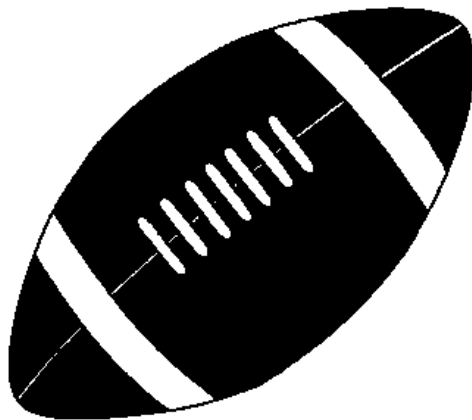


RUGBY LEAGUE BREAKOUT

**HEAD TO HEAD
COLLISION FOOTBALL**



Software Simulations

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Version 1.2

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION "Rugby League Breakout" is a game about Rugby League. It tries to capture the "flavour" and "feel" of Rugby League, but it's not actually a simulation game. Simulation games are more complicated and expensive and are usually a lot more difficult to play. The game has been design from scratch as a game for the internet, but it should still work as a play-by-mail game. In these rules we refer to players in the game (like yourself) as "coaches". The "players" are the guys in your squad that play for the team.

1.2 PLAYER INTERACTION "Rugby League Breakout" is designed so that interaction between the coaches is all carried out within the game. To set up player trades with the coaches of other teams you can use your normal orders. We don't give out your address, email address or phone number as part of the game, but there's nothing to stop you doing so with the message facility (see later).

1.3 THE LEAGUE Leagues are made up of twelve teams each. Teams are always named after real teams in the real life league. When you have to specify another team in your orders (on a trade action, for example) you use the three letter code shown in the game report.

Each season is nineteen turns long (one week of pre-season games, four weeks for the cup, eleven weeks for the league and three weeks for the finals). Teams that aren't playing (during the cup and in finals rounds) play additional pre-season games.

Note: There's normally no home advantage in the game, so it's not necessary to play the full home and away series that you'd see in a real league.

1.4 LEAGUE STANDINGS League positions are decided by two points for a win and one for a draw, and then by points difference. Pre-season games don't count in the league standings. They're just for practice. Any round when you don't have a proper game, then you play pre-season (even the winner of the qualifying final). Player stats do count in pre-season games, however.

1.5 CHALLENGE CUP The challenge cup is played at the start of the season. Eight teams play in the first round, while four teams have byes into the second round (they play pre-season games amongst themselves during round one). The second, third and fourth rounds are quarter-finals, semi-finals and the final in the usual knockout format. In the first season the first round byes go to the last four teams to join, but after that they go to the four top teams in the league the previous season.

1.6 THE FINALS Four teams play in the finals. The teams that finish first and second in the league play in the Qualifying Final. The winner goes straight to the Grand Final. The loser plays in the Preliminary Final. The teams that finish third and fourth in the league play in the Elimination Final. The loser is eliminated and the winner plays in the Preliminary Final. The loser of the Preliminary Final is eliminated, and the winner goes to the Grand Final.

Round One:	Qualifying Final	(winner to Grand Final, loser to Preliminary Final)
	Elimination Final	(winner to Preliminary Final, loser eliminated)
Round Two:	Preliminary Final	(winner to Grand Final, loser eliminated)
Round Three:	Grand Final.	

1.7 CONSOLATION GAMES The eight teams that don't make the finals play in the Consolation Cup, which is a straight knockout competition. The teams that are eliminated in the first two rounds of the finals play in the Playoff Cup. This gives everyone something to do while waiting for the next season to start. This is the best time to mess around with improving your team, signing new players and making trades etc. The teams that lose in the consolation cup also play each other, with the ultimate loser being awarded the wooden spoon.

Note: Don't expect to impress anyone by winning the Playoff Cup or the Consolation Cup. They're just a chance to show your team is quite as bad as the next one, or that maybe you're going to do better next season.

2 GENERAL RULES

2.1 LOSING POINTS Losing points (usually abbreviated to LPs) are the "currency" of the game. LPs are used for coaching and other actions, as well as signing new players. They're called losing points because the more you lose the more you get. Your income each turn (once the game has started) is 2 LPs if you won, 3 LPs if you drew, and 5 LPs if you lost.

Note: One way the game is different from real life is that the worse you play the richer you get. This is essential if the game is to remain interesting. In league games that don't have this type of balancing mechanism the most successful teams get richer and richer - and it gets harder and harder for the other teams to catch up. In games with this rule the better you do the bigger the challenge next time around. It can be hard going when the other teams catch up with you, but then the rule starts to work in your favour to help you fight your way back again.

2.2 THE GM The "GM" (either Games Master, according to obscure tradition, or General Manager if you prefer to avoid the jargon) is the person responsible for the operation of the game. In normal terminology the GM would be called a moderator, or an umpire. The game is actually processed by computer, but is supervised by the GM. The name of your GM is given in the game report.

2.3 GAMESTART In a new league starting from scratch coaches are assigned to the league as they arrive. There is usually a delay between joining the game and it being ready to start, but during this time you can select your initial squad (see section 9) and play individual "warmup" games (see 9.4). If you join a league that is already in play (this is always the easiest and quickest way to start) then you go straight into action with the team as it stands.

2.4 DEADLINES There is a deadline for each round of games, usually either one or two weeks apart (some leagues do one, some the other) on the same day of the week. Your orders should arrive before the deadline, or at the latest by noon on deadline day. Games are normally run on the deadline day and are sent back the same day.

Late Orders: If your orders arrive late then they are set aside. If no orders arrive from you for the next deadline then your late orders are used instead. If new orders do arrive then your late orders are discarded. Under no circumstances will two sets of orders be processed together. If you miss a turn you cannot make it up.

2.5 MISSED ORDERS If you miss a deadline the computer will write a set of orders for you. It will usually not do very much, if anything. If the computer decides a player has dropped out of the game then the "missed orders" routine expands to become much more active.

2.6 TURNSHEETS There are two different ways of submitting your orders. If you want to post or fax your turn you should use the printed turnsheet at the back of your game report, but there is an extra charge for using this (because we have to take time typing them in to the computer). The normal way to send your orders is by using the online turnsheet on our website.

Please try to write your orders as neatly as possible, as we will not correct errors that result from poorly written turns. Think BEFORE you start filling in the turnsheet. We recommend you write out your plans on another sheet of paper and transfer the final version to your turnsheet when you're finished (if you're using the online turnsheet then use the printed turnsheet for your draft).

2.7 PLAYER MESSAGES The turnsheet also includes a section for player messages, which are published in the game report (for everyone to see). All messages are identified by the computer according to who sent them, and our normal restrictions apply (i.e. keep it clean and fair). Be aware that a proportion of players in a game like this will be quite young (including very young ones playing with the help of parents etc), and people do not expect to see so-called "adult" language and content in a sports game.

3 PLAYERS & SQUADS

3.1 YOUR SQUAD Each team has a squad of exactly 22 players. Any time you sign a new player you must release another one to make room, and any time you want to release a player you must sign someone to replace him. Each player has a squad number and players are always identified in your orders by their squad numbers.

3.2 PLAYER POSITIONS Each player is classified as one of nine types according to the position he plays. The different positions are identified by three-letter codes, as follows:-

FBK	Full Back	SOF	Stand Off	HKR	Hooker
WNG	Wing	SCR	Scrum Half	SRF	Second Row Forward
CEN	Centre	PRP	Prop	LSF	Loose Forward

Note: Player positions cannot be changed at present, even between positions which are often swapped in real life. This might be changed at a later date.

3.3 YOUR TEAM The players numbered 1 to 13 in your squad are your team, numbered in the usual manner. These are the guys that actually play in each game. The positions for each squad number are as follows:-

1 FBK 2 WNG 3 CEN 4 CEN 5 WNG
6 SOF 7 SCR
8 PRP 9 HKR 10 PRP 11 SRF 12 SRF 13 LSF

3.4 RESERVES The players numbered 14 to 22 in your squad are your reserves. You have one reserve player for each different position. They play no part in the game except that they may be swapped in and out of your team between turns. Player movements are restricted to reserve players (if you want to trade or replace a player from your actual team you must first swap him into your reserves). The positions for each squad number are as follows:-

14 FBK 15 WNG 16 CEN 17 SOF 18 SCR 19 PRP 20 HKR 21 SRF 22 LSF

3.5 SWAP ACTION The SWAP action is used to swap players between different positions in your squad. You can only swap players that play the same position. The cost is 1 LP for each action. This action takes effect at the start of the turn, before the games are played (you can change who is in your team during the run-up to the game: your opponent doesn't know which players you're fielding in which positions when he writes his game plan, just as you don't know his). Enter "SWAP" in the action box and the squad numbers of the two players in the squad number and amount boxes.

*Example: ACTION [SWAP] SQUAD NUM [13] AMOUNT [22] OTHER [not used]
This action would swap the loose forward in your team with the loose forward in your reserves.*

3.6 SKILLS Each player is rated with a value of 0 to 15 in each of five skills. These are Power, Speed, Handling, Tackling and Kicking. When you need to indicate a skill in your orders these are abbreviated to the four letter codes shown below. Skill levels never go below zero.

POWR Power is the strength of a player in a tackle on attack.
SPED Speed is the ability to accelerate from a start as well as flat speed over a longer distance.
HAND Handling is the ability of a player to handle the ball creatively and safely.
TACK Tackling is the defensive strength of a player.
KICK Kicking is accuracy and distance when kicking in open play as well as place kicking.

3.7 PLAYER VALUES The "value" of a player (in LPs) is the sum of all his skills (not including potential). This is the minimum number of LPs for which he can be signed (you'll often have to pay more if other coaches want the same player) and also determines how many LPs you get if/when you release him (you get half his value, rounded down, when he's released but you get the other half, rounded up, if another team signs him later).

3.8 POTENTIAL Potential is an extra “skill” that doesn’t do anything in the game except that it gets converted to extra skills by coaching (see 3.10) or by the end of season routine (see next paragraph). It’s important when you use it for coaching because you get to choose which skills you coach (the rest of the time you have to make do with whichever skills the player has got).

Note: In this game you can coach players who have no potential. It’s more expensive, but it is allowed.

3.9 AGE Players are aged anything from 17 up. Players age one year each season. Players aged 30 and above lose skills at the end of each season (two speed and one of each of the others).

Players aged below 30 that have any potential increase one skill (chosen at random among skills they’ve already got) by any number of levels up to their current potential, but lose one potential.

Players aged below 30 with no potential gain one level or lose one level selected at random (but you always have an equal number of each).

3.10 COACHING ACTION You can use the COACH action to increase the skills of your players. If the player has no potential then the cost is 2 LPs, and if does then the cost is 1 LP and he may lose one potential (it’s a 50-50 chance). The chosen skill increases by one.

Enter “COACH” in the action box, the squad number of the player is the squad number box and the code for the skill (see 3.6) in the “other” box. You can’t coach a coach beyond the maximum of 15.

Example: ACTION [COACH] SQUAD NUM [9] AMOUNT [not used] OTHER [POWR]
This action would increase the POWER skill of your hooker by one.

Note: This is an important action. It allows you to develop the strengths of your team/squad much more quickly and to put the new strengths exactly where you want them.

3.11 PLAYER NAMES Player names should be appropriate for the team, and match current or recent real life players. Names are assigned to players at the start of the game, but you can change them around during play. When you trade or sign players the player name stays with the same squad number even though it now belongs to a different player. Many coaches prefer to rename players when this happens, but it’s entirely up to you whether you do or not.

There’s a RENAME section in the turnsheet you can use to change the name of a player in your squad. Give the squad number of the player in the number box, and his new name in the name boxes. If you want to swap the names of two players over then use the NAMES action instead (see next).

Example: SQUAD NUM [9] SURNAME [BLOGGS] FORENAME [FRED]
This action renames your hooker to be “Fred Bloggs”.

Note: Player names are entirely cosmetic. They have no effect on the game itself, but nearly everyone prefers to see players with sensible names in the right teams with reasonably similar skills to real life.

3.12 NAMES ACTION The NAMES action is used to swap the names of two players in your squad. The names are swapped over but the rest of the player data stays the same (ie. attached to the same squad numbers). This action is provided to help you to attach player names to the appropriate players (so that players have the same or similar player types and skills to their real life counterparts) because swapping names around with the rename section is slow and awkward.

Enter “NAMES” in the action box and the squad numbers of the players in the squad number and amount boxes.

Example: ACTION [NAMES] SQUAD NUM [10] AMOUNT [12] OTHER [not used]
This action would swap the names of one of your props with one of your second rowers.

Note: You can swap the names of the players even though you can’t swap their positions (the point is to help you give your team the right “look” and “feel” and it doesn’t actually change the game play).

4 PLAYER MOVEMENTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION All player movements (signings and trades) apply only to your reserve players and occur after the games for that week have been played. If you want to release or replace one of the players in your actual team then you must first swap him into your reserves (normally you'd want to bring in his replacement, then swap the replacement in to the team, and then trade or replace the player once he's in the reserves).

4.2 PLAYER ACTIONS There are a number of different actions you can use to make changes in your squad, but you cannot make more than one action in a turn on the same player. This means you cannot do two actions from COACH or SWAP or SIGN or TRADE or YOUTH with the same squad number. You can't swap a player out of your team and trade him the same turn, for example (or agree a trade and then swap a different players into the position you're trading...). You have to do things one step at a time. This is a very important rule that you will need to remember when writing your actions.

Be especially careful with SIGN actions, because in these the squad number is hidden and you don't actually write it in your orders. It's probably a good idea to write down the squad number of the player you're replacing with a signing when you're writing the draft of your orders to reduce the risk of messing up.

Note: Those of you who have played our simulation games will notice that this is very different from our previous games. It's an important change that makes the game a LOT simpler and makes the rules a LOT shorter because we don't have to write complicated rules for all the awkward combinations of different actions that you could try to do at the same time.

4.3 FREE AGENTS Free agents are players who are not currently signed for a team in the game but who are available to be signed. The current list of free agents is given in the game report each turn and each player is allocated a "free agent number" (from 1 to 99) by which he is identified when you want to sign him.

4.4 FIND ACTION You can use the FIND action to find a new player and have him added to the free agent list (from where you can try to sign him another turn). The cost is 1 LP. Enter "FIND" in the action box and the player position in the "other" box. The new player is generated by the computer with random skills and age.

Example: ACTION [FIND] SQUAD NUM [not used] AMOUNT [not used] OTHER [WG]
This action would add a new winger to the free agent list.

Note: You have no special rights for being the team that found the player, and anyone else can bid for him the same as you (if they've got enough LPs, and if they want the same sort of player). Equally, if he's not what you wanted you don't have to bid for him.

4.5 SIGN ACTION You can bid for any player currently on the free agent list by using the SIGN action. Your bid must be at least the normal value of the player (see 3.7) but may be higher. Other teams may make bids for the same player at the same time, in which case he signs for whichever team offers the most (equal bids are decided at random). The cost of the action is the value of your bid less half the value of the player released (you pay nothing if the action fails).

Enter "SIGN" in the action box, the free agent number of the player wanted in the squad number box and the number of LPs you're bidding in the amount box.

Example: ACTION [SIGN] SQUAD NUM [17] AMOUNT [32] OTHER [not used]
This action tries to sign a free agent with a bid of 32 LPs.

Note: You don't need to say which player he's to replace, because it's always the reserve player who plays the same position.

4.6 YOUTH ACTION The YOUTH action creates and signs a new free agent “youth” player straight into your reserves. The player is generated by the computer with random skills and age. He doesn’t go through the free agent list and other coaches don’t get to bid against you. The cost of the action is the value of the new player less half the value of the player released. Youth players will usually be younger and have lower values than free agents created by the FIND action.

You should be aware that this action can fail because you can’t afford it (since you don’t know in advance how much the new guy will cost).

Enter “YOUTH” in the action box and the squad number of the reserve player to be replaced in the squad number box.

Example: ACTION [YOUTH] SQUAD NUM [14] AMOUNT [not used] OTHER [not used]
This action tries to replace your reserve full back with a youth player.

Note: The point of a YOUTH action is normally to release the player being replaced. In the action you don’t have to say what position you want the new guy to play because it’s the same as the one you released.

4.7 PLAYERS RELEASED When you release a player he is added to the free agent list, where he is available to be signed by anyone. You get half his value (rounded up) back when you release him (it reduces the cost of the action). If someone does sign him from the free agent list then you get back the other half of his value.

You can also sign one of your own players back from the free agent list and still get the second half of his value back when you do.

Note: This can be used as an alternative way of making a trade. It’s much simpler because each step in the trade can be carried out separately, and many trades happen this way without being pre-arranged at all. The thing that does tend to go wrong with pre-arranged trades done this way is that people change their minds (someone else offers a better player) or someone else steps in with a higher bid.

4.8 TRADES You can use the TRADE action to trade players with another team. You can only trade players in your reserves, and you can only trade for a player who plays the same position.

All trades you make in a turn must be with the same team (you can’t trade one player to one team and another to a different team). Trades only work if both teams order the same trade. All trade actions you order in the same turn succeed or fail together (ie. they all succeed or they all fail, and you can’t have one part of a multiple trade go through if any part doesn’t).

The cost of a trade is the difference in the value and potential of the players concerned.

Enter “TRADE” in the action box, the squad number of the player in the squad number box, and the team code for the team you’re trading with in the “other” box. Note that you don’t need to give the squad number of the other guy since it must be the same as the player you’re offering.

Example: ACTION [TRADE] SQUAD NUM [18] AMOUNT [not used] OTHER [WIG]
This action offers to trade sign reserve scrum halves with Wigan.

Note: Because you can only trade players who play the same position you will often need to make two trades at once. If you wanted to trade a centre for a wing, for example, then you’d have to make two trades and trade their counterparts as well. This is the reason for the all-pass or all-fail rule.

Note: In a trade potential is included with the value of the players.

4.9 TRADE OFFERS If you order a trade that doesn’t happen then it is listed in the game report as a “trade offer”. This is a perfectly reasonable way to propose a trade to another team. Just make the action so that it will be listed as an offer, and then repeat it the following turn to see if the other coach follows suit and accepts the trade.

4.10 SCOUTING You can use the SCOUT action to get details of players in other teams (including players in their reserves). Players you scout are listed in your game report in the same format as your own players (there's no "secret" or "hidden" information in this game). Any actions you don't use are treated as scout actions (picking a team and a squad number at random).

Enter "SCOUT" in the action box, the squad number of the player you want to scout in the squad number box and the three-letter code for his team in the "other" box. If the player you're scouting is involved in swap action then you still scout the same player (even though his squad number will have changed).

Example: ACTION [SCOUT] SQUAD NUM [9] AMOUNT [not used] OTHER [CAN]
This action extracts details of of the hooker of a team called CAN (presumably the Canberra Raiders).

Note: Knowing the exact strengths and weaknesses of individual players in opposing teams can be very useful. Sometimes this will tell you tactics that you should or shouldn't use.

4.11 THE FREE AGENT LIST After all player movements for the turn have been processed all players on the free agent list with the lowest value or highest age are retired (removed from the list and from the game).

Example: The oldest player on the list is aged 29, there are three players with values of only 20, and a whole bunch with lower ages or higher values. The 29 year old disappears (whatever his value) and all three 20-point guys disappear as well (whatever their ages).

5 GAMETIME

5.1 POSSESSIONS Each team has six possessions and there are six tackles in each possession. The field position is different at the start of each possession. The first possession starts 5 yards out, the second starts from 10 yards, the third from 20, the fourth from 40, the fifth from 60 and the sixth from 80. There may be a seventh possession (see 5.18). The attacking team selects a play for each tackle and the defending team selects a tactic for the defence.

5.2 ATTACKING PLAYS For each tackle the attacking play is selected for the attacking team. For each possible attacking play there is a player position, a skill required, two numbers for the yardage gained, and a risk factor. The position and skill decide who carries the ball and which skill is used. The risk factor is the risk of a turnover (a forward pass, a knock on or an interception) on that tackle. The two yardage numbers are the “fixed yardage” and the “variable yardage”.

5.3 THE BALL CARRIER A suitable player (one who plays the right position for the play) is selected to carry the ball. Half the time the ball carrier will be the best player for the play (ie. the one with the highest strength in the skill required for the play) and half the time it will be any suitable player selected at random.

Whoever carried the ball on the previous tackle in the same possession is excluded (because he’s got to play the ball in the ruck) in which case the best player available might be the second strongest, and if there’s only one player of that type in the team then he’s replaced by someone from a different position (your hooker or loose forward can be replaced by any other forward, your full back by any other back).

Note: The choice between giving the ball to the best player and a random player is not itself random. Whichever choice is made on one play, the other choice will be made on the next. The random bit is only which one happens first.

5.4a THE FIRST DEFENDER The first defender on each play is the opposite number of the ball carrier (ie. the guy with the same shirt number, who plays the same position).

5.4b CHOICE OF SKILLS The strength of the first defender on the play is either the same skill as the attacker, or the tackling strength of the defender, or the average of the two. One of the three options is chosen at random.

Note: The choice of the three options for the strength of the defender is random (not like the way the ball carrier is chosen). The same random choice could happen again and again.

5.5 YARDAGE The number of yards gained is a fixed number of yards for the play and the field position, plus the difference in the strengths of the attacker and the defender up to the value of the “variable yardage” defined for the play (see the play definitions in 6.2). If the defender is stronger than the attacker then you can be driven back, but only by one yard (a bigger loss is treated as one yard).

The field position alters the fixed yardage because the closer you get to the goal line the closer the defence is to the play - when you’re further out the defence must play deeper.

5.6 LINE BREAKS If the difference in the strengths of the players is greater than the variable yardage then the defender has missed the tackle and this is a line break. In this case the attacker gets extra yards equal to the variable yardage (again) plus the difference between the SPEED of the attacker and the strength of the cover defender (see 5.8, below). Again, it is possible to lose yardage.

Note: The cover defender is usually stronger than the attacker, but rarely by enough that you don’t get extra yardage from the line break.

5.7 DOUBLE YARDAGE If the PREVIOUS play in the same possession was a line break then the yardage is doubled.

Note: This is an important rule. When an attacker breaks tackles and disrupts your defence you are vulnerable to what happens on the next before you defence has a chance to recover.

5.8 COVER DEFENDERS In a line break the cover defender is the next similar player (forwards cover forwards, backs cover backs, and halfbacks count at backs) with the highest total of speed and tackling skills. The strength of the cover defender (in the yardage calculation for line breaks) is the average of his speed and tackling skills (it's no use him being quick if he can't tackle, and no use being a good tackler if he's too slow to get there).

5.9 DEFENCE PLAYS Many defences (the inside, open, wide, press, swarm or heavy defences) alter the fixed yardage either up or down according to the characteristics of the attacking play. The tight defence reduces the fixed yards and the variable yards (this makes the short yards harder and increase the chance of longer yards). The loose defence increases the fixed yards and the variable yards (this makes the short yards easier, and long yards harder). The goal line defence reduces the variable yards by half the fixed yards, removes all the fixed yards and increases the risk factor. The deep defence is bad against everything (except kicking plays).

All defences have greater effects (for good or bad) if your set the effort option higher.

5.10 DEFENCE OPTIONS There are three "options" for offside, hardness and effort on defence, but these currently have fixed values (they're all set at 2) so they've been removed from the turnsheet.

EFFORT: An effort value above one increases the effect of the defence play (for good or bad). Most of the defence plays add or subtract yards according to which attacking play is used.

OFFSIDE: Offside reduces the fixed yards on each play but increases the risk of conceding a penalty.

HARDNESS: Hardness reduces the variable yards and increases the risk factor on each play but also increases the risk of conceding a penalty.

Note: Reducing the variable yardage is not necessarily a good thing. It makes it easier for the attacker to make a line break.

5.11 TURNOVERS Each play has a risk factor. This is the chance (out of ten) of a turnover on the play. The more complicated the play and the better the yardage it might gain the higher the risk. The risk is reduced by the handling skills of the ball carrier. If the ball is turned over then the possession ends (the defending team doesn't get to run the ball back or win an extra possession for themselves).

Note: Handling skills reduce the risk by one third of the skill (fractions do count).

5.12 KICKS If the play chosen by the attacking team is a kick (on sixth tackle only) then the yardage calculation is simply a fixed value plus a random proportion of a variable value.

The player who is the target of the kick (the chaser) contests possession with his immediate opponent. If the defender wins the ball the possession is over. If the attacker wins the ball the possession continues (but you'll normally kick on the sixth tackle, so the possession ends if you don't score).

On a grubber kick (GK) the kicker is also the chaser and the yardage is five to ten yards. On a bomb (BK) the chaser is the attacking player with the highest total of speed and handling skills and the yardage is fifteen to thirty yards. On a cross kick (CK) the chaser is the winger with the highest total of speed and handling skills and the yardage is ten to twenty yards.

On all kicks the skills are needed are speed and handling for both the chaser and the defender, plus the kicking skill of the best kicker among the half backs and loose forward for the attacking side. The chance of recovering the ball on a kick is proportional to the skills of the players.

Example: A half back with speed 4, handling 11 and kicking 9 tries to recover his own grubber kick. His immediate opponent has speed 6 and handling 10, The attacker has 24 chances of recovering the ball (all three skills added together) and the defender has 16 chances (speed plus handling). In percentage terms their chances are 60% and 40%. The yardage gained is five to ten yards.

5.13 DEFENCES ON KICKS If the defence is playing offside, the chance of the attacker recovering the ball is increased by three times the offside value. If the defensive play is deep defence (DD) then the yardage is reduced by one plus the effort of the defence and the chance of the defender recovering the ball is increased by three times the effort of the defence.

5.14 KICKERS Your place kicker (on penalty goals and conversions) is the player in your team with the highest kicking skill. Your kicker for drop goals and tactical kicks (kicking plays) is the half back or loose forward with the highest combination of kicking and handling skills (with the usual exclusion for the player who carried the ball on the previous tackle).

Note: You need two kickers in your midfield, because otherwise you daren't risk using your playmaker on fifth tackle and having him unavailable when you want a tactical kick or a drop goal attempt.

5.15 DROP GOALS On sixth tackle you can also try for a drop goal (DK). The chance (in twenty) of success is the kicking skill of your open field kicker less one for every five yards you are from the goal line. It's only worth one point.

5.16 TRIES & CONVERSION A try is worth four points, and you also get a kick at goal for two points. The chance (in twenty) of success on a conversion is the kicking skill of your place kicker.

5.17 PENALTIES Penalties are awarded against teams that use the hardness and offside options. Penalties are awarded only on the sixth tackle (after the play, even if it was a kicking play, and only if you didn't score anyway). The chance (in twenty) of success is the kicking skill of your place kicker less one for every five yards you are from the goal line.

Note: Yes, this is a completely unrealistic rule, but it works and avoids the complication of deciding whether to kick the penalty or go for the try or reset the tackle count. We call it an advantage rule!

5.18 FIRST TIE-BREAKER The first tie breaker applies when the two teams are within one score (a converted try, which is six points) after the six normal possessions. Both teams get an extra possession starting from 10 yards out (this is the seventh/extra possession on the turnsheet).

Note: Yes, it's not really a tie-breaker, because you might not really be tied. So think up something better to call it and tell us about it. This is the possession that's labelled "10+" on turnsheets and in game reports.

5.19 SECOND TIE-BREAKER The second tie breaker applies when there is an actual tie (scores level) at the end of a game in the finals or a cup competition. The winner is the team that scored the most points during the season. If both scored the same, then the winner is the team that conceded the fewest. If they scored and conceded the same number of points then the winner is decided by the toss of a coin. The winner kicks an automatic drop goal, which is awarded to their open field kicker.

5.20 KEY PLAYERS For each game you pick two key players. This increases their strengths when picked as the ball carrier and/or as the first defender. Keys have more effect when your man is weaker than his opponent (ie. They work better if you use them to patch a weakness rather than exploiting a strength). There is no key bonus when they're picked as the cover defender, as a kicker or a chaser.

Note: Although it's it's only a little one, and it's hidden away here at the end of a section, this is another important rule. You can use your keys to try to even up the strengths where you think your team is weak, or you can use them to exploit the areas where you think your opponent is vulnerable. The actual value of a key is half the difference in strength between the players involved (or two, if that is more).

6 ATTACKING PLAYS

6.1 PLAY DESCRIPTIONS

FR	<u>FORWARD DRIVE</u>	A short pass to a forward who drives straight ahead.
HR	<u>HALFBACK RUN</u>	A short pass to a half back to drive straight ahead.
CR	<u>CENTRE RUN</u>	Pass the ball along the line for a centre to drive straight ahead
WR	<u>WING RUN</u>	Pass the ball along the line for a wing to drive straight down the touchline.
OL	<u>OVERLAP</u>	Pass along the line for the overlapping full back to drive straight down line.
UL	<u>UNDERLAP</u>	A short pass to the full back to drive straight ahead up the middle.
DR	<u>RUN FROM DUMMY HALF</u>	The hooker drives straight ahead from acting half.
FO	<u>FORWARD OFFLOAD</u>	A forward drive with the player attempting offload in the tackle.
HO	<u>HALFBACK OFFLOAD</u>	A half back run, offloading in the tackle.
BO	<u>BACK OFFLOAD</u>	A centre or wing or full back run, offloading in the tackle.
IF	<u>INSIDE FORWARD</u>	A pass inside to a forward crossing behind the ball carrier.
IH	<u>INSIDE HALFBACK</u>	An inside pass to a half back crossing behind the ball carrier.
IB	<u>INSIDE BACK</u>	A pass inside to a back crossing behind the ball carrier.
HG	<u>HALFBACK GO</u>	A half back dummy pass and go.
HH	<u>HALF & HALF</u>	A half back loops around the second half back with an exchange of passes.
OR	<u>OUTSIDE RUN</u>	Pass along the line to a roaming loose forward to drive straight ahead.
SW	<u>SPIN WIDE</u>	Long, floated or miss passes to move the ball quickly to an outside back.

The kicking plays are described fully in the previous section, so they're not repeated here. You can't use the kicking plays except on the sixth tackle.

6.2 PLAY DEFINITIONS

PLAY CODE	BALL CARRIER	SKILL WANTED	FIXED YARDS	VARIABLE YARDS	RISK FACTOR	WHICH CHANNEL
FR	FWD	POWER	4	4	1	INSIDE
HR	HBA	POWER	3	5	1	INSIDE
CR	CEN	POWER	2	6	2	OPEN
WR	WNG	POWER	1	7	2	OPEN
OL	FBK	POWER	0	9	2	OPEN
UL	FBK	POWER	1	7	1	INSIDE
DR	HKR	POWER	5	3	0	INSIDE
FO	FWD	POWER	3	5	3	INSIDE
HO	HBA	HANDLING	2	6	3	INSIDE
BO	BCK	SPEED	1	7	4	OPEN
IF	FWD	SPEED	2	6	2	INSIDE
IH	HBA	SPEED	1	7	2	INSIDE
IB	BCK	SPEED	0	9	3	INSIDE
HG	HBA	HANDLING	2	6	1	INSIDE
HH	HBA	HANDLING	0	8	2	OPEN
OR	LSF	POWER	1	7	3	OPEN
SW	BCK	SPEED	0	8	4	OPEN

FWD = PRP, HKR, SRF, LSF

HBA = SOF, SCR

BCK = WNG, CEN, FBK

7 DEFENDING PLAYS

7.1 DEFENCE DESCRIPTIONS

DD DEEP DEFENCE Strong against kicks (shortens the yardage by two yards and improves the chance of recovering the ball) but weak against everything else.

GD GOAL LINE DEFENCE Reduces the variable yards by half the fixed yards and the fixed yards to zero. Increase the risk factor by one.

HD HEAVY DEFENCE Reduce the fixed yards by two if the ball carrier is a forward, and increases the fixed yards by two if he's a back or half back.

ID INSIDE DEFENCE Reduces the fixed yards by two if the play is inside, up the middle, and increases the fixed yards by two if it's not.

LD LOOSE DEFENCE Increases both the fixed and variable yards by two (this increase the normal yardage but makes it more difficult to achieve a line break).

OD OPEN DEFENCE Reduces the fixed yards by two if the play is outside, in the open field, and increases the fixed yards by two if it's not.

PD PRESS DEFENCE Reduces the fixed yards by two if the ball carrier is a half back, and increases the fixed yards by two if he's a forward or back

SD SWARM DEFENCE Reduces the fixed yards by two if the play is an offload, and increases the fixed yards by two if it's not.

TD TIGHT DEFENCE Reduces both the fixed and variable yards by two (this reduces the normal yardage, but increases the risk of a line break).

WD WIDE DEFENCE Reduces the fixed yards by two if the ball carrier is a back, and increases the fixed yards by two if he's a forward or half back.

8 GAME REPORTS

8.1 PLAYER REPORTS Each turn your individual game report lists all the players in your squad along with their skills and stats for the season, details of any players you scouted and all the actions you made (or tried) that turn.

8.2 PLAY-BY-PLAY The play by play report gives a full report of your own game with field position, plays and players selected on each tackle, the tacklers, yardage and others results of the play and the possession for both sides. All the plays selected are shown for both sides, even if they weren't used (either because possession was lost early in the tackle count, or because it's the seventh possession and the scores weren't close enough).

8.3 RESULTS For all games in the league, including your own, you get a shorter game report that shows just the teams with top skills and stats, scores and scorers.

8.4 STANDINGS The standings includes the current league table with the deadline and fixtures for next turn. It also includes player messages and messages from the GM (rules changes and clarifications, player changes and so forth). The GM messages often contain important information, so be careful to check (new stuff will normally be at the top of the page, with updates next and reference stuff last).

8.5 ACTIONS REPORT The actions report shows the current free agent list along with player movements for the turn, trades offered and coaching reports.

9 GETTING STARTED

9.1 INTRODUCTION There are two ways to start in the game, by setting up a new team in a new league starting from scratch or by taking over a standby position.

9.1 STANDBY POSITIONS A standby position is when you take over a team that is already playing in a league that is already running. This is the quickest and best way to get started, and even if what you want is a new startup it's still best to play a standby position first so as to get to know the game and how it works. For a standby position you take over the team as it stands, but your starting balance is increased to 50 LPs (if the team has more than that already then it's not changed).

Note: For a standby position, that's all the startup rules. The remainder of this section applies to new leagues setting up from scratch.

9.2 ALLOCATING TEAMS Teams are allocated as soon as coaches are ready to start, first come first served. If the team you want to play is already allocated then you can't have it (check for a standby place or wait for the next league, if your team preference is very strong). There are no deadlines and no scheduled games until the league is full.

9.3 INITIAL SELECTION When your team is allocated you should use the "setup sheet" to choose the balance of strengths in your squad. On this form you enter numbers from 0 to 3 in each of ten boxes (any you leave blank will be treated as zero). The higher the number you enter the larger the proportion of your strengths will be allocated in that skill or group of players.

Note: My suggestion is that you allocate 2 or 1 respectively to each category according to whether you think it is more or less important. Then go back and reduce some 1's to 0's if you really don't fancy that category, and 2's to 3's where you think you want as much as possible.

Squads always have a value of 500 LPs at the start. The values you enter on your setup sheet change only the relative strengths of the different parts of your squad and the skill of your players. Higher skills in one area will be achieved at the cost of lower skills in other areas.

The POWER, SPEED, HANDLING, TACKLING and KICKING boxes emphasise these skills, and FORWARDS, HALFBACKS and BACKS emphasise the strengths of these groups of players. POTENTIAL will produce lower skills but more potential so that you can add the missing skills later and DEPTH will mean a more balanced squad with more strengths in your reserves.

Example: If you want a side with big, powerful forwards to play a simple smash-mouth game, then you might enter POWER 3, TACKLING 3, FORWARDS 3 and leave the others blank. But don't blame me if you end up watching the opposing backs galloping downfield with your forwards lumbering behind!

9.4 WARMUP GAMES Warmup games are the only format of game you can play in a league before it is full and ready to start. They're optional, and all they do is give you a chance to look at how your team and the different plays you can run work in practice. They're completely unrealistic, because what you do in a warmup game is you play against yourself with the same players on both sides. To play a warmup game simply send in a turnsheet with your instructions.

Note: It doesn't matter that in a warmup game you've got the same players on both sides. They even have to tackle themselves... this is virtual reality, after all.

9.5 REVISED SELECTIONS Up until the startup notice is issued you can re-make your initial selection. Just send in a new setup sheet and a new squad will be generated. You can't go back to the previous selection, though (there are lots of random values in the initial selection, so even if you make the same choices you won't get the same player details).

9.6 STARTUP When the last team in the league has been selected the GM sets the deadline and issues the startup notice with a roundup of all the teams and squads and the fixtures list for the pre-season round.

10 QUICK REFERENCE

10.1 ACTION FORMATS

ACTION NAME	RULES PARAGRAPH	SQUAD NUMBER	AMOUNT	OTHER
COACH	3.10	1-22	not	SKILL CODE
FIND	4.4	not	not	POSITION CODE
NAMES	3.12	1-22	1-22	not
SCOUT	4.10	1-22	not	TEAM CODE
SIGN	4.5	FA 1-99	LPs bid	not
SWAP	3.5	1-22	1-22	not
TRADE	4.8	1-22	not	TEAM CODE
YOUTH	4.6	1-22	not	not

10.2 REMINDERS

You're allowed only one signing action each turn.

You can't do two actions on the same player in the same turn.

All trades you make in a turn must be with the same team.

Trades all succeed or all fail together. If one of your trades fails, they all fail.

10.3 SKILL CODES

Skill codes are four characters

POWR	Power
SPED	Speed
HAND	Handling
TACK	Tackling
KICK	Kicking

10.4 POSITION CODES

Player position codes are three characters.

FBK	Full Back	PRP	Prop
WNG	Wing	HKR	Hooker
CEN	Centre	SRF	Second Row
SOF	Stand Off	LSF	Loose Forward
SCR	Scrum Half		

10.5 TEAM CODES

Team codes are specific to each league, but the usual team codes for the two different formats are:

SUPER LEAGUE

BRD	Bradford Bulls
CAS	Castleford Tigers
HAL	Halifax Blue Sox
HKR	Hull Kingston Rovers
HUD	Huddersfield Giants
HUL	Hull Sharks
LDS	Leeds Rhinos
LGH	Leigh Centurions
LON	London Broncos
OLD	Oldham Bears
SAL	Salford Reds
SHE	Sheffield Eagles
STH	St Helens
WAK	Wakefield Wildcats
WAR	Warrington Wolves
WID	Widnes Vikings
WIG	Wigan Warriors

NRL

AUK	Auckland (or NZ) Warriors
BRI	Brisbane Broncos
CAR	Canberra Raiders
CAB	Canterbury Bulldogs
CRO	Cronulla Sharks
MAN	Manly-Warringah Sea Eagles
MEL	Melbourne Storm
NEW	Newcastle Knights
NQU	North Queensland Cowboys
NZW	New Zealand Warriors (Auckland)
PAR	Paramatta Eels
PEN	Penrith Panthers
SSR	South Sydney Rabbitohs
STG	St George Illawarra Dragons
SYD	Sydney City Roosters
WES	Wests Tigers