



LAWS OF BEACH 5's

English Version | 30-10-2026

1. The Ground

The playing area must have the following measurements:

Total Length: 31 meters (including both team in-goal areas of 3 meters each)

Total Width: 25 meters

It must be a safe surface and made of sand.

The lines on the playing enclosure are made of tape, rope, string or inflatable surroundings and include:

- The dead ball lines and touch-in-goal lines which are outside the field of play (where in-goal areas apply).
- The goal lines which are within the in-goal areas but outside the field of play.
- The touch lines which are outside the field of play.

2. The Ball

The ball used in the game shall be a **no. 4** size and must conform to the World Rugby Laws **Law 2**.

3. The Team

The teams consist of 12 players where **5 are 'in-field' players** and **7 substitutes** are admitted and substitutional during match stoppages without any need to call for the referee's permission.

Substitutes may enter the field from the halfway line and they may exit from whatever position. As soon as the referee becomes aware that a team has more than 5 players on the field, he may disallow any action that has taken place in the meantime, unless the opponent team have gained an advantage.

Example 1: a try is scored and the defending team has 6 players on the field: the score stands.

Example 2: a try is scored and the attacking team has 6 players on the field: the try is disallowed and sanctioned by rewarding the defending team a free kick at the halfway line.

4. Players Clothing

A player wears a jersey and shorts that are tear resistant, if necessary socks can be worn but no hard materials are allowed on the feet.

Banned items of clothing:

- A player must not wear any item that is banned in accordance with World Rugby Law 4.
- Players may not wear footwear unless approved by match organisers. In special circumstances, and at their discretion, match organisers may permit footwear, providing such items do not have studs.

The referee has power to decide at any time, before or during the match, that part of a player's clothing is dangerous or illegal. If the referee decides that clothing is dangerous or illegal the referee must order the player to remove it. The player must not take part in the match until the items are changed or removed.

5. Time

A match consists of two halves of 5 minutes with a maximum of a 3 minute break or interval. During the break or interval the teams, the referee and the assistant referees remain in the playing area.

The referee keeps the time but may delegate the duty to either or both the assistant referees and/or the official time-keeper if appointed.

Time lost to injury: The referee may stop play for not more than one minute so that an injured player can be treated, or for any other permitted delay. The referee may allow play to continue while a medically trained person treats an injured player at the touchline. If a player is seriously injured and needs to be removed from the field of play, the referee has the discretion to allow the necessary time to have the injured player removed from the field of play.

Making up time lost: Any playing time lost is made up in the same half of the match.

Playing extra time: A match may last more than ten minutes if the match organiser has authorised the playing of extra time and established the duration of extra time to take place following a drawn match.

Referee's right to end a match: The referee has the authority to end a match at any time when believing further play would be dangerous.

When time expires: Play ceases when the ball next becomes dead. If time expires and a free kick is then awarded, the referee allows play to continue until the next time the ball becomes dead.

Only the captain may report to the referee to ask for explanations or mention serious infringements such as the opponents having 6 players on the field.

6. Match Officials

Referees should wear a referee shirt provided by the tournament, a short, a watch and whistle. If needed medical socks are allowed. No sunglasses are allowed while refereeing.

If the ball touches the referee, play restarts with a free kick for the team in possession of the ball before the ball touched the referee.

Every match is under the control of match officials who consist at least of the referee and possibly two assistant referees. Additional persons, as authorised by the match organisers may include the reserve referee and/or reserve assistant referee and/or a timekeeper.

Toss: The tournament organisation can decide if per game a toss occurs for the kick off, alternatively it can be decided that the team that is first on the game sheet kicks off and receiving team decides the side.

The referee may consult with assistant referees in regard to matters relating to their duties, the Law relating to foul play, or timekeeping.

If a player is injured and continuation of play would be dangerous, the referee must blow the whistle immediately.

If the referee stops play because a player is injured but there has been no infringement and the ball has not been made dead, play restarts with a free kick to the team last in possession of the ball. If neither team was in possession, the last attacking team is awarded the free kick.

2 second rule – counting: In case of applying the 2 second rule referees call it out the following way:

- 1 – one thousand
- 2 – one thousand

This methodology comes close to true 2 seconds and warns players to play the ball.

It is expected from the match organiser to check that all referees participating are in possession of the certificate of World Rugby Match Officiating Level 2 for Senior games. For Junior games the World Rugby Match Officiating Level 1 is required.

Referees have a primary goal to safeguard players health and safety.

7. Mode of Play

A match is (re-)started by a free kick, or uncontested punt. After the start, any player who is onside may take the ball and run with it. Any player may throw it. Any player may give the ball to another player. Any player may tackle, hold or push an opponent holding the ball. Any player may fall on the ball. Any player may ground the ball in-goal. Whatever a player does must be in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

Sanction: Free kick

It is not allowed to kick the ball in open play.

Sanction: Free kick

Players on the ground without the ball are deemed to be out of the game and must:

- Allow opponents who are not on the ground to play or gain possession of the ball.
- Not play the ball.
- Not tackle or attempt to tackle an opponent.

Sanction: Free kick. In case of repeated infringement players may be suspended for two minutes (yellow card).

Should an event occur which is not covered by these Laws, play restarts with a free kick to the team last in possession of the ball. If neither team was in possession, the attacking team is awarded a free kick.

In case a match ends in a draw, an additional limitless period will be played under the sudden-death rule, i.e. the first scoring team is the winner.

In case some teams rank with the same score during qualification rounds, the team with the highest number of tries scored will qualify; in case parity should persist, the lowest number of tries against will qualify; if parity still persists, the winner of the match between the two teams will qualify. If still no decision is possible, team captains will do a toss.

8. Advantage

The advantage Law precedes most other Laws to promote continuity. When a team infringes the Laws and opponents have an opportunity to gain an advantage, the referee delays blowing the whistle until determining whether or not an advantage is gained.

In case of dangerous play advantage will not be applied as players safety should precede.

9. Method of Scoring

Try: A try is awarded when a player is first to ground the ball in the opponents' in-goal. Value: 1 point

Penalty try: If a player would probably have scored a try but for foul play by an opponent, a penalty try is awarded. Value: 1 point

10. Foul Play

Foul play is anything a person does within the playing enclosure that is against the letter and spirit of the Laws of the Game. It includes obstruction, unfair play, repeated infringements, dangerous play, handing off a player above the shoulders and misconduct which is prejudicial to the game.

Sanction: Free kick at the place of infringement

All players must respect the authority of the referee. They must not dispute the referee's decisions. They must stop playing at once when the referee blows the whistle except at starts and restarts. The captain is the only player who can make a comment to the referee.

Sanction: Free kick at the place of infringement or where play would next commence.

Sanctions for infringements of foul play:

Any player who infringes the foul play Law must be:

- reprimanded, or
- cautioned and temporarily suspended for a period of two minutes playing time (yellow card), or
- sent off (red card).

A player who has been cautioned and temporarily suspended (yellow card) who then commits a second cautionable offence must be sent off (red card).

In case a player has been sent off, the tournament management can decide on the duration a player can't participate in the tournament.

11. Offside

In general play a player is offside when ahead of a teammate who is carrying the ball or ahead of a teammate who last played it.

During or after a tackle a defending player is offside if he is in front of the ball. A defending player is considered onside if he comes through the gate or once the tackle has finished is starting from behind the ball.

An offside player is temporarily out of the game, and liable to sanction if taking part in the game. This player should move back behind the ball before being able to participate.

Sanction: Free kick

12. Knock on and Throw Forward

It is a knock-on when a player, in tackling or attempting to tackle an opponent, makes contact with the ball and the ball goes forward or if the ball carrier drops the ball forward.

Sanction: Free kick at the referee's mark (if the ball goes into touch, the non-offending team may opt for a free kick at the point the ball went into touch).

A player must not intentionally knock the ball forward with hand or arm.

Sanction: Free kick; the offending player will receive a 2 minute suspension (yellow card). In case the intentional knock has prevented a try, a penalty try is awarded.

A throw forward may occur anywhere in the playing area.

Sanction: Free kick

13. Starts and Restarts

The kick off of both halves will take place with a place kick, taken from the middle of the half-way line. The kick needs to go further than 5 meters or can be received within the 5 meters by the receiving team.

Sanction: A free kick is awarded to the receiving team on the middle of the half-way line.

Receiving teams need to be at least 5 meters from the halfway line.

Sanction: Free kick

A place kick needs to remain in the field of play.

Sanction: Free kick on the halfway line

If the ball is kicked into the in-goal or over the goal line without having been touched by a player, the opposing team has two choices:

- to ground the ball, or
- to play on.

If the opposing team grounds the ball that team is awarded a free kick at the centre of the half-way line.

Restart kicks after scoring a try will take place with a free kick on the half-way line.

In both cases the ball needs to clearly leave the hands of the kicker.

Sanction: Free kick

14. Ball on the Ground: No Tackle

This situation occurs when the ball is available on the ground and a player goes to ground to gather the ball. The player must immediately do one of three things:

- get up with the ball
- pass it
- release it.

Sanction: Free kick

What a player must not do:

- A player must not lie on, over, dive to or near the ball to prevent opponents from getting possession of it.
- A player must not intentionally fall on or over a player with the ball who is lying on the ground.

- A player must not intentionally fall on or over players lying on the ground with the ball between them or near them.
- A player on the ground must not tackle an opponent or attempt to tackle an opponent.

Sanction: Free kick

15. Tackle and Contact

A tackle occurs when the ball carrier is held and brought to ground by one or more opponents.

Being brought to ground means that the ball carrier is lying, sitting or has at least one knee on the ground or on another player who is on the ground.

Being held means that a tackler must continue holding the ball carrier with clearly both arms wrapped until the ball carrier is on the ground.

After a tackle occurs the tackler and assistant tacklers (player who held the ball carrier while going to ground) need to release the ball carrier. After releasing they are allowed to attack the ball after showing a clear release (hand above your shoulders).

Ball carrier needs to place or play the ball immediately (2 seconds) after being tackled.

Sanction: Free kick

Attacking on the ball means one attempt to pick up the ball after the tackle. Players need to try to remain on their feet; diving for the ball is deemed to be dangerous.

Sanction: Free kick

Any player who wants to attack the ball should remain on their feet and supporting their own body weight (shoulder above hips) and no hands on the ground and is behind the ball. They should grab the ball and immediately commence play.

Sanction: Free kick

Any player that wants to attack the ball needs to come from their own side and through the tackle gate.

Sanction: Free kick

When the ball carrier is held up by the opponent, from that point, he must release the ball within 2 seconds by playing it.

Sanction: Free kick

16. Rucks

Rucks do not exist in Beach Fives Rugby. In case a ball becomes unplayable the 2 seconds rule applies.

17. Mauls

Mauls do not exist in Beach Fives Rugby. In case a ball becomes unplayable the 2 seconds rule applies.

18. Mark

The mark does not exist in Beach Fives Rugby.

19. Touch and Lineout

There are no lineouts in Beach Fives Rugby.

The ball is in touch when it is not being carried by a player and it touches the touchline or anything or anyone on or beyond the touchline.

The ball is in touch when the ball carrier (or the ball) touches the touchline or the ground beyond the touchline.

The place where the ball carrier (or the ball) touched or crossed the touchline is where it went into touch.

When the ball is in touch the referee awards a free kick to the team who did not carry or put the ball into touch.

20. Scrum

There are no scrums in Beach Fives Rugby. See Law 12 for further explanations.

21. Free Kicks

Free kicks should be taken without delay (5 seconds).

A free kick is taken by releasing the ball from the hands and touching the leg between the knee and foot, but not on the knee. If touched on the knee the sanction is a free kick for the opponent.

Free kicks are taken on or behind the referee's mark or, in case of touch, on or behind the mark where the ball left the field but not further than 1 meter in field from the touch line.

The distance of the defending team from the ball for free kicks or kick-offs shall be 5 meters.

Sanction: Extra 5-meter free kick. On repeated infringement players can be suspended for 2 minutes (yellow card). Opponents can only commence once the kicker has tapped the ball.

Free kicks closer than 5 meters to the goal line need to start at a distance of 5 meters from the goal line.

22. In-Goal

When an attacking player carries the ball into in-goal or over the goal line that player has three seconds to score a try.

Sanction: A free kick is awarded to the opposing team 5 metres from the goal line.

When an attacking player scores a try that player must leave the ball at the place where the try has been scored.

Sanction: A free kick from the centre of the half-way line is awarded to the opposing team and the offending player will be cautioned and can receive a yellow card after repetitive occurrence.

After scoring a try, the defending team will restart the game with a free kick on the half-way line. It can only be taken directly if the ball is carried to the half-way line. The ball can not be passed or kicked to the half-way line; in that case restart can only happen once the opponent is in position to play.

23. 2 Seconds Law

As a repetition, the 2 seconds law is vital in the Beach 5's game. Once players are being stopped the ball must be played within 2 seconds once the referee starts counting (1-one-thousand – 2-one-thousand). If the ball is not being released to the ground or to a player the defending team is awarded a free kick.