Trying to make sense of Rugby?

'Scrum', 'Ruck', 'Maul', 'Knock-on'? Want to learn the lingo of the world's most popular contact sport? We've got you covered!

The play

Object — The aim of the game is to score the most points, by placing the ball down over the opposition goal line (a 'Try', 5 points, or 7 if a goal is kicked immediately after the Try), or kicking a goal (drop or place kick, 3 points)

Start/ Restart — Play starts with a kick off from the centre of the field, using a drop-kick

Attack — The team with the ball tries to score by running or kicking the ball towards the goal line, or passing to their team mates to do likewise

Defense — The team without the ball tries to prevent the others scoring by tackling them and then contesting for the ball

Ruck — If a tackled player goes to ground, both teams contest for the ball, this is called a 'ruck'. With a few exceptions, players must drive over the ball and not use their hands to pick it up.

Maul — If a tackled player does not go to ground, both teams contest for the ball, this is called a 'maul'. Any player not involved in the maul has to stand well back, on their team's side of the maul.

Line out — When the ball goes out of bounds ('in-touch'), it gets thrown back in by the non-offending team, who also decide how many players from each team participate in the 'Line out'

Scrum — If a player passes or knocks the ball forwards from their hands (a 'knock-on'), a scrum is called, where eight players from both teams bind and contest for the ball on the ground

Terms you'll hear

Try line/ Goal line — The line on the ground where the big sticks are – 'goal line' is correct, but 'try line' is more popular

Turn-over — Possession of the ball goes to the other team

In goal — The part of the field behind the goal line where you score a Try

Touch/ In touch — The side boundary of the field, so 'in-touch' = 'out of bounds'

22 — The part of the field from the goal line to 22 metres from the goal line

Offside — Infringement, usually for a player not in a ruck or maul not standing well back

Knock-on — Dropping the ball forwards: turnover, scrum

KIWI HAWTHORN RUGBY