

DUBAI EXILES

RUGBY & NETBALL SINCE 1966

A PARENTS' GUIDE TO THE RULES · SEASON 2026/27

U18

YEARS 12 & 13 · CONTACT RUGBY · 10, 12 OR 15-A-SIDE

ONE TEAM. ONE FAMILY.
ONE EXILES.

U18 AT A GLANCE

THE NUMBERS THAT MATTER

Your child is now playing **Under 18s (Years 12 and 13)**, the last step before senior rugby. Fixtures are played 10, 12 or 15-a-side depending on numbers, to World Rugby law with a small number of youth safety variations. Discipline and match length follow World Rugby.

All rules in this guide are the official 2026/27 UAE Rugby Federation (UAERF) & RCC Mini & Youth Law Variations (Rev.2), which every club in the UAE plays to. Anything not listed follows normal World Rugby law.

THE NUMBERS

what you will see on match day

10–15 a-side
PLAYERS ON THE PITCH
Fixtures are 10, 12 or 15-a-side depending on numbers.

15/18/22
MAX SQUAD SIZE
Rolling substitutions, on and off as often as coaches like.

2 × 35 mins
LEAGUE MATCH
Maximum. Tournaments: 2 × 20.

70 × 100 m
MAXIMUM PITCH SIZE
A full-size pitch.

Size 5
BALL
A full-size ball.

90 mins
DAILY LIMIT
No player may play more than 90 minutes in one day.

WHAT'S NEW AT U18

compared with U15 & U16 Years 10 & 11

	U15 & U16 YEARS 10 & 11	U18 YEARS 12 & 13
TEAM & SQUAD	15-a-side, squad of 22	**10/12/15-a-side, squad of 15/18/22**
LEAGUE MATCH	2 × 35 mins	**As per World Rugby**
SCRUM	8 players, contested, 1 m push	**8 players, contested, 1.5 m push**

Everything else is unchanged from U15 & U16 Years 10 & 11. 3 things change this season.

MATCH DAY BASICS

TIME, TEAMS, SCORING & RESTARTS

TIME ON THE PITCH

HOW LONG IS A GAME?

- **League:** as per World Rugby age-grade law, normally 2 halves of 35 minutes.
- **Tournaments & festivals:** 2 halves of 20 mins (maximum).
- **Daily limit:** no player may play more than **90 minutes in one day**, however many games there are.

SELECTION

EVERYONE PLAYS

- At this age selection follows **World Rugby** practice: there is no minimum-minutes rule, although Exiles coaches still aim to give everyone meaningful game time.
- Substitutions are **rolling**: players can go off and come back on.
- Squads are capped at **15/18/22** depending on the format being played.

POINTS

HOW DO YOU SCORE?

- **Try = 5 points.** Ball grounded over the try line under control.
- **Conversion = 2 points.** Taken in line with where the try was scored, 10 m back from the try line.
- **Penalty goal = 3 points** and **drop goal = 3 points**, as in the senior game.

DIAGRAM

POINTS ON THE BOARD



GETTING THINGS GOING

KICK-OFFS & RESTARTS

- Each half starts with a **drop kick** from the middle of the pitch.
- The receiving team must stand **10 m back**, and the kick must travel at least 10 m.
- After a try, the team that **did not score** restarts the game with a drop kick. Scoring means you have to win the ball back.

NEAR THE TRY LINE

IN-GOAL & THE "22" RESTART

- If an attacker is **held up** over the try line (unable to ground the ball), the defending team restarts with a **goal-line drop-out**, as in the senior game.
- When the defence makes the ball dead in their own in-goal, play restarts with a **22 drop-out**: a drop kick taken from on or behind the 22 m line.

OFFENCES

PENALTIES & FREE KICKS

- The team awarded a penalty may **tap and pass**, take a **scrum**, or **kick for touch** and get the lineout throw. The opposition must retreat **10 m**.
- They may also **kick for goal** (3 points).
- Common penalties you will hear: *offside, not releasing the ball, hands in the ruck, not rolling away, high tackle.*

KICKING

KICKING IN OPEN PLAY

Kicking is allowed in open play as in the senior game: kicks to touch, chips, grubbers and cross-kicks.

A player catching an opposition kick cleanly inside their own 22 may call **"mark"** and take a free kick (World Rugby Law 18).

CONTACT & SET PIECE

TACKLE, RUCK, MAUL, SCRUM & LINEOUT

CONTACT

THE TACKLE

- Full tackling to normal **World Rugby Law 14**: below the line of the shoulders, wrap the arms, then release and roll away.
- **No "swinging" tackles.** A defender may not grab an arm or a shirt and swing the ball carrier around or to the ground.

AFTER THE TACKLE

THE RUCK CONTESTED

- Once a player is tackled, both teams compete for the ball on the ground. This is a **ruck**, fully contested under **World Rugby Law 15**.
- Defenders may **counter-ruck** (drive the attackers off the ball) and **jackal** (grab the ball while on their feet before a ruck forms).
- Everyone must enter from their own side ("through the gate") and stay on their feet.

STANDING TACKLES

THE MAUL

When the ball carrier is held up standing and team-mates bind on, that is a **maul**. If it stops and the ball is not out within **5 seconds**, the referee awards a **scrum to the team that had the ball** (World Rugby Law 16).

Collapsing a maul is a penalty offence, as in World Rugby law.

BALL CARRIER

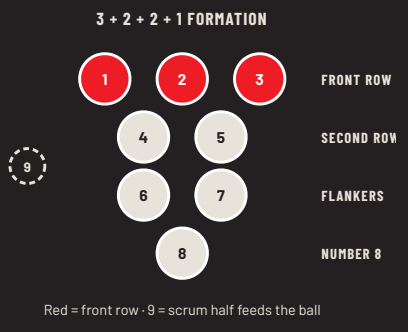
FENDING & THE "SQUEEZE BALL"

- Fending (pushing a tackler off with an open hand) is allowed **as per World Rugby law**: never to the head or neck.
- **No "squeeze ball".** A tackled player may not curl up over the ball and push it back between their own legs. Present it to the side.

SET PIECE

THE SCRUM CONTESTED

- **8 players** per side in a **3 + 2 + 2 + 1** formation: a front row of three, two second rows, two flankers and a number 8.
- The scrum is **contested**, but the push is limited to a **maximum of 1.5 metres**. Driving further is a penalty.
- The **number 8 may pick up and run** from the base of the scrum.
- The **scrum half can pass or run** from the scrum.
- The **defending scrum half may not go past the middle of the scrum**, giving the attacking 9 space to clear the ball.

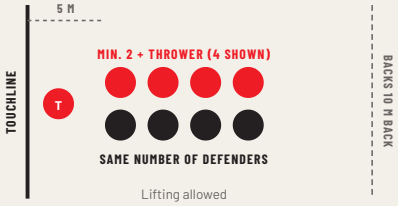


Red = front row · 9 = scrum half feeds the ball

SET PIECE

THE LINEOUT CONTESTED

- When the ball goes into touch, play restarts with a lineout of a **minimum of 2 players plus the hooker** to throw, formed between **5 m and 15 m** in from the touchline, as in the senior game.
- Both teams may **jump and compete** for the ball.
- **Lifting is allowed**, so you will see jumpers hoisted into the air by two supporters.
- **Catch and drive** mauls are allowed as per World Rugby law.
- Everyone not in the lineout must stay **10 m back** until it is over.

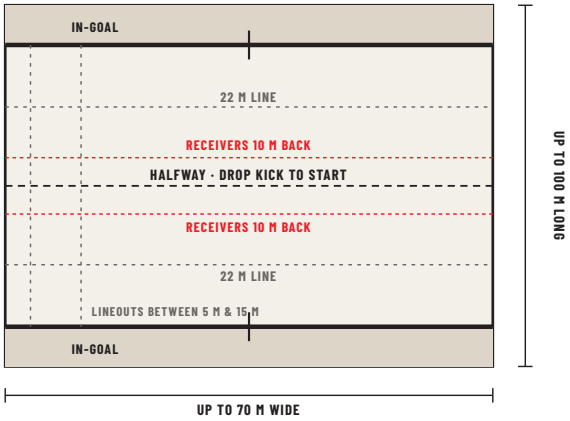


Lifting allowed

THE PITCH & THE JARGON

WHERE THINGS HAPPEN, AND WHAT THE WORDS MEAN

THE U18 PITCH



Maximum sizes, not to scale. Exact markings vary from venue to venue.

DISTANCES TO REMEMBER

KICK-OFF	receivers 10 m back
PENALTY / FREE KICK	opposition 10 m back
LINEOUT	backs 10 m back
SCRUM PUSH	max 1.5 m

WHERE TO FIND THE FULL RULES

This guide summarises the U18 (Years 12 & 13) column of the *2026/27 RCC & UAERF Mini & Youth Law Variations, Rev.2*. Your age-group coach has the full document covering every age group from U6 to U18. If in doubt, ask them rather than the referee.

JARGON BUSTER

what the words mean

TAP & PASS
The player taps the ball with their foot and passes to a team-mate to restart play. Used for penalties, free kicks and many restarts.

RUCK
Players from each team, on their feet, over a ball on the ground after a tackle. Once a ruck forms, hands are not allowed.

JACKAL
A defender staying on their feet and grabbing the ball from a tackled player before a ruck forms.

MAUL
Like a ruck, but the ball carrier is still standing and held by players from both sides.

SCRUM
The forwards bind together while the scrum half feeds the ball in. Restarts play after minor errors such as a forward pass or knock-on.

LINEOUT
Restarts play after the ball goes into touch. Two lines of players compete for a ball thrown in from the touchline.

KNOCK-ON / FORWARD PASS
Dropping the ball forwards, or passing it forwards. Both give possession to the other team.

OFFSIDE
Being in front of the ball, or on the wrong side of a ruck, scrum or lineout. The most common penalty at every age.

BEHAVIOUR

DISCIPLINE

Discipline follows **World Rugby**: yellow cards (10 minutes in the sin bin) and red cards are used as in the senior game, and serious incidents are reported to the UAE Rugby Federation.

ON THE SIDELINE

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Referees at this age are often young or volunteer coaches applying these variations for the first time. Decisions will not always be perfect. Please back the referee, let the coaches coach, and cheer effort as loudly as tries.

One team. One family. One Exiles.