

Rugby NorCal Junior Youth - Referee Cheat Sheet

	U8	U10	U12
Age	7 or younger 9/1/2026	9 or younger on 9/1/2026	11 or younger on 9/1/2026
Ball	3	4	4
Field Size (min)	25x40 meters	30x50 meters	40x60 meters
Match Duration	15 min halves	15 min halves	20 min halves
# of Players	4-7 (6 recommended)	10	12
Weight-Level Matches	None	Light-Weight: <= 80 lbs (2 stars) Open-Weight: <= 139 lbs (1 star)	Light-Weight: <= 108 lbs (2 stars) Open-Weight: <= 169 lbs (1 star)
Weighed In @ Match Venue	No	X-Player: >= 140 lbs (must wear red socks) Yes	X-Player: >= 170 lbs (must wear red socks) Yes
Contact Type	NON-CONTACT Flag , restart with a Free pass from place of tag	Tackle	Tackle
Tackles	None	Below Sternum, no jersey slings	Below Sternum, no jersey slings
Lineout Variations	None	None , free pass 5 meters from touch, level with where the ball/ball carrier went into touch. 8 meters offside. All players freeze until first pass is made.	Contested , no lifting, 8 meters offside
Scrum Variations	None	Uncontested , 3-man, no forward pickup, 4 meter offside, scrumhalf behind center of scrum	Uncontested , 5-man, no forward pickup, 4 meter offside, scrumhalf behind center of scrum
Restarts	Free Pass	kick-off, scoring team kicks off	kick-off, scoring team kicks off
Kicking	No	Yes, 10s are the 22s	Yes, 10s are the 22s
Conversions	No	Yes, if there are posts and the coaches agree	Yes, if there are posts and the coaches agree
Sin Bin	No, player should be substituted for foul play	5 min	5 min

All U10/U12 players must be weighed in prior to match start and stamped (two/one stars) or wearing red-socks (X-Player).

Referee must check for stamps and red sock players before kick-off

X-Players must wear red-socks and cannot be used to dominate play, i.e. may only play on an Open side for their age group, may be spread evenly across teams, cannot lead rushes from free-kicks (includes tap kick and pass), may not charge through a lineup JUNIOR YOUTH

Guidelines for Refereeing Junior Rugby

- Referees must be qualified with Rugby NorCal, USAR (USA Rugby), or NCRRS (Northern California Rugby Referee Society)
- If there is no referee available at any given fixture a person who has attended a coaching course may referee the game
- Referees should wear a distinct colored jersey and dress as a referee: i.e. rugby shorts and socks • Referees need to attain a full understanding of the rules for the Age-Weight level they are refereeing • Referee performs pre-match stamp and red socks check, players must be stamped correct for the match being played, those not stamped must wear red socks
- Appoint a person to be a touch judge, preferably not the team coach, the touch judge should mark offside lines for scrums and lineouts to teach players offside lines and create space for a clean and open contest • Blow the whistle with authority, use hand signals then give verbal explanations
- In set play, **take time** to make sure both backs and forwards are correctly in position (scrums 4 meters and lineouts 8 meters).
- Ensure scrums are set safely using a proper cadence call
- Record scores and work with coaches at half time if scores blow-out occurs by a 30-point differential • Apply the advantage law as often as possible
- Apply penalties for penalty offences and try to keep scrums to a minimum
- All tackles must be below the armpit. Penalize immediately any tackle above this line.
- The referee ensures: (1) the tackler immediately releases the ball carrier, (2) the ball carrier plays the ball, and (3) all arriving players come through the gate on their feet.
- Explain decisions clearly, players will look to you for guidance, instructing offending players as to what they have done wrong
- Referees have the right to stop play if they think a player's safety is at risk, and then discuss the situation with the coaches of both teams
- Stop play immediately for over aggressive play, dangerous play, fighting or back chat
- Stop play for injuries to players
- Where appropriate use the sin bin in preference to sending off. Players can be forced to substitute for disciplinary measures

For U8 refereeing guidelines refer the "Flag Rugby Handbook" plus the adaptations below:

- No keeping score
- No tournament rules as described on page 2 of the handbook
- No game progressions from page 12 of the handbook
- No kicking as described on page 12 of the handbook
- Start a half and re-start after a score with a free pass at halfway, not tap and pass

Referee Code of Conduct

- Referee to ensure that the "spirit of the game" for children is not lost by "over refereeing" the game, brow-beating or scolding players
- Ensure that your behavior is consistent with the principles of good sportsmanship both on and off the field • Compliment both teams on their good play, whenever such praise is deserved
- Be consistent, objective and courteous
- Condemn the "deliberate foul" as being unsportsmanlike, thus retaining respect for fair play • Be a good communicator
- Have empathy with the players
- Be unobtrusive, but exercise firmness
- Be calm when player/spectator passions are high

Referee Harassment

Stop play for verbal or physical harassment from coaches, parents or spectators. Referees have the ability to speak to coaches to evict unwanted persons from grounds under their control. Ensure you report all incidents to Rugby NorCal Referee Committee Chair and Rugby NorCal Junior Youth Committee Chair. This is a Zero Tolerance Policy against referee abuse, and disciplinary action will be taken!