CZECH RUGBY
UNION

# AMENDMENTS TO RUGBY RULES

## FOR JUNIORS, PUPILS, AND BEGINNERS

## MARCH2026

Approved by the Youth Committee on 1 September 2015
Amended by the Youth Committee on 19 March 2016
Amended by the Youth Committee on 27 May 2016
Amended by the Youth Committee on 29 April 2018
Amended by the Youth Committee on 19 September 2018
Amended on 4 May 2020
Amended by the Methodology Committee on 18 June 2024
Amended by the Methodological Committee on October 6, 2025
Amended by the Methodological Committee on February 2, 2026
Amended by the Methodological Committee on March 31, 2026



Compiled by Ondřej Surga on April 1, 2026

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1) Player Approach
2) Key National Issues
3) Match Decisions and Sanctions
4) Clarifications of Certain Rules
5) Rule Amendments by Category

## 1) Player Approach

This document contains amendments to the rules applicable to all children's and youth categories. These amendments are founded upon principles critical to the development of these categories as outlined in this section.

All players participating in tournaments must be registered in the information system and must possess a valid medical examination.

Regional tournaments for U6 to U12 are non-competitive and developmental in nature, as are the autumn matches for categories U14 to U18. Their purpose is not to achieve results subject to recognition but to afford all participants the enjoyment of playing, while emphasizing the acquisition of skills and their application in the game without any pressure to win. The enjoyment of the game should not be replaced by enjoyment derived from rewards for demonstrated performance.
**Accordingly, no rankings or winners are declared at regional tournaments within the U6 to U12 categories.** Results are not published; they are recorded solely as a reference for player placement in subsequent tournaments, although they may be misleading given the chosen approach. From the perspective of the tournament structure, it is not required to adhere strictly to competition regulations—for example, certain matches may be omitted when necessary.

The development of the individual's character, independence, and personal responsibility of players is essential.

**Priorities:**

- Long-term development of each player and attainment of their personal best;
- Ensuring the highest possible number of players progress to the senior category (maximizing retention);
- Matches in youth categories shall be regarded as the highest form of training (the most valuable and essential training session); therefore, all players must experience match load (physical and psychological stress). It cannot be permitted that certain players are deprived of the most important training opportunity (players train to participate, not to remain on the bench). Ideally, all players shall participate in the entire match, or at a minimum, one half;
- Only a balanced match satisfies the requirement for the long-term development of the player and serves as the optimal internal motivation for each participant. A match with an excessively one-sided score or one-sided course provides no benefit to either side;
- The match must serve to motivate players to pursue further training.

Practical implementation of the aforementioned points:

- Coaches of both teams in youth categories (U14 and above) communicate with sufficient notice the number of players they intend to field for the match.
- To fulfill the aforementioned priorities, coaches employ the provisions set forth by the rugby competition regulations and competition schedule: rules governing developmental competitions – Article 26 of the rugby competition regulations; provisions regarding team participation with a reduced number of players – Article 76 of the rugby competition regulations.

## 2) Key National Issues

A defining characteristic of most team sports is the phenomenon of late specialization. Rugby is recognized in international literature as a 'late development sport.' From this standpoint, the significance of an appropriate procedure in establishing the Player Long-Term Development Plan (LTPD / LTAD) is unequivocal.

The central idea of long-term athlete development plans is to maximize the development of each player's potential during the periods that are most suitable for developing a given skill. The Methodical Committee identified these goals and means:

- A long-term player development plan that identifies four key national themes:
  - catching the ball and passing,
  - duel and offload (mastering the 1v1 situation),
  - Dump Site,
  - independence and communication.

  Up to and including the U12 category, the rules are aimed at developing basic individual abilities (speed, agility) while simultaneously gradually building individual rugby skills that are difficult to develop at a later age (catching the ball, passing, Dump Site, kicking, mastering rugby body position and situations in contact). These skills are essential for applying the principles and elements that the Methodical Committee considers fundamental:
  - continuity of play. Emphasis is placed on play with the ball (pass / serve), i.e. the flow of play before contesting the ball;
  - high tempo of play,
  - **putting pressure on the defense** through play in motion,
  - creating options ,
  - reading the game and independent decision-making.

- Developing small-sided game formats that offer high player involvement, frequent handling of basic game situations, and the use of basic skills.

- Given that the primary objective is to support the flow of the game, the rules cannot be applied in a way that undermines it. Therefore, the following measures are applied:
  - controlled contact ,
  - more space for ball play (limiting contests for the ball),
  - gradual development of skills in contact play from simple situations (1v1) to more complex ones. This should allow coaches to devote more time to the basics and to favor individual solutions;
  - building correct habits at the Dump Site (first the Dump Site, then the contest for the ball, not the other way around).

- Adjustments to the rules for children and youth provide the framework within which, and through which, the long-term player development plan is implemented.

## 3) Match Decisions and Sanctions

In all categories, Referees must not signal play (the restart) with a whistle, except at the start of the match, in accordance with the laws of rugby, because both sides react simultaneously to an audible signal, instead of the defenders having to react to the restart taken by the attacking player. Furthermore, from the U12 category onward, it is necessary to allow a quick restart and penalize the defending side if it prevents the quick restart or fails to keep the prescribed distance, in accordance with the laws of rugby. Because it is appropriate to develop the skills necessary for effective attack, there is no reason to favor the defense by having the Referees first position the defenders and only then allow play to restart. However, in the U6 to U10 categories, the restart is only possible on the signal of the Referees, which the Referees gives verbally .

The highest emphasis must be placed on safety. The guidance for assessing contact with the head https://www.rugbyunion.cz/pravidla/posuzovani-kontaktu-s-hlavou applies.

In the preparatory categories it is necessary to penalize dangerous play even at the cost of not allowing advantage. In the event of an offence for which a caution and temporary suspension or sending off is awarded, the Referees may require the player to be substituted. The penalty try rule applies. Therefore, if a player prevents the scoring of a try through foul play (e.g. the last defender pushes the attacker into touch with the hands instead of attempting a tackle), a penalty try may be awarded.

In the youth categories (U12 and U14, a player who receives a caution and is temporarily sent off (yellow card), as well as a player who is sent off (red card), may be replaced by another player. In the event of a caution and temporary sending-off, the player may return to play after the specified time limit has elapsed.
Replacing a player in the event of a caution and temporary sending-off is not a substitution and does not count toward the number of substitutions.

A caution and temporary suspension or the sending-off of a player in matches in the preparatory and youth categories is neither subject to disciplinary proceedings nor reported to the disciplinary committee; it is only recorded in the match report, if one is prepared.

## 4) Clarifications of Certain Rules

Absolute non-application **of the knock-on rule in the U6 and U8 categories** . The rule on the forward pass, as well as on the intentional knock-on and offside, shall apply without restriction.

**The adjustment of the height of the Dump Site** is in line with the emphasis on player safety, as a high Dump Site is one of the main causes of head and spinal injuries. An equally important aspect is preserving the continuity and speed of the game; the player with the ball has more options for keeping the ball "alive." At the same time, this restriction leads players to master the low Dump Site.
Three Dump Site zones:
- green - permitted height up to waist level (navel, below the ribs).
- orange - Referees always give a warning about correct technique.
- red - from the lower edge of the sternum.

Referees always warn the tackling player about a high Dump Site, but they stop play only if the Dump Site is above the level of the lower edge of the sternum or if it simultaneously **violates the prohibition on contesting the ball until the moment of the Dump Site** . The guidelines for assessing contact with the head apply https://www.rugbyunion.cz/pravidla/posuzovani-kontaktu-s-hlavou .




**No charging through** up to and including U14. The key element in beating an opponent (successfully handling a 1v1 situation) is changing the running line before contact (Agility Before Contact / ABC), that is, trying to find or create through one's own movement a better chance of breaking through the defensive line. This skill must be part of the toolkit

of every player. Especially players who, in addition to other skills, are also physically gifted will need this skill once they reach a level where their opponents catch up with them. While shorter players are compelled by the conditions of the game to deal with this situation in normal play, physically gifted players do not have that need and therefore do not develop in this respect. Charging is defined as a situation in which a player with the ball, without attempting to avoid contact (without changing direction), runs into a stationary defender. Charging does not include a situation in which an attacking player runs into a defender who moved out against him or is coming in from the side.

**Fending off is prohibited**up to and including the U12 category. A player may not fend off before attempting a tackle. If a player is already in contact, they may free themselves from it by pushing away the opponent holding them with an open hand. An attempt to break free from a tackle is therefore not considered fending off. The reason is the preference for holding the ball in both hands before contact. In a contact situation, if a player cannot move forward, it should preferably be resolved by passing or offloading the ball, thus maintaining the flow of the game rather than forming a ruck. The infringement is punished by a penalty kick.

**Foot play and kicking** in play are permitted from the U8 category as a means of play, not as a means of gaining territory or stopping play. Kicking is an important element, as it is one of the three ways to overcome the defense (through the defense / around the defense / over the defense). Kicking in play is therefore permitted from the U8 category; however, if the ball goes into touch (without being touched by an opponent), the other side restarts from the place of the kick with a penalty kick. This also applies if a penalty kick is awarded.

In the U6 to U10 categories, play is restarted with a **TAP** – by touching the ball held in the hands to the ground or to the foot. It is very important to maintain sufficient defensive distance.

Also prohibited and penalized as **dangerous play** up to and including U12 is pushing with the hands into touch, without attempting to grasp the player, spinning by the jersey, tripping with the hands (French Dump Site), squeeze ball (pushing the ball on the ground between the legs). For higher categories, only spinning is prohibited. In all categories, the Head Contact Process guideline applies https://www.rugby.cz/pravidla/posuzovani-kontaktu-s-hlavou .

**In the preparatory and younger pupils categories (up to and including U12), boots with metal-studs are prohibited.**

The width of the pitch is crucial for the number of players listed below and should always be observed.

A breach of the rule on the prohibition of lifting in the lineout in the U14 category is punished by a free kick.

**Penalty kick instead of free kick** - From January 2026, in preparatory and younger pupils competitions (up to and including U12), the free kick will be replaced by a penalty kick. However, in the U6 to U10 categories, a penalty kick may only be taken on the Referee's signal (it may not be taken quickly).

## 5) Rule Amendments by Category

### (A)Mini rugby and younger age groups

### U6 category

| | |
|---|---|
| pitch dimensions | 22m x 6m (22m x 8 m) |
| number of players | 3 (4) – rolling substitutions, with no limit on the number of substitutes; each player should play at least half of the playing time |
| ball size | 3 |
| maximum playing time | 90 minutes in 48 hours |
| restart method | TAP – MAY NOT BE TAKEN QUICKLY |
| defensive distance | at least 5 m |
| forward pass rule | NO |
| Dump Site height | from the waist down; the orange zone applies |
| dangerous play | pushing into touch with the hands, without attempting to grasp the player, and spinning by the jersey, tripping with the hand (French Dump Site), squeeze ball |
| charging | PROHIBITED |
| refusing | PROHIBITED contest |
| for the ball in the Dump Site | PROHIBITED |
| contest for the ball after the Dump Site | PROHIBITED; the defending side may gain possession at the moment the ball is free; a free ball also includes a situation where, after a tackle, the ball is available to the attacking side, which, however, does not play the ball for 3s; in that case the Referee announces "free ball" |
| no attacking the 9 | it is forbidden to attack the player restarting play after a tackle until the moment they pass the ball or start running |
| number of players in the ruck | ruck PROHIBITED |
| number of players in the maul | maul PROHIBITED (the attacking side is allowed to join the player in contact for the purpose of handing over the ball, max. duration 3s) |
| scrums | NO |
| pop pass | NO |
| foot play / kicks | only stopping the ball with the foot permitted kick-offs NO |

**U8 Category**

| | |
|---|---|
| pitch dimensions | 35 m x 15 m |
| number of players | 5 – rolling substitutions, unlimited number of substitutes; each player should play at least half of the playing time |
| ball size | 3 |
| maximum playing time | 90 minutes in 48 hours |
| restart method | TAP – CANNOT BE TAKEN QUICKLY |
| defensive distance | at least 5 m |
| knock-on rule | NO |
| Dump Site height | from the waist down; the orange zone applies |
| double Dump Site | YES - if both tacklers maintain the safe Dump Site zone |
| dangerous play | pushing into touch with the hands, without attempting to grasp the player, and spinning by the jersey, tripping with the hand (French Dump Site), squeeze ball |
| charging | PROHIBITED |
| refusing | PROHIBITED |
| contest for the ball in the Dump Site | PROHIBITED |
| contest for the ball after the Dump Site | only the tacklers |
| no attacking the 9 | it is prohibited to challenge the player restarting play after the Dump Site or ruck until the moment they pass the ball or start running |
| number of players in the ruck | 1 v 1; if a ruck follows a Dump Site, only the tackler and the tackled player may take part in it (this also applies if two defenders make the tackle simultaneously) |
| number of players in the maul | maul PROHIBITED (the attacking side is allowed to join the player in contact from behind for the purpose of passing the ball) |
| scrums | NO |
| pop pass | NO |
| foot play / kicking | YES, with no territorial gain |
| kick-offs | NO |

**U10 Category**

| | |
|---|---|
| pitch dimensions | 40 m x 25 m |
| number of players | 6 - rolling substitutions, with no limit on the number of substitutes; each player should play at least half of the playing time |
| ball size | 3 |
| maximum playing time | 90 minutes in 48 hours |
| restart method | TAP – CANNOT BE TAKEN QUICKLY |
| defensive distance | at least 8 m |
| Dump Site height | from the waist down; the orange zone applies |
| double Dump Site | YES - if both tacklers maintain the safe Dump Site zone |
| dangerous play | pushing into touch with the hands, without attempting to grasp the player, and spinning by the jersey, tripping with the hand (French Dump Site), squeeze ball |
| charging | PROHIBITED |
| refusing | PROHIBITED |
| contest for the ball in the Dump Site | PROHIBITED |
| contest for the ball after a tackle | YES |
| no attacking the 9 | it is prohibited to challenge the player restarting play after the Dump Site or ruck until the moment they pass the ball or start running |
| number of players in the ruck | 1+1 in 1+1; if a ruck follows a tackle, only the tackler and the tackled player may take part, plus one support player from each team |
| number of players in the maul: 2 v 2; only one stoppage; maul with no forward movement for no more than 3s | |
| scrums | NO |
| pop pass | NO |
| foot play / kicking | YES, with no territorial gain |
| kick-offs | YES, by a kick from hand or a drop kick; if the first attempt is unsuccessful, the other side restarts with a scrum, i.e. with a penalty kick<br>the ball must reach a distance of 8 m from the halfway line of the pitch<br>the team that conceded the points may choose to receive instead of the kick-off |

**U12 Category**

| | |
|---|---|
| pitch dimensions | 55 m x 40 m (45 m wide when playing with 10 players) |
| number of players | autumn 9 / spring 10 - hockey-style substitutions, with no limit on the number of substitutes; each player should play at least half of the playing time |
| ball size | 4 |
| maximum playing time | 90 minutes in 48 hours |
| restart method | kick / scrum / line-out |
| defensive distance | at least 10 m |
| Dump Site height | from the waist down; the orange zone applies |
| double Dump Site | YES - if both tacklers maintain the safe Dump Site zone |
| dangerous play | pushing into touch with the hands, without attempting to grasp the player, and spinning by the jersey, tripping with the hand (French Dump Site), squeeze ball |
| charging | PROHIBITED |
| refusing | PROHIBITED |
| contest for the ball in the tackle | PROHIBITED |
| contest for the ball after a tackle | YES |
| number of players in the ruck | 1+2 v 1+2 |
| number of players in the maul | 3 v 3; only one stop; maul with no forward movement for no more than 3s |
| scrums | YES |
| number of players in the scrum | autumn 3v3, spring 5v5 |
| binding method | autumn 3 v 3 (in one row), spring 3-2 v 3-2 (in two rows) |
| contest for the ball in the scrum | NO |
| pressure in the scrum | max 0.5 m |
| no attacking the 9 | it is forbidden to tackle the player restarting after the scrum until they pass the ball or start running |
| pop pass | YES, uncontested, 3v3 |
| foot play / kicking | YES, with no territorial gain |
| kick-offs | YES, by drop kick<br>the ball must travel 10 m from the halfway line<br>the team that conceded the points may choose to receive instead of the kick-off |

**(B)Older boys and youth (U14 to U18)**

Played in accordance with the Standard Set of Variations for players under 19, which forms part of the World Rugby Laws of the Game, unless stated otherwise below.

**U14 category**

| | |
|---|---|
| pitch dimensions | full pitch |
| ball size | 4 |
| number of players | 15 |
| number of substitutes | maximum 8 |
| head Referees | players of the participating teams |
| playing time | 2 x 25 min |
| yellow card | according to the competition rules: caution and temporary suspension for 5 minutes |
| **pop pass lifting is not allowed**（**free kick**） | |
| refusing | is allowed (no height restriction) |
| charging | FORBIDDEN (penalty kick) |
| Dump Site | dangerous tackle includes a Dump Site or an attempt to Dump Site an opponent **above the level of the lower edge of the sternum** (approximately 5 cm above the elbows).<br>A dangerous Dump Site is not<br>• a Dump Site above the above-mentioned level, if the tackling player made an effort to perform the Dump Site at a permitted height (reasonably lowered their stance), but the player with the ball lowered their stance shortly before the Dump Site and the tackling player no longer had the opportunity to react to this lowering,<br>• a Dump Site above the stated level if the player with the ball plays pick&go (i.e. picks the ball up from the ground and immediately attempts to break through the defense without straightening up), but only if all other rules on the Dump Site are complied with (especially the attempt to wrap the player with the arms),<br>• an attempt to take the ball from the hands of the player with the ball without attempting a Dump Site (however, if contact with the head of the player with the ball occurs, it is an offense by the defending player). |
| dangerous play | spinning by the jersey and other instances of dangerous play expressly prohibited in lower categories are not generally prohibited, which does not preclude the Referees from judging a specific situation as dangerous play if there is a particular reason for doing so |

**Youth categories U16 and U18**

| | |
|---|---|
| tackle | dangerous tackle includes a tackle or attempted tackle of an opponent above chest level |
| yellow card | according to the competition rules: caution and temporary suspension for 7 minutes |
| dangerous play | spinning by the jersey and other cases of dangerous play expressly prohibited in lower categories are not generally prohibited, which does not preclude the Referee from judging a specific situation as dangerous play if there is a particular reason for such an assessment |

* * * * *