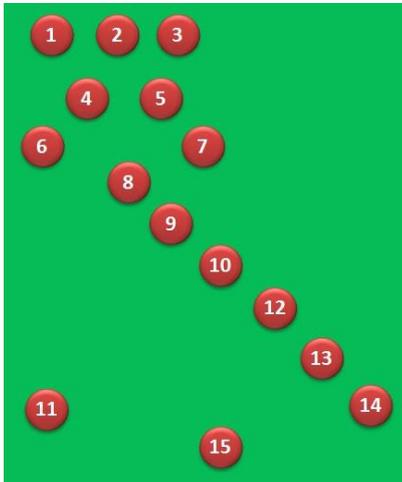


LineoutCoach Guide to Rugby Positions

Rugby positions each have a specific role to play. Different physical attributes are required, although strength and speed are key across the team. Most players will specialise in one or two positions which uses their skills and size to best advantage.



The 15 players for each team are on the pitch at all times and play both attacking and defending roles unlike American Football which has offence, defence and special teams that alternate depending on possession.

The team is divided into two packs, the Forwards (8 players) and Backs (7 players) and they can stand in any position on the field of play as long as they remain onside.

The exception is set piece plays when rugby rules stipulate where each player should be in relation to the ball and opposition.

The players wear rugby jerseys with the numbers 1-15 on the back. The number stays with the rugby positions and not the player as it can do in other sports, e.g. the hooker is always no 2. The numbers were introduced in 1920s as a way for coaches to rate the players.



Substitute players (16-23) cover positions where players are injured, tired, or as impact players to turn a match around or close down an opposing team in a close game.

Forwards Pack (1-8)

The Forward pack is involved in all set piece plays and contests the lineouts and scrums. Larger and more powerful than the Backs, they aim to win or retain the ball and drive the team up the field and in that respect are similar to linebackers in American Football.

The Backs (9-15)

The Backs tend to be smaller than their Forward brothers as they need speed and agility to run the ball into space or kick for goal. They have to maximise the possession and get points on the board so would be similar to running backs or wide receivers in American Football.



1 Loosehead & 3 Tighthead Props

- Supports hooker in the scrum
- Lifts jumpers in the lineout
- Key at rucks and mauls to retain ball

2 Hooker

- Middle of the front row of the scrum
- Responsible for winning the ball
- Throws ball at lineouts

4&5 Second Row/Lock

- Tallest on the field
- Lineout jumper
- Bind in the scrum and drive forward

6 Blindside & 7 Openside Flanker

- At the back of the scrum
- Aim to win ball through turnovers

8 Number Eight

- Link between the forwards and backs
- Controls ball at back of scrum



9 Scrum-half

- Links between Forwards and Backs
- Feeds ball into scrum

10 Fly-half

- Directs play on the pitch
- Good decision maker, communicator
- Commonly the goal kicker

11&14 Wing

- Stay outside the backline
- Score tries and finish plays
- Fast, agile & powerful enough to break tackles



12 Inside & 13 Outside Center

- Good reader of the game
- Direct attacks and breach defences
- Tackle advancing opponents

15 Full Back

- Fields opponents kicks
- Last line of defence
- Good kicking game