



## Phoenix Overview & History

Phoenix Rugby is Georgia's leading youth rugby club, offering Middle School, JV and Varsity teams for boys. Training takes place on Tuesday & Thursday evenings at Alpharetta North Park, Field #1. Matches are normally held on weekends, and the team frequently travels out of state for tournaments and regional matches. Phoenix plays both the 7's and 15's versions of rugby.

Founded in 2006, the Club has been very successful over its short history. In many years, the U19 team is **ranked nationally**, and has been invited to play in the US National High School Rugby Championship Tournament four times - most recently in May, 2018. Phoenix have won the **GA State Varsity Championship** 8 times (2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2104, 2015, 2017 and 2018), and the **JV and MS State Championships** in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

## Why Play Rugby?

Rugby is a game that explicitly aims to teach important life lessons. In our experience, can play an integral part in helping boys and girls grow into young men & women of **character and integrity**. How? By teaching them perseverance and resilience in the face of adversity, patience, respect for others and the rules, physical and mental toughness, the ability to think on your feet, grace in both victory and defeat, and integrity. The game also helps develop enthusiasm for life; loyalty to friends, family, teammates, and community; and personal discipline. Phoenix encourages a 'rugby for life' attitude, aiming to encourage our players to participate in rugby after high school and college.

## What is Rugby?

Rugby originated in England almost 200 years ago, and is the 'parent sport' of American football. Today, the game is played by over 5 million people in 120 countries on 6 continents

Like football, rugby is a **team 'invasion' contact sport**. The objective is to get the rugby ball past an opponents' goal line and score a try. It is in some ways similar to football but differs in several respects. For example, there is no forward pass in rugby, play is continuous, there are no set plays, and the same players are on the field for offence and defence.

## How is Rugby Played?

**Game Time and Scoring:** A rugby match has two 40 minute halves, with a 10 minute halftime; the clock is stopped only for penalties and serious injuries. The only required protective gear is a mouthguard. Each team has 15 players on the field, all of whom are required to play both offence and defence. Substitutions are limited (at higher levels of the game), and there are only 3 referees on the field. (Rugby 7's operates under similar but slightly different rule: only 7 players a side, with two 7 minute halves.). There are 4 ways to **score**: A **try** (5 points) is scored when a player carries the ball across the goal line and touches it down inside the try area; a **conversion** is a point after kick (2 points). Players can also score a **drop goal** (3 points) by drop-kicking the ball through the posts from play, and a **penalty kick** (3 points) given after a penalty.

**Continuous Play:** Play is continuous, stopping only for penalties, serious injuries, and when the ball goes out of bounds. There are no plays, and no distance requirement to retain the ball (no 'downs'). **The ball is never 'dead'** and is continually contested, even after tackles. There are no separate offensive or defensive teams or players; any player can carry the ball and score.

Rugby is a high-intensity cardio sport: Players usually run about **5 miles** per game on average.

The ball may be **kicked** forward, but may only be passed backwards or laterally. Players may not block; blocking will result in an **obstruction** penalty. Only the player with the ball can be tackled. After a player is tackled, he must **release** the ball; his teammates must recover it to retain possession, usually by rucking.

As noted, only the ball-carrier can be **tackled** by an opposing player. A tackle occurs when the ball carrier is **held** by one or more opponents and is brought to ground.

NOTE: **High tackles** (tackles above the shoulders) **spear tackles** (or dump tackles), and **shoulder charges** are considered to be extremely dangerous, and are almost always penalized as **foul play**.

Once tackled, the ball carrier must immediately release the ball; the tackler must also release the ball carrier, and both players must roll away from the ball. This allows other players to come in and contest for the ball, thereby starting a new phase of play: the ruck.

A **ruck** is formed after a tackle if the ball is on the ground and one or more players from each team who are on their feet close around it. Players must not handle the ball in the ruck, and must use their feet to move the ball or drive over it so that it emerges at the back of the ruck, at which point it can be picked up.

A **maul** is where one team binds together in a pack to drive the ball forward towards the goal. The ball must be **off the ground**, and the ball can be handed backwards between players in the maul and eventually passed out of the maul or carried out by a player in the maul.

The ball can be **passed** between players, but only backwards or laterally; a **forward pass** results in a penalty. Likewise, a **'knock on'** occurs when a player drops the ball or loses possession of the ball and it goes forward. A **scrum** is set, with the non-offending team getting the scrum feed.

**Foul Play** (dangerous, obstructive, unfair play or misconduct) is harshly penalized; the offending player may receive a **Yellow Card**, in which case he is sent to the **'sin bin'** for 10 minutes and cannot be substituted. A **Red Card** results in **permanent expulsion** from the match with no substitution. Yellow and red cards are reserved for the most serious offenses since both put the penalized team at a serious disadvantage.

## Safety and Injuries

According to a recent NIH study, if rugby is taken as a baseline (1.00) for injuries resulting in a visit to the ER, baseball rated 0.64, basketball at 1.19, and football at 1.22. The NIH interpreted this to mean that rugby players are more likely to go to the ER with an injury suffered during a practice or game than baseball players; however, basketball and football players

are much more likely to go to the ER with an injury suffered during a practice or game than a rugby.

it's important to note that football and rugby are so different that direct comparisons are challenging. However, the NIH study also showed that for every 1,000 player contacts, rugby players on average suffered 22.5 injuries per game, 5.5 practice injuries, and 2 concussion events; measured over the same number of contacts, football players on average suffered 42 injuries in games, 5.9 practice injuries, and 4.5 concussion events.

Safety is a rightly a primary concern for rugby players, coaches and referees, and the sport is constantly working to reduce the number of injuries overall.

## What Does Rugby Offer Football?

**Hand-Eye Coordination:** In rugby, every type of player handles the ball at least a few times. Every player is expected to pass, catch, tackle, and break tackles. The development of sense of space, timing, and teamwork can help the athlete in a variety of sports.

**Fitness:** While play does stop sometimes in rugby, it does not occur on every play. A well-played rugby match makes the backs and forwards run great distances to retrieve the ball and launch another attack. Playing a rugby match that way for 80 minutes requires a level of fitness that can only help the athlete in football.

**Tackling Technique:** Rugby players do not wear pads. Athletes who have played both football and rugby claim that playing a tackle sport without pads forces you to use good tackling techniques.

Finally, **rugby "culture"** is positive and focuses on respect for coaches, referees and the other team. Rugby does not tolerate complaining to the referee, excessive celebration, or taunting opponents. Like football, rugby is a game that explicitly aims to **develop young men and women of character**.

## Contact Us

[www.phoenixrugby.org](http://www.phoenixrugby.org)

**Facebook:**

**@alpharettphoenixrugby**

**Email:**

**InfoGeneral@phoenixrugby.org**