

TOUCH

A GUIDE TO PLAYING & EVENT MANAGEMENT



THE ULTIMATE COMMUNITY SPORT

INTRODUCTION – WHAT IS TOUCH?

Touch is one of the fastest growing participation sports in the World and is played in over 60 countries worldwide including USA, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, England, Canada, Germany and Japan.

Touch is a dynamic 'catch & pass' sport that is fast-moving and involves minimal contact

Touch is a unique, independent team sport played by both males and females, and in mixed competition

Touch is often referred to as Touch Rugby, but there are no tackling, lineouts, scrumming or kicking involved.

Touch is played outdoors and throughout the summer months.

The game was initially developed in Australia in the 1960s as a training tool for rugby league teams.

Participation levels increased rapidly as the minimal degree of contact and simplicity of the game made it an ideal activity to be played by men, women and children of all ages and skill levels.

The game quickly developed within Australia, New Zealand the surrounding Islands, culminating in the formation of the Federation of International Touch (FIT) in 1985.

The formation of the FIT has seen phenomenal international growth in participation, spectator interest and awareness over the past 20 years. This ranges from increased participation in established countries in the southern hemisphere, to the introduction of the sport to a whole host of nations throughout the world.

Major events include the World Cup (every 4 years) The European Championships (every 2 years), Youth World Cup & World School Championships.



TOUCH IN WALES

Touch was introduced to Wales in 1990 by the establishment of the inaugural league in Cardiff which is still going strong today.

There are currently over 1500 registered players in Wales competing in various well-established league modules across South Wales as well as stand-alone tournaments played throughout the season.

The Wales Touch Association (WTA) was established in 1999 to co-ordinate the development of Touch in Wales and to enable Welsh players to represent their country at an international level at FIT sanctioned events

The WTA aims to be the main point of contact for information on, and assistance with touch in Wales. The WTA will endeavour to provide assistance to anyone interested in touch, including players, referees and tournament organisers.

The WTA organise the selections and training for the national squads, together with undertaking Coaching Clinics using development officers and existing Wales squad members to promote the fundamentals of the game to new players coaches and referees and raise the quality of existing touch teams.

Further details regarding Touch in Wales can be obtained via the WTA website at www.walestouch.co.uk



WHY TOUCH?

As a sport in its own right, Touch has many advantages:

- It increases activity levels among players and promotes the ethics of teamwork and effective communication.
- It runs through the summer months, and is played outdoors.
- It offers the opportunity for mothers, fathers, and children to play together in a common physical activity
- It's minimal contact nature removes concerns about injury to players
- Playing ages range from primary school juniors to the 55 plus age-group category.

As a development tool for Rugby, it promotes the positive skills required for either code of the game:

- It focuses on the manipulation and exploitation of space, distributing the ball before contact
- It promotes the fundamental skills of running, handling, communication, evasion, support play and improvisation
- It enables players to develop the basic principles of attack and defence without the fear of getting hurt.

'...We play a lot of touch rugby in training but it is carefully structured, with Scott(Johnson) refereeing, and a lot of the handling movements between backs and forwards we have put together this (Grand Slam) championship is a consequence of that....' Martyn Williams Wales & British Lions (Guardian Newspaper 18/03/05)



UNDERSTANDING THE GAME



Object of the Game

The object of the game is for each team to score touchdowns and to prevent the opposition from scoring

The ball may be passed, knocked or handed between onside players of the attacking team who may in turn run or otherwise move with the ball in an attempt to gain territorial advantage and score.

Defending players prevent the attacking team from gaining a territorial advantage by touching the ball carrier. Either defending or attacking players may initiate the touch.

UNDERSTANDING THE GAME (cont'd)

Start of Game

The team that wins the coin toss chooses the direction of play and must start with a tap from the middle of the field. The defending team must be back 10 meters for the start of play and after each touchdown.

Duration of Game

Duration of the game can be varied to suit your local circumstances. But as a guide try 2x 15-minute halves

Size of the Field

The size of the field can vary depending on local conditions. True touch fields of play are rectangular in shape and measures seventy (70) metres in length from scoreline to scoreline and fifty (50) metres in width.

For the vast majority of tournaments in Wales, the game will generally be played on half a rugby field (playing across the field). Posts are not required to play Touch.



Number of Players:

Teams can consist of up to a maximum of 14 players, 6 on the field at anyone time.

It is suggested that teams of between 8 and 10 helps to encourage maximum involvement and activity.

Method of Scoring:

A touchdown is awarded when an attacking player places the ball on the ground, on or over the defending teams scoreline. A touchdown is worth 1 point.

The person who takes the role of dummy half can cross the try-line but not score.

After a team scores, the play begins again with a tap in the middle of the field by the non scoring team.

THE BASICS



The Touch:

Players of both defending and attacking teams are to use the minimum force necessary to affect the touch. A touch can be made on any part of the person, their clothing or the ball.

After a touch has been affected, the player in possession is required to stop, return to the mark where the touch occurred if the mark has been over-run, and perform a Rollball without delay.

THE BASICS (cont'd)

After being touched 6 times the ball is handed over to the other side.

If a touch is considered to be too strong a penalty will be awarded against the offending team.

The dummy half (the person who receives the ball from the player starting the game) is not allowed to be caught while in possession of the ball. If the dummy half is caught with the ball, possession is handed over to the opposition who will recommence play with a Rollball



The Rollball:

The Rollball is affected by the attacking player positioning on the mark, facing the defenders scoreline, standing parallel to the sidelines, and rolling the ball backwards along the ground between their feet. If the ball is rolled more than 1 meter a penalty will be awarded to the opposition.

Voluntary Rollball is when the player is not touched and rolls the ball between their legs, this is not allowed and will result in a penalty to the opposition.

The Penalty:

If someone is penalised their team must retreat 10 meters.

A penalty is taken by placing the ball on the ground, letting go of the ball, touching the ball with your foot and picking up the ball.

Passing:

A forward Pass is when the ball is passed in front of the player who possessed the ball. In this situation the ruling will be a penalty

A Touch and Pass is when the person who is touched then passes the ball. Again the ruling will be a penalty

Offside

An attacking player is offside when that player is forward of another attacking player who has possession or who last had possession of the ball.

A defending player is offside when that player has not retreated the required 5 meters (Rollball) or 10 meters (Penalty and restart of play after touchdowns) at recommencement of play.

For all offside incidents the opposition will be awarded a penalty



GENERAL RULES

General

Over Stepping or Off the Mark occurs when the player who has been touched goes past the point where they were touched. In this case a penalty will be awarded to the opposition

When the ball goes to ground for any reason, possession changes and the game is recommenced with a Rollball.

Shepherding or obstruction will result in a penalty being awarded to the opposition

Deviation happens at re-commencement of play when a defender does not retreat straight back 5 meters to an on-side position and thereby obstructs the attacking player. This will result in a penalty being awarded to the opposition.

For minor offences i.e. bickering with refs, shouldering, leg trips etc... the player can be sin binned for five minutes without replacement.

Foul play of any nature (the referee being the sole judge) will result in the offending player being sent from the field without replacement



GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PLAY



Go Forward:

In Attack: The aim of the game is to score more touchdowns than the opposition; this is achieved by advancing towards the try line. At times it can be tactically advantageous to move towards the sideline to enable more room for further attacking plays

In Defence: When defending try to deny your opponents time and space by moving forward and making the touch. The faster you move up on the attacking team the less advancement toward your try line they will make.

Support the Ball Carrier at all Times:

Close support of the ball carrier allows more options in attack and means possession can be maintained. Close support also means no ground needs to be lost by having to pass the ball a long way backwards to a team-mate. Remember a pass directly sideways is allowed and can often be the most effective pass.

Interchange players as much as possible

A fresh set of legs on the field can be the difference between winning and losing. Look to interchange your players while on attack and in the area of the interchange box. Once you have made a touchdown it is good to get a whole new set of players out there to keep up the intensity.



REFEREEING

The WTA holds a database of referees nationwide, who referee the club league matches with level-headedness, patience, compassion and confidence.

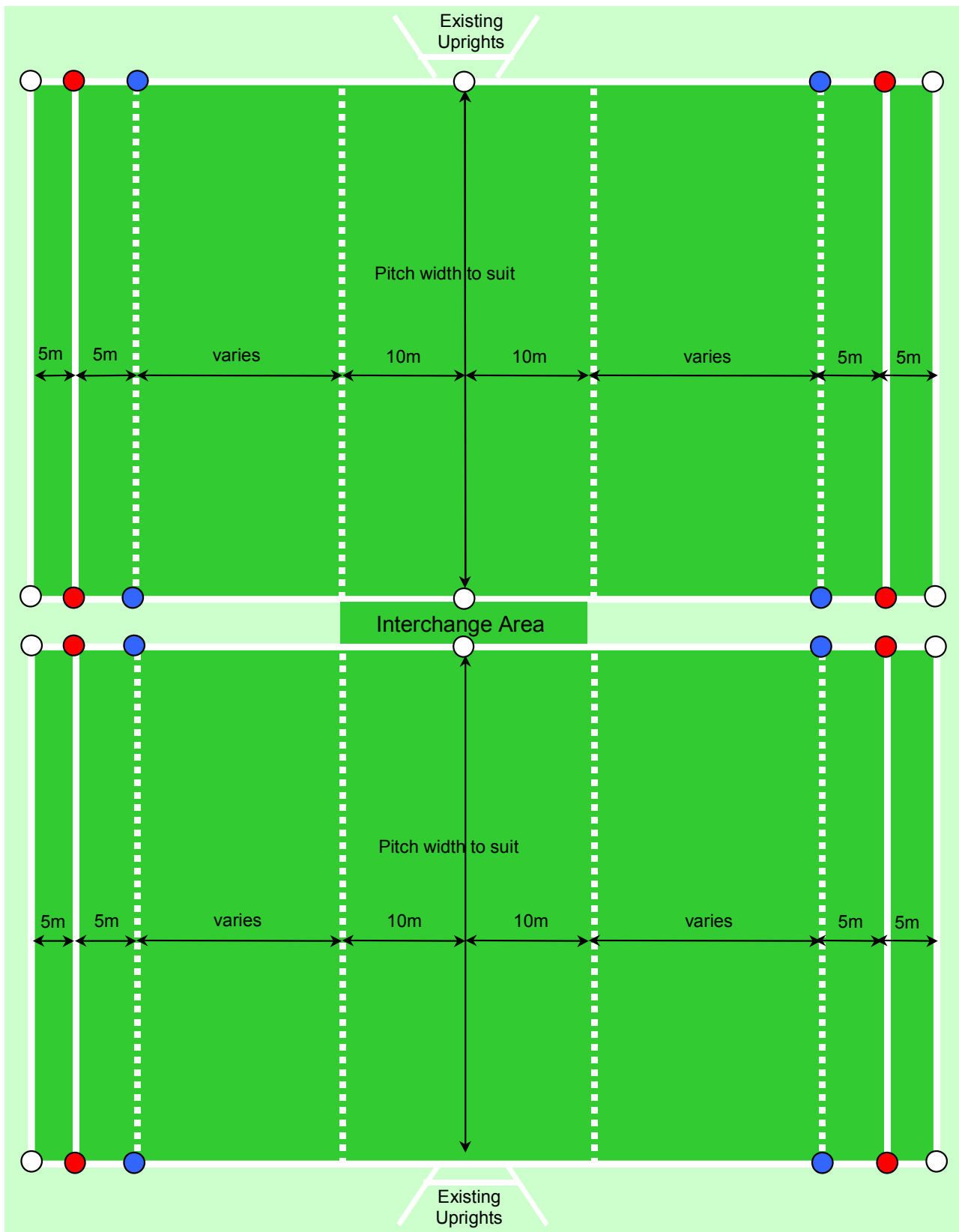
The WTA is willing to assist organisers by providing referee support for local tournaments. Alternatively, each entering team can be asked to propose one of their squad to referee within the event. Even at a social level the referee must, as a minimum, understand the basic rules (see Quick Rules below). A full copy of the international rules of Touch can be obtained from the FIT website at <http://www.internationaltouch.org/page.aspx?pri=18>

We are constantly seeking to assist in the development of refereeing standards across Wales by running Referee Courses and by working with local League and tournament organisers. Referee Courses are run by the WTA and delivered to referees and players who want a better understanding of the rules. All courses fall under the European Touch grading system running from level 1 (entry level) to level 5 (world cup standard). No previous experience is required to attend a level 1 course. Courses are usually held to coincide with a tournament to allow candidates to be assessed.

Quick Rules

1. The conventional rules of the game as laid out by the Federation of International Touch (F.I.T) will apply.
2. The fields are 50x70m though local variations may occur.
3. The attacking team must start with a tap from the middle of the field.
4. The defending team must be back 10m for the start of play and after each touchdown.
5. After a team scores the play begins again with a tap in the middle.
6. The person who takes the role of dummy half can cross the try-line but not score
7. If the dummy half is touched while possessing the ball it is a turnover. **ROLL BALL.**
8. After being touched, the player touched must roll the ball between their legs.
9. The attacking team continues play until they have had 6 touches
10. After being touched 6 times the ball is handed over to the other side. **ROLL BALL.**
11. After touching the attacking player with the ball, all defending team members must retreat 5m.
12. **Ball to Ground:** When the ball is dropped on the ground it is a turnover.
13. **Turnover:** When the attacking side loses the ball to the opposition
14. **No control:** When the ball is thrown, dropped, knocked on, in a touch. **ROLL BALL.**
15. When someone is penalised their team must then retreat 10m.
16. If the defending players do not retreat they are offside. **PENALTY**
17. If a touch is considered to be too strong. **PENALTY**
18. **Offside:** when the defending players have not retreated 5m. **PENALTY**
19. **Forward Pass:** When the ball is passed in front of the player who possessed the ball. **PENALTY**
20. **Touch and Pass:** When the person who is touched then passes the ball. **PENALTY**
21. **Overstep or off the mark:** When a player who has been touched goes past the point where they were touched. **PENALTY**
22. **Voluntary Rolled Ball or No Touch:** When the player is not touched and rolls the ball between their legs. **PENALTY**
23. **More than a Meter:** the ball must not be rolled more than one meter. **PENALTY**
24. **Shepherd or Obstruction:** Obstructing a touch from the defending side. **PENALTY**
25. **Deviation:** When a defender changes their direction before retreating straight back 5m. **PENALTY**
26. For minor offences i.e. bickering with refs, shouldering, leg trips etc. the player will be sin binned for up to five minutes without replacement.
27. Foul play of any nature (the referee being the sole judge) will result in the offending player being sent from the field without replacement

PITCH LAYOUT



- ● ● Cones
- Pitches to be marked out as indicated
- Posts are not required for Touch



EVENT GUIDE

The resources needed for an event depend on the size and nature of the event. Irrespective of the event size, the key to its success is the degree of planning undertaken at the outset.

Below is a quick guide to some of the key areas that are required; it is by no means exhaustive and is only provided as a guide.

Personnel:

Identify the roles you require both in advance of the event, and for the day itself. Prepare a brief for each role to ensure all individuals are aware what their specific duties will entail. Typical roles for a touch event will include:

- Event Manager;
- Promotion and Marketing Officer;
- Announcer;
- Site Officials;
- Attendants;
- Referees.

Venue:

Select a suitable venue for the event. Theoretically any large, flat surface is suitable as a venue, however the WTA strongly recommend that no playing surface other than grass or sand are adopted for Touch events.

The availability of other facilities must be considered adjacent to the playing surface, for example:

- Parking facilities and public transport links;
- Changing/toilet/shower facilities;
- Bar and catering facilities;
- PA Systems, marquees etc.

Other:

- Medical cover, e.g. first-aid and physiotherapist facilities;
- Insurance (Event, Public Liability, etc).

Publicity:

Getting the information out in good time is essential to ensure people have enough time to commit to the event.

Target existing sports clubs and associations for potential participants and supporters using flyers and/or posters, for example:

- Your own club members;
- Local rugby clubs - senior teams;
- Local juniors sections - parents and coaches;
- Rugby Development Officers;
- Women's rugby teams;
- Pubs and clubs;
- Gyms and health clubs;
- Supporters clubs;
- Other local sports teams - netball, hockey, rugby league, football, cricket;
- Local authority buildings - libraries, leisure centres.
- Local shops who will normally support events in their community

The WTA will normally assist in promoting tournaments on our website at www.walestouch.co.uk

Dedicated Touch websites are also good forums for advertising touch events. Local league organisers may also be prepared to provide you with a database of contact details of established Touch teams.

EVENT GUIDE

Registrations:

Co-ordinate registrations and collect payment/entry forms. Try to encourage as many teams as possible to pre-register, possibly by offering a discounted entry fee for teams registering early

As was noted previously, it is important that event details are sent out as early as possible. This will ensure that people are aware of the event and therefore have enough time to commit themselves to participating.

Pre-Event:

If possible, assemble all the relevant resources and set up the event the day before it is due to take place;

Plan your fixture list and allocation of staff;

Check and double-check that everything is in place and is functioning correctly, particularly any electrical equipment.

On the day:

Arrive early and allow plenty of time to re-check all equipment;

Gather staff and brief them on the day. Ensure they are happy with their appointments and answer any questions they may have;

Process any registrations not previously received

Welcome people and handout any relevant information;

Conduct briefings for the team captains and referees;

Start the event on time and keep to the planned sequence of events;

Remain flexible and look ahead on the schedule to keep things running smoothly;

Close the day with a brief speech summarising the day and thanking the relevant people (including the participants);

De-mobilise the event, clear and tidy the venue, and return any equipment.

Post-Event:

Carry out a de-brief with relevant staff;

Assess the day, looking at what aspects of the event went well and what areas could be improved upon for next time;

Ensure any follow-up information is implemented.

Sit back, and congratulate yourself on a job well done!





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