

The Game of Rugby

Edited from the Peninsula Rugby Club Team Handbook

INTRODUCTION

If you are just starting to play or watch rugby, it, probably seems like complete chaos, or at the very least, organized mayhem. You will discover the need to learn a new vocabulary--ruck, maul, scrum, a try, etc. For the new rugby player, this handbook will provide a basic lesson in rugby. For the experienced player this handbook will provide a review, and perhaps new insights into his position. For the entire club, this handbook will provide the basics on how we do things on the Peninsula Rugby Club. The youth team is very important for the future of this club. There is a section specifically for the youth concerns in this handbook in the last section of this handbook. Unless specifically noted, throughout this handbook the use of masculine terms (his, he, etc.) is intended to be gender non-specific and is applicable both male and female players.

A. BASIC RUGBY

A-1 The Game

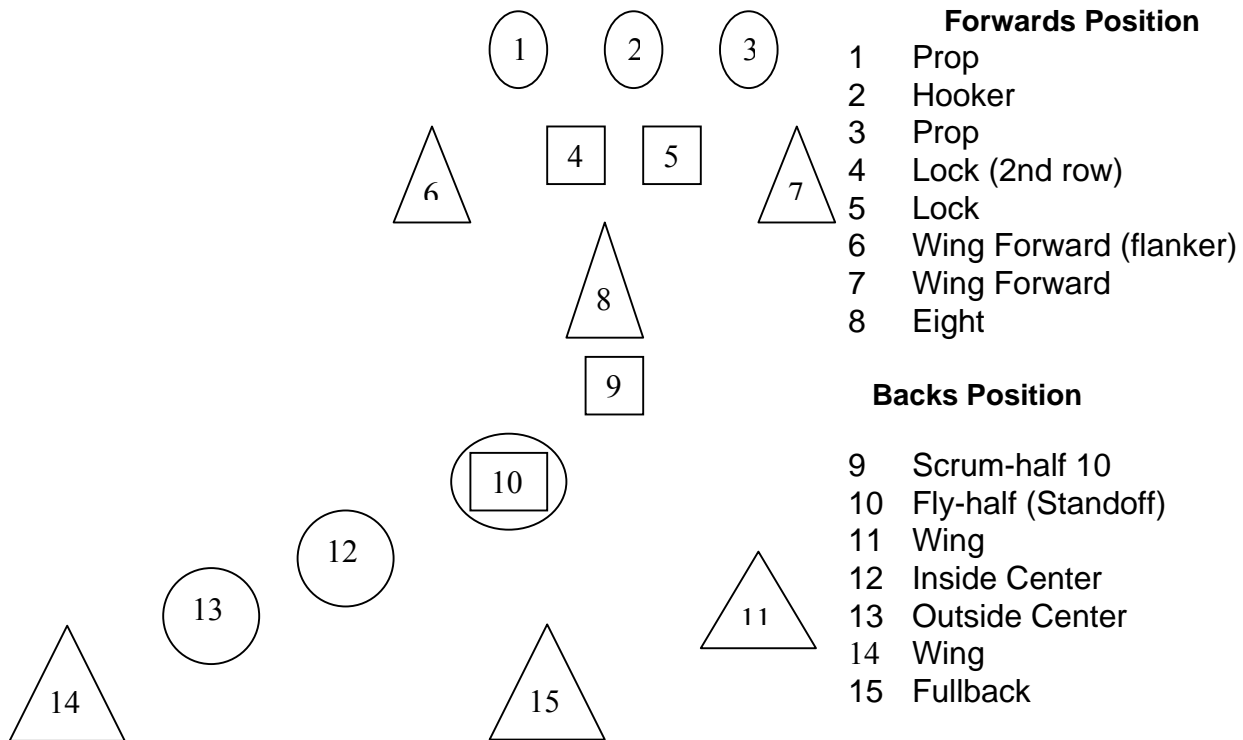
A full-length rugby field, known as a "pitch," is approximately 100 meters long by 70 meters wide with a 20 meter try (end) zone. Many rugby fields in America measure 100 yards long- by 75 yards wide, with try zone areas of 10 to 20 yards reflecting the tendency to use football fields. The object of the game is obvious -outscore your opponent. A player with the ball may advance the ball by running, kicking, or passing the ball. He may kick it forward, but may only pass the ball laterally or behind him. Other members of the team in possession of the ball must stay behind the ball to participate in the play. There is no blocking for the ball carrier. Any player on the pitch may run with the ball. The opponents may tackle the ball carrier at any time. Tackles must be made with the arms wrapped around the opponent's body below the shoulders. A player may not leave his feet to make a diving tackle or to hurdle an opponent. Above the shoulder tackles, and other tackles deemed to be dangerous, are against the laws and are severely penalized.

A-2

Players

Each team, or "side", consists of 15 on-field players: eight forwards and seven backs. The forwards (collectively called the scrum or pack) work as a group. The forwards have four primary responsibilities: win the ball in set play, win or maintain possession of the ball in the loose play, provide support, and create an advantage by skill and intensity. The backs (collectively called the backline) usually run and advance the ball up field. To do this the backs must focus on five responsibilities: receive the ball from the forwards, advance the ball beyond the gain line, provide support, create advantage, and provide defense in depth. While the forwards usually focus on possession and the backs on advancing the- ball, one of the most exciting aspects of rugby is that *all players are involved in all aspects of the continuous flow of the game*. Rugby forwards often handle the ball and must be adept at passing and catching, while backs must be prepared to contest for possession of the ball. As a result of the continuous flow of the game, players must learn to think and react for themselves.

The number on a player's jersey generally indicates his position. The sketch below lists the player's number and corresponding position:



The Pack (Forwards)

1. Front Row - Consists of two props, #1 and #3, and the hooker, #2. These are the pillars of the scrum. They are usually fairly strong, and generally squat in stature. The props direct the power of the other forwards into the opposing pack and provide the support for the hooker, who attempts to hook the ball with his feet. .

2. Second Row -The locks, #4 and #5, stabilize the scrum and are the real power behind the push when the ball comes into the scrum. At the lineout they are usually the tallest and best jumpers. .

3. Loose Forwards - The flankers, #6 and #7, and the eight-man, #8, are often the most mobile and active of the forward pack. On defense, they are always after the ball and usually first to the breakdown (when an opponent goes to the ground with ball). Offensively, they are usually running with the backs and provide the base for second phase play from the loose ball.

The Backline (Backs)

1. Scrum-half -- #9 is the primary field manager of the team. He must work with his forwards to cleanly get the ball and pass it out to his backs to press the attack. The Scrum-half runs the offense and must communicate with both the forwards and backs. He is the player who puts the ball into the scrum and passes the ball to the backs. The scrum-half also receives the ball from the forwards in lineouts, rucks, and mauls. In rucks and mauls, the scrum-half directs the forwards to counter the opposition and retrieve the ball.

2. Fly-half -- #10 is usually one of the more experienced rugby players on the team. After receiving the ball from the Scrum-half, the Fly-half directs the backline attack. He will pass the ball, kick, or run to take advantage of the opponents' mistakes.

3. Centers -- #12 (inside) and #13 (outside) are usually the hardest hitting, and best runners on a rugby team. They must tackle like American football linebackers and run like a tailback. They must be skilled both defensively and offensively. In the backline, they are the likeliest to become involved in a ruck or a maul.

4. Wings -- #11 and #14 are the speedsters of the team. Teams like to get the ball to their wings quickly and let the speedsters have room to maneuver and run. Defensively the wing is often the last player between an opponent and a score and the only protection from an opponent's run along the sideline (known in rugby as the touch line). Weak side wing acts as fullback when fullback is involved with a play (crashing in the offense, tackling in the defense).

5. Fullback -- # 15 is the rugby equivalent to the free safety. While it may appear he does little, the fullback is one of the most difficult positions on the field. He is the last line of defense between the opposition and end zone. He must make a quick decision to come into a play or hang back, and he is the one who most often makes the lonely last tackle before a score. Offensively, the fullback will join the backline attack to overwhelm the opponent's defense.

A-3 Scoring

1. **Try - 5 points.** A player grounds the ball in his opponent's end zone (try zone). The ball may be run or kicked into end zone and then touched down for a score. In order for a try to count, it must be placed down on to the ground under control with downward pressure.

2. **Conversion - 2 points.** After a try is scored, the team that scored may kick the ball through the goal posts. The kick is taken at any point on a line perpendicular to where the ball was touched down in the try zone. This can lead to some very difficult attempts from near the sidelines when the try is scored at the extremes of the try zone.

3. **Penalty Goal - 3 points.** A team is awarded a penalty kick if the opposition is guilty of a major penalty. If the ball is kicked through the goal posts from a place kick or drop kick, 3 points are awarded. If the kicking team is too far from the goal posts to try for points, they will usually kick to gain a territorial advantage. The most common major penalties are offsides, hands in the ruck, and falling over the ball to kill play.

4. Drop Goal - 3 points. At any time during a match, a player may attempt a drop kick through his opponent's goal posts. The ball is dropped on the ground and then kicked through the uprights. If the kick is good, 3 points are awarded.

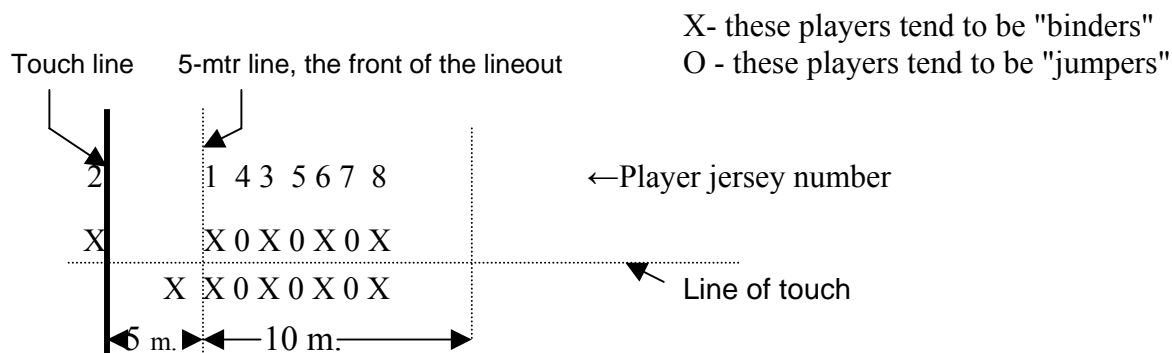
A-4 Phases Of Play

There are two basic phases of play in rugby. The first phase is called **Set Play**, including the scrum, line-out, drop-out, free kick, and penalty kick. This phase of play is generally well organized, planned, and has formations established from which plays can be run. The second phase is known as **Loose Play** or "second phase ball", occurs when the called play is over or a breakdown occurs. A breakdown occurs when a player is tackled or a mistake is made. This phase is largely improvised and highly spontaneous. This is where an enterprising team can create magic and develop movements of great beauty. This is where the action is!

Set Play

1. Scrum - The most unique and identifiable formation in rugby is the serum. A scrum will take place following a minor rule infraction, the most common of which are forward passes or knock-ons (knocking the ball forward, usually with the hands), or when the ball becomes unplayable. The eight forwards bind together and the front row binds on the opposition. The team not responsible for the rule infraction or stoppage of play is allowed to put the ball into the scrum between the front rows. Each team then attempts to hook the ball to their side, or push the opposition off the ball. The ball is then heeled back through the forward pack to the eight-man where the Scrum-half is waiting to secure the ball. While the ball is in the scrum, no player is allowed to handle the ball-only feet are allowed.

2. Line-out - Under the new variations of the laws, the line-out has become the most common set piece. After the ball has been kicked or run out-of-bounds, the forwards line up in a straight line perpendicular to the touch line where the ball went into "touch" (out-of-bounds). The team not responsible for the ball going into touch is given the right to re-start play by throwing the ball between the two groups of forwards. Most line-outs consist of seven forwards formed in a line, although the standard minimum number is two. The team throwing the ball in will call a signal and throw the ball where they have a superior jumping advantage. The ball must travel, five meters. After gaining possession of the ball, the forwards usually (but not always) pass the ball to their Scrum-half who passes it out to the backs who then attack up field. Many teams also have plays that can be initiated from the line-out to take advantage of the mass of the forwards.



3. Dropout, or 22 meter drop-kick - After the attacking team puts the ball into their opponent's end zone and the ball is then grounded by the defending team, the defending team is given a dropout (drop kick) to be taken behind their 22 meter line. Play re-starts when the dropout is taken and the ball crosses the 22 meter line. (If the attacking team had grounded the ball, then a try would have been awarded) .

4. Penalty and Free Kicks.. Following more serious infractions of the laws, a penalty, or free kick, is taken. The type of kick taken (a punt, place kick, drop kick, kick for goal, or just tapped on the foot) is usually determined by a team's field position, match score, and time remaining. The kick only requires a foot tapping the ball free through a mark. As a result, teams will often develop running plays for the forwards. Here are the primary differences between the two kicks:

a. Penalty Kick: The referee signals by holding his arm at a 45 degree angle with his foot marking the location of the penalty. The kicking team may attempt to kick through the uprights for 3 points. Any other type of kick may also be taken. The opposition may not advance forward until the ball has been kicked. A significant advantage of the penalty kick is the line-out gained. If the ball goes out of play (rugby term is *in to touch*) from a penalty kick, the kicking team may take a line-out at the spot where the ball went in to touch.

b. Free Kick: The referee signals a free kick by holding his upper arm out with his elbow bent, hand in the air, and foot marking the location of the free-kick. Any form of kick may be taken, but points may not be scored directly from a free kick.

. Second Phase Or Loose Play

1. After Contact - Loose play occurs when the ball leaves the set formation. The divisions between forwards and backs then tend to blur." The key to successful second phase is what happens after contact, usually a tackle initiating a **ruck or a maul**. A rugby player, when tackled, must release the ball-either on the ground or to a teammate-immediately after contact is made with the ground. The attacking team's objective is to maintain possession and forward momentum. It is to the attacker's advantage to keep the play moving after the breakdown. In the defense, it is generally the object of the forwards to gain control of the ball and provide a stable platform to initiate the counter-attack.

2. Fundamental Concepts

a. **Possession:** Rugby is a possession sport; if a team does not have the ball, it can not score. Almost all individual skills are geared to maintaining or gaining possession of the ball. It is important to not only retain possession of the ball, but also to prevent the opposition from getting possession of the ball. The focus of loose play is to ensure that one's team maintains possession of the ball, especially after a break down in play .

b. **Attack:** If the ball is not moved forward, a team cannot score.

c. **Support:** Support is critical to the effectiveness of possession and attack. As the ball moves from player to player, members must support the ball carrier, i.e., be where they can catch a pass, pick the ball up from the ground, or field a kick. The attacking team does not want the ball to die and stop their attack.

3. **Ruck** - A ruck is a loose variation of a scrum. A ruck is formed when two opposing players are bound together over the ball. Each pack of forwards (and sometimes backs) will bind into the ruck and attempt to win possession of the loose ball. As with the scrum, only the feet can be used to get the ball out of the ruck.

4. **Maul** - When the ball carrier has been held up by his opponents, but not taken to ground, members of his team (usually forwards) will bind onto him in attempt to protect the ball (maintaining possession of the ball) and provide a stable base to get the ball out (initiate an attack). The opposition is attempting to take the ball away. Unlike a ruck where the ball is on the ground, in a maul the ball is being held by one team while the other team attempts to grab it away. Once possession is secure, the ball is usually tossed to the waiting Scrum-half who runs or passes the ball.

Penalties

Concept of Advantage

One of the least understood, but most exciting aspect of Rugby is the concept of "advantage". In most sports Americans play, the flow of the game stops after a rule infraction. In rugby, however, if one side commits an infraction and their opponents gain an advantage from it, the game continues until the advantage no longer exists. The advantage may be tactical (good attacking opportunity) or territorial (a gain in ground).

Example 1: a player makes a forward pass, but an opponent intercepts it and starts his attack up field. He has a tactical advantage, so the referee ignores the forward pass.

Example 2: A player knocks-on (knocks the ball forward) and drops the ball. His opponents kick it ahead and follow up. They have gained a territorial advantage from the knock-on, so the referee lets it go.

The referee will usually signal a possible advantage situation by holding one arm straight out to his side. If no advantage is gained, the referee will blow his whistle and award a scrum, free kick, or penalty kick as determined by the infraction.

Knock-On And Thrown Forward

The only way to attack and gain ground is to run or kick. A player cannot throw or knock the ball forward. A pass must be a lateral or backwards. A knock-on means a player has fumbled the ball forward, toward his opponent's goal. A pass thrown forward (towards one's tryline) is a forward pass. These are probably the two most common law infringements in rugby. If the non-offending team gains no advantage, a scrum will be awarded to the non-offending team.

Off-Side

With its roots as an English game, one of the most confusing aspects of Rugby is the concept of Off-side/On-side. For each condition there are variables that may or may not make a player offside, or put a player on-side. The most important aspect of off-side is the location of ball. Generally, if you are in front of the ball you are off-side and unable to participate in the play. The off-side law for open play is not the same as that for scrums, rucks, mauls and line-outs. In open play you are off-side when you are in front of a player on your team who has the ball or who has last played it, i.e. kicked the ball. Being off-side means you can not play the ball until you are put on-side again. You can be put on-side by the ball being run ahead of you, you retreating to get behind the ball, or by the player who last played the ball running past you. There is nothing wrong in being off-side. Every player is bound to be off-side at some point in the game. You become penalized only when you are off-side and you try to play the ball. Remember, simply being in front of the ball does not get you penalized for being off-side. You are only penalized if you're in front of the ball when your team has it, or you have not been put on-side again, and you play the ball.

Examples:

Line-Outs

1. For players actually taking part in a line-out-i.e. all forwards, both scrum-halves, the player throwing in, his opposite number) the off side line is the line-of-touch until the completion of the line-out. After that, the off-side line runs through the ball itself. If you are in a line-out, keep on your side of the line until the ball is caught. Then keep on your side of the ball until the line-out ends.
2. For players not taking part in a line-out (i.e. all remaining backs, and forwards not involved in the line-out) the off-side line ten is meters behind the line-of-touch, or the goal-line, whichever is nearer. Until the line-out ends, stay behind that line.
3. A line-out starts when the ball leaves the hands of the player throwing in. It ends when one of four things happens:
 - a. The ball leaves the area of 5 to 15 meters from the touch line and one meter on either side of the line-of-touch.

- b. .A player carrying the ball leaves the line-out.
- c. The ball is thrown more than 15 meters from the touch line.
- d. A ruck or maul forms and the entire ruck or maul has moved beyond the line or-touch.

Kicks

1. If you are off-side when a player on your team kicks ahead, and you are within ten meters of an opponent waiting for the ball, you must retreat until you are ten meters from him, or you will be penalized. Just by staying near him you are affecting the game. You must retreat at once: nothing he may do can put you onside.

2. On-side means you are no longer off-side, so you can take part in the game again. Any off-side player (including one off-side under the 'Ten-Meter' Law and retreating) can be put on-side by his team in these four ways:

- a. A teammate who kicked the ball when behind him now runs past him.
- b. Any other teammate who was on-side when the ball was kicked now runs past him.
- c. A teammate with the ball runs past him.
- d. He retreats behind any of these teammates.

3. Any off-side player (except one off-side under the 'Ten-Meter' Law) is put on-side if an opponent does one of these things:

- a. Carries the ball ten meters.
- b. Kicks or passes the ball.
- c. Intentionally touches it but doesn't hold it.

Rucks and Mauls

In a ruck (ball on ground) or a maul (ball being carried) the off-side line is the ball. The actual off-side for players entering the ruck/maul runs through the tail-end of the ruck or maul, ie., the hindmost foot of a player on your team. You must enter a ruck/maul from the rear. Once in, the player must remain bound or retreat behind the entire ruck/maul. Backs, or players not involved in the ruck or maul, may advance to the rear foot of the last player in the ruck or maul.

Scrum

1. For everyone except the Scrum-half and the forwards bound in a scrum, the offside line is the hind foot of the last player of his team's scrum. No player may advance in front of that "line" (foot) until the ball emerges from the scrum.

2. For the Scrum-half, he can continue to stay even with the ball. He cannot grab one of the opposing players and they are not supposed to obstruct him. This means the Scrum-half whose team lost the hook can go forward, just not past the ball.

3. There is a special variation of this rule for youth rugby. The off-side line for the scrum-halves is different. If team A wins the "hook" or put-in, the Scrum-half for Team A may follow the ball as it makes its way to the rear of the scrum. The opposing Scrum-half from Team B may not advance past the original off-side line as defined by start of the serum.

Summary

This final segment is a quick review of how to play rugby for a new player. Rugby is an unfamiliar sport for most Americans, so there is a great deal a player needs to learn to play effectively.

Rugby, at its very essence is a soccer game where the players pick up the ball and run with it. Legend has it that the first Rugby game was a soccer game that a player in a fit of frustration, picked up the soccer ball and started to run with it. A somewhat colorful beginning for what has become one of the most enjoyable sports in the world.

The Object of the Game, as defined in the laws:

"two teams of fifteen players each, observing fair play and according to the Laws and in a sporting spirit, should be carrying, passing, and kicking the ball to score as many points as possible"

First, the field, the pitch as it is known in the Rugby world, is officially 70 meters by 120 meters, which of course is liberally interpreted at the local level." There are fifteen players on the pitch per side. The object of the game is to score by bringing the ball down field, crossing the goal (try) line, and putting the ball down with downward pressure in the try zone. This first of three methods of scoring is worth five points. The second is the after try conversion that is kicked directly out from the try zone where the ball was placed which is worth two points. Finally; any other kick that goes between the goal posts is worth three points.

The matches have two forty minute halves with a five-minute half-time. The only substitutions allowed are for injuries, and these are limited. For that reason, a player with a minor injury may get a minute or two to regain his composure, work out the cramps, or stem the flow of blood. If the player cannot play on, he leaves the field. Time taken out for injuries is made up in the last part of the match.

Teams themselves are broken down into two groups, the forwards and the backs. The forwards are similar in function to the offensive line in American football, while the backs are similar to the backs. The forwards generally gain possession of the ball, and the backs generally advance the ball. Rugby is a possession-based sport that places a premium on keeping the ball. In addition, once the set play is completed, there is little difference between the forwards and backs. Both groups can pick up the ball and run, can kick, can tackle, and get into rucks/mauls. The only ways to advance the ball down the field are kicking or running. It is illegal to pass the ball forward. The player with ball may be stopped by tackling. Play does not stop once a player is tackled. If a player is tackled and taken to the ground, the tackled player must release the ball and cannot play the ball

again until he regains his feet. Depending on whether the player is on his feet (a maul) or on the ground (a ruck), a struggle ensues to either maintain, or gain possession of the ball and get it out to the backs. Once a ruck is formed, hands may not be used to gain control of the ball. This is done by either pushing the opposition off the ball, or moving the ball back with his feet.

For a minor infraction of the laws (rules of the game) or if the ball becomes tied up in a ruck or a maul, the referee will call for a scrum. A scrum is the large cluster of shoving people- or more correctly the forwards of each team trying to gain possession of the ball by pushing the opposition off .it. Major infractions of the laws will result in either a penalty kick, or a free kick, depending on the severity of the infraction. When the ball goes out of bounds, the play is reinitiated with a lineout. This is when both teams line up opposite each other in two parallel lines and the team with the line-out throws the ball down the line between them. Once the ball is in the air both teams jump to catch the ball.

Rugby is an impact sport. The contact, while vigorous, is much less dangerous than in American football since there is no blocking, no rigid protective equipment allowed, and there are stringent rules on tackling. The emphasis on possession and the requirement that only allows contact near the ball decreases the number of physical collisions. Dirty, or dangerous, play is not allowed by the laws, nor is it tolerated by the players. Rugby is still considered "a sport of ruffians and thugs played by gentleman". Many players consider the sportsmanship aspect of the game its most important and significant attribute.

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES/ REQUIREMENTS

Special Thanks' to Dr. Martyn Kingston, Head Coach, Seattle RFC for his assistance in this section.

General Notes:

1. It is imperative that all players on the field have a high level of fitness. Players are expected to maintain personal fitness during the off season.
2. Regardless of position, every player on the field must have a reasonable competence in basic skills (tackling, rucking, passing the ball, defending).
3. All players must communicate to each other during the course of play.

Prop

Major requirements:

1. Strength
2. Developed neck, shoulders, back and leg muscles
3. Develop correct technique to apply strength - foot position, body angles, correct binding and understanding of forces
4. All around fitness and stamina
5. Understanding with locks and hookers: the scrum and line-out

Essential skills:

1. Contact:

- a. To scrummage effectively, safely and consistently
- b. To bind tightly with hooker and to form a stable front row platform
- c. To support in the line-out
- d. To legally prevent opposition from breaking through the line-out
- e. To tackle from close positions.
- f. To maul and ruck-low body position for driving forward
- g. A continuous commitment to secure ball and maintain possession

2. Running:

- a. To run with determination and commitment
- b. To sprint over short distances
- c. To run after strenuous physical effort in the rucks, mauls and serums

3. Handling:

- a. To take and give a short lifted pass
- b. To control, manipulate and rip out and roll out of a maul
- c. To be able to take deflection from a line-out including a planned peel

NOTES:

1. The prop's game is mainly played in close contact situations: scrums, mauls, rucks, and line-outs. Develop strength and skills to be effective under these situations.

2. Tighthead and loosehead props have slightly different roles and requirements.

*tightheads are the master scrummagers and need mass, strength and technique; they move scrums against the head. The tighthead must consistently pressure the opposing hooker. The tighthead prop is generally the leader of the pack.

*looseheads must have aggressive mental dispositions along with an explosive body type required to open up the tunnel and pre-empt an opposing tighthead prop. The loosehead prop must protect the hooker so that he may win the ball.

3. Technique, strength and ability are vital to the success and effectiveness of the scrum and line-out (binding, body position, foot position, coordinated pushing are as important as physical strength).

4. Attitude is an essential attribute of a prop. He must be willing to slam his head and shoulders into an opposing pack for 80 minutes.

Hooker

Major requirements:

1. Strike: Ability to win ball on his own team's put-in and, if required against the head (against the opposition hooker)
2. Throw: Ability to throw in accurately and quickly at the line-out with timed throws- rising and flat to the front and slower timed lobs to the middle and back of a long line-out, with the additional ability to throw quick timed throws to jumpers and gaps in a short line-out (Good coordination between eye and hand and foot movements)
3. Scrummaging ability: Be a third prop. Have developed leg, upper body and neck strength
4. BE A FOURTH LOOSE FORWARD

Essential skills:

1. Scrummaging:
 - a. To bind tightly and quickly with props. Weight training and exercises to develop neck, shoulders, arms, back and leg muscles are necessary
 - b. To position head, body, and legs in correct position, head forced up, hips below the shoulders, eyes on the ball
 - c. To time the strike with feed of ball
 - d. To move ball through appropriate channels
2. Line-out:
 - a. To throw the ball various distances with accuracy
 - b. To position body, head and arms for throw. Ball should be visible to the forwards
 - c. To communicate with forward jumpers, to discuss type of throw, height speed, trajectory of ball
3. Contact: The majority of energy is expended in contact situations and tight-play
 - a. To scrummage correctly
 - b. To maul and ruck
 - c. To support at front of line-outs and general play
 - d. To tackle in close situations'
 - e. To be able to fall on ball going forwards and backwards and to regain feet quickly
4. Handling:
 - a. To give and take a short lifted pass
 - b. To manipulate, rip out and roll off a maul
 - c. To pick up LINE-OUT deflections and charged down drop outs

NOTES:

1. In the scrum, line-out and loose play, the hooker must understand the importance of correct body, feet and head position.
2. In the scrum, line-out and loose play, the hooker must understand the importance of correct body

mechanics i.e. binding, grip, locking, snap shove, drives, channeling ball, foot pressure, angles etc.

3. Develop line-out skills- i.e. timing of the jump, body position for jump, jumping aggressively, need for close communication between thrower and jumper. A knowledge of different throws and the ability to work with a short line-out where timing and body movements become more critical.

4. Ability to develop the skills required in the second and third row of rucks and mauls is essential. Body position and mechanics, the drive, ball channels, tight binds etc.

5. Primary reasons to exist are to add strength and power to the set play and to win clean ball.

6. Fitness, strength and stamina are essential. Training is critical to developing them.

7. Always be around the ball and GO FORWARD-pressure the opposition.

Flanker (Wing Forwards, Breakaways)

Major requirements;

1. Ability to win the ball at breakdowns
2. Ability to tackle well and be destructive
3. Ability to be constructive and possess the ball skills and mobility
4. Ability to support backs and initiate or continue attack
5. Possess an extremely high work rate during a game (Fitness is paramount!)

Essential skills:

1. Contact:
 - a. To tackle effectively from the front, side, and rear of opponents
 - b. To bind, drive, and protect effectively
 - c. To maul and ruck
 - d. To support in the LINE-OUT and to drive from line-outs and other situations
2. Running:
 - a. To run with determination and speed
 - b. To understand lines of movement and angles of pursuit
 - c. To run to support the man with the ball
 - d. Ability to cope with continued physical contact and strenuous effort-short bursts of speed and sustained play
3. Position:
 - a. There are specialist requirements for blind side and open side breakaway play. Each has a specialist role to play in attack and defense.
 - (1) **The Open Flanker** tends to be quicker, more agile, able to go to ground (controlled falling to the ground to set up a clean ruck) easier, and occupies: the back of the line-out and open side of scrums that determine his angles of . run in set play.

(2) **The Blindside Flanker** tends to be bigger, possesses greater strength and occupies the blind side of scrums and the fifth position in the line-out with a greater contribution to the physical integrity of the set pieces. His contribution to the physical integrity of the set is also different.

b. Communication with No.8, Scrum-half, and Fly-half is essential

NOTES:

1. Work rate and physical intensity should be high.
2. Primary tasks are to ensure that the ball is won and /or possession is maintained at the breakdown, to support play, and to nullify the opposition's attacking moves,
3. Tend towards disruptive activity in maintaining constant pressure on the opposition.
4. It is crucial to follow the coaches' instruction to maintain correct angles of pursuit and positioning on the field in attack and defense.
5. Develop strength in the arms, shoulders and thighs, and speed and endurance with interval and repetition running.
6. The flankers set the pace of the forwards! (Fitness!)

Lock- (Second Row):

Major requirements:

1. Possess jumping ability to win good ball at line-outs
2. Ability to lock and drive the scrummage effectively
3. Focus and direct power at all phases of the game
4. Be physically fit and possess good neck, body and leg strength
5. Have stamina and strength at second phase situations
6. Bring total concentration to the position
7. Have an ability to reach breakdowns quickly and to rip, ruck and maul effectively

Essential skills:

1. Handling:
 - a . To catch and deflect a ball at line-outs
 - b. To catch ball at kick-offs and drop outs
 - c. To take and give a short pass
 - d. To manipulate, rip out and roll off mauls e. To be able to make ball available in a tackle
2. Contact:
 - a. To lend weight and force to both set and loose play
 - b. To stand up in tackle

- c. To tackle in close situations
- d. A commitment to secure, protect, and provide good ball

3. Running:

- a. To run with determination and committed aggression
- b. To be able to run and sprint after strenuous physical work (especially important to support the backline from the scrum).

NOTES:

1. In the scrum, line-out, and loose play, the lock must understand the importance of correct body, feet and head position.
2. In the scrum, line-out and loose play, the lock must understand the importance of correct body mechanics i.e. binding, grip, locking, snap shove, drives, channeling ball, foot pressure, angles etc.
3. Develop line-out skills- i.e. timing of the jump, body position for jump, jumping aggressively, need for close communication between thrower and jumper. A knowledge of different throws and the ability to work with a short line-out where timing and body movements become more critical.
4. Ability to develop the skills required in the second and third row of rucks and mauls is essential. Body position and mechanics, the drive, ball channels, tight binds etc.
5. The lock's primary job is to add strength and power and win good ball.
6. Fitness, strength and stamina are essential and training is critical to develop them.
7. Always be around the ball and GO FORWARD to put pressure the opposition

Number Eight

Major requirements:

1. Ability to read the game
2. Physical and tactical ability to control and direct play at line-outs, base of scrums and most platforms of attack and defense
3. All around strength and stamina
4. Ball skills (Hand and Foot), mobility, and ability to anticipate good angles of run (to get where the opponent should be going)
5. Ability to communicate and work effectively with the scrum half

Essential skills:

1. Handling:
 - a. To control ball and release it properly at back of scrum
 - b. To catch and deflect a ball at the back of line-outs

- c. To pass the ball at varying lengths and speeds
- d. To give and take a short lifted pass
- e. To manipulate play by ripping and rolling from a maul
- f. To deal with a ground ball and pick it up quickly at speed

2. Running:

- a. To run to support backs in attack and in defense
- b. To understand the different angles of pursuit
- c. To run ahead straight with commitment and conviction
- d. To run with speed, accelerate quickly, and to run after strenuous physical effort

3. Contact:

- a. To tackle well in close situations, from front, rear, and side, and to stand people up if necessary
- b. To scrummage, bind locks and control the ball at the foot of the scrum
- c. To support at the LINE-OUT
- d. To initiate attack at the base of the scrum and fringe of LINE-OUT
- e. To commit himself to secure good ball

NOTES:

1. The eightman must be fit and physically strong.
2. He occupies a key, tactical position in the team and as such he has the responsibility to control and direct play.
3. The eightman must have a serious commitment to angles of run and to the support of moves in attack and defense.
4. All around athletic ability and durability is vital-you should be able to run like a back as well as play effectively in set forward play.
5. He must direct the scrum, especially during set play.

Scrum-half

Major requirements:

1. Distribution - Ability to pass the ball quickly and accurately anywhere on the pitch
2. Athleticism - Coordination and agility, and high level of overall fitness
3. Mental alertness
4. Communication skills
5. Mental and physical toughness
6. Unselfishness
7. Anticipation
8. Knowledge of the game and the team's specific game plan

9. Show leadership on the pitch

Essential skills:

1. Handling:

- a. To throw four types of pass - Standing, Spiral, Dive, Reverse
- b. Understand the type of pass for different situations
- c. Understand what makes a good pass: Speed, Accuracy, Length, Consistency
- d. Understand the ingredients of a good pass: Reflexivity, Body balance, Foot position, Hand position, Sight lines, Follow through
- e. Eliminate a bad passing side
- f. To not turn your back when passing
- g. To pick up ball at speed
- h. To feed the scrum accurately and correctly

2. Strategic:

- a. To understand set play and the work of forwards
- b. To command forward respect and to direct the- delivery of ball from forwards to backs
- c. To ensure proper balance of forwards is involved in loose play

3. Kicking:

- a. To kick accurately and quickly with both feet
- b. To execute a variety of kicks: clearing (kick used to gain tactical advantage or defend by kicking the ball a great distance down field, generally for touch), box (a kick that is placed in a certain location on the field, generally behind the pack), chip (a short kick that is used to get beyond an opponent), and grubber (similar to a chip, but the ball stays at ground level)
- c. Understand his increased kicking responsibilities on a wet or windy day
- d. To step back and away to create more time and room for kicking

4. Running:

- a. To run explosively and with low body position
- b. To run with strength and agility
- c. To accelerate quickly and remain elusive
- d. To recognize and identify opportunities
- e. To breach defenses and link with back row on blind side

5. Contact:

- a. To avoid being caught in possession
- b. To tackle from front, rear, and side
- c. To fall on the ball and to quickly regain his feet
- d. Understanding defensive options

6. Position:

- a. Understand the stance that should be adopted before receiving the ball to make effective passes
- b. To remain as close as possible to ball in open play

- c. To stay alert to the position of the ball at scrum, ruck, maul, and line-out
- d. Understand the benefits of varying one's position at the line-out
- e. Support the ball carrier
- f. Develop defensive understanding with the back row
- g. Guard the blind side to prevent blind side plays or the loss of loose ball on the blind side
- h. Understand opportunities for counter attack from cover defending roles

NOTES:

1. Understanding of the correct stance or body position in order to make effective passes.
2. Ability to stay as close as possible to the ball at all times.
3. Ability to command respect of forwards and to direct the delivery of ball.
4. Ability to remain alert at all times.
5. Understanding varying positions.
6. Develop defensive roles with back row and at loose.
7. Develop kicking skills and options.

Fly-half

Major requirements:

1. Possess a tactical awareness of the options available in attack and defense
2. Have sound judgment and an ability to select the correct option
3. Possess the skill to execute the appropriate option
4. Have a high level of fitness, agility, balance, quickness, and speed
5. Possess an ability to pass short and long and to penetrate opposition defenses
6. Possess a wipers, up and under, grubber and chip kick, and kick left and right
7. Unselfishness
8. Leadership on the pitch and management of the back line

Essential skills:

1. Handling:
 - a. To take a variety of passes early enough to have a range of options available
 - b. To pass ball quickly and accurately with varying length and speed
 - c. To pick up ball at speed
2. Position:
 - a. To know how to set the correct alignment depth and width in attack and defense
 - b. To know how to vary alignment according to the dictates of the situation
 - c. To reposition quickly and efficiently

- d. To be tactically aware, e.g., Know how to set up platforms in close or out wide, and to work with forwards inside and backs outside
3. Kicking:
- a. To kick accurately on attack and defense with either foot and under pressure if necessary
 - b. To know how to use a variety of kicks, i.e., Clearing kick to touch, grubber and chip, feint, line, box, wipers, and drop kicks
 - c. To kick accurately with varying lengths and height and always in control
4. Communication: Be able to communicate the appropriate planned moves in attack and defense as the situation dictates
5. Running:
- a. To accelerate quickly off the mark
 - b. To run with control, change pace, side step, change direction and swerve
 - c. To support other backs in attack and defense
 - d. To vary pace and sprint over short distances
6. Contact:
- a. To tackle
 - b. To possess a determination to be involved in defensive work
 - c. To collect ground ball

NOTES:

1. A key tactical decision maker. Choosing the right option is essential.
2. The Flyhalf needs to have a good understanding of other positions and of the tactics to be used in defense and attack.
3. The Flyhalf should be in control of the back line moves.
4. The backline is dependent on the flyhalf's alignment, skills, fitness and option choices.
5. The Flyhalf's command of defense (and its patterning) is just as important as attack.

Inside/Outside Centers

Major requirements:

1. Control of the middle of the field in defense and attack-winning and maintaining possession there
2. Ability to receive and give a pass under pressure
3. The knowledge of positioning and correct alignment in defense and attack
4. Ability to tackle effectively in close situations
5. Ability to support other backs'

6. Ability to accelerate quickly either from a standing start or when running
7. Ability to work with forwards (especially back row)

Essential skills:

1. Handling:

- a. To stand in the tackle and take it on his terms and when need!3d to make the ball available
- b. To take and give any pass under pressure-to think quickly-and vary the speed, length and height of a pass as the situation dictates .
- c. To support and appreciate his role in second phase
- d. To field any ball in the air and on the ground going backwards or forwards

2. Running:

- a. To accelerate quickly *off* the mark
- b. To run with power and conviction
- c. To run with control-change of pace, step *off* both feet, change direction, side step, swerve, draw a man etc.
- d. To burst through tackles
- e. To fend off tackles

3. Contact:

- a. To know how to tackle effectively from the front, middle and rear
- b. To possess superior loose/contact skill and technique
- c. To retain possession in contact
- d. To stand in tackle and keep his *feet* when necessary

4. Position:

- a. To know how position, alignment and angles *of* run will help your effectiveness to move the ball and put others away
- b. To cover defend when necessary
- c. To execute moves *off* the ball - loop, dummy runs, miss and decoy moves

5. Kicking:

- a. To kick with both feet
- b. Know how and when to kick for territory
- c. To execute a variety of kicks - punt, grubber, chip, feint, line, and drop kicks at varying lengths and heights

NOTES:

1. The centers' main task is to engineer try scoring opportunities.
2. Alignment, positioning and angles of run are critical
3. Physical strength and contact skills are crucial.
4. All round fitness facilitates better mental and physical performance

5. Ability to handle the ball confidently under pressure.
6. Ability to tackle and control contact situations effectively.

C-9 Wings

Major requirements:

1. To run with speed and determination
2. To run elusively with the ball
3. To position oneself correctly off the ball
4. Possess an all round fitness
- 5~ Be able to handle the ball confidently-catching, holding under pressure, and passing
6. Be able to field kicks and kick effectively-especially to touch, line and box

Essential skills:

1. Running:
 - a. To run with pace and determination carrying the ball
 - b. Possess the ability to run with the ball with control and be elusive-change pace, swerve, change step, side step, change direction
 - c. To run with body angle slightly forward
 - d. To run with arm in a position to fend off
2. Position:
 - a. To possess knowledge and skill of positioning for defense and attack
 - b. To alter position on the field quickly and to do it all game
 - c. To avoid distractions and to possess the mental concentration necessary for these tasks
 - d. To know then variations possible at scrum, line-out, 22 drop, kick off, and penalty kicks
 - e. To know his position in various back line moves
3. Handling:
 - a. To be able to catch and receive a ball correctly and at pace
 - b. To give a pass - speed of pass, body position, length of pass, height of pass, in front of chest of receiver
 - c. To hold the ball correctly in two hands or in one. If using one, ball in outside arm - leaving inside field arm free to fend
 - d. Know how to protect ball in maul or tackle and how and when to release it to make it available
 - e. To stand in tackle if needed
 - f. To throw in at the line-out if necessary
 - g. To field any ball in air or on ground, going forward and backwards
4. Kicking:

- a. To be able to kick accurately with both feet
- b. To execute a variety of kicks - chip and grubber, cross or centering kick, clearing kick to space, to touch, feint and drop kicks
- c. To toe ball ahead and chase/retrieve under pressure

5. Contact:

- a. To tackle effectively from front, rear and side
- b. To fend off and to burst through tackles
- c. To retain possession in contact
- d . To position body for a drive
- e. To fall on ball quickly and regain feet

NOTES:

1. It is the wing's job to score tries, and finish off play decisively.
2. The wing must be hungry for the ball and look for work.
3. The wing must value the positioning and repositioning work he does off of the ball, which can create opportunities and deny them for the opposition - again, be hungry and look for work.
4. The wing's main task is also to prevent tries from being scored against his team.
5. The wing must make the ball available when necessary.
6. The wing must run with pace, skill, power and conviction.

Fullback

Major requirements:

1. Sound positioning sense
2. Good concentration and cool nerves
3. An ability to field the ball under varying circumstances and kick well
4. An ability to defend well and make open field tackles
5. Quickness, speed and a slashing style of run when joining the attack

Essential skills:

1. Position:
 - a. To be able to organize a Back Three cover defense in various first and second phase situations
 - b. To be able and willing to work interchangeably with other deep cover positions on the field
 - c. To possess the mental skills and discipline of concentration and sustained focus necessary to position himself and others effectively

2. Contact:

- a. To be a strong tackler and to be 'able to make open field tackles
- b. To move onto the ball quickly, fall on it and regain feet immediately while under pressure
- c. To stand up in the tackle and work effectively in the maul

3. Kicking:'

- 16
- a. To have a strong boot and be able to kick effectively with either foot
 - b. An ability to execute a variety of kicks - clearing kick, to touch, chip, grubber, drop, place, and box kicks
 - c. To vary length and height of kick

4. Running:

- a. Positioning knowledge in attack to make entry most effective
- b. To run quickly, to accelerate and change pace
- c. To enter the back line at the right time and along various angles of run
- d. To .counter-attack

NOTES:

- 1. Mental preparation prior to a game is crucial.
- 2. Positioning for defense and attack is vital.
- 3. Organization of the Deep Cover is the fullback's job.
- 4. The fullback should be involved in attacking moves.
- 5. Fielding, kicking, and tackling well are essential.
- 6. Be innovative by moving quickly and looking for work but avoid mistakes.