

DUBAI EXILES

RUGBY & NETBALL SINCE 1966

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

U6 & U7

TAG RUGBY · 7-A-SIDE

ONE TEAM. ONE FAMILY.
ONE EXILES.

U6 & U7 AT A GLANCE

THE NUMBERS THAT MATTER

Your child is starting out in **Tag rugby**. There is no tackling at all: defenders stop the ball carrier by pulling a Velcro tag from their belt. The whole point is running, passing and having fun, and every child gets plenty of the ball.

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

7 a-side
PLAYERS ON THE PITCH
Small teams so everyone is involved in every play.

12
MAX SQUAD SIZE
Rolling substitutions, on and off as often as coaches like.

2 × 15 mins
LEAGUE MATCH
Maximum. Can also be played as 4 × 7 mins. Tournaments: 2 × 10.

25 × 35 m
MAXIMUM PITCH SIZE
A small pitch, so the ball is never far away.

Size 2 or 3
BALL
A smaller ball that fits young hands. A full-size ball is a size 5.

50 %
EVERYONE PLAYS
Every player must be on the pitch for at least half of every match.

HOW TAG RUGBY WORKS

the game in six lines

- **7 players a side** on a small pitch. Everyone runs, everyone passes, everyone scores.
- **No tackling.** Defenders rip a Velcro tag from the ball carrier's belt instead.
- **Tagged? Pass within 3 steps.** The tagger hands the tag back after the pass.
- **Six tags and it's a turnover.** Teams have six tags to score before the ball goes to the other side.
- **Everything restarts with a tap and pass**: kick-offs, penalties, knock-ons. No scrums, no lineouts, no kicking.
- **Try = 5 points.** No conversions or kicks at goal. The team that did not score restarts.

STILL NOT IN THE GAME AT U6 & U7

No tackling, no kicking in open play, no conversions and no penalty goals or drop goals. These arrive in the older age groups.

MATCH DAY BASICS

TIME, TEAMS, SCORING & RESTARTS

TIME ON THE PITCH

HOW LONG IS A GAME?

- **League:** 2 halves of 15 mins (maximum), or 4 quarters of 7 mins.
- **Tournaments & festivals:** 2 halves of 10 mins (maximum).
- **Daily limit:** no player may play more than **90 minutes in one day**, however many games there are.

SELECTION

EVERYONE PLAYS

- The **"50% rule"**: every child in the squad must play at least half of every match.
- Substitutions are **rolling**. Players can go off and come back on any number of times, so coming off is not a bad sign.
- Squads are capped at **12** so that the 50% rule is workable.

POINTS

HOW DO YOU SCORE?

- **Try = 5 points.** Ball grounded over the try line under control.
- **No conversions**, no penalty goals and no drop goals. There is no kicking for points at all at this age.

DIAGRAM

POINTS ON THE BOARD



GETTING THINGS GOING

KICK-OFFS & RESTARTS

- Each half starts with a **tap and pass** from the middle of the pitch. There is no kicking in Tag rugby.
- The receiving team must stand **5–7 m back**.
- After a try, the team that **did not score** restarts the game with a tap and pass. Scoring means you have to win the ball back.

NEAR THE TRY LINE

IN-GOAL & THE "22" RESTART

- There are no special in-goal rules at this age. If the ball goes over the try line without a try being scored, the referee simply restarts play with a **tap and pass**.

OFFENCES

PENALTIES & FREE KICKS

- Penalties are always a **tap and pass**. The opposition must retreat **5 m** and may only move forward once the ball has been passed (not on the tap).
- There is no kicking for touch and no shot at goal.
- Common penalties you will hear: *offside, more than 3 steps after a tag, not handing the tag back, obstructing the pass.*

KICKING

NO KICKING IN OPEN PLAY

There is no kicking at all in this format. Halves start with a tap and pass, and the ball stays in hand the whole game. This is all about running, passing and support play.

Kicking out of hand, conversions and the mark arrive at U12 (U14 for the girls' Quick Rip game).

THE TAG GAME

HOW A TAG WORKS AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

HOW IT WORKS

THE TAG NON-CONTACT

- Players wear a belt with two Velcro **tags**. A defender stops the ball carrier by **ripping a tag** off the belt. If belts are not available, a **two-handed touch** counts instead.
- The tagger must come from an **onside position**, and must **hand the tag back** to the attacker only after the pass has been made.
- There is **no tackling** of any kind, no fending and no protecting the tags with the arm, body or ball.

AFTER THE TAG

PASS WITHIN 3 STEPS

- Once tagged, the ball carrier must **pass within 3 steps**. Taking more than 3 steps is a penalty to the other team.
- Defenders **must not obstruct the pass** and must retreat to an onside position. The **offside line is the ball**, not the spot where the tag happened.
- After the **6th tag** without scoring, possession turns over to the other team, so teams have to attack rather than just keep the ball.

FAIR PLAY

WHAT ATTACKERS MAY NOT DO

- **No fending.** Attackers may not push defenders away with the hand, body or ball.
- **No protecting the tags.** Attackers may not shield their tags with an arm, the body or the ball.
- Everything else follows normal rugby: forward passes and knock-ons are not allowed, and players must stay onside.

BALL INTO TOUCH

NO LINEOUTS: FREE PASS

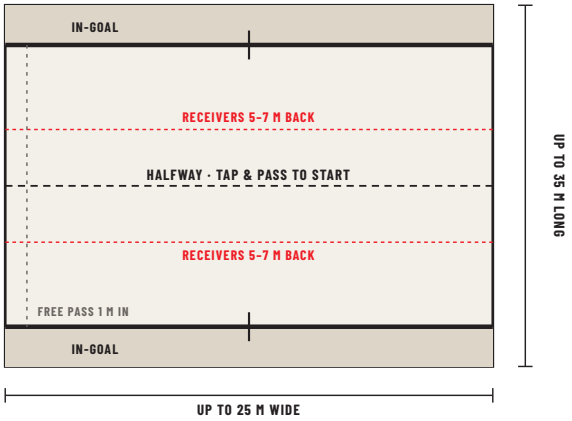
When the ball goes off the side of the pitch, the non-offending team gets a **free pass 1 m in from the touchline**. The opposition must be **5 m back** and may only move forward after the pass.

RESTARTS

NO SCRUMS: TAP & PASS

There are no scrums in Tag rugby. Minor errors such as a forward pass or a dropped ball give the other team a **tap and pass**. The opposition must be **5 m back** and may only move forward once the ball has been passed, not on the tap.

THE U6 & U7 PITCH



Maximum sizes, not to scale. Clubs usually mark this pitch across part of a full-size field, so distances vary by venue.

DISTANCES TO REMEMBER

KICK-OFF	receivers 5–7 m back
PENALTY / FREE KICK	opposition 5 m back
FREE PASS FROM TOUCH	opposition 5 m back

WHERE TO FIND THE FULL RULES

This guide summarises the U6 & U7 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.

TAG / RIP
Pulling a Velcro tag off the ball carrier's belt. In these formats it replaces the tackle.

3 STEPS
After a tag the ball carrier has three steps to pass. A fourth step is a penalty.

TURNOVER
Possession passes to the other team, for example after the sixth tag.

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

There are no formal sanctions at this age. Coaches and referees manage behaviour on the pitch, and a child who needs a moment may simply be swapped off and back on.

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.