to participate in next match/ rest of the day's event unless there is a repeat of the offence.

Punching/Kicking of an opponent

No verbal warning – immediate compulsory substitution and the player is not allowed to participate in next match or rest of the day's event

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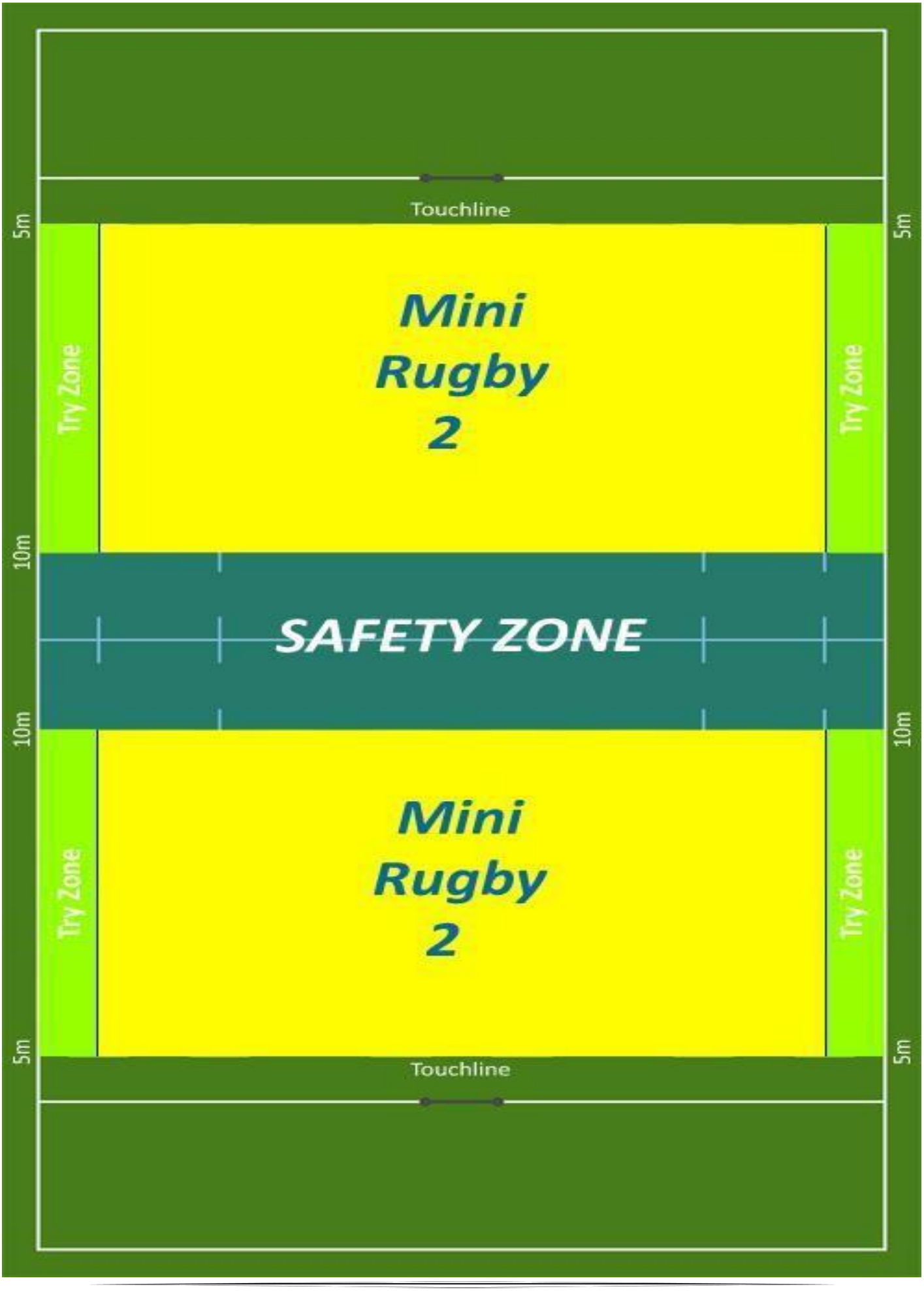
Touchline
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Rugby
2
Try Zone
10m
SAFETY ZONE
10m
10m
Try Zone
Mini
Rugby
2
Try Zone
5m
5m
Touchline

Mini Rugby 3

Ball size	4
Maximum time per half – Single match	20 minutes
Maximum time per half – Festivals/ Events	7 minutes
Maximum time a squad/ team is allowed to play per day/ event	70 minutes
Minimum time allowed for half time	1 minute
Max no of players per team	10
No of forwards	5
No of backs	5
Safety zone between pitches	6 metres
Tackle height	Waist high. Penalty for tackles above the waist. Dangerous Tackles (e.g. High / Swinging / Dump tackle) to be penalised immediately & player warned.
Ripping / Tackling the ball	Not allowed and will be penalised.
Hand off	Not allowed. Carry ball in two hands.
Time allowed for rucks & mauls	The 5 seconds "Use it or Lose it" rule applies. It is illegal to collapse a maul Referee/Coach should count down "5, 4, 3, 2, and 1" from moment ruck/maul is formed.
Ruck – number of players	Maximum 2 players from each team are in contact, on feet, over the ball. 2 v 2.
Maul – number of players	No more than 3
Kicking in Play	Defence zone only
Start match	Drop Kick on Half Way
Method of scoring	Try
Line-Out	5 Players including the thrower All "forwards" must be involved in lineout No lifting allowed.
Scrum	5 Players. 3 front row, 2 second row Uncontested. Strike allowed by receiving team only Players must stay bound.

Discipline

No sending off in Mini Rugby. Only compulsory substitutions to ensure same numbers on the pitch at all times.

Start of Match and/or Restarts

Starts - Drop Kick on half-way and must be after the referee's whistle.

In dead ball situations the restarts must take place 10m from try-line (kicking zone).

Penalties: **No quick tap penalties allowed**

Penalties must be taken through the mark designated by the referee. A scrum to be awarded to the opposition if persistently done incorrectly.

Opposition must be 10 m back or behind the goal line. To play the ball, it must be first tapped with the foot before being passed off the ground. The first receiver must start no more than 2m back from the scrum half/passer.

Penalties inside the Kicking Zone: The DEFENDING team awarded the penalty may kick directly to touch and are awarded throw in

Kicking

It is not permitted to kick the ball outside the "Kicking Zone" (10m from own goal line). If the offence is unintentional, a scrum is awarded to the opposition and if intentional, a penalty is awarded to the opposition.

Pass back into Kicking Zone rule (as per 15-a-side) to apply.

Players in front of the kicker must be brought onside before they can take part in play.

Hand Off – Not allowed. Ball should be carried in both hands.

Scrum

1. 5 players (LHP/H/THP & Two 2nd Rows)
2. Uncontested
3. All players stay bound until ball has emerged.
4. Strike from receiving team only.
5. Scrum half to feed the ball into the scrum with two hands and straight.
6. No forward allowed to pick up the ball from the scrum.
7. Opposition scrum half behind his 2nd Rows – no follow around allowed.
8. Both back lines 5m back from scrum.
9. Always 10m from touchline and 5m from goal line.
10. Scrum is over when referee calls "scrum over" or when the ball is in the hands of the scrum half who may break.

Line out:

1. 5 players including the Thrower
2. Line out 2m from touch line.
3. The ball may be contested.
4. No lifting allowed
5. No quick throw allowed
6. A space of one metre (arm's length) between all players in the line-out
7. Both hookers/throwers must be at the front of the line-out and both scrum halves behind their forwards.
8. Both back lines 5m back from Lineout.
9. Ball must be thrown straight into the line-out – no over throw.
10. Line out is over when the scrum half passes the ball/ makes a break or when team catching the ball catches & drives
11. (5 seconds "Use it or Lose it" in driving maul to apply).

Rucks and mauls

The "Use it or Lose it" rule should be strictly applied - Referee/Coach should count down "5, 4, 3, 2, and 1" from moment ruck/maul is formed.

It is **ILLEGAL to COLLAPSE** a Maul.

Players arriving at a Ruck or Maul must do so in a safe and legal manner**, e.g. no shoulder-charging, diving off feet etc.** Squeeze ball and Bridging are **Not Allowed**

Dangerous Tackles: High /Swing and Dump Tackles

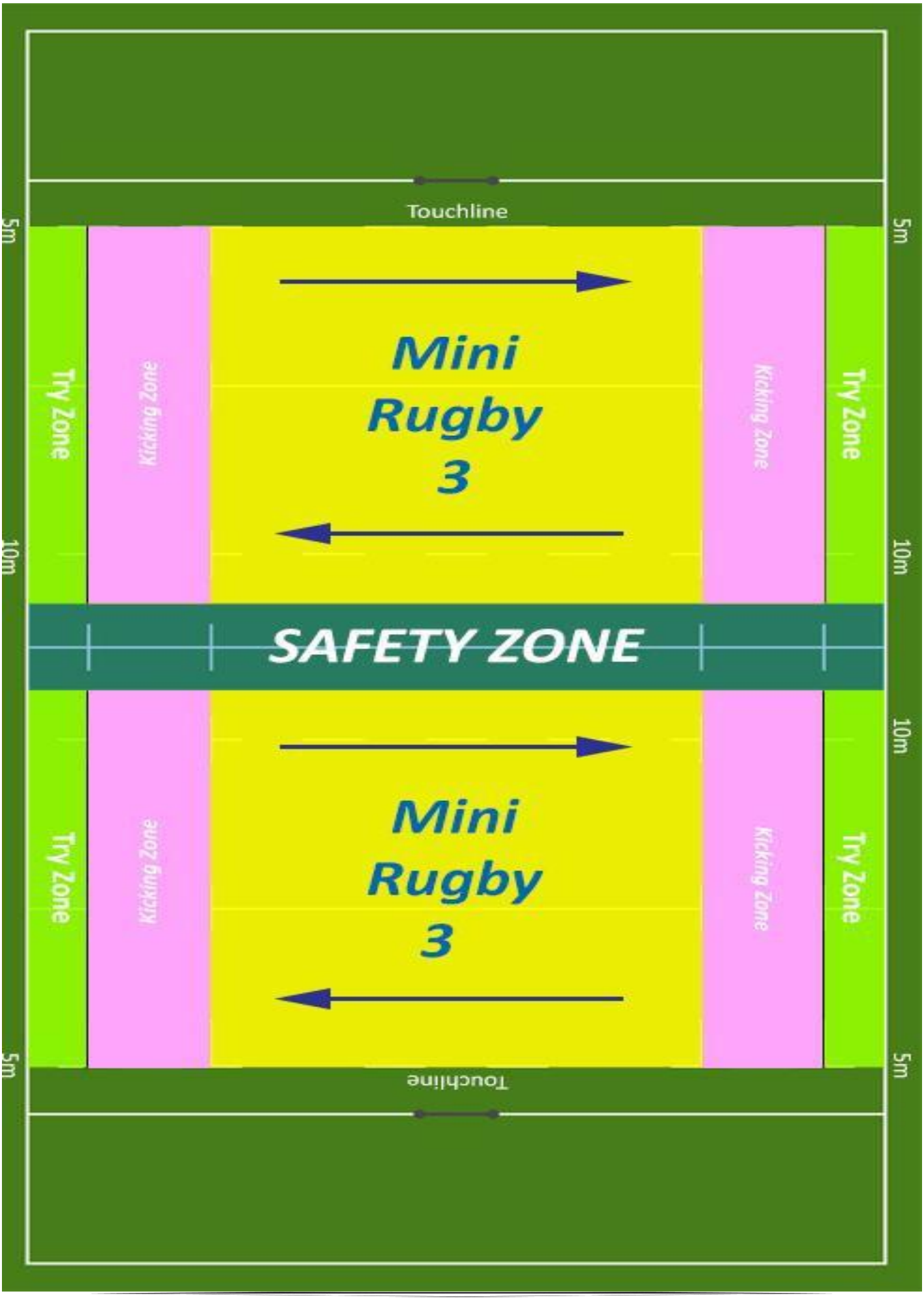
Player to receive 1 (one) verbal warning from the referee. If the player offends again, compulsory substitution to be made by coach on request by the referee. Player is allowed to participate in next match/ rest of the day's event unless there is a repeat of the offence.

Punching/Kicking of an opponent

No verbal warning – immediate compulsory substitution and the player is not allowed to participate in next match or rest of the day's event

15 a side

Not allowed at U12. Doing so will result in a club sanction from the branch.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10m
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10m
Try Zone
Kicking Zone
Mini
Rugby
3
Kicking Zone
Try Zone
5m
5m
Touchline

Mini Rugby 4- For U12s only and all players must be aged 11

Ball size	4
Maximum time per half – Single match	20 minutes
Maximum time per half – Festivals/ Events	7 minutes
Maximum time a squad/ team is allowed to play per day/ event	70 minutes
Minimum time allowed for half time	1 minute
Max no of players per team	12
No of forwards	6
No of backs	6
Safety zone between pitches	6 metres
Tackle height	Waist high – penalty for tackles above the waist. Dangerous tackles (e.g. High/swinging/dump tackle penalised immediately)
Ripping / Tackling the ball	Not allowed and will be penalised.
Hand off	Below shoulder Players should be encouraged to carry the ball in two hands.
Time allowed for rucks & mauls	The 5 seconds "Use it or Lose it" rule applies. It is illegal to collapse a maul Referee/Coach should count down "5, 4, 3, 2, and 1" from moment ruck/maul is formed.
Mauls – number of players	No more than 4
Ruck – number of players	Maximum 2 players from each team are in contact, on feet, over the ball. 2v2.
Kicking in Play	Defence zone only
Start match	Drop Kick on Half Way
Method of scoring	Try – no conversion kicks
Line-Out	6 Players including the thrower All "forwards" must be involved in lineout No lifting allowed.
Scrum	6 Players – 3 front, 2 second rows, 1 back row. Uncontested Strike allowed by receiving team only Players must stay bound until scrum is over

Discipline

No sending off in Mini Rugby. Only compulsory substitutions to ensure same numbers on the pitch at all times.

Start of Match and/or Restarts

Starts - Drop Kick on Half Way and must be after the referee's whistle.

In dead ball situations the restarts must take place 5m from try-line (kicking zone).

Penalties: No quick tap penalties allowed

Penalties must be taken through the mark designated by the referee. A scrum to be awarded to the opposition if persistently done incorrectly.

Opposition must be 10 m back or behind the goal line.

To play the ball, it must be first tapped with the foot before being passed off the ground. The first receiver must start no more than 2m back from the scrum half/passer.

Penalties inside the Kicking Zone: The DEFENDING team awarded the penalty may kick directly to touch and are awarded throw in.

Kicking

Is permitted to kick the ball inside own "Kicking Zone" (5m both sides of the try line).
Pass back into Kicking Zone rule (as per 15-a-side) to apply. Players in front of the kicker must be brought onside before they can take part in play.

Scrum

1. 6 players (LHP/H/THP - Two 2nd Rows & One Back Row)
2. Back row to scrum between the two 2nd Rows
3. Uncontested
4. All players stay bound until ball has emerged.
5. Strike from receiving team only.
6. Scrum half to feed the ball into the scrum with two hands and straight.
7. No forward allowed to pick up the ball from the scrum.
8. Opposition scrum half behind his 2nd Rows – no follow around allowed.
9. Both back lines 5m back from scrum.
10. Always 10m from touchline and 5m from goal line.
11. Scrum is over when referee calls "scrum over" or when the ball is in the hands of the scrum half who may break.

Line out:

1. 6 players including the Thrower
2. Line out 2m from touch line.
3. The ball may be contested.
4. No lifting allowed
5. No quick throw allowed
6. A space of one metre (arm's length) between all players in the line-out
7. Both hookers/throwers must be at the front of the line-out and both scrum halves behind their forwards.
8. Both back lines 5m back from Lineout.
9. Ball must be thrown straight into the line-out – no over throw.
10. Line out is over when the scrum half passes the ball/ makes a break or when team catching the ball catches & drives
11. (5 seconds "Use it or Lose it" in driving maul to apply).

Rucks and mauls

Referee/Coach should count down "5, 4, 3, 2, and 1" from moment ruck/maul is formed.
The "Use it or Lose it" rule should be strictly applied.
It is **ILLEGAL to COLLAPSE** a Maul.
Players arriving at a Ruck or Maul must do so in a safe and legal manner**, e.g. no shoulder-charging, diving off feet etc.** Squeeze ball and Bridging are **Not Allowed**

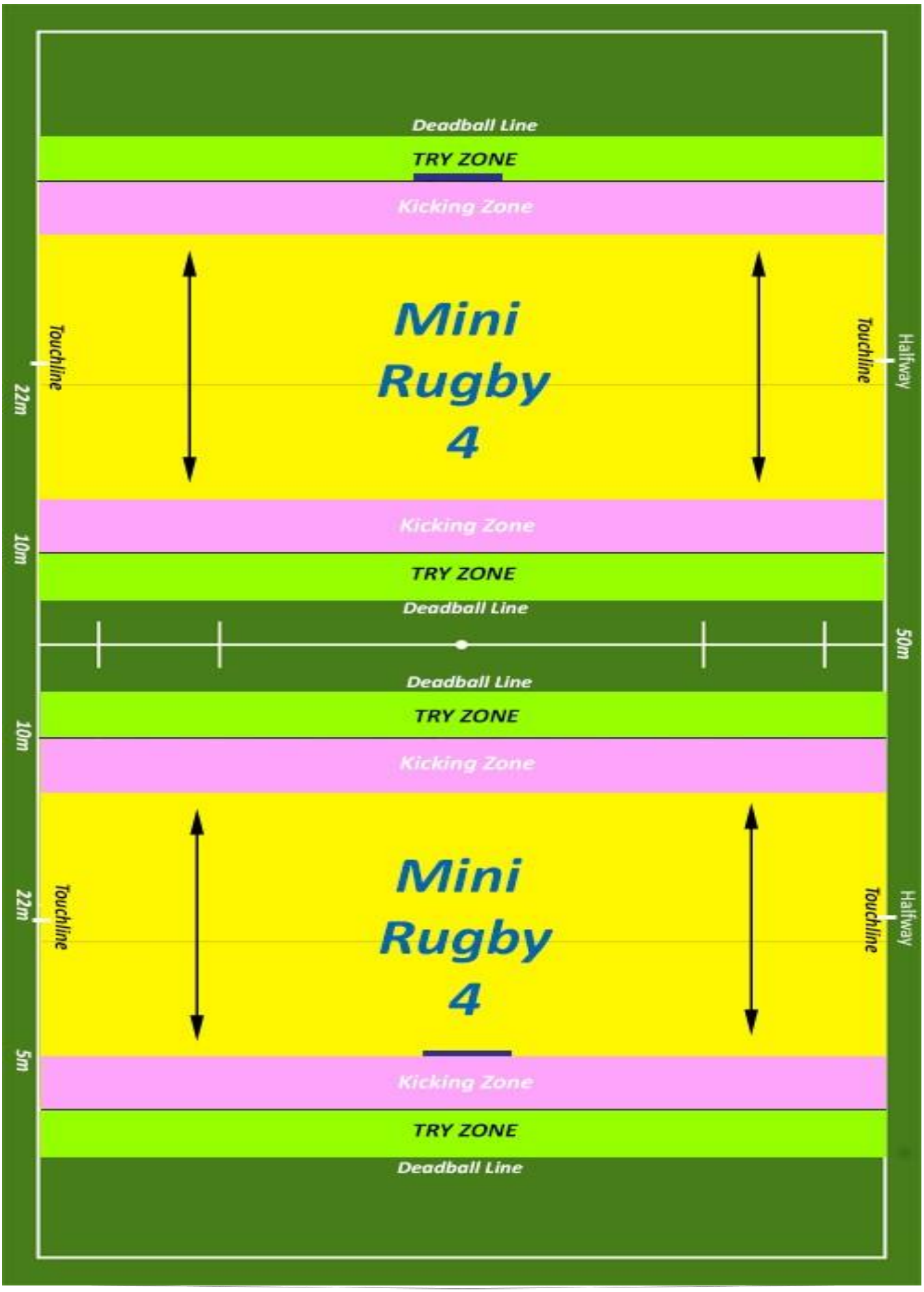
Dangerous Tackles: High /Swing and Dump Tackles

Player to receive 1 (one) verbal warning from the referee. If the player offends again, compulsory substitution to be made by coach on request by the referee. Player is allowed to participate in next match/ rest of the day's event unless there is a repeat of the offence.

Punching/Kicking of an opponent

No verbal warning – immediate compulsory substitution and the player is not allowed to participate in next match or rest of the day's event

15 a side Not allowed at U12. Doing so will result in a club sanction from the branch.


Deadball Line
TRY ZONE
Kicking Zone
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Halfway
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Kicking Zone
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TRY ZONE
Deadball Line
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TRY ZONE
10m
Kicking Zone
Mini Rugby 4
Touchline
Touchline
Halfway
22m
5m
Kicking Zone
TRY ZONE
Deadball Line

Codes of Conduct

See also: *www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/recruitment/*

Code of Conduct for Players – Adopted from the IRFU Child Welfare Policy Document

1. Play for enjoyment and become part of the rugby family.
2. Respect the "Game of Rugby" and play within the Laws of the Game.
3. Accept the referee's decision and let your captain or coach ask any relevant questions.
4. Play with control. Do not lose your temper.
5. Always do your best and be committed to the game, your team and your club.
6. Be a "good sport". Applaud all good play whether by your team or the opposition.
7. Respect your opponent. Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not "bully" or take advantage of any player.
8. Rugby is a team sport and make sure you co-operate with your coach; team mates and members of your club.
9. Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good.
10. At the end of the match thank your opponents and the referee for the match.
11. Always remember that you owe a duty of care to your opponents. Tackle hard but fairly, do not intend to hurt your opponent.
12. Winning and losing is part of sport: Win with humility – lose with dignity.
13. As part of the team it is important that you attend training regularly and listen to your coach and help your team.
14. As a team sport, it is important to understand that all members are important to the team!
15. Remember you are representing your team, club, family and the Game of Rugby.

Code of Conduct for Coaches - Adopted from the IRFU Child Welfare Policy Document

1. Remember that as a coach of an "age-grade team" you are acting "in loco parentis" and that you have a duty ofcare to all your players.
2. Lead by example - young people needs a coach they can respect as a Role Model.
3. Be generous with your praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or losing a match.
4. Teach your players that the Laws of the Game are mutual agreements which no one should evade or break.
5. Ensure that you are appropriately qualified by gaining the relevant coaching accreditation for your particular level.
6. Be reasonable in your demands on the players' time, energy and enthusiasm.
7. Encourage respect for all participants – teammates and opponents, as well as match officials.
8. Create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to train and play.
9. Always follow professional medical advice in determining when an injured player is ready to play again.
10. Develop policies for your club / team to agree procedures regarding discipline, injury prevention and treatment, team selection etc.
11. Be responsible and ensure you uphold the ethos of the game and the IRFU.
12. Support the IRFU Child Welfare Policy and all policies regarding Children in Sport.

Code of Conduct for Parents - Adopted from the IRFU Child Welfare Policy Document

1. Remember, young people play rugby for their enjoyment, not only yours.
2. Encourage your child always to play by the Laws of the Game.
3. Teach young children that honest endeavour is as important as winning, so that the result of each game is accepted without disappointment.
4. Help age grade players to work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship.
5. Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides.
6. Never ridicule, humiliate or shout at young players for making a mistake or losing a match.
7. Do not place emphasis on winning at all costs.
8. Do not force an unwilling child to participate in the playing of rugby. If the child is to play, he/she will do so in good time through your encouragement.

9. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from rugby.

10. As a spectator, do not use profane language or harass referees, coaches or age grade players.

11. Do not publicly question the referee's judgement and never their honesty.

12. Recognise the value and importance of volunteer referees and coaches.

13. Identify and acknowledge the good qualities of the Game of Rugby and uphold these values.

14. Remember you and your child's contribution to the Game of Rugby are very important to the IRFU and be proud of your contribution.

15. Understand the value of team sport and its importance.

Code of Conduct for Spectators - Adopted from the IRFU Child Welfare Policy Document

1. Remember that although age grade players play organised rugby they are not "miniature internationals".

2. Be on your best behaviour and lead by example. Do not use profane language or harass referees, players or coaches.

3. Applaud good play by the visiting team as well as your own.

4. Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them there would not be a match.

5. Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.

6. Verbal abuse of age grade players or sports leaders cannot be accepted in any shape of form.

7. Age grade players or Sports leaders are not fair targets for ignorant behaviour.

8. Encourage young age grade players to play by the Laws of the Game.

9. Spectators can contribute to the enjoyment of the event and all involved.

10. Be proud of your club and the Game of Rugby.

Code of Conduct for Referees - full version available online in the Codes of Conduct Documentation

1. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion, etc.
2. Put welfare of Age-Grade Player first.
3. Encourage fair play and ensure safety is paramount in all games.
4. Facilitate the playing of the game through the correct application of the laws of the game.
5. Plan and prepare appropriately, be punctual.
6. Hold up to date referee qualifications and be committed to the guidelines in the IRFU's Safeguarding Policy.
7. Act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of rugby and maintain highest standards of personal conduct..
8. Be responsible for monitoring boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with Age-Grade Players.
9. Remain positive when dealing with Age-Grade players and/or coaches, parents and spectators.
10. Manage disciplinary matters appropriately, report to the Branch when necessary.
11. Follow agreed protocols regarding changing rooms.
12. Report and concerns in accordance with this Policy's reporting procedures which are contained within the IRFU Safeguarding Policy.

Additional Information for Sports Leaders

1. Remember that as a Sports Leader of an 'Age-Grade team' you are acting 'in loco parentis' and that you have a duty of care to all your Age-Grade Players.
2. Always follow professional medical advice in determining when an injured Age-Grade Player is ready to play again.
3. Adhere to policies for your club / team to agree procedures regarding discipline, injury prevention & treatment, team selection etc.
4. Be reasonable in your demands on the Age-Grade Players' time, energy and enthusiasm.

INFORMATION

If you would like more information about Mini Rugby or would like information on Coaching Courses, Refereeing, or additional coaching material, please contact your Provincial Rugby Development Department.

Connacht Branch

IRFU Connacht Branch,
Galway Sportsground,
College Road,
Galway.
Tel: 091 – 561-568
Fax: 091 – 560-097
Email: info@connachtrugby.com

Leinster Branch

IRFU Leinster Branch,
Newstead Building A,
UCD, Belfield,
Dublin 4.
Tel: 01 – 269-3224
Fax: 01 – 269-3142
Email: info@leinsterrugby.ie

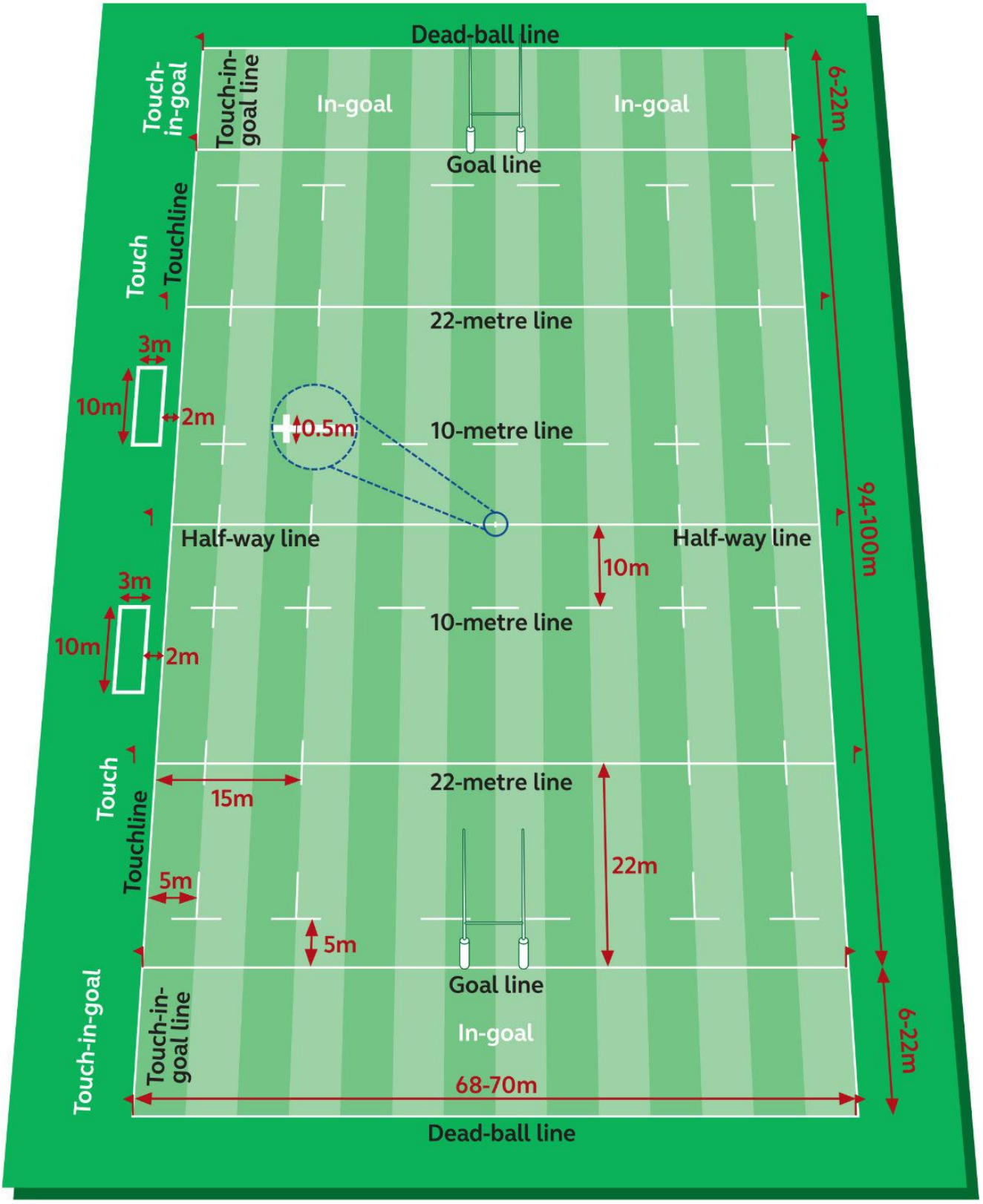
Munster Branch:

Cork:
IRFU Munster Branch
Irish Independent Park,
Tramore Road,

Cork.
Tel: 021 – 432-3563
Fax: 021 – 432-3956
Email: info@munsterrugby.ie

Limerick:
IRFU Munster Branch
High Performance Centre
University of Limerick,
Plassey, Limerick.
Tel: 061 – 335644
Fax: 061 – 371117
Email: info@munsterrugby.ie

Ulster Branch
IRFU Ulster Branch
Kingspan Stadium,
134 Mount Merrion Avenue,
Belfast BT6 0FT.
Tel: 048 – 9049-3111
Fax: 048 – 9049-1522
Email: info@ulsterrugby.com

Irish Rugby Football Union
10-12 Lansdowne Rd,
Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
Tel: 01-647-3800
Fax: 01-647-3895
Email: info@irishrugby.ie

From World Rugby Law 1 :The dimensions of the playing area are shown in the ground diagram.