



UNDER 14S · RESTARTING FROM TOUCH

THE LINEOUT, EXPLAINED

A guide for U14 parents — what you are watching, how to help your child, and what the referee is looking for.

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Under 14s is the first season with **lineouts**. Up to U13, when the ball went into touch, play restarted with a free pass 10 metres in from the touchline. Now two lines of players face each other and a thrower sends the ball down the middle. At U14 the lineout is **uncontested**: the team throwing in is meant to win it, and nobody is lifted. This guide explains what is going on in plain English, so you can enjoy it, help your child, and follow the referee.

WHERE THE RULES IN THIS GUIDE COME FROM

The rules come from **RFU Regulation 15, Appendix 8 — the Under 14s Rules of Play**, the RFU's lineout guidance for age grade rugby, 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 (effective 1 August 2026) still points to it. For this season we also follow **RugbyReferee.net's 2026/27 U14 sheet**, which records the RFU's latest wording. If anything here ever disagrees with the RFU, **the RFU is right**. Where we give coaching advice rather than a rule, we say so. Links are at the back.

THE U14 LINEOUT IN FOUR POINTS

1 UNCONTESTED

The team throwing in **must win the ball**. The other team may not compete for a straight throw — if they do, the throwing team gets a **free kick**.

2 FEET ON THE GROUND

No lifting, binding or supporting of jumping players. A player may jump for the ball on their own, but nobody holds them up.

3 LAND FIRST

The other team can only go for the ball once the catcher has **safely returned to the ground** and brought the ball down to **chest height**. See page 3.

4 EVERYONE ELSE 10 METRES BACK

Players not in the lineout stay **10 metres behind the mark** until the referee invites them forward. Up to **13 players** a side can be in the lineout.

A STEPPING STONE — THE RFU'S LINEOUT PROGRESSION

U13 AND BELOW

No lineout

U14 — THIS SEASON

Uncontested lineout introduced. Focus: the throw, the jump and landing, the catch and delivery.

BOYS U15

Still uncontested, but the **lift** is permitted

U16 AND ABOVE

Contested lineout — the contest is added

Girls' age bands go from U14 straight to U16, so the RFU encourages introducing the lift at the start of the girls' U16 season before the full contest.

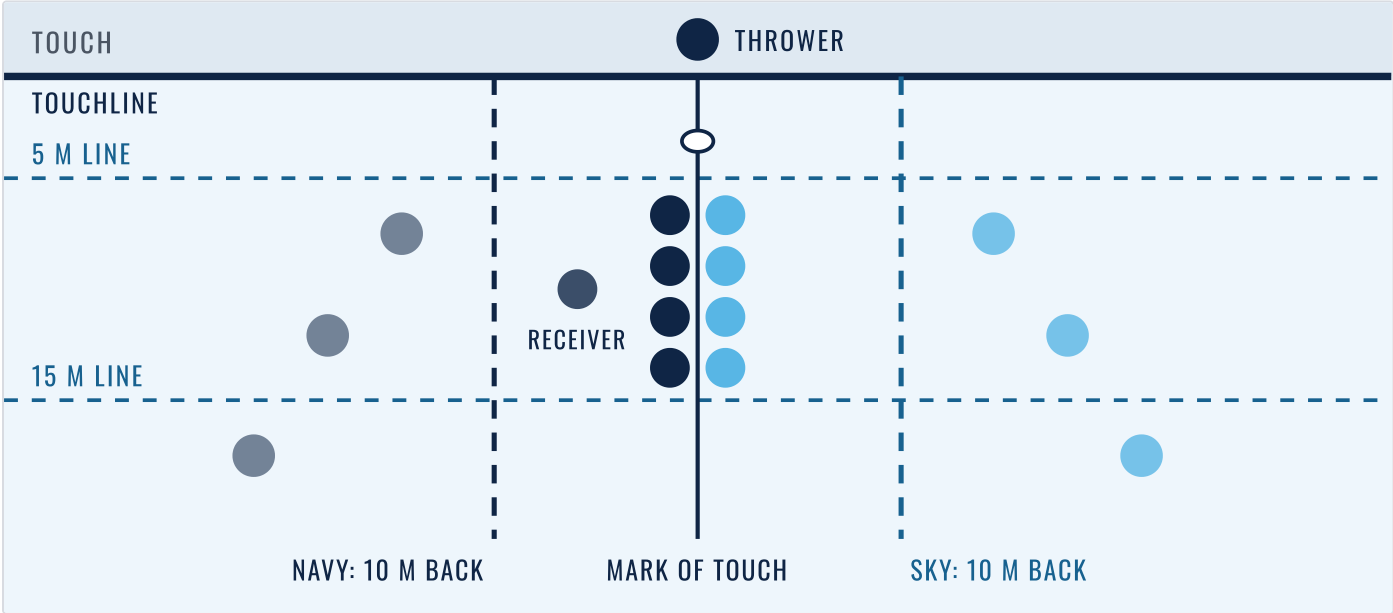


THE BASICS

HOW A LINEOUT WORKS

A lineout restarts the game after the ball, or a player carrying it, goes over the touchline. Here is how one is set up at U14, from the whistle to the throw.

WHERE	On the touchline, level with where the ball crossed it — the “mark of touch”. The ball is thrown in along that line.
WHO THROWS	The opponents of the player who last touched the ball before it went out. The exception is a penalty kicked into touch: then the team that kicked it throws in (World Rugby Law 18).
OR THROW QUICKLY	Instead of waiting for a lineout, a team may take a quick throw-in with the same ball, if nobody other than a player has touched it.
HOW MANY	At least two and up to thirteen from each team. The team throwing in decides the maximum; the other team may have fewer, but not more .
THE LINES	Each team forms a single line, half a metre from the mark on its own side, between the 5-metre and 15-metre lines. The gap is kept until the ball is thrown (Law 18).
THE THROW	Straight down the middle of the gap, and far enough to reach the 5-metre line before it hits the ground.
EVERYONE ELSE	10 metres behind the mark until the referee invites them forward. Only the receiver (usually the scrum half) and the hooker (usually the thrower) are exempt.



Seen from above, navy throwing in. Two lines either side of the mark of touch, between the 5 m and 15 m lines. The receiver may stand near the lineout; everyone else waits behind their team's 10-metre line.



THE HEART OF THE U14 RULES

WHEN CAN THE OTHER TEAM COMPETE?

An uncontested lineout does not mean the other team just watches. They cannot touch the ball in the air or the catcher on the way down — but once the catch is safely made, the game is live again.

THE RFU'S LINEOUT GUIDANCE FOR U14

"The contest for possession can start once the player who catches the ball has safely returned to the ground. The non-throwing team cannot contest possession whilst the ball is in the air."

NEW WORDING FOR 2026/27: "CHEST HEIGHT"

Last season's RugbyReferee.net grid said the contest starts when the catcher has *"safely returned to the ground"*. The 2026/27 grid says *"when catcher has safely returned ball to chest height"*, and the 2026/27 U14 sheet adds that **defenders can engage the ball carrier to form a maul when the ball is brought to chest height**. In plain English: the catcher lands on both feet and brings the ball down into their chest — **only then** can opponents go for them or the ball. It gives the catcher a moment to land and secure the ball before any contact.

IS IT A CONTEST YET?

HANDS OFF

Ball in the air, or catcher in the air.

No one from the other team may jump against, touch or grab.
Grabbing a player whose feet are off the ground is also foul play (Law 9).

WAIT

Landed, but the ball is still up high. Under the 2026/27 wording the contest starts once the ball is brought down to chest height, so opponents wait a moment longer.

CONTEST ON

Feet down, ball at the chest.

Opponents may now go for the catcher. A maul can form, and normal maul rules apply.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE OTHER TEAM GOES TOO EARLY?

COMPETING FOR THE THROW

The throwing team must win the ball, so competing for a straight throw gives away a **free kick** (RFU lineout guidance; RugbyReferee.net 2026/27).

CONTESTING BEFORE THE CATCHER IS DOWN

RugbyReferee.net's 2026/27 U14 sheet marks this as a **penalty**. The RFU's guidance gives a free kick for competing, or a penalty where there is foul play — and taking a player in the air is foul play.

CAN A MAUL FORM FROM A LINEOUT?

Yes. The RFU's guidance: the catcher must return safely to the ground before the other team can contest, and then normal World Rugby Laws apply. The lineout itself ends when the catcher's team mates **bind on to the catcher** — at that point it is a maul, not a lineout.



WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

CROOKED THROWS, LOOSE BALLS AND THE END

NOT STRAIGHT

- 1 FIRST THROW NOT STRAIGHT** — the other team is given a lineout of their own.
- 2 THEIR THROW NOT STRAIGHT EITHER** — a **scrum** to the team who had the lineout first, on the 15-metre line.

Source: RugbyReferee.net 2026/27 U14 sheet and the RFU's lineout guidance. The RFU adds a note: "we still want the thrower to develop their skill of throwing under pressure."

WHAT IF...

Answers from the RFU's lineout FAQ for U14.

THE THROW MISSES THE CATCHER?

If it was straight, it is **still an uncontested lineout** and the throwing team must still win it. The lineout is still in play.

THE BALL HITS THE FLOOR?

The **lineout is over**. As long as the throw was straight and there was no foul play, either team may now go for the ball.

IT IS KNOCKED ON?

The throwing team only has to win a straight throw that one of its players **catches cleanly**. A knock-on, or a throw that is not straight, is dealt with by the normal laws.

THE NUMBERS ARE NOT EQUAL?

That is allowed one way only. The other team may have **fewer** players in the lineout than the throwing team, but **not more**.

WHEN DOES THE LINEOUT END?

Once the lineout is over, the players who were waiting 10 metres back can join in. At U14 it ends when:

- the **ball, or a player carrying it, leaves the lineout**;
- the ball goes **beyond the 15-metre line**, or into the channel between the touchline and the **5-metre line**;
- the catcher's team mates **bind on to the catcher**;
- a ruck or maul forms and **all the feet of everyone in it** move beyond the mark of touch, or the ball becomes unplayable (World Rugby Law 18).

NO 50:22 AT U14

In adult rugby, a team that kicks from its own half and bounces the ball into touch inside the opponents' 22 throws in to the lineout — the "50:22". **It does not apply at U14**. RugbyReferee.net's 2026/27 sheet: any kick that would have been a 50:22 is a **throw-in to the non-kicking team**. The 50:22 arrives at U15.



FOR VOLUNTEER REFEREES — AND CURIOUS PARENTS

REFEREEING THE LINEOUT

If you are refereeing an U14 game — or you would simply like to understand the whistle — this routine takes a lineout in the order things happen. The routine is practical advice; the rules it enforces are the RFU's.

- 1 MARK AND TEAM.** Level with where the ball went out, to the opponents of the last player to touch it — unless it was a penalty kicked to touch.
- 2 ALLOW A QUICK THROW** if it is the same ball and nobody but a player has touched it.
- 3 TWO STRAIGHT LINES.** Half a metre each side of the mark, between the 5 m and 15 m lines. Two to thirteen a side, and the other team no more than the throwing team.
- 4 EVERYONE ELSE 10 METRES BACK** — until you invite them forward. The receiver and the hooker are exempt.
- 5 STRAIGHT THROW.** Down the middle of the gap. Not straight: the other team's lineout; not straight again: scrum to the first team, on the 15 m line.
- 6 NO LIFT, NO BIND, NO SUPPORT.** Jumpers go up and come down on their own.
- 7 HANDS OFF UNTIL THE BALL IS DOWN.** Catcher safely on the ground with the ball at chest height — then the contest can start.
- 8 CALL THE END.** Ball out of the lineout, past 15 m or into the 5 m channel, or team mates bound on the catcher.

FROM WORLD RUGBY'S RUGBY READY

Check the ball is thrown in straight, that players not in the lineout retire behind the 10-metre offside line, and watch for anyone **intentionally destabilising a player in the air**.

The RFU asks referees to sanction only what affects the other team, and to **play advantage wherever it is safe**.

MANAGING THE GAME

- Talk before the throw: “No lifting, hands off until they're down.” Most offences never happen.
- Say a one-line reason every time you blow. Players are learning the lineout this season too.
- The **sin bin is 5 minutes** at U14.

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

AT HOME

Coaching advice, based on World Rugby's Rugby Ready. Leave jumping in a real lineout to training.

- **Throw straight.** Two hands, over the head, at a mark on a wall or fence. Straight throwing is the one skill every lineout depends on.
- **Catch with hands up.** Chest and hands up, watching the ball all the way into the hands.
- **Jump and land.** Knees bent, take off from two feet, land on two feet with the knees bending. A soft, balanced landing is what makes the catch safe.
- **Bring it down.** After the catch, ball straight into the chest — the “chest height” that starts the contest.

ON THE TOUCHLINE

- **Praise the right things** — a straight throw, a clean catch, a safe landing, patience from the other team.
- **Stand well back** from the touchline. The thrower needs space, and so does a ball going into touch.
- **Let the coaches coach and respect the referee** — very often a volunteer.
- **Cheer effort** from both teams. Our 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, and takes about half an hour.

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 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 6.

THE RULES

U14 RULES

[RFU — Under 14s Rules of Play \(Reg. 15, Appendix 8\)](#)

englandrugby.com/run/rules-governance/rfu-rules-and-regulations/regulation-15-age-grade-rugby/regulation-15-appendix-8-u14-rules-of-play

LINEOUT FAQ

[RFU — Introducing the lineout to age grade rugby \(FAQ\)](#)

rfu.widen.net/s/hs22vfhtmf/lineout-faq

ON ONE PAGE

[RugbyReferee.net — U14 regulations, season 2026/27 \(PDF\)](#)

rugbyreferee.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2026-27-u14s-RRNet-RFU-Regulations-1.pdf

ALL AGE GRADES

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

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

NEXT SEASON

[RFU — U15–U18 Variations to the Laws \(Reg. 15, Appendix 9\)](#)

englandrugby.com/run/rules-governance/rfu-rules-and-regulations/regulation-15-age-grade-rugby/regulation-15-appendix-9-u15-u18-variations-to-the-laws-of-the-game

EVERY AGE

[RugbyReferee.net — Age grade rules grid, 2026/27 \(PDF\)](#)

rugbyreferee.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2026-27-RRNet-RFU-Age-grade-rugby-regulations-grid.pdf

THE LAWS

EVERY LAW

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

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

THE MAUL

[World Rugby — Law 16: Maul](#)

passport.world.rugby/laws-of-the-game/laws-by-number/16-maul

DEFINITIONS

[World Rugby — Definitions \(lineout, 50:22...\)](#)

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

THE LINEOUT

[World Rugby — Law 18: Touch, quick throw and lineout](#)

passport.world.rugby/laws-of-the-game/laws-by-number/18-touch-quick-throw-and-lineout

FOUL PLAY

[World Rugby — Law 9: Foul play](#)

passport.world.rugby/laws-of-the-game/laws-by-number/9-foul-play

SIGNALS

[World Rugby — Referee signals](#)

passport.world.rugby/laws-of-the-game/match-official-signals/primary-referee-signals

SAFE TECHNIQUE

LINEOUTS

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

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

INJURY PREVENTION

[RFU — Activate injury prevention programme](#)

englandrugby.com/run/player-welfare/activate

MAULS

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

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

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

LOCALLY

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

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

REFEREE COURSE

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

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