



Tom Pulliman, Treasure Island, 2021

WHAT IS RUGBY?

Rugby is a game using a ball like a slightly "fat" football. It is a fast game with lots of running. The ball is carried in the hands and scoring is done by crossing the goal line and touching the ball down (it is where the term "touchdown" in football comes from). There is passing to teammates running downfield with the ball carrier, but no *forward* passing. There is no blocking. The defense stops the ball carrier by tackling. There is kicking, but not at the younger ages. The game is continuous, like soccer, without stopping after every play like football.

HOW IS YOUTH RUGBY ORGANIZED IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA?

The age levels are U (under) 8, U10, U12 and Middle School. U8s start playing as young as 5 and do not tackle - they play "flag rugby".

WHY SHOULD MY BOY OR GIRL PLAY RUGBY?

The game is a lot of fun. Kids bring their friends to play with them. They make new friends. Kids playing rugby are taught respect for referees — they are taught not to question referees' calls, not to complain about them at all. They are taught respect for their opponents. No trash talking. Each player congratulates each opponent after every game.

By learning how to handle the collisions in tackling, each boy and girl develops a self-confidence taken into every other aspect of their life for the rest of their life — school, relationships, employment, other sports.

IS RUGBY SAFE?

Yes. There are far fewer serious injuries than football. Although there are bumps and bruises, coaches spend lots and lots of time teaching safe tackling skills to be sure the head and neck are protected.

WHAT EQUIPMENT IS NEEDED?

Players wear what soccer players wear.

HOW MANY PLAYERS ARE ON A TEAM, HOW LARGE IS THE FIELD AND HOW LONG DO THEY PLAY?

Middle School plays with 15 on a team on a field the size of a soccer field for 40 minutes each half, as do all levels of rugby beyond Middle School, except for the version of rugby called "7s", which is played with only 7 on each team, on a full-size field. for 7 minutes each half. This is the version played in the Olympics, a version at which the US excels, both men and women (the last World Cup for 7s was played at the SF Giants' stadium). The younger ages play with fewer players on smaller fields with shorter halves.

WHO COACHES THE KIDS? WHAT ARE THE COACHES' GOALS FOR THE KIDS?

At SFGG there are several coaches, with more than one coach for every age level. Each coach has extensive playing experience and has coached youth rugby several years. Some also coach college rugby, both men's and women's rugby. Several have taken courses in coaching put on by USA rugby and have received certifications confirming the coaching skills they have acquired. The *primary* goal of every coach is that the kids have fun. They want them to have fun with their friends and to make new friends. They also want them to learn rugby skills because they will have more fun if they play the game well.

The emphasis is on playing well, not winning — if they play well, they will have more fun and they will win.