

# THE RUGBY DICTIONARY

## A

**All Blacks** - the national team of New Zealand

## B

**Backs** - the group of players normally numbered 9 through 15 who do not participate in scrums and lineouts, except for the scrumhalf .

**Barbarians** - the name of invitational rugby teams, the most famous based in the UK, drawing the finest players from around the world together to play matches against international teams. Also called the BaaBaas.

**Binding** - the careful method players grip and grasp each other to form a secure scrum, ruck, or maul. This is a critical skill to ensure the safety of players.

**Bledisloe Cup** - the annual competition between the national teams of New Zealand and Australia. Now held during the Tri-Nations Competition.

**Blindside** - from a set piece, ruck or maul, the short side of the field. Also called the weakside.

**Breakaway** - either of the two forwards wearing No. 6 or No. 7. Also called wing forwards or breakaways they bind to the scrum outside of the locks just behind the outside hip of the props. They can play always on the same side of the scrum or can specialize on either the weakside or strongside. The players with the fewest set responsibilities, their job is to aggressively pursue the ball, gain possession, and take off running. Also known as Flanker.

## C

**Calcutta Cup** - the annual match between England and Scotland each year during the 5 Nations tournament. The trophy is made from the silver rupees remaining after the Calcutta Rugby Club disbanded in the '20s.

**Cap** - anytime a player plays in a match he/she is technically awarded a cap but the term is mostly used to note the number of official games a player has appeared for his/her national team against another national team. A cap is an honor, there is typically no physical item awarded.

**Captain** - the player selected to guide a team on the pitch during a match.

**Cardiff Arms Park** - the former home stadium of the national team of Wales in Cardiff, Wales (now the Millennium Stadium)

**Centre** - either of the the backs wearing No. 12 (inside) or No. 13 (outside). Powerful runners who are the heart of the back running attack and defense. The inside centre can also be called the 2nd 5/8th.

**Charge Down** - the blocking of a kick by an opposition's player.

**Chip Kick** - a short shallow kick usually delivered over the head of an onrushing defender to be quickly retrieved or caught by the kicker or one of his/her supporting players

**Clearance Kick** - a kick of the ball to touch which relieves pressure on a side under heavy attack by the opposition.

**Conversion Kick** - a kick at the posts after the awarding of a try scoring two points if successful. The kick must be attempted directly from a spot perpendicular to the spot where the try was awarded. Usually taken with a place kick, it can be rushed when the kicker makes a move towards the ball. If taken as a drop kick it is uncontested.

## **D**

**Drop Goal** - a kick at the posts taken at anytime a side is close to their own try line. If successful it scores three points but the ball must hit the ground before being kicked.

## **E**

**Eagles** - the national team of the United States of America

**Ellis, William Webb** - the person, as a student at Rugby School, credited with inspiring the modern game of rugby football in 1823. He later became a priest and passed away in Southern France.

## **F**

**Feed** - the rolling of the ball into the scrum by the scrumhalf. Must be straight down the tunnel.

**Fifteens** - the name of the most common game of rugby union featuring fifteen total players per side. Each team consists of 8 forwards and 7 backs playing two halves each 40 minutes long.

**First 5/8th** - the back wearing No. 10 who normally recieves the ball from the scrumhalf. Also called the Outhalf, Outside half or 1st 5/8th, he/she will call plays for the backline, pass the ball to other backs, or provide most of the tactical kicks. Also known as Flyhalf.

**Fixture** - another name for a rugby match.

**Flanker** - either of the two forwards wearing No. 6 or No. 7. Also called wing forwards or breakaways they bind to the scrum outside of the locks just behind the outside hip of the props. They can play always on the same side of the scrum or can specialize on either the weakside or strongside. The players with the fewest set responsibilities, their job is to aggressively pursue the ball, gain possession, and take off running. Also known as Breakaway Forward.

**Flyhalf** - the back wearing No. 10 who normally receives the ball from the scrumhalf. Also called the Outhalf, Outside half or 1st 5/8th, he/she will call plays for the backline, pass the ball to other backs, or provide most of the tactical kicks. Also known as First 5/8th.

**Foot Up** - an offense where a hooker brings his foot into the scrum's tunnel before the ball is fed by the scrumhalf.

**Forward Pass** - an illegal pass to a player ahead of the ball causing the ball to be awarded to the other team in a scrum.

**Forwards** - the group of players normally numbered 1 through 8 who bind together into scrums, lineup for lineouts, and commit themselves to most rucks and mauls.

**Free Kick** - a uncontested kick awarded to a team usually for a minor penalty by the other team. The kick cannot be taken directly at the posts except by a drop goal.

**Front Five** - a common name for all of the front (props and hooker) and second row (locks) forwards. Also known as Tight Five

**Front Row** - the common name for the Prop/Hooker/Prop combination at the front of a scrum.

**Fullback** - the back wearing No. 15 who normally plays deep behind the backline. In offense the fullback is a dangerous attacking position hitting holes unexpectedly at pace, in defense the fullback has primary responsibility for covering all tactical kicks down field by the opposition.

## **G**

**Garryowen** - a tactical kick which is popped very high and shallow allowing the kicker and supporting players to easily run underneath it for recovery. The kick is intended to put heavy pressure on any opposition player attempting to catch the ball. Also known as an Up and Under .

**Grand Slam** - a 6 Nations championship won without any losses or draws.

**Grubber** - a kick of the ball which cause the ball to bounce and roll along the ground.

## H

**Haka** - a cultural ceremony display with a chant performed by many Southern Pacific teams as a challenge before a match at the center of the pitch.

**Halfback** - the back wearing No. 9 who normally feeds the ball into a scrum and retrieves the ball at the base of scrums, rucks, and mauls. Can also be called the Scrumhalf.

**High Ball** - a ball kicked very high into the air placing any player attempting to catch it under extreme pressure by on rushing opposition players.

**Home Nations** - England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland

**Hooker** - the frontrow forward wearing No. 2. The player is supported on either side in the scrum by props and is required to gain possession of the ball in the scrum by hooking or blocking the ball with one of his/her feet. The hooker will normally also be the forward who throws the ball into the lineout.

## I

**Injury Time** - during a half, the clock is stopped by the referee while any injury is attended to. After the normal half's time has expired (eg. 40 minutes) the continued play afterwards equal to the amount of injury stoppage is called injury time.

**Inside Centre** - the back wearing No. 12. See Centers

**International** - a name identifying a person capped for their country's national team also another name for a test

**IRB** - the International Rugby Football Board. The IRB is the ruling body for Rugby Union worldwide and has primary responsibility for setting and adjusting the laws of the sport and running the Rugby World Cup championships for 15s and 7s every four years.

## J

**Jumper** - a common name for a rugby jersey. Also the name of a player in a lineout, usually at the 2,4, and 6 positions, jumping to chatch or intercept the throw.

## K

**Knock On** - losing, dropping, or knocking the ball forward from a player's hand resulting in the ball being awarded to the other team in a scrum.

**Knock Forward** - same as Knock On

## L

**Lansdowne Road** - the home stadium of the Irish national team in Dublin, Ireland.

**League** - a version of rugby played normally with 13 players under different laws than Rugby Union. The two codes deviated over professionalism and are usually contentious towards each other.

**Lifting** - the act of lifting the lineout jumper into the air in order to more easily catch or intercept the throw.

**Lineout** - the setplay restarting play after the ball has been taken out or kicked to touch. Both sets of forwards will line up opposite each other with the side with throw calling a play. The throw must be directly down the middle of the two lines.

**Lock** - either of the two forwards normally wearing No. 4 and No. 5. Typically the largest players on the field, they have primary responsibility for being the power in scrums and securing the ball in lineouts. Due to their size, they are also normally powerful forces in all loose play, rucks, and mauls. Also known as Second Row

**Loosehead** - the No. 1 prop in a scrum due to his head being outside the opposition's tighthead prop's shoulders. see prop

**Loose Forwards** - common names for the flankers and No. 8 in a forward pack.

## M

**Mark** - a location on the pitch designated by the referee as the location a scrum should come together. Also a word a player will call while catching a kicked ball within his own 22 meter line. If awarded by the referee, that back is awarded a free kick.

**Maul** - typically after a runner has come into contact and the ball is still being held by a player once any combination of at least three players have bound themselves a maul has been set. The primary difference from a ruck is that the ball is not on the ground.

**Melrose Cup** - the trophy awarded the mens champions of the Rugby World Cup 7s.

**Murrayfield** - the home stadium of the national team of Scotland in Edinburgh, Scotland.

## N

**Number 8** - the forward who wears the jersey with the No. 8. This player binds into the scrum normally at the very base between the two locks. His/her responsibility is to initiate attacks by the forwards from scrums or to provide a stable ball from the scrum for the scrumhalf.

## O

**Offsides** - during rucks, scrums, lineouts, and mauls an imaginary line is present over which any player crossing before the set piece is completed commits a penalty.

**Outhalf/Outside half** - the back wearing No. 10 who normally receives the ball from the scrumhalf. Also called the Outhalf, Outside half or 1st 5/8th, he/she will call plays for the backline, pass the ball to other backs, or provide most of the tactical kicks. Also known as Flyhalf.

**Outside Centre** - the back wearing No. 13. see center

## P

**Pack** - another name for all the forwards usually when they are bound for a scrum.

**PacRim** - the annual spring tournament between the national men's teams of the USA, Canada, Hong Kong, and Japan.

**Penalty** - any number of infractions or violations which award the other team a kick.

**Penalty Kick** - an uncontested kick awarded to a team for a major infraction by the other team. The kick can be taken directly at goal and scores 3 points if successful. If the ball is kicked to touch, then the ball is awarded back to the team which kicked the ball out of bounds.

**Penalty Try** - the awarding of a try due to a flagrant violation by an opposing side that prevents an obvious try from being scored.

**Pitch** - the field upon which a rugby match is played.

**Place Kick** - a kick of the ball resting on the ground, placed in an indentation in the ground, from a small pile of sand, or from a kicking tee. Place kicks are used to start each half, for penalty kicks at goal, or for conversion kicks after a try has been awarded.

**Prop** - either of the two forwards normally wearing No. 1 (loosehead) or No. 3 (tighthead). Responsibilities are to support the hooker during scrums and 2nd rows during lineouts.

**Pumas** - the national team of Argentina

**Pushover Try** - a try scored by the forward pack as a unit in a scrumdown by pushing the opposition's scrum pack backwards across the tryline while dragging the ball underneath them. Typically scored from a 5 meter scrum, the try is usually awarded when the No. 8 or scrumhalf touch the ball down after it crosses the try line.

**Q**

**R**

**Ranfurly Shield** - a challenge trophy between the provincial sides of New Zealand.

**Red card** - the card shown to a player by the referee usually after a malicious foul, resulting in that player being expelled from the match.

**Referee** - the sole judge and timekeeper of the game.

**Restart** - the kick restarting play after a half or after points are scored.

**Ruck** - typically after a runner has come into contact and the ball has been delivered to the ground once any combination of at least three players have bound themselves a ruck has been set. The primary difference from a maul is that the ball is on the ground.

**Rugby** - a football game in which the ball is kicked or carried forward down a field to score points either by touching the ball down beyond a tryline or kicking the ball through posts. The primary rule governing the game is that no pass to a player forward of the ball is allowed. Two codes of rugby are played, Rugby Union and Rugby League. All information on this site concerns Rugby Union. Union is normally played with fifteen players, but versions of the game featuring only seven or ten players is also popular. Football is quite ancient and has existed in most every cultural group through time. The current form of Rugby Football was first developed at Rugby School in England and thus the school provided the name for the sport.

**RWC** - short for Rugby World Cup. Tournaments played every four years for mens 15s, womens 15s, mens 7s, U-21 men, and U-19 men.

**Rugger** - colloquial name for the game.

**S**

**Scrum** - the formation used in the setplay restarting play after a knock-on or forward pass. The forwards from each side bind together and then the two packs come together to allow the scrumhalf with the feed to deliver the ball to the scrum. A

scrum can also be awarded or chosen in different circumstances by the referee. Also the name of an excellent rugby union website!

**Scrumdown** - the coming together of the scrum.

**Scrumhalf** - the back wearing No. 9 who normally feeds the ball into a scrum and retrieves the ball at the base of scrums, rucks, and mauls. Can also be called the halfback.

**Scrummaging** - the process of setting and completing a scrum

**Second 5/8th** - either of the the backs wearing No. 12 (inside) or No. 13 (outside). Powerful runners they are the heart of the back running attack and defense.

**Second row** - either of the two forwards normally wearing No. 4 and No. 5. Typically the largest players on the field, they have primary responsibility for being the power in scrums and securing the ball in lineouts. Due to their size, they are also normally powerful forces in all loose play, rucks, and mauls. Also known as Lock.

**Selection** - the process of picking a squad for a match by a club or team. Also a identifier of a player selected to play a match.

**Selector** - a person involved in the selection process.

**Send off** - after flagrant, numerous or a malicious foul, the referee can elect to expel a player from the match. The player cannot be replaced causing the side to play one person short. Normally the sent off player is banned for at least one match after the sendoff and depending on the severity of the offense can be banned for more than one match to life.

**Sevens** - a form of rugby union invented in Scotland and played with only seven total players, usually three forwards and four backs. Each half typically last only 7 minutes but can be longer. Games are almost always played during tournaments.

**Sin Bin** - when a player is shown a yellow card and expelled from the field of play by the referee for 10 minutes for foul play or persistent infringement he is said to have been sent to the "Sin Bin".

**Six Nations** - the annual tournament from January through March between the national men's teams of England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France and Italy

**Springboks** - the national team of South Africa

**Super Twelve** - the annual tournament between the best provincial teams of Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

## T

**Take** - a well executed catch of a kicked ball.

**Tens** - a form of rugby union played with only ten total players. Each half typically last only 10 minutes but can be longer. Games are almost always played during tournaments.

**Test** - the name typically used for matches between two national teams. The match can also be called an international.

**Tight Five** - a common name for all of the front (props and hooker) and second row (locks) forwards. Also known as Front Five

**Tighthead** - the No. 3 prop in a scrum due to his head being between the opposition's hooker and loosehead prop's shoulders. A scrum can also win a tighthead by taking possession of the ball in a scrum fed by the other pack.

**Touch, touchline** - the out of bounds line that runs on either side of the pitch. The non-contact version of rugby is also commonly called touch.

**Touch judge** - an official posted on each side of the pitch to mark the spot where balls go out of touch and to judge kicks at goal. The touch judge is also instrumental in pointing out any serious violence infractions not seen by the referee.

**Tour** - a trip by a club or team typically to a foreign country playing a number of different matches.

**TriNations** - the annual competition between the national men's teams of Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

**Try** - a score of 5 points awarded when the ball is carried or kicked across the tryline and touched down to the ground by a player.

**Tryline** - the goal line extending across the pitch.

**Tunnel** - the gap between the front rows in a scrum or the gap between the two lines of forwards in a lineout.

**22 Meter Dropout** - the kick which restarts play after a missed penalty or drop goal passing the end goal line or touched down by a defending player. The ball is kicked back to the original attacking side.

**Twickenham** - the home stadium of the national team of England in Twickenham, England.

## U

**U19** - players under the age of 19

**U21** - players under the age of 21

**Union** - another name for the most popular form of rugby featuring either 15, 10, or 7 players per side. The local, provincial, or national organizing body for rugby competition is also often called a union.

**Up and under** - a tactical kick which is popped very high and shallow allowing the kicker and supporting players to easily run underneath it for recovery. The kick is intended to put heavy pressure on any opposition player attempting to catch the ball. Also called a Garryowen due to the Irish club which originated the play.

## V

## W

**Wallabies** - the national team of Australia.

**Weakside** - from a set piece, ruck or maul, the short side of the field. Also called the Blindside.

**Webb Ellis Trophy** - the trophy awarded the mens champions of the Rugby World Cup 15s.

**Wing/Winger** - either of the two backs wearing No. 11 or No. 14. Each will normally stay on the same side of the back line they are on throughout the match and are typically expected to be the fastest sprinters in the side. Wingers also have key duties during defense helping the fullback cover kicks and counterattacking.

**Wing forward** - either of the two forwards wearing No. 6 or No. 7. Also called wing forwards or breakaways they bind to the scrum outside of the locks just behind the outside hip of the props. They can play always on the same side of the scrum or can specialize on either the weakside or strongside. The players with the fewest set responsibilities, their job is to aggressively pursue the ball, gain possession, and take off running. Also known as Flanker.

## X

**XV** - a common identifier for the first fifteen selected players of a club or team. A team can also use XV in their name, pronounced as fifteen.

## Y

**Yellow card** - the card shown by a referee to a player for foul play or persistent infringement, resulting in that player being expelled from the field of play to the "Sin Bin" for 10 minutes. If a player receives two yellow cards in the same game he is expelled from the field of play for the remainder of that game.

