

A guide to Rugby – „illiterates“



It is said that Rugby was created when William Webb Ellis took the ball into his arms and ran with it during a soccer match at Rugby School in England in 1823. So the game of Rugby was invented, called after his school (thank goodness that he did not come from Auchtermuchty...). There are people who will watch a rugby match and ask "Which team does Beckham play for?", or "Why is the ball oval?"... To recover from that lost ground, here is a beginner's guide to Rugby.

The Players

The basic game involves 15 players, the forwards and the backs. Each position has a specific number and responsibilities during the two 40 minutes halves of a match. Players do not wear any padding or protection except for a mouth guard. Forwards are great lumbering men whose mission is to seize the ball from the opposition. Once they have the ball they give it to the backs, who score and take all the glory. Forward passes are not allowed (though the ball may be kicked forward). Dropping the ball forward is also prohibited and is called a knock-on.

The Scrum

Rugby forwards spend much of their time locked together, bent head to head against the opposition. A scrum restarts play after a forward pass or knock-on. Scrums are not to be confused with "rucks and "mauls". A maul is if the player is holding a ball; if the ball is on the ground, it's a ruck and if the ball is nowhere to be seen, it's a fight... .

Scoring

The object of the game is to score as many points as possible by carrying, passing, kicking and grounding the ball in the scoring zone at the far end of the field -called the in-goal area. A try is worth 5 points; this is when a player touches the ball down behind the opposing goal line. You're awarded further two points if you can manage to kick the ball between the goal posts. Points may also be scored from a drop goal and a penalty kick (worth 3 points).

The Teams

The game is dominated by New Zealand "The All Blacks", South Africa "The Springboks" and Australia "The Wallabies". Australia is famous for beating the Irish in Dublin in the quarterfinals of 1991. The Irish are known for playing as good as the best in the World, but only for the first 60 minutes.

Addendum:

In case you really don't know... The ball is oval because in early days it was almost impossible to get a round ball... .