



**IRFU Age Grade Rugby
Mini and Leprechaun Rugby (LTPD Stage 1) - “Growing from 6 to 6 Nations”
2015 to 2016**

Mini and Leprechaun Rugby Mission Statement

“The ethos of Mini and Leprechaun Rugby is to foster and develop young players (boys & girls) of all ability in the game of rugby in a safe, ***non-competition**, enjoyable environment through activities which ensure progressive skill development for all participants in line with the IRFU LTPD (Long Term Player Development) pathway, Child Welfare Policy and Traditions of Rugby Union”

*** non-competition meaning no Leagues/Cups and Blitzes and/or events resulting in play-off matches or finals.**

Safeguarding

All those working **regularly and continuously** with young people should read and sign the Declaration of Intent (with accompanying code of conduct) and in addition such volunteers and staff should complete the necessary vetting checks. For those who are supervised and/or assist occasionally they should inform themselves of the coaches' code of conduct.

Code of Conduct

All participants in Mini Rugby are to adhere to all aspects of the IRFU Code of Conduct for Players/ Coaches/ Parents/ Spectators and Referees. See also: <http://www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/CodeofConducts.pdf>

Correspondence

Any correspondence from a club, school or individual regarding Mini Rugby, must be directed to the Branch Mini Rugby Committee.

Procedure to report issues relating to Codes of Conduct

Internal:

Report to Mini Rugby Coordinator & Club Child Welfare Officer – liaise with individual(s) and report to Club Committee.

Issues of Significant harm:

Report to Mini Rugby Coordinator & Club Child Welfare Officer who in turn will report to mandated person within the IRFU.

Maximum playing time

Consideration must be given to clubs/teams with small numbers and or no reserves to prevent/avoid exhaustion and or the risk of injuries.

Wearing of glasses/ Sports goggles

In the interest of safety (of the player wearing the goggles and other players) and best practice the wearing of glasses or goggles when participating in the contact format of rugby cannot be allowed. Regarding "approved eyewear" like boots, shoulder pads and head gear it must be IRB approved before it can be used when playing rugby and as this has not been approved by the IRB it is against the regulations.

Fixtures

Competitions (meaning Leagues/ cups & Blitzes ending with play-off matches or finals) are not allowed and Festivals / Events must be arranged according to the National Festival Day format. These must be registered with the respective Branch prior to taking place and all Festivals/Events including matches involving teams from other Unions, must adhere to the IRFU Mini and Leprechaun Rugby regulations.

Community Games

National Community Games have recently amended their Rugby rules to reflect those of the Governing Body IRFU and have now been aligned with the IRFU on the U11 Mini Rugby Sport. Please go to the IRFU website to download the Regulations for Mini Rugby 2 – <http://www.irishrugby.ie/agegrades/minirugby/>

Registration

It is the responsibility of Clubs/ Schools to ensure all their players are properly registered with the Club/ School, Branch and IRFU.

Eligibility

- Mini Rugby is a participation sport - any boy or girl registered with a club and/or school may take part in line with IRFU health and safety regulations.
- Date of eligibility for participants is that which is approved by the IRFU Domestic Game Committee (currently, the 1st January).
- Where Mini and Leprechaun rugby are part of the school curriculum, eligibility is based the year/ class the player is in.
- Concerns regarding eligibility must be raised through the Club/School to the Branch or if required the IRFU.

Date of Eligibility

Age Groups	Season 2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Under 7	Born in: 2009	Born in: 2010	Born in: 2011	Born in: 2012
Under 8	2008	2009	2010	2011
Under 9	2007	2008	2009	2010
Under 10	2006	2007	2008	2009
Under 11	2005	2006	2007	2008
Under 12	2004	2005	2006	2007

Players playing at a higher age category

In the event of clubs not having sufficient numbers, players can play in two age categories – the year a player is eligible for and one year up e.g. U10 playing also at U11, it is the club's responsibility to ensure all players get the opportunity to participate in mini rugby.

Procedure for allowing U12 players to play at U13

- (Only) In instances where clubs have a concern regarding numbers e.g. not enough U13 players in the club, a club may apply to their Branch Youth Committee with supporting documents explaining the reason(s) to allow this.
- This to only apply to players who are U12 - no U11 player playing at U12 allowed to play up.
- Branch Youth Committee to ensure that the decision does not affect playing opportunities of the U12 team(s).

Leprechaun Rugby

U7

Mini Rugby

U8/ U9/ U10/ U11 and U12

Regulations and Laws regarding Mini Rugby (LTPD Stage 1)

Due to variations in the physical, mental, social and emotional developments of young children, **players under the age of 7 are not allowed to play full contact games.** Players in this age group should be introduced to Rugby Union through the non-contact game of Leprechaun Rugby.

Mini and Leprechaun Rugby have been broken down into distinct stages which progressively introduce and develop the fundamental skills of Rugby Union.

- No limit on number of players to play in club days or events – emphasis on enjoyment and participation for all.
- For safety reasons players should play within their own age group and may not play for a lower age group.
- Leprechaun Rugby and Mini 1 – one coach per team allowed on the pitch, coach must stay behind players

Age group(s) - Age on 1st January

Leprechaun Rugby

Under 7

Mini Rugby 1

Under 8

Mini Rugby 2

Under 9 & Under 10

Mini Rugby 3

Under 11 & Under 12

Leprechaun Rugby

Suggested Age Group – U7

Leprechaun Rugby has been developed to introduce the Game of Rugby Union to young players new to the Game. The non-tackling and soft contact nature of Leprechaun Rugby contains all the running and handling skills of Rugby Union. It is a game, which is designed to be FUN

Number of players

Can vary from 4-a-side to 8-a-side and or 10-a-side games and the emphasis is on the introduction of the skills, inclusion of all participants; safety and enjoyment.

Playing area

Depends on the number of participants and vary from 10m x 20m to 30m x 40m and or 50m x 70m.

Duration of games

Depends on the time available and can vary from 5 min. each way to 10 min. or 15 min. each way. Young players (beginners) playing non-contact rugby can only play a maximum amount 30 min. of rugby per day.

Start of play

The game starts by a pass-off with the referee indicating the mark.

The opposition must be 5 to 10 m away depending on the size of the playing area and the size of the teams.

Attacking team

The attacking team carries the ball downfield, running, passing (or handling) back to score try by placing the ball over or behind the opposition goal line. The ball can only be transferred to a player behind the ball carrier. No forward (handling) or passing allowed.

Defending team

The defending team attempts to halt the running progress of the attacking team by tagging the ball carrier.

Tagging and ball take

To tag a player must contact the ball carrier with two hands (one on each side of the hips). The ball carrier must then (immediately) pass backwards within a maximum of 3 steps. Any attempt to deliberately gain territory without trying to pass, will result in loss of possession.

OR

If the ball carrier can't see anyone to pass to he/she should (immediately) stop, turn and present the ball immediately to a support player. The support player must then take the ball and pass to another player without running.

Off-side

Applies only to the pass-off and the ball take.

The defending team can gain possession as follows:

Intercepting the ball

An opposition pass can be intercepted.

Gathering a dropped ball

If the attacking team drops or throws the ball to the ground, the defending team can pick up the ball and play on.

Knock on

If the attacking team knocks the ball on (dropping a pass forward) the defending team will restart with pass-off.

Forward pass

Forward passes are not allowed and a pass-off is awarded to the non-offending team.

Ball in touch

If the ball or attacking player carrying the ball crosses the touchline, play is restarted by a pass-off awarded to the non-offending team.

Penalties

All penalties are taken with a pass-off. A player from the non-offending team taps the ball on the ground with his foot and then passes to a team mate. Opposing players must 5 to 10 m back depending on the size of the team and or the pitch.

Reasons for penalties

- Ball carrier hands-off a player.
- Interference by a defending player not allowing a transfer, pass or ball take immediately after a tag.
- Ball carrier makes further ground after a tag without passing, transfer or ball take.
- A defending player takes the ball from the ball carrier.
- Deliberate obstruction of an opponent.
- A defending player is offside.

In all instances the opposition must be 5 to 10m back depending on the size of the teams or the pitch.

Mini Rugby 1 Suggested Age Group U8

Ball size	3
Maximum time per half – Single match	15 minutes
Maximum time per half – Festivals/ Events	7 minutes
Maximum time a squad/ team is allowed to play per day/ event	60 minutes
Minimum time allowed for half time	1 minute
Max no of players per team	Recommended 8
No of forwards	Not applicable
No of backs	Not applicable
Safety zone between pitches	6 metres
Tackle height	Coaches to ensure players are taught the correct technique Waist high – Penalty for tackles above the waist Dangerous Tackles (e.g. High / Swinging / Dump tackle) to be penalised immediately & player warned.
Hand off	Not allowed
Time allowed for rucks & mauls	The 5 seconds “Use it or Lose it” rule applies. This starts from the moment ruck/maul is formed. It is illegal to collapse a maul Referee/Coach should count down “5, 4, 3, 2, and 1” from moment ruck/maul is formed.
No of players per team allowed in rucks & mauls	3
Kicking in Play	Not allowed
Start match	Pass-Off: Must be off the ground and after the referee’s whistle
Method of scoring	Try
Line-Out	No
Scrum	No

Start of Match and/or Restarts

All starts and restarts are by pass-off (from the ground) and must be after the referee’s whistle. The opposition must retire 10m from the ball and can only move once the scrum half/passer passes the ball. The first receiver must start no more than 2m back from the scrum half/passer.

At the start of both halves and after a try, the pass-off from the centre of the pitch will be used to restart the game.

Penalties: **No quick tap penalties allowed**

Penalties are taken by a pass-off (from the ground) and after the whistle, the opposition being 10m back from the mark (or behind the goal line). Penalties must be taken through the mark. To play the ball, it must be first tapped with the foot before being passed off the ground. The first receiver must start no more than 2m back from the scrum half/passer.

Kicking - Not allowed

Hand Off - Not allowed

Discipline

No sending off in Mini Rugby only compulsory substitutions to ensure same numbers on the pitch at all times.

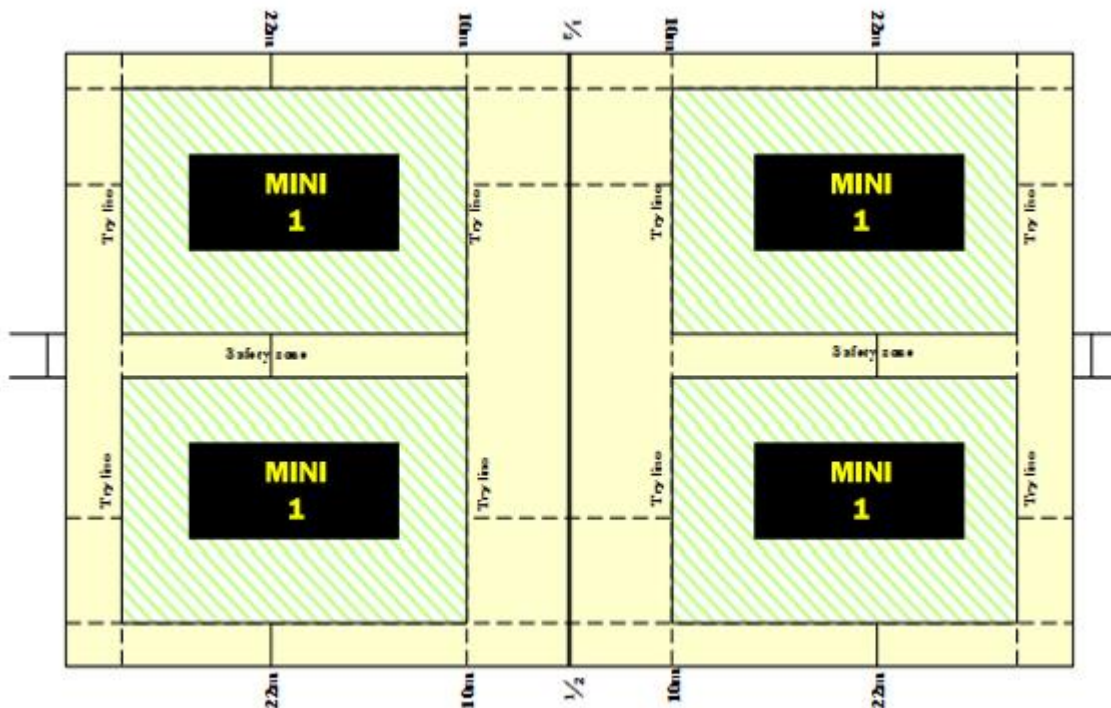
Punching/Kicking of an opponent

No verbal warning – immediate compulsory substitution and the player is not allowed to participate in next match or rest of the day's event.

Dangerous Tackles: High /Swing and Dump Tackles

Player to receive 1 (one) verbal warning from the referee. If the player offends again, compulsory substitution to be made by coach on request by the referee. Player is allowed to participate in next match/ rest of the day's event unless there is a repeat of the offence.

Pitch size: Minimum 40m x 30m



Mini Rugby 2

Suggested Age Group – U9 & U10

Ball size	3
Maximum time per half – Single match	15 minutes
Maximum time per half – Festivals/ Events	7 minutes
Maximum time a squad/ team is allowed to play per day/ event	60 minutes
Minimum time allowed for half time	1 minute
Max no of players per team	8
No of forwards	3
No of backs	5
Safety zone between pitches	6 metres
Tackle height	Coaches to ensure players are taught the correct technique Waist high – Penalty for tackles above the waist Dangerous Tackles (e.g. High / Swinging / Dump tackle) to be penalised immediately & player warned.
Hand off	Not allowed
Time allowed for rucks & mauls	The 5 seconds “Use it or Lose it” rule applies. This starts from the moment ruck/maul is formed. It is illegal to collapse a maul Referee/Coach should count down “5, 4, 3, 2, and 1” from moment ruck/maul is formed.
No of players per team allowed in rucks & mauls	3
Kicking in Play	Not allowed
Start match	Pass-Off: Must be off the ground and after the referee’s whistle
Method of scoring	Try
Line-Out	3 Players including the thrower All “forwards” must be involved in lineout No lifting allowed.
Scrum	3 Players No contest Players must stay bound until scrum is over

Start of Match and/or Restarts

All starts and restarts are by pass-off (from the ground) and must be after the referee’s whistle. The opposition must retire 10m from the ball and can only move once the scrum half/passer passes the ball. The first receiver must start no more than 2m back from the scrum half/passer.

At the start of both halves and after a try, the pass-off from the centre of the pitch will be used to restart the game.

Penalties:

No quick tap penalties allowed

Penalties are taken by a pass-off (from the ground) and after the whistle, the opposition being 10m back from the mark (or behind the goal line). Penalties must be taken through the mark. To play the ball, it must be first tapped with the foot before being passed off the ground. The first receiver must start no more than 2m back from the scrum half/passer.

Kicking - Not allowed

Hand Off - Not allowed

Scrum

1. All players stay bound until ball has emerged.
2. No push or contesting allowed, ball must be put in straight.
3. Opposition scrum half behind his forwards – no follow around allowed.
4. Scrum is over when ball is in the hands of the attacking scrum half.
5. Scrum half must pass the ball – no break allowed.
6. Both back lines 5m back from scrum.
7. Always 10m from touch line and 5m from goal line.

Line out:

1. 3 players including the Thrower
2. Line out 2m from touch line.
3. No contest.
4. No Lifting allowed
5. No quick throw allowed
6. Ball must be caught and delivered to scrum-half - Line out is over when the scrum half passes the ball.
7. Both hookers/throwers must be at the front of the line-out and both scrum halves behind their forwards.
8. Scrum halves must pass the ball. No break allowed.
9. Both back lines 5m back from Lineout.
10. Ball must be thrown straight into the line-out – no over throw.
11. No catch and drive allowed.

Rucks and mauls

Referee/Coach should count down “5, 4, 3, 2, and 1” from moment ruck/maul is formed.

The “Use it or Lose it” rule should be strictly applied.

It is **ILLEGAL to COLLAPSE** a Maul.

Players joining a Ruck or Maul must do so in a safe and legal manner, **e.g. no shoulder-charging, diving off feet etc.**

Squeeze ball and Bridging are **Not Allowed**

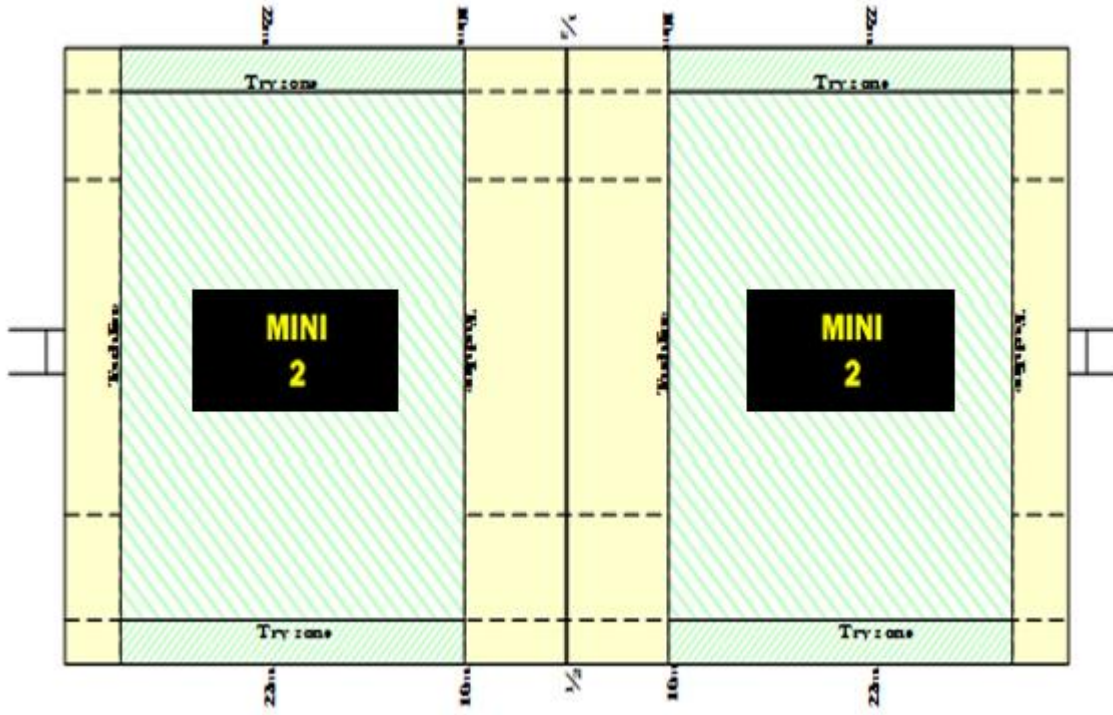
Dangerous Tackles: High /Swing and Dump Tackles

Player to receive 1 (one) verbal warning from the referee. If the player offends again, compulsory substitution to be made by coach on request by the referee. Player is allowed to participate in next match/ rest of the day's event unless there is a repeat of the offence.

Punching/Kicking of an opponent

No verbal warning – immediate compulsory substitution and the player is not allowed to participate in next match or rest of the day's event

Pitch size: Minimum 60m x 40m



Mini Rugby 3

Suggested Age Group – U11 & U12

Ball size	4
Maximum time per half – Single match	20 minutes
Maximum time per half – Festivals/ Events	7 minutes
Maximum time a squad/ team is allowed to play per day/ event	60 minutes
Minimum time allowed for half time	1 minute
Max no of players per team	10
No of forwards	5
No of backs	5
Safety zone between pitches	6 metres
Tackle height	Coaches to ensure players are taught the correct technique Waist high – Penalty for tackles above the waist Dangerous Tackles (e.g. High / Swinging / Dump tackle) to be penalised immediately & player warned.
Hand off	Below shoulder - Players should be encouraged to carry the ball in two hands.
Time allowed for rucks & mauls	The 5 seconds “Use it or Lose it” rule applies. This starts from the moment ruck/maul is formed. It is illegal to collapse a maul Referee/Coach should count down “5, 4, 3, 2, and 1” from moment ruck/maul is formed.
No of players per team allowed in rucks & mauls	5
Kicking in Play	Defence zone only
Start match	Drop Kick on Half Way
Method of scoring	Try
Line-Out	5 Players including the thrower All “forwards” must be involved in lineout No lifting allowed.
Scrum	5 Players 1 step allowed & Strike allowed Players must stay bound until scrum is over

Start of Match and/or Restarts

Starts - Drop Kick on Half Way and must be after the referee’s whistle.

In dead ball situations the restarts must take place 10m from try-line (kicking zone).

Penalties: No quick tap penalties allowed

Penalties must be taken through the mark designated by the referee. A scrum to be awarded to the opposition if persistently done incorrectly.

Opposition must be 10 m back or behind the goal line. To play the ball, it must be first tapped with the foot before being passed off the ground. The first receiver must start no more than 2m back from the scrum half/passers.

Penalties inside the Kicking Zone: The DEFENDING team awarded the penalty may kick directly to touch and are awarded throw in

Kicking

It is not permitted to kick the ball outside the “Kicking Zone” (10m from own goal line). If the offence is unintentional, a scrum is awarded to the opposition and if intentional, a penalty is awarded to the opposition.

Pass back into Kicking Zone rule (as per 15-a-side) to apply.

Players in front of the kicker must be brought outside before they can take part in play.

Hand Off Only allowed Below the Shoulder - penalty awarded if hand off is to the face or neck.

Scrum

1. 5 players (LHP/H/THP & Two 2nd Rows)
2. All players stay bound until ball has emerged.
3. Scrum may not move further than 1 step from the mid-point of original scrum.
4. Only strike can be contested (hooker v hooker).
5. Scrum half to feed the ball into the scrum with two hands and straight.
6. No forward allowed to pick up the ball from the scrum.
7. Opposition scrum half behind his 2nd Rows – no follow around allowed.
8. Both back lines 5m back from scrum.
9. Always 10m from touchline and 5m from goal line.
10. Scrum is over when referee calls “scrum over” or when the ball is in the hands of the scrum half who may break.

Line out:

1. 5 players including the Thrower
2. Line out 2m from touch line.
3. The ball may be contested.
4. No lifting allowed
5. No quick throw allowed
6. A space of one metre (arm’s length) between all players in the line-out
7. Both hookers/throwers must be at the front of the line-out and both scrum halves behind their forwards.
8. Both back lines 5m back from Lineout.
9. Ball must be thrown straight into the line-out – no over throw.
10. Line out is over when the scrum half passes the ball/ makes a break or when team catching the ball catches & drives
11. (5 seconds “Use it or Lose it” in driving maul to apply).

Rucks and mauls

The “Use it or Lose it” rule should be strictly applied - Referee/Coach should count down “5, 4, 3, 2, and 1” from moment ruck/maul is formed.

It is **ILLEGAL to COLLAPSE** a Maul.

Players joining a Ruck or Maul must do so in a safe and legal manner, **e.g. no shoulder-charging, diving off feet etc.** Squeeze ball and Bridging are **Not Allowed**

Discipline

No sending off in Mini Rugby only compulsory substitutions to ensure same numbers on the pitch at all times.

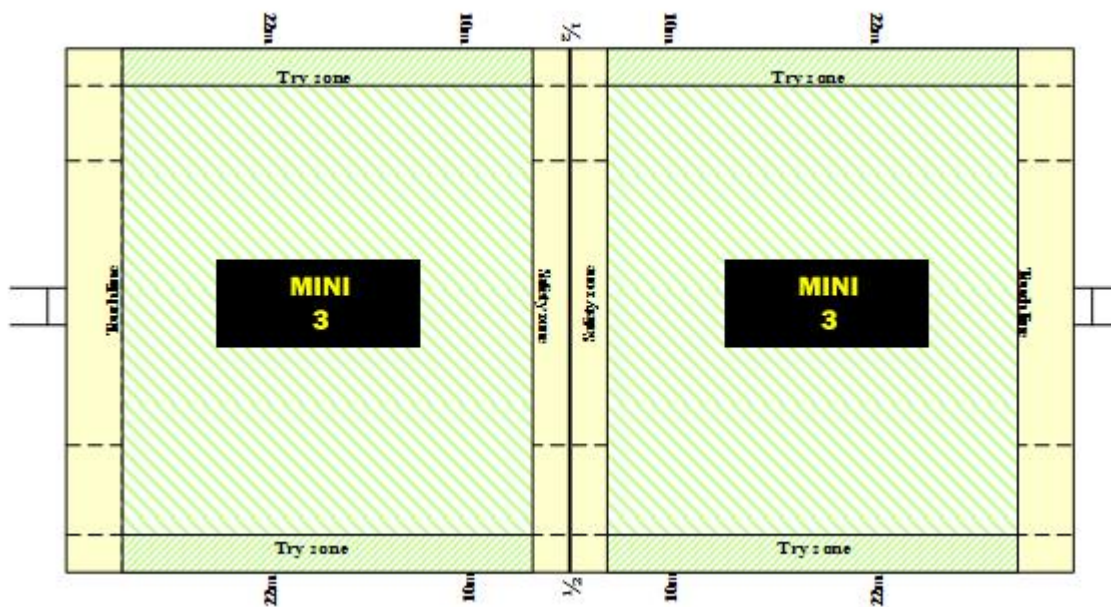
Dangerous Tackles: High /Swing and Dump Tackles

Player to receive 1 (one) verbal warning from the referee. If the player offends again, compulsory substitution to be made by coach on request by the referee. Player is allowed to participate in next match/ rest of the day's event unless there is a repeat of the offence.

Punching/Kicking of an opponent

No verbal warning – immediate compulsory substitution and the player is not allowed to participate in next match or rest of the day's event

Pitch size: Minimum 70m x 40m



INFORMATION

If you would like more information about Mini Rugby or would like information on Coaching Courses, Refereeing, or additional coaching material, please contact your Provincial Rugby Development Department.

Connacht

IRFU Connacht Branch,
Galway Sportsground,
College Road,
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