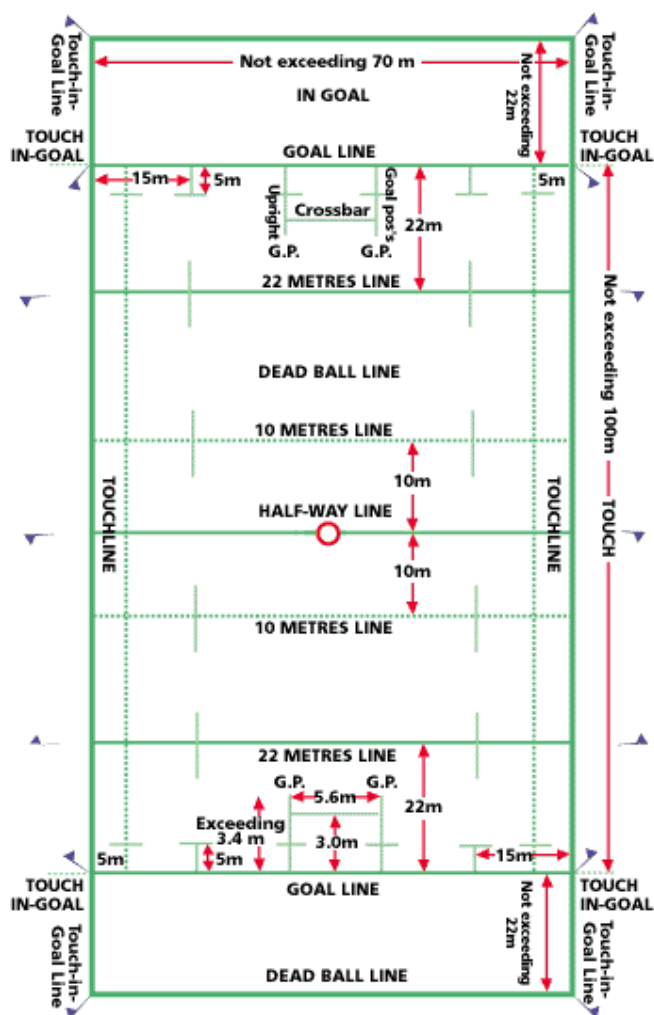


## Introduction to Rugby

Rugby is a popular game played by men and women of every race and creed, from under age five to well over fifty, in over 100 countries of the world. In a few of those countries it is the national sport -- some say religion.

The basic game involves 15 players though seven-a-side tournaments are also popular. The object of the game is to score as many points as possible by carrying, passing, kicking and grounding an oval ball in the scoring zone at the far end. Grounding the ball, which must be done with downward pressure, results in a try (worth 5 points). After a try a conversion may be attempted by place kick or drop kick. If the ball passes over the bar and between the goal posts the conversion is scored and results in a further 2 points. Points may also be scored from a drop kick in general play (worth 3 points) and a penalty kick (worth 3 points). The ball can't be passed forward (though it may be kicked forward) and players can't receive the ball in an offside position, nor may they wait in such a position. Play only stops when a try is scored, or the ball goes out of play, or an infringement occurs. When the ball goes out it is thrown back in at a lineout where the opposing "forwards" line up and jump for the ball.



Each side consists of 15 players and usually 6 replacements. Each player has a position. These are:-

### Forwards

**Loose Head Prop** - A loose head prop is at the front of each scrum. They are traditionally very strong, sometimes quite short and squat. They possess very good neck, back, leg and arm strength, as they are the foundation of the scrum.

**Hooker** - A hooker is the person who packs down in the middle of the front row of the scrum. They traditionally throw the ball in at the lineouts, and like props are very

strong in the neck, back, legs and arms. However, hookers are normally slightly smaller than props and have to be flexible because, as their name implies, they hook the ball back with a leg or foot when the scrum half puts the ball in to a scrum. This takes considerable flexibility in the hips and shoulders.

**Tight Head Prop** - Same attributes as the loose head but packs down the tight head side (right hand) of the scrum, which requires different scrummage technique to a loose head (left hand)

**Second Row** - This position is referred to as the "engine room" second rows provide the push in the scrum and generally are the persons who jump for the ball in the lineout. Second rows are normally tall, very athletic and have an excellent standing jump along with good strength.

**Flankers or Wing Forwards** - Considered the position where the player should have all round attributes, speed strength fitness handling skills amongst other skills. Flankers are always involved in the game, as they are the real ball winners once play has commenced. Flankers can be broken down into open side and blind side. The open side being normally smaller, faster and more mobile as he starts play nearer to the potential action and needs to be the first person to arrive. The blindside being larger as he has a more physical role to play at the lineout and may well be used

**No 8 or Lock** - Packs down at the rear of the scrum and therefore controls the ball out of the scrum. A very influential position and is often used to attack with a pickup of the scrum. Normally tall and athletic and used as an option to win the ball in the lineout.

## **Backs**

**Scrum Half** - The person who is the link between the forwards and the backs. Normally acts as the 'General' for the forwards and is always in the hub of the action. A scrum half is normally quite small but with a high degree of vision and speed off the mark, and pound-for-pound is very strong. They have to be able to react to situation very quickly. A key player in any side.

**Fly Half** - Often considered the most influential person on the field the fly half is the person who makes the key decision during a game. Responsible for deciding whether to kick or to run the ball, the fly half should be very fast, able to kick off both feet and operate in pressurised situations.

**Centre** - Centres provide the cutting edge to a side. They are the "Rapiers" that are given the ball normally via the fly half to make breaks through the opposition backs or can also act as decoys for other attacking options for the backs. A Centre should be very strong fast and able to pass with pinpoint accuracy.

**Wing** - The wingers are the finishers of the game. The idea being that the space should be created by the forwards and backs inside the wingers so once they receive the ball they have a clear run to use their speed and agility to score tries. Need to be very fast and able to jink and side step to finish off scoring situations.

**Full Back** - This player should possess great courage as he is likely to be the person who will be required to catch the high kicks referred to as "up and unders" or "bombs". The Full Back is also an essential part of any side's attacking option; a full back will appear in the back line as an extra man or as a decoy to provide space for the wings. Like all backs, the Full Back should have good speed and very good kicking skills.



Octopush: an English Invention

*(Article by Alan Blake, Southsea No 9 Branch of the British Sub-Aqua Club)*

At the close of summer 1954 with evening diving curtailed, the prospect of six months confined to a swimming pool was daunting. As Branch Secretary at the time it seemed essential that a competitive game was needed to soak up the winter interlude.

Octopush was a completely academic creation at the formation meeting. In 1954 we were very conscious of our new unhacked underwater environment and wanted a phraseology that linked us to the sea, and divorced us from the land. The name and really the game itself revolved around the word "octopus". The number of players had to be eight to suit the "oct". As Southsea could not muster 16 players regularly, six players and two probably weak or non-existent substitutes suit the membership.

(Historical note - in September 1954 there were only 15 Branches.) The "pushers" had to be called "pushers" because that was the action they took and was self-explanatory. The addition of the "h" to the end must now appear obvious, in retrospect. In order to tie the game to the sea further, the "squid" was a generically convenience. At no time had Southsea considered the unimaginative and non-descriptive [name] "underwater hockey", ice or grass, as an alternative to the 37 years of establishment of Octopush.

Octopush was devised with its own rules and original name as an underwater competitive sport for divers in its own right, not as an adapted land game.

The original rules had two differences that belong to the past era.

The restriction of overarm strokes was a direct adherence to the BS-AC pool rules at that time, similarly jumping in from the edge was forbidden. (Many Bath Superintendents opposed diving clubs using their pools for fear of broken glass.)

The non-use of snorkels was also to pacify the Bath Superintendent regarding broken masks, but also to avoid being used as a second implement that would have allowed "dribbling" the squid, so altering the intent and character of the game. The use of snorkels came in once Octopush was disciplined.

Competitions were held with our two neighbouring branches Bournemouth and Brighton in the 1954/55 winter. In March 1955 the first invited public demonstration was held at the Portsmouth City Baths in the Southsea BS-AC Gala.