**Tag-Rugby Rules**

**Year group:** Years 5 & 6

**Gender:** Mixed

A squad of 12 players, with 8 to play at any one time.

Eligibility. A minimum of 2 girls must be playing at all times.

**Format:**

**ALWAYS have two hands on the ball when moving with the ball and passing**

***Tag Belts*** must be worn over the shirt at all times. Shirts should be tucked in.

***No contact*** -strictly no contact or grabbing a player's clothing.

***No kicking*** - no kicking is allowed in Tag Rugby.

***No hand-offs*** - no hand-offs on the body or face or to swipe a defender's hand away to stop them taking your ribbons. This includes using the ball to fend off defenders.

***No diving on the ball*** - for safety players are not allowed to dive on a loose ball but instead must remain on their feet to play it.

***No deliberate barging into defenders*** - for safety, the ball carrier and the defender should attempt to avoid contact with each other at all times.

***No diving to score a try*** - Tag Rugby is often played during the summer months on hard grounds. For safety, it is recommended that young players are not allowed to dive in the act of scoring.

***Principles of Play***

**In attack**, the ball carrier should run forward whenever possible with the other players in close support. He / she can dodge potential taggers but cannot fend them off or shield his / her tags. The ball carrier’s feet must not leave the ground at any time including static spinning (when the players feet leave the ground and they turn 360°) However a pivoting movement is allowed as long as both feet do not come off the ground and the player is moving in a forward direction. The ball carrier should look to hold the ball in both hands at all times (coaching point not law), run at spaces between defenders and, if there are no spaces available, pass the ball to a team

mate in a better position. The ball carrier must not deliberately make contact with an opponent - offenders must be spoken to and reminded of the non-contact rules of tag rugby and a free pass awarded to the non offending side.

**In defence**, players should also be looking to run forward to that they can reduce the space their opponents have to play in. Defenders cannot physically touch the ball carrier, as the only contact allowed between the two teams is the removal of a tag from the belt of the ball carrier. Any other type of contact on the ball carrier, such as shirt pulling, running in front of or barging the ball carrier, forcing the ball carrier into touch, wrestling the ball from the ball carrier, etc, should be penalised.

**Rules:**

***Rule 1 - Method of scoring***

A try is worth one point.

To score a try a player must carry the ball over the opponents' goal line and press the ball down on the ground.

After a try is scored the game restarts from the centre of the field with a free pass by the non-scoring team.

***Rule 2 - Passing***

No forward passes are allowed and will be penalised by a free pass being awarded to the non-offending team at the place the ball left the player's hands.

***Rule 3 - The 'Tackle' (Tag)***

Only the player with the ball can be tagged and a tag is simply the removal by a defender of one of the two ribbons from the ball carrier. Ball carriers can run or dodge potential taggers; one pivoting movement in a forward direction is permitted as long as the players feet remain in contact with the ground i.e. no spinning jumps allowed. **Players** **cannot fend off potential taggers, guard or shield their ribbons in any way**. This includes using the ball to fend away defenders. The defender then holds the ribbon above their head and shouts 'tag' for all to hear. ***Note: When playing with a referee, it is helpful to players if the referee shouts 'pass' as a tag is made.*** Once tagged, the player in possession of the ball must attempt to stop as soon as possible and pass the ball within 3 seconds of being tagged. Even at full pace, the ball carrier will be expected to stop in 3 strides. Near the goal line, players are allowed momentum strides which means if they have taken 2 or 3 strides and put the ball down over the goal line the try will be given unless on the 5th and final tag. After a tag has been made, both the ball carrier and the defender are momentarily out of the game. The defender can take no further part until they have handed back the ribbon to the attacker (**not thrown it on the floor**) and the attacker no further part, until they have replaced their ribbon back on their belt.

***Rule 4 - The Free Pass***

A free pass is used to start the game (from the centre of the field) or to restart it at the place where the ball went out of play or an infringement took place. ***Note: If an infringement takes place over the goal line, or within 5 metres of the goal line, then a free pass should be awarded to the non-offending team, 5 metres out from the goal line to create some space.***

At a free pass the ball is held in two hands and on the instruction 'play' given by the referee the player passes the ball to a team-mate. ***Note: It is the referee who dictates when a free pass is taken by saying 'play'. Players cannot take a quick free pass in Tag Rugby, instead referees must allow sufficient time for defenders to get back before restarting the game.***

The player making the free pass must start play with a pass, they are not allowed to run with it themselves.

The opposition cannot start moving forward until the player has actually passed the ball.

At a free pass, the opposition must be 7 metres (7 large steps) back.

***Rule 5 - Ball out of play***

If the ball or ball carrier goes out of play a free pass is given to the other team from the sideline.

***Rule 6 - Knock-ons***

A knock-on occurs when the player attempting to catch the ball fumbles it and knocks it forward to the ground in the direction of the opponents' goal. ***Note: The ball must touch the ground for a knock-on to occur, so if a player fumbles a pass but manages to catch it before it hits the ground, play should continue.***

***Rule 7 - Off-side***

Once a tag has been made all defenders should make an effort to get back on their side of the ball and not deliberately stand in an off-side position, blocking the pass or waiting for an interception. Off-side is penalised by awarding a free pass to the non-offending team. ***Note: It tends to be the defenders standing off-side and within 3 metres of the ball that need penalising the most. Where defenders are off-side but not interfering with play, then play should be allowed to continue permitting the game to flow.***

***Rule 8 - Number of Tags ('tackles')***

**The five tag rule is applied at the County Final.** Failure to score after this set number of tags results in a 'turnover', with the opposition gaining a free pass at the place the last tag took place. ***Note: Referees could call out the number of tags when players are tagged e.g. 'Pass, one' …..'pass, two' etc.***

For a tag to count, the ball must still be in the hands of the ball carrier at the moment the tag is made. If a defender removes a ribbon after the ball carrier has passed the ball the tag should not be counted.

After a free pass has been awarded, the number of tags start back to zero.

When the Tag Rugby rules are broken, a free pass is awarded to the other team at the place the infringement took place and the number of tags start back to zero.