U8 - Flag Rugby

The following Under 8s Rules of Play set out below will be adopted for the 2020 Southern California Youth Rugby “Youngers” season beginning in January. The adoption of flag provides clarity in the playing rules. Additionally, flag provides a safer playing environment as it eliminates players having the opportunity shove or push with two handed touch.

Key elements of the playing rules:
• Team Numbers: 7 v 7
• Co-Ed
• Playing time: 2 x 15 minute halves
• Ball: Size 3
• No Kicking
• No scrums - Free pass is awarded to opposing team at the spot of the infraction
• No Lineouts - Free pass is used to restart play at the point where the ball has gone out
• Six flag pulls in row leads to a turnover in possession.
• There is no intentional contact in U8 rugby

1. Field size
   a. 40-50 meters x 25 meters is recommended for U8. The try zone should be 5 meters deep from the try line and clearly marked with cones.

2. Playing Numbers
   a. U8 will play 7 a side.
   b. Where a team has less numbers, opponents should match numbers as best as possible.
   c. Substitutions are unlimited.

3. The Flag
   d. All players must wear a flag belt around their waist with two tags attached by velcro over the hips.
   e. The flags must be worn outside the clothing, shirts tucked into the belt so the flags are free to be pulled.

4. Flag Pull

While the offensive team attempts to move the ball forward, the defensive team will attempt to “pull” the ball carrier’s flag, simulating a tackle.
   a. Once a Defender pulls a flag, they hold it up and yell "FLAG!" The defender is now out of play and should stand still.
b. Once the ball carrier’s flag is removed, the ball carrier must make a pass within 2 steps.
c. He or she does not stop: does not return to the mark or does not roll the ball between their legs.
d. If the pass takes longer than 2 seconds or the player takes more than approximately 2 strides a free pass is awarded to the non-offending team at the place where the tag occurred.
e. While play continues, the defender must return the flag to the offensive player before they can return to play. The defender must hand the flag to the offensive player.
f. The player whose flag was removed must replace their flag on their belt before returning to play.
g. If a player’s flag is pulled before the try line and doesn’t pass before they get over the line, they restart play five meters out from the try line with a free pass.
h. Six flag pulls in row leads to a turnover in possession.
i. Restarting the flag count occurs when there is a turnover or when either team is penalized.

5. Free Pass

5.1. A free pass is an uncontested pass allowed from one player to a teammate. To make a free pass, the referee calls "Play" and the player passes the ball backwards to a member of the player’s own team. A free pass is used for the following:

a. Each half of the match at the center of the field.
b. Restart after a try is scored. The non-scoring team restarts play from the center of the half way line.

c. Restart after the ball goes out of play, and is awarded against the team who the ball last came off of before going out of play. Free pass will occur at the point where the pass has gone out of play.
d. After the sixth flag pull by the defense.
e. Restart after turnover or a penalty offense, from the spot of the infraction, including:
   i. Kicking.
   ii. Contact of any kind (pushing, tackling, fending, pushing away a defender's attempt to pull a flag)
   iii. Offside.
   iv. Obstruction.
   v. Failing to pass the ball after 2 steps or 2 seconds.
   vi. Dangerous play - includes diving to score a try or to retrieve a ball on the ground.
   vii. Any act that is against the spirit of good sportsmanship and SCYR Culture and Values.

5.2. The opposition team must remain five yards back from the free pass until the ball leaves the passer’s hands.
4.3. If a free pass would otherwise occur within five yards of the try line, move the free pass five yards away from the try line.
6. Offside
   a. The offside line is drawn across the field where the ball carrier stops after the flag pull. Not where the flag is pulled, so that players are not in the passing lane.
   b. Failure to do so will result in a Free Pass for the attacking team and the flag pull count will be reset.
   c. Defenders must not prevent the pass from being made.
   d. Offensive Offside, passes can only be made laterally or backwards, offensive offsides occur when teammates are in front of the ball carrier. Penalties only occur if the offensive offside player receives the ball.
   e. Defensive offside: An imaginary line is drawn through the ball once the ball carrier stops after the flag pull. The defense must retreat behind this line in order to play the ball.
   f. Defending Players that are retreating back and are in the passing lane should not attempt to play the ball on purpose.

7. Starting Play
   a. One team starts each half of the game from the centre of the field with a free pass.
   b. When a try is scored, the non-scoring team starts at the centre of the field with a free pass.

8. Attackers/Defenders
   a. Ball carriers are not allowed to fend off opponents or guard their flags in anyway.
   b. Ball carriers must not intentionally go to ground.
   c. Players may not dive on a ball on the ground.
   d. There is no contact in flag rugby.
      1. No Player should initiate contact on purpose. This can occur on offense and defense in the following ways:
         - **Attackers initiating contact:** This can occur in players charging through or changing directions to initiate contact. If contact is deemed to be made on purpose the attacking team should be penalized and the defending team should receive the ball.
         2. **Defenders initiating Contact:** Defenders should be trained to pull an opposing players flag off hips. Therefore there should be no reason to be directly in front of a ball carrier. Although this may still occur, if contact is deemed to be made on purpose, then the defending team should be penalized and the tag count set back to “0.”