



UNDER 10S · YOUR CHILD'S FIRST SCRUMS

THE SCRUM, EXPLAINED

A guide for U10 parents — what happens at a scrum, why it is built the way it is, and what the referee is looking for.

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Under 10s is the first season with **scrums**. At Under 9s there were none. At U10 the scrum is small and calm: **three players a side, nobody pushes**, and only the team putting the ball in may hook it. It is there to teach every child a safe body shape and a safe way of coming together, long before the scrum becomes a contest. This guide explains what you are watching, how to help your child, and what the referee is calling.

WHERE THE RULES IN THIS GUIDE COME FROM

Every rule here comes from **RFU Regulation 15, Appendix 4 — the Under 10s Rules of Play**, and the World Rugby Laws of the Game they build on. The RFU page reads “*Effective from 1st August 2025*”. Regulation 15 for 2026/27 took effect on 1 August 2026 and still names the Rules of Play as its appendices, which have not been reissued, so they were the current rules on the day this guide was created. Where RugbyReferee.net's **2026-27 U10 sheet** adds detail, we say so. If anything here ever disagrees with the RFU page, **the RFU page is right**. Where we give coaching advice rather than a rule, we say so. Links are at the back.

THE U10 SCRUM IN FOUR STEPS

1 WHO IS IN IT

The **three players nearest the stoppage** from each team: a prop either side of a hooker. The fourth nearest acts as scrum half, the “9”. The RFU says all players should be encouraged to take part.

2 CROUCH, BIND, SET

The referee calls “**Crouch**”, then “**Bind**”. After a pause, and only when the front rows are ready, the referee calls “**Set**”. Only then do the two front rows come together.

3 THE PUT-IN

The 9 of the team awarded the scrum puts the ball in **straight, from the middle of the gap**. Only **that team's hooker** may strike for it. **Neither team may push**.

4 OUT AND AWAY

The 9 must **pass** the ball from the base of the scrum — not run with it. The backs of both teams wait **5 metres** behind the scrum until the ball is out.

WHY U10 SCRUMS ARE BUILT THIS WAY

The RFU lists two of the key elements of U10 rugby as the “**introduction of uncontested scrum**” and the “**nearest 3 players in a scrum (all players trained, late specialisation)**”. Every child learns to scrummage safely before anyone becomes a specialist, and nobody has to win a shove to get the ball.



THE SET-UP

FORMING THE SCRUM

A scrum restarts the game after a small mistake. At U10 there are only two reasons for one, and the referee controls every step of how it comes together.

WHEN For a **forward pass** or a **knock on** — the ball handed or passed to a player in front, or passed or knocked forwards. The scrum goes to the other team, unless playing on gives them an advantage. The RFU asks referees to play advantage wherever possible, to keep the game flowing.

WHO The nearest **three players** from each team — prop, hooker, prop — with the fourth nearest as scrum half.

NEAR THE LINE A scrum awarded within 5 metres of the goal line is moved out so that its middle is **5 metres from the goal line**. The defending backs stay on or behind their goal line until the scrum is completed.

WHAT “UNCONTESTED” MEANS — WORLD RUGBY, LAWS OF THE GAME

“A scrum in which the team throwing-in gains possession without contest, with neither team being allowed to push from the mark.”

The U10 rules add that **only the team throwing the ball in may strike** for it.

CROUCH, BIND, SET

- 1** “**CROUCH**” — the two front rows crouch, facing each other.
- 2** “**BIND**” — using their **outside arm**, each prop binds onto the **back or side** of their opponent.
- 3** **PAUSE** — the referee waits until the front rows are ready.
- 4** “**SET**” — only now may the front rows engage. They must **not charge** at each other.

THE SHAPE THE RULES ASK FOR

- ✓ Props' bodies **parallel to the touchline**
- ✓ Head and shoulders **no lower than the hips**
- ✓ Shoulders **never below the level of the hips**
- ✓ **No downward pressure** on anyone

STOPPED AND REFORMED

- ✗ Front rows charging at each other
- ✗ Setting too close together, with necks and backs bent — the RFU says the scrum **must be stopped and reformed**

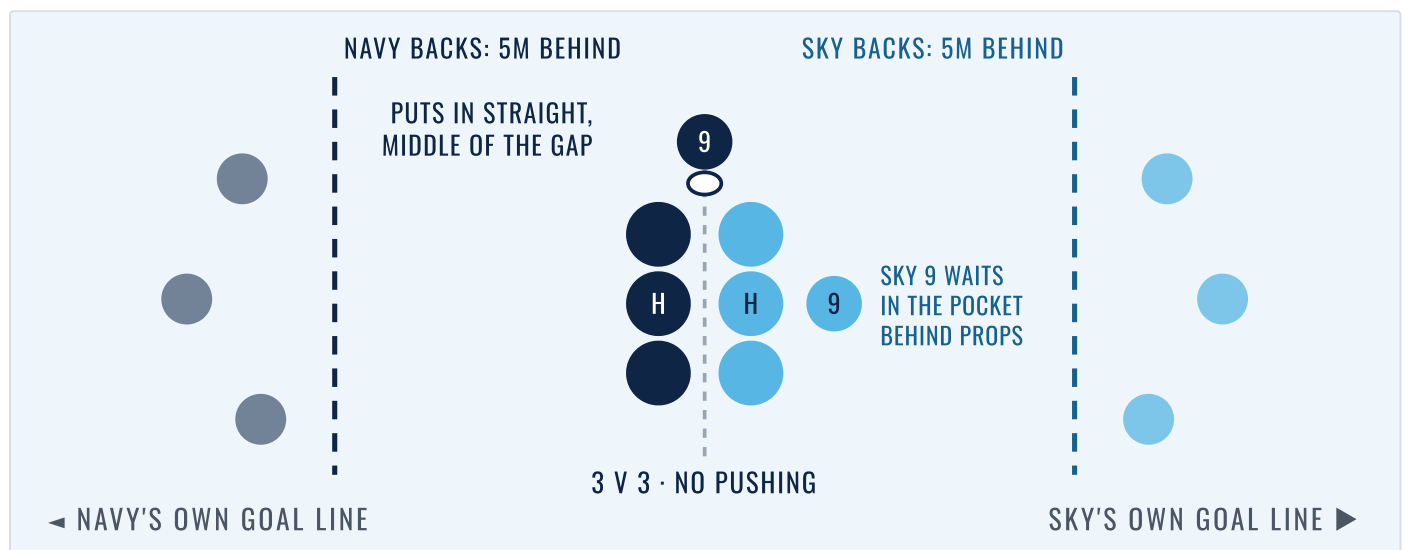
WHY THE ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

World Rugby's **Scrum Ready** programme notes that several studies have found **up to 50% of scrummaging injuries happen during the engagement** — the moment the front rows come together. That is why the referee calls every step, waits before “Set”, and never lets a scrum be rushed.

THE RULES

THE PUT-IN, AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

THE PUT-IN	The 9 puts the ball in straight, from the middle of the gap between the front rows (RugbyReferee.net 2026-27 U10 sheet).
THE STRIKE	Only the hooker putting in may strike (hook) for the ball. The other team may not strike or contest.
NO PUSHING	Neither team may push.
THEIR 9	Passes the ball from the base of the scrum and must not run with it.
THE OTHER 9	Stays directly behind their own scrum , in the pocket between their two props, until the ball comes out or the 9 with the ball lifts it from the ground.
THE BACKS	Both teams stay at least 5 metres behind the scrum until the ball comes out or the 9 lifts it.



Seen from above: navy have the put-in. Prop, hooker (H), prop on each side; the navy 9 feeds the gap between the front rows; the sky 9 waits behind their own scrum; every back stays behind their team's 5-metre line.

WHEN IT GOES WRONG

A FREE PASS TO THE OTHER TEAM

- When a team **contests, pushes or strikes** for the ball in the scrum
- Offside**, when there is no advantage

At a free pass the other team goes 7 metres back, and nobody runs until the pass is made.

SAFETY FIRST — THE RFU'S NOTE

If the scrum **collapses**, the whistle goes immediately. A player who keeps collapsing or binding illegally takes no further part in the scrum, and a player whose technique or strength makes them a danger is **replaced**. Everyone, replacements included, should be suitably trained.

Looking ahead: at U11 the scrum is still three a side with no pushing, but **both hookers may strike**. At U12 it grows to **five a side**. For the tackle, ruck and maul at U10, see our companion guide, **The ruck, explained**.



FOR VOLUNTEER REFEREES — AND CURIOUS PARENTS

REFEREEING THE SCRUM

Many U10 games are refereed by a coach or a parent volunteer. This routine takes a scrum in the order things happen. The routine is practical advice; the rules it enforces are the RFU's.

- 1 IS IT A SCRUM?** A forward pass or a knock on — and no advantage worth playing.
- 2 WHO'S IN?** The nearest three from each side; the fourth nearest is the 9. Encourage everyone to take a turn.
- 3 SQUARE AND READY.** Both sets of three in shape, not too close, necks and backs straight.
- 4 “CROUCH” — “BIND” — PAUSE — “SET”.** Clear, calm and in that order. Wait until the front rows are ready before “Set”.
- 5 SHAPE.** Shoulders above hips, bodies parallel to the touchline, binds on the back or side, nobody driving down.
- 6 PUT-IN.** Straight, from the middle of the gap. Only the putting-in hooker strikes. Nobody pushes.
- 7 OFFSIDE.** The other 9 in the pocket behind their props; both sets of backs 5 metres back.
- 8 OUT AND AWAY.** The 9 passes, and does not run. Anything unstable — whistle straight away.

WORLD RUGBY'S REFEREE TIPS

From Rugby Ready: The scrum.

- ✓ Before the match, speak to front rows and scrum halves to explain the engagement sequence
- ✓ Be directive throughout
- ✓ Make sure both packs are ready before starting
- ✓ Check nobody is driving down or has shoulders below hips
- ✓ Check correct binding, and that the ball goes in straight
- ✓ If the scrum becomes unstable, **blow the whistle early and loudly**

WHEN EVERYTHING HAPPENS AT ONCE

Safety first, then offside, then keeping the game flowing.

The RFU asks referees to sanction only infringements that affect the other team, and to **play advantage wherever it is safe** to do so. There is **no sin bin** at U10: repeated problems are managed with the coaches, and the sides stay equal.

WANT TO REFEREE PROPERLY?

England Rugby's entry course is **Ready 2 Referee**, and Devon RFU supports new referees locally. Both links are on the last page.



YOUR PART IN IT

HELPING YOUR CHILD

WORLD RUGBY · SCRUM READY

"Players should NOT play in the scrum until they are Scrum Ready."

Scrum Ready builds up in stages — alone on the knees, alone on the feet, against a tackle shield, one against one, then three against three — and a player only moves on once they can show a strong, stable shape at each stage. That work happens at training.

AT HOME

Coaching advice — keep scrummaging for training.

- **Practise the shape, not the scrum.** Scrum Ready's key points: head in a neutral position, shoulder blades back, chest out, tummy muscles tight, knees slightly bent, feet shoulder-width apart and pointing forwards, weight on the balls of the feet. Hold it for ten seconds and make it a game.
- **Learn the calls.** Crouch, Bind, Set — and why the referee waits before "Set".
- **Leave engagement to the coaches.** Coming together, binding and hooking belong at training, with the proper calls and supervision.

ON THE TOUCHLINE

- **Praise the right things** — a straight back, a good bind, patience before "Set", a quick pass from the 9.
- **Don't shout "push!"** Nobody pushes at U10; it gives away a free pass.
- **Every child is a front-row player this year.** The RFU wants all players trained and no early specialists, so cheer whoever is in.
- **Respect the referee.** It is very often a volunteer. Our values are the game's values: Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship.

CONCUSSION

The UK Concussion Guidelines for Grassroots Sport sum it up in five words: **"If in doubt, sit them out."** Nobody should return to sport within 24 hours of a suspected concussion, and the guidelines advise calling **NHS 111** within those 24 hours.

England Rugby's free **HEADCASE** e-learning has a version written for parents of age grade players. It explains how to recognise concussion and what to do.

READ MORE: PARENTS, WELFARE AND CONCUSSION

AGE GRADE RUGBY

[RFU — Age Grade Rugby overview](#)

englandrugby.com/play/parents-guardians/age-grade-rugby-overview

CONCUSSION

[RFU — HEADCASE concussion information](#)

englandrugby.com/run/player-welfare/headcase

UK GUIDANCE

[UK Concussion Guidelines for Grassroots Sport](#)

sportandrecreation.org.uk/campaigns-and-policy/concussion/concussion-guidelines-for-grassroots-sport

BEHAVIOUR

[RFU — Code of conduct](#)

englandrugby.com/play/parents-guardians/code-conduct

FREE COURSE

[RFU — HEADCASE e-learning](#)

englandrugby.com/run/player-welfare/headcase-e-learning

Questions? Speak to your child's coach or your Parent Rep.



SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

FIND OUT MORE

The rules come from the RFU; the laws, definitions and safety programmes from World Rugby. Every link was checked on the day this guide was created — tap a title to open it. Links on welfare and concussion are on page 5.

THE RULES

U10 RULES

[RFU — Under 10s Rules of Play \(Reg. 15, Appendix 4\)](#)

englandrugby.com/run/rules-governance/rfu-rules-and-regulations/regulation-15-age-grade-rugby/regulation-15-appendix-4-u10-rules-of-play

NEXT SEASON

[RFU — Under 11s Rules of Play \(Reg. 15, Appendix 5\)](#)

englandrugby.com/run/rules-governance/rfu-rules-and-regulations/regulation-15-age-grade-rugby/regulation-15-appendix-5-u11-rules-of-play

ALL AGE GRADES

[RFU — Regulation 15: Age Grade Rugby](#)

englandrugby.com/run/rules-governance/rfu-rules-and-regulations/regulation-15-age-grade-rugby

ON ONE PAGE

[RugbyReferee.net — U10 regulations, season 2026/27 \(PDF\)](#)

rugbyreferee.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2026-27-u10s-RRNet-RFU-Regulations.pdf

THE LAWS OF THE SCRUM

EVERY LAW

[World Rugby — Laws of the Game 2026 \(PDF\)](#)

passport.world.rugby/media/jxnmptk/2026en-laws-of-the-game-compressed.pdf

DEFINITIONS

[World Rugby — Definitions \(uncontested scrum, bind...\)](#)

passport.world.rugby/laws-of-the-game/definitions

THE SCRUM

[World Rugby — Law 19: Scrum](#)

passport.world.rugby/laws-of-the-game/laws-by-number/19-scrum

THE RUCK

[World Rugby — Law 15: Ruck](#)

passport.world.rugby/laws-of-the-game/laws-by-number/15-ruck

SAFE TECHNIQUE

SCRUMMAGING

[World Rugby — Rugby Ready: The scrum](#)

passport.world.rugby/injury-prevention-and-risk-management/rugby-ready/the-scrum

INJURY PREVENTION

[RFU — Activate injury prevention programme](#)

englandrugby.com/run/player-welfare/activate

STEP BY STEP

[World Rugby — Scrum Ready](#)

passport.world.rugby/injury-prevention-and-risk-management/rugby-ready/the-scrum/scrum-ready

CONTACT & LOAD

[RFU — Age Grade contact training, match load and recovery](#)

englandrugby.com/run/coaching/coach-resources/contact-guidance

REFEREEING

JUNIOR RUGBY

[RugbyReferee.net — Refereeing junior rugby](#)

rugbyreferee.net/refereeing-junior-rugby

REFEREE COURSE

[RFU — How to book a Ready 2 Referee course](#)

help.rfu.com/support/solutions/articles/103000161012

LOCALLY

[Devon RFU — Become a rugby referee](#)

devonrfu.co.uk/become-a-rugby-referee