DUBAI EXILES

RUGBY & NETBALL SINCE 1966



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

U8

QUICK RIP · 7-A-SIDE

ONE TEAM. ONE FAMILY.
ONE EXILES.

U8 AT A GLANCE

THE NUMBERS THAT MATTER

Your child is now playing **Quick Rip**. It is still non-contact, but the game gets a little more structured: proper drop-kick starts, a small three-player scrum and a two-player lineout appear for the first time, so the shape of "real" rugby starts to show.

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.

35 × 60 m
MAXIMUM PITCH SIZE
A small pitch, so the ball is never far away.

Size 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.

WHAT'S NEW AT U8

compared with U6 & U7

	U6 & U7	U8
PITCH & BALL	25 m × 35 m, size 2 or 3 ball	**35 m × 60 m, size 3 ball**
CONTACT	Rip the tag (or two-handed touch)	**Rip the tag, no tackling**
SCRUM	Tap & pass instead of a scrum	**3 players, uncontested**
LINEOUT	Free pass 1 m in from touch	**2 + thrower, uncontested**
SCRUM HALF	Tap & pass restarts	**Must pass**
SCORING	Try 5	**Try 5 (7 in the try zone)**
DISCIPLINE	Coach-managed, no sanctions	**2-minute substitution**

Everything else is unchanged from U6 & U7. 7 things change this season.

STILL NOT IN THE GAME AT U8

No tackling, no kicking in open play, no conversions, no penalty goals or drop goals, no lifting in the lineout, no driving mauls, no pushing in the scrum and no competing at the lineout. 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.

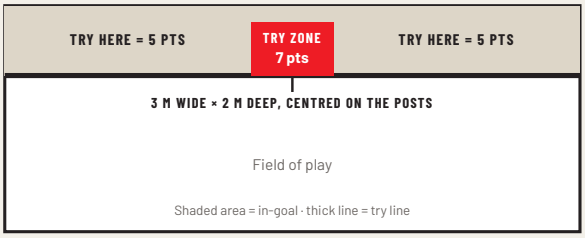
POINTS

HOW DO YOU SCORE?

- **Try = 5 points.** Ball grounded over the try line under control.
- **Optional 7-point "Try Zone".** Some leagues and festivals mark 3 m × 2 m box in the middle of the try line. A try scored inside it is worth **7 points**. This rewards teams for working the ball back towards the middle rather than just sprinting down the wing.
- **No conversions**, no penalty goals and no drop goals. There is no kicking for points at all at this age.

DIAGRAM

THE 7-POINT TRY ZONE



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**.
- 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 QUICK RIP GAME

HOW A RIP WORKS AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

HOW IT WORKS

THE RIP NON-CONTACT

- Players wear a belt with two Velcro **tags** (at least 30 cm long). A defender stops the ball carrier by **ripping a tag** off the belt and holding it up.
- 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 RIP

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 rip happened.
- After the **6th rip** without scoring, possession turns over to the other team, so teams have to attack rather than just keep the ball.

FAIR PLAY

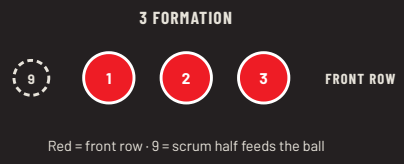
WHAT ATTACKERS MAY NOT DO

- **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.

RESTARTS

THE SCRUM UNCONTESTED

- A small **3-player scrum** is used to restart play after a knock-on or forward pass. It is **uncontested**: no pushing, and the team putting the ball in wins it.
- The backs of both teams must stay **5 m back** from the scrum.
- The **scrum half must pass** from the scrum: no running from the base.
- The **defending scrum half may not go past the middle of the scrum**.

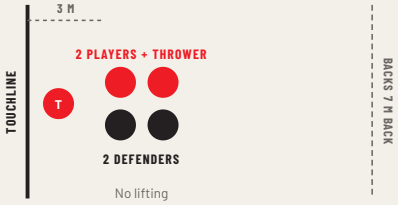


Red = front row · 9 = scrum half feeds the ball

SET PIECE

THE LINEOUT UNCONTESTED

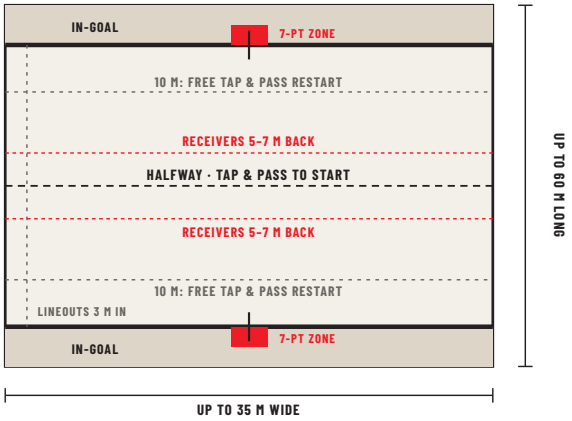
- When the ball goes into touch, play restarts with a lineout of **2 players per team plus the thrower**, formed **3 metres in** from the touchline.
- The lineout is **uncontested**: the throwing team wins the ball, and the defence may not jump for it.
- **No driving mauls** from a lineout. Once caught, the ball must be passed or run.
- Everyone not in the lineout must stay **7 m back** until it is over.



THE PITCH & THE JARGON

WHERE THINGS HAPPEN, AND WHAT THE WORDS MEAN

THE U8 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
LINEOUT	backs 7 m back
SCRUM	backs 5 m back

WHERE TO FIND THE FULL RULES

This guide summarises the U8 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.

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

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

HELD UP
The attacker crosses the try line but a defender stops them grounding the ball. No try.

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

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

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.

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.

BEHAVIOUR

DISCIPLINE

There are no yellow cards in the senior sense. Any **misconduct** (dangerous play, backchat, repeated foul play) is dealt with by a compulsory **2-minute substitution**. The player comes off, cools down with the coach and can come back on after 2 minutes. It is a teaching moment, not a punishment for life.

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.