

2023 Touch Football Rules



The object of the game is to score 'tries' by placing the ball on or over the score-line before being touched by opposition players. The ball cannot be bounced or dropped prior to being placed. For every try scored the team is awarded one point. The team with the most points at the end of the game is the winner.

Each team is composed of six (6) players on the field who can interchange at any time with players on the sideline. Total number of players cannot exceed 14. The recommended number of players for each team is 8 or 9 to ensure all students get game time each week.

Upon gaining possession each team has six (6) touches before they surrender possession to the opposing team.

When a player in possession is touched, they must return to the spot where they were touched and perform a "roll ball." This can be performed by placing the ball on the ground and stepping over it or rolling the ball backward between the legs.

- If the ball rolls more than a metre a change of possession results.
- The attacking player has one step after the touch to place the ball or return to the mark of the touch. If the player takes more than one step and plays the ball they are penalised.

When the ball is rolled the "half" picks it up. The half can run with the ball or pass it or do both. If the half is touched when in possession of the ball a change of possession occurs. The half cannot score a try. If they place the ball on or over the try line a change in possession occurs.

Attacking players may pass the ball. If a player throws a forward pass a penalty is given against their team. The penalty occurs where the pass was thrown. Attacking players may not pass the ball after being touched. If this occurs a penalty is given from where the pass was thrown.

If the ball is dropped, bounced or touches the ground a change of possession happens where the ball first touched the ground. A roll ball is performed to re-start play.

An attacking player may not use a team mate to obstruct a defender. i.e. use a player from their own team to prevent a touch being made. This incurs a penalty at the place of interference.

When a change of possession occurs, a player must perform a roll-ball unless a penalty is given whereby the player may either tap the ball or perform a roll-ball. The only exception to this rule is when a defending player intercepts the ball passed by the attacking team and it is play on (unless the ball has touched the ground).

A team defends by trying to touch the player in possession. After a touch is affected all defending players must retire to a line **seven (7) metres** behind the point where the player was touched (which is marked by the referee). When a penalty is awarded, players must retrieve **ten (10) metres** (marked by the referee). After the first touch, players retrieve to 7 metres for the remaining touches.

Defending players may not move forward to affect the next touch until the half has touched the ball. If there is no half present the players must wait until directed by the referee (allow approximately 2 seconds). If a defender gets to the half position before an attacking player does simply touching the ball results in a turnover.

There should not be a case where there is two mistakes in one play. If a player knocks the ball on play is stopped and the other team performs a roll ball. A player cannot pick the ball up and run after a dropped ball.

The dead ball line is 7 metres after the try line. If a player goes beyond the dead ball line the referee will call it no try and there will be a roll ball 7 metres from the try line or a change over if after the 5th touch.

The referee's decision is always final. Any player misconduct should be reported to the school and the convenors.

Awarding Penalties

Penalties are awarded where the breach of the rules occurred. The defending team must retire the 10 metres and wait until the ball is tapped before advancing on the opposition. Penalties should be awarded for the following:

- Deliberate forward passes
- Late passes
- Offside defenders (defenders who fail to retire five metres before trying to affect a touch)
- Having more than six players on the field at one time
- Obstructing defenders
- Players from either side interfering unnecessarily with opposition players
- Calling "phantoms" (defending players who claim to have affected a touch when the referee is certain that they did not). Referees should dismiss players from the field if this action is repeated.
- Dissent or rudeness to a referee
- Using more force than necessary to affect a touch or deliberate foul play (touching a players leg on purpose to try and trip them)
- Not playing the ball on the correct mark

Length of Games

Junior Boys play 2 x 15 minute halves. Start at approx. 12.30

Senior Boys play 2 x 15 minute halves. Start at approx. 1.05

Open Girls play 2 x 15 minute halves. Start at approx. 1.40

The above order should be the order games are played each week in order to provide consistency and a rough time for any spectators attending. **Teams must be on the field ready to commence by 12.30pm.**

As all schools have three teams, please be prompt and start the games ASAP. Please keep time in between games and half times to a minimum (no more than 2 minutes). If schools need to leave before 2.20 or arrive after 12.30, please negotiate between coaches to take a couple of minutes off each game rather than shortening the Open Girls game each week.

Age Groupings

Juniors are in years 3 and 4 and Seniors are in years 5 and 6 in 2022. Juniors may play up a maximum of three games. If they play up more than three games they need to stay in seniors for the remainder of the season. **However, juniors are not able to play in seniors for semis or finals.**

The Field

The field is half a soccer field with markers at the corners for the try line and at half way. The first school to arrive at the field should set the field. All games to use a size 4 touch football or rugby league ball.