



MASTERS RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYING RULES

INTRODUCTION

Masters Rugby League is **strictly a social version** of the sport for male players who have reached their 35th birthday and for female players who have reached their 30th birthday and have stopped playing open age rugby league.

The rules are slightly modified to cater for the **older person** where **safety of old bones is paramount**.

SPIRIT OF MASTERS

- Masters is **non-competitive**.
- Masters does not welcome nor allow rough or over vigorous play
- Masters is about enjoyment and having a good time
- on and off the pitch!
- There are no winners; no champions; no leagues; no cup finals.
- **All games end in a 0-0 draw**

Masters referees shall referee the games **strictly** to Masters' rules and in the Spirit of Masters.

THE INTERNATIONAL LAWS OF RUGBY LEAGUE APPLY IN FULL WITH THE FOLLOWING EXCEPTIONS FOR MASTERS.

1. Age Groups
2. Tackling
3. Running with Ball
4. Play the ball
5. Advantage
6. Scrums
7. Penalties
8. Sixth tackle
9. Kicking
10. Restarts
11. Kicks at goal
12. Number of players
13. Duration of Games
14. Misconduct



MASTERS RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYING RULES

1. AGE GROUP

WHITE & BLACK

- Men 35-39 years | 40-49 years.¹
- Women 30-39 | 40-49 years.
- White and Black short players tend to tackle each other in full contact, below the armpit. ^{1,4,7 13}



RED

- 50-59 years ¹
- On attack, **RED** short players must be physically stopped and held, not necessarily brought to ground. All contact with the ball carrier must be made below the armpit. ¹³
- On defence, red short players must have a minimum of a definite 2 handed positive hold on the ball carrier the armpit. ^{4,13}



GOLD, GREEN & BLUE

- 60-69 years | 70-79 years | 80years +
- In defence, a **GOLD** short player touches the ball carrier, below the armpit and stands at the point of the tackle and raises a hand to indicate the tackle to the referee. The tackled player **MUST** return to the point of the tackle to play the ball. ^{2,3}
- On attack, the defender must remove the tag from the **GOLD** short ball carrier. ^{2,3} No other contact with the **GOLD** short player is permitted. The tackling player stands at the point of the tackle and raising a hand and the tag to indicate the tackle to the referee. The tackled **GOLD** short player **MUST** return to the point of the tackle to play the ball. ^{2,3}
- **GREEN** and Sky **BLUE** short players follow the requirements for **GOLD** shorts. ³





MASTERS RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYING RULES

2.

TACKLING

- In all cases, players are to succumb to tackles rather than try to keep progressing.
- Only two players are allowed in a tackle.⁴
- No lifting – No throws – No drive tackles.
- All tackles are to be below the ball carriers armpits.
- No drag down tackles from behind^{4.7.13}
- No stripping of the ball - including 1 on 1 tackles.
- Ankle taps are not allowed

3.

RUNNING WITH THE BALL

- Players may run as hard as they wish as long as they run at GAPS.
- Players are not allowed to try and run over the top of each other.
- Players are not allowed to fend or hand off.
- **Players are not allowed to “barge over” to score**

4.

PLAY THE BALL

- TWO markers are permitted.
- All other defenders must retire 5 metres minimum at the play the ball.
- **All markers are to remain passive unless the Dummy half starts to run with the ball.**
- **All the defenders in the defensive line must not move until the Dummy half has passed the ball or has started to run.**
- **Dummy half is allowed to run from play the ball BUT cannot score and if tackled in possession a sixth-tackle is awarded with scrum head and feed to defending side.**

5.

ADVANTAGE

- Advantage from a knock on or a forward pass shall ONLY be allowed when possession of the ball is cleanly and safely transferred to the non-infringing team. In all other cases advantage is expressly not allowed.



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6.

SCRUMS

- **No pushing/pulling in scrums is allowed** to avoid injuries (it is accepted that teams will win their own ball back i.e. **scrums go with feed**). All six forwards must participate in scrums
- The scrum half must not follow opposing scrum half around the base of the scrum.
- The attacking team scrum half can pick the ball up and run from the base of the scrum.
- Loose forward cannot break off the base of the scrum with the ball: scrum half must receive the ball from the scrum
- When the ball or player is in touch a scrum is formed 20 metres in from touch.
- Lateral positioning of scrums does not apply.

7.

PENALTIES

- All penalties are a tap kick on the mark, given by the referee, at point of the misconduct.²
- All defenders must retreat FIVE metres.

8.

SIXTH TACKLES

- There are no turnovers.
- Sixth tackle results in a scrum to the defending side.

9.

KICKING

- Kicking in general play is only allowed on the last tackle.⁶
- For all kicks, including kick-offs and goal line drop-outs, the receiving team must receive the ball.
Receiver must not be challenged and must be allowed to run at least 5 metres.⁷
- **ONLY** in the unlikely event that the receiving team makes no attempt to claim the ball and kicking team players are onside, the referee may call play on⁸ and the kicking team may re-gather the ball.



MASTERS RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYING RULES

10.

RESTARTS

- From kick offs and goal line drop-outs, if the ball bounces out untouched by receiving team, the scrum goes to the receiving team.
- ALL restarts are controlled by the referee!

11.

KICKS AT GOAL

- There are no kicks at goal.

12.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- The game is played with teams of a maximum of 13 players per team.⁹ Each team can name up to 7 replacement players.¹⁰
- Unlimited interchanges are allowed. Interchanges may occur at any time.

13.

DURATION OF GAMES

- A game is normally of 50 minutes duration.
- There will be a half time interval of 5 minutes.¹¹

14.

MISCONDUCT

- Sin Bin** - FIVE minutes | player stands beyond the opponents dead ball line behind the posts.¹²
- Sending off** - Player is excluded for rest of the match and/or festival.¹²



MASTERS RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYING RULES

15. NOTES

- 1. ALL** players must wear correct short colour for their age. Exceptions can be agreed where a player through medical need requires the protection of Gold shorts. Exceptions to be agreed with referee prior to game. When an active male player (35-59yrs) or female player (30-59yrs) wears **GOLD** shorts as protection due to injury or for any other reason, they are not to wear tags and are tackled by touch only. **In the Spirit of Masters, under age GOLD players may not move away from acting half back to tackle.**
- Referee shall if required blow his/her whistle to stop play and ensure play restarts at the point of the tackle/penalty offence.
- Gold short player is counted as a tackler.
- When the ball carrier is advancing in an upright posture, any tackle by a defender in which initial contact is made above the armpits is deemed to be an infringement
- The six-again rule does not apply.
- 40:20 rule does not apply.
- This applies even in the case where a player does not gather the ball cleanly.
- Referee will only call "play on" when he/she is certain there is no risk of player collision.
- In the spirit of Masters, where a team is unable to field 13 players at the start of a game or at any time during the game, the opposition is required to reduce their number of players on the field to the corresponding number or to loan players to ensure balanced teams. At the start of a game, the size of the playing area may also be reduced in agreement between team captains and the referee.
- It is permissible for teams to use more than 7 replacements but not where this would give an unfair advantage.
- The duration of games may be modified at festivals to suit the number of teams participating or the time available and on any occasion in agreement between team captains and the referee. **No more than 60 minutes of scheduled Masters game time per team.**
- Players sin-binned or dismissed may be replaced.
- Brain Health - For the safety of all Masters players brought in line with the Community Rugby League Tackle Height Laws.