



# TOUCH

## Guide to playing Touch







## INTRODUCTION - WHAT IS TOUCHRUGBY?

The origins of touchrugby can be traced back to Australia in the 1960s where it was used as a warm-up game for rugby codes. The simplicity of this game is unique; all you need is a rugby ball, a space to play and a group of friends.

Touchrugby is a fast moving, minimal contact, evasive game that is played throughout the world by men and women of all ages and skill levels.

The game is similar to rugby but without the tackling, scrummaging, rucking, mauling, lineouts and kicking.

This fast, simple and exciting game promotes the fundamental skills of running, handling, evasion and support play, whilst developing basic principles of attack and defence, without the fear of getting hurt.

## PART 1 - WHY TOUCHRUGBY?



### **Flexibility:**

Touchrugby is suitable for both beginners and experienced players. You can play in either men's, women's or mixed divisions.

Touchrugby is a minimal contact, recreational sport that is about playing the game on the field and also the social atmosphere afterwards.

Touchrugby is a fun game for the local park or even the beach. It is easy to learn and a great way to get in shape.

Touchrugby can also be used for simple dodging, chasing and warm-up activities.

## PART 2 - UNDERSTANDING THE GAME

### **Object of the game:**

The object of the game is for each team to score 'touchdowns' and to prevent the opposition from scoring.

The ball may be passed, knocked or handed between on-side players of the attacking team, who may in turn, run or otherwise move with the ball in an attempt to gain territorial advantage and score.

Defending players prevent the attacking team from gaining a territorial advantage by touching the ball carrier. Either defending or attacking players may initiate the touch.





**Start of the game:**

The team that wins the coin toss chooses the direction of play and must start with a ‘tap’ from the middle of the field.

The defending team must be back 10 metres for the start of play and after each touchdown.

**Duration of the game:**

The duration of the game can be varied to suit your local circumstances. But as a guide try 2 x 10-minute halves.

**Size of the field:**

The size of the field can vary, but the game will generally be played on half a rugby field (playing across the field). Posts are not required to play touchrugby.

**Number of players:**

Teams can consist of up to a maximum of 14 players, 6 on the field at anyone time.

It is suggested that teams of between 8 and 10 help to encourage maximum involvement and activity.

**Method of scoring:**

A touchdown is awarded when an attacking player places the ball on the ground, on or over the defending team’s scoreline. A touchdown is worth 1 point.

The person who takes the role of ‘dummy half’ (the person who receives the ball from the player starting the game) can cross the try-line, but not score.

After a team scores, the play begins again with a tap in the middle of the field by the non-scoring team.

# PART 3

## THE BASICS

**The Touch:**

Players of both defending and attacking teams are to use the minimum force necessary to affect the touch. A ‘touch’ can be made on any part of the person, their clothing or the ball.

After a touch has been affected, the player in possession is required to stop, return to the mark where the touch occurred (if the mark has been over-run), and perform a ‘Rollball’ without delay.



After being touched 6 times, the ball is handed over to the other side.

If a touch is considered to be too strong, a penalty will be awarded against the offending team.

The dummy half is not allowed to be caught whilst in possession of the ball. If the dummy half is caught with the ball, possession is handed over to the opposition who will recommence play with a Rollball.



**The Rollball:**

The Rollball is affected by the attacking player positioning on the mark, facing the defenders’ scoreline, standing parallel to the sidelines, and rolling the ball backwards along the ground between his/her feet. If the ball is rolled more than 1 metre, a penalty will be awarded to the opposition.

‘Voluntary Rollball’ occurs when the player is not touched and rolls the ball between his/her legs. This is not permitted and will result in a penalty to the opposition.

**The Penalty:**

If a player is penalised, his/her team must retreat 10 metres.

A penalty is taken by placing the ball on the ground, letting go of the ball, touching the ball with the foot and picking up the ball.

**Passing:**

A forward pass occurs when the ball is passed in front of the player who was in possession of the ball. In this situation, the ruling will be a penalty.

A ‘touch and pass’ occurs when a person who is touched then passes the ball. Again, the ruling will be a penalty.

**Offside:**

An attacking player is offside when that player is forward of another attacking player who has possession or who last had possession of the ball.

A defending player is offside when that player has not retreated the required 5 metres (Rollball) or 10 metres (penalty and restart of play after touchdowns) at recommencement of play.

For all offside incidents, the opposition will be awarded a penalty.



## PART 4 - GENERAL RULES



### General:

‘Overstepping’ or ‘off the mark’ occurs when the player who has been touched goes past the point where they were touched. In this case, a penalty will be awarded to the opposition.

When the ball goes to ground for any reason, possession changes and the game is recommenced with a Rollball.

Shepherding or obstruction will result in a penalty being awarded to the opposition.

‘Deviation’ happens at recommencement of play when a defender does not retreat straight back 5 metres to an on-side position and thereby obstructs the attacking player. This will result in a penalty being awarded to the opposition.

For minor offences, e.g. bickering with a referee, shouldering, leg trips, etc, the player can be sin-binned for five minutes without replacement.

Foul play of any nature (the referee being the sole judge) will result in the offending player being sent from the field without replacement.

## PART 5 - GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

### 1. Go forward:

In attack: The aim of the game is to score more touchdowns than the opposition. This is achieved by advancing towards the try-line. At times, it can be tactically advantageous to move towards the sideline to enable more room for further attacking plays.



In defence: When defending, try to deny your opponents time and space by moving forward and making the touch. The faster you move up on the attacking team, the less advancement towards your try line they will be able to make.

### 2. Support the ball carrier at all times:

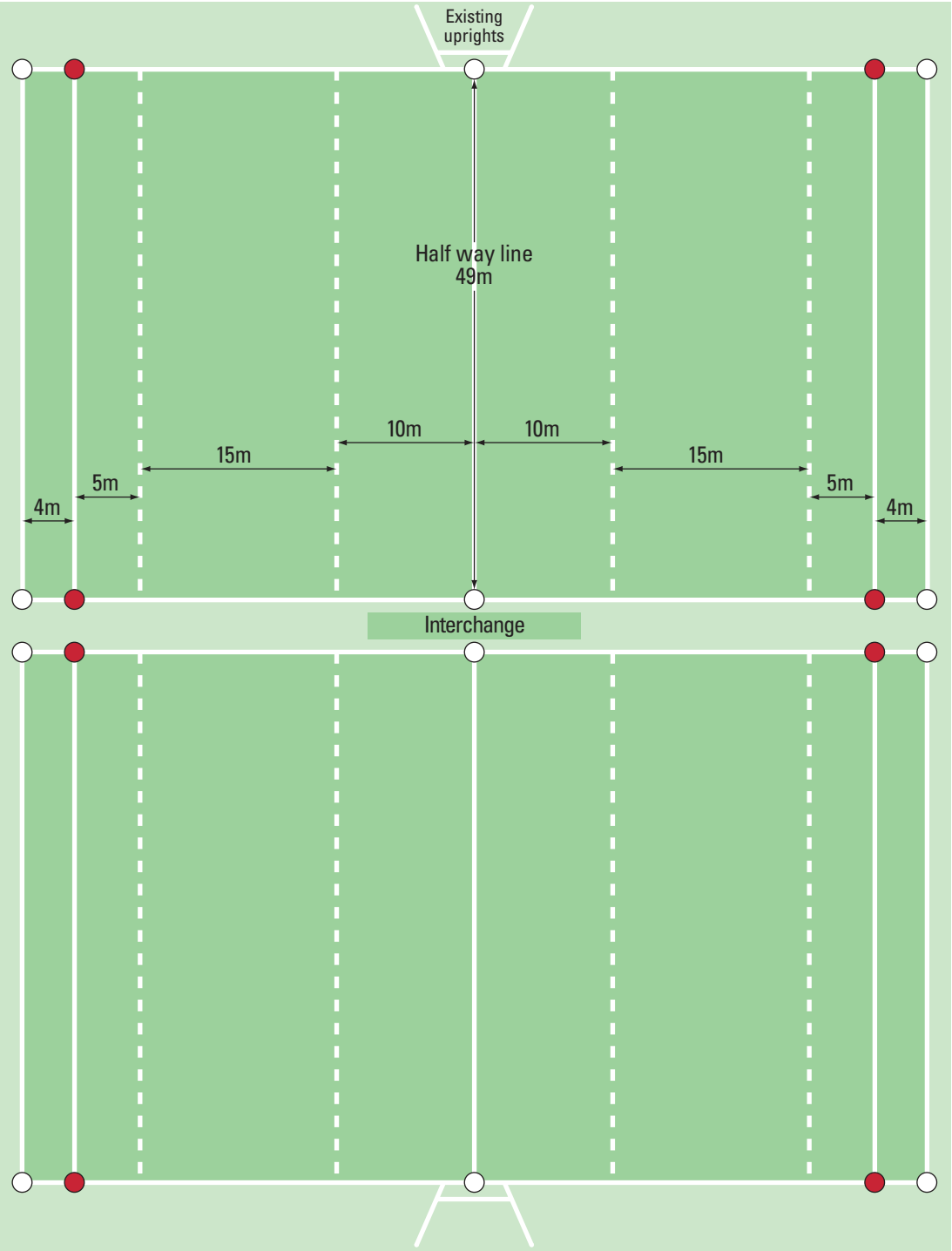
Close support of the ball carrier allows more options in attack and means possession can be maintained. Close support also means no ground needs to be lost by having to pass the ball a long way backwards to a team mate. Remember, a pass directly sideways is allowed and can often be the most effective pass.

### 3. Interchange players as much as possible:

A fresh set of legs on the field can be the difference between winning and losing. Look to interchange your players while your team is on the attack and in the area of the interchange box. Once you have made a touchdown, it is a good idea to get a whole new set of players on the field to keep up the intensity.



# PITCH LAYOUT



- ● - Layout of cones
- Grass to be no longer than 1½ inches
- Solid and broken line markings as per diagram above
- Posts are not required



# REFEREEING

As in any game, a referee’s role is vital to ensure that the prescribed rules are followed for the enjoyment of all participants.

Anyone can referee Touchrugby at a social level providing the basics are understood (please see the Quick Rules below). A referee must be able to control play on the field in a firm but friendly manner.

Your local Referees’ Society and club members are both great places to start when looking for referees.

# QUICK RULES

1. The conventional rules of the game as laid out by the Federation of International Touch (F.I.T) will apply, unless otherwise stated.
2. The fields are a reduced size from the international standard.
3. The attacking team must start with a tap from the middle of the field.
4. The defending team must be back 10 metres for the start of play, and after each touchdown.
5. After a team scores, the play begins again with a tap in the middle.
6. The person who takes the role of dummy half can cross the try-line but not score.
7. If the dummy half is touched while in possession of the ball, it is a turnover. **ROLLBALL.**
8. After being touched, the player touched must roll the ball between his/her legs.
9. The attacking team continues play until they have had 6 touches.
10. After being touched 6 times, the ball is handed over to the other side. **ROLLBALL.**
11. After touching the attacking player with the ball, all defending team members must retreat 5 metres.
12. **Ball to ground:** When the ball is dropped on the ground, it is a turnover.
13. **Turnover:** When the attacking side loses the ball to the opposition.
14. **No control:** When the ball is thrown, dropped, knocked on, in a touch. **ROLLBALL.**
15. When someone is penalised, his/her team must then retreat 10 metres.  
**PENALTY:** Ball on the ground, let go of the ball, touch the ball with your foot, pick up the ball.
16. If the defending players do not retreat, they are offside. **PENALTY.**
17. If a touch is considered to be too strong. **PENALTY.**
18. **Offside:** When the defending players have not retreated 5 metres. **PENALTY.**
19. **Forward pass:** When the ball is passed in front of the player who was in possession of the ball. **PENALTY.**
20. **Touch and pass:** When the person who is touched then passes the ball. **PENALTY.**
21. **Overstep or off the mark:** When the player who has been touched goes past the point where they were touched. **PENALTY.**
22. **Voluntary Rollball or no touch:** When the player is not touched and rolls the ball between their legs. **PENALTY.**
23. **More than a metre:** The ball must not be rolled more than one metre. **PENALTY.**
24. **Shepherd or obstruction:** Obstructing a touch from the defending side. **PENALTY.**
25. **Deviation:** When a defender changes his/her direction before retreating straight back 5 metres. **PENALTY.**
26. For minor offences, e.g. bickering with referees, shouldering, leg trips, etc, the player will be sin-binned for five minutes without replacement.
27. Foul play of any nature (the referee being the sole judge) will result in the offending player being sent from the field of play without replacement.

