

Mini Rugby



Fostering and Developing Young Players



Mini Rugby (LTPD Stage 1)

The ethos of mini rugby is to foster and develop young players (boys & girls) of all ability in the game of rugby in a safe, non competitive, enjoyable environment through activities which ensure progressive skill development for all participants in line with the IRFU LTPD (Long Term Player Development) pathway, Child Welfare Policy and Traditions of Rugby Union.

Team Ireland Mini Rugby

The IRFU Mini Rugby Committee would like to make all participants aware of the following regulations for 2009 to 2012:

Child Welfare

All volunteers involved with mini rugby (in any capacity) must read the IRFU Child Welfare Policy Document and sign the Declaration of Intent. The signed copy of the Declaration must be handed to the Club Child Welfare Officer or School Games Master for record keeping in the club or school. Clubs/ Schools are responsible to ensure that all their volunteers involved in age grade rugby adhere to all aspects of the IRFU policy on Child Welfare.

Code of Conduct

All participants in Mini Rugby are to adhere to all aspects of the IRFU Code of Conduct for Players / Coaches / Parents and Spectators

Fixtures

From the start of the 2009 season all competitions (leagues/ cups & blitzes ending with play-off matches or finals) are not allowed and fixtures must be arranged according to the National Festival Day format. All events must be registered with the respective Branch prior to taking place and all fixtures events, including matches involving teams from other Unions, must adhere to the IRFU Mini Rugby regulations.

Festivals/ Events and Blitz Days - Branch approved

May only be arranged by application to the respective Branch Mini Rugby Committee. Age limit and stages must be confirmed prior to the start of event and clear indications should accompany all invitations. Club coaches/ managers must be able to give proof of eligibility (Festival/ Event or Blitz day registration form) before his/her team's first match in the event.

Before the start of the event a referees/ coaches briefing must take place to clarify all arrangements e.g. stages, format of play and safety. Should there be any concerns over safety (e.g. ability to scrum) matches will then be played at the next lower stage.

Eligibility - Mini Rugby is a participation sport.

Date of eligibility for participants is the 1st January – diagram attached

Players playing in a higher age category

Written permission must be obtained from the Branch Youth Committee prior to players playing in a higher age category

Registration

It is the responsibility of clubs to ensure all their players are properly registered with the Club, Branch and IRFU

Correspondence

Any correspondence regarding Mini Rugby must be directed to the Branch Mini Rugby Committee

Maximum playing time

Consideration must be given to clubs/teams with small numbers and or no reserves to prevent/avoid exhaustion and or the risk of injuries.

Date of Eligibility categories from September 2009 onwards:

Age Groups	Season 2009/2010	Season 2010/ 2011	Season 2011/2012
Under 7	Born in: 2003	Born in 2004	Born in 2005
Under 8	2002	2003	2004
Under 9	2001	2002	2003
Under 10	2000	2001	2002
Under 11	1999	2000	2001
Under 12	1998	1999	2000
Under 13	1997	1998	1999
Under 14	1996	1997	1998
Under 15	1995	1996	1997
Under 16	1994	1995	1996
Under 17	1993	1994	1995
Under 18	1992	1993	1994

Regulations and Laws regarding Mini Rugby:

The IRFU feels strongly that due to variations in the physical, mental, social and emotional developments of young children, **players under the age of 7 are not allowed to play full contact games.** Children in this age group should be introduced to Rugby Union through the non-contact games of Leprechaun Rugby.

Mini Rugby has been broken down into distinct stages which progressively introduce and develop the fundamental skills of Rugby Football.

- **Coaches are responsible for compliance with the IRFU Child Welfare Policy Document**
- **No limit on number of players to play in club days or events – with emphasis on enjoyment and participation for all.**
- **For safety reasons players should play within their own age groups.**
- **Players cannot play for a lower age group.**
- **Leprechaun Rugby – one coach per team allowed on the pitch, coach must stay behind players**

Regulation	Leprechaun	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Notes
Age group (s) - Age on 1st. January	U 7s	U 8's	U 9/U 10	U11/ U12	
Ball size	3	3	3	4	Must be adhered to.
Maximum time per half – single match.	15 min	15 min	15 min	20 min	No injury or extra time allowed
Maximum time per half – blitz days	7 min	7 min	7 min	7 min	No injury or extra time allowed
Maximum time a squad/ team is allowed to play per day/ event	60 min.	70 min.	70 min.	70 min.	No injury or extra time allowed
Minimum time allowed for half time	1 min	1 min	1min	1 min	
Max no of players per team	8 Recommended	8	8	10	Equal numbers on both teams – emphasis on participation & enjoyment.
No of forwards	NA	NA	3	5	
No of backs	NA	NA	5	5	
Safety zone between pitches	6 m	6 m	6 m	6 m	
Tackle height	Touch on shorts or pull tag	Below waist	Below waist	Below waist	Swinging tackle/high tackle to be penalised immediately & player warned!
Hand off	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not Allowed	Below shoulder	Players should carry the ball in two hands.
Time allowed for rucks & mauls	NA	5 sec	5 sec	5 sec	The 5 seconds use it or lose it rule applies. This starts from the moment ruck/maul is formed. It is illegal to collapse a maul.
No of players allowed in rucks & mauls per side	N/A	3	3	5	
Kicking	No	No	No	Defence zone only	
Start match	Pass off	Pass off	Pass off	As per 15-a-side	Pass-off must be off the ground and after the referees whistle
Method of scoring	Try	Try	Try	Try	
Line out	NA	No	3 Man	5 Man	All forwards must be involved in lineout.
Scrum	NA	No	3 Man No contest	5 Man Strike & 1 step allowed	Players must stay bound until scrum is over

Start of match and/or restarts

Stages 1 & 2

All starts and restarts are by pass off (**from the ground**) and must be **on the referee's whistle**. The opposition must retire 10m from the ball and can only move once the scrum half/passers passes the ball. **The first receiver must start no more than 2m back from the scrum half/passers.**

At the start of both halves and after a try, the pass off from the centre of the pitch, will be used to restart the game.

Stage 3:

Starts as per the 15-a-side game and must be after the referees whistle.

In dead ball situations the restarts to take place 10m from try-line (kicking zone)

Penalties – No quick tap penalties allowed

Stage 1 & 2

Penalties are taken by a pass off (**from the ground**) **and on the whistle**, the opposition being 10m back from the mark (or behind the goal line). Penalties must be taken through the mark. To play the ball, it must be first tapped with the foot before being passed off the ground.

Stage 3

Penalties must be taken **through the mark** designated by the referee. A scrum to be awarded to the opposition if persistently done incorrectly.

Opposition must be 10 m back or behind the goal line. To play the ball, it must be first tapped with the foot before being passed **off the ground**.

Defensive penalties from within the Kicking Zone as per the 15 a side game i.e. team awarded the penalty may kick directly to touch and are awarded throw in.

Kicking

Stage 1 & 2

Not allowed

Stage 3

It is not permitted to kick the ball outside the “defensive zone” (10m from own goal line). If the offence is unintentional, a scrum is awarded to the opposition and if intentional a penalty to the opposition.

Pass back into kicking zone rule (as per 15-a-side) to apply

Players in front of the kicker must be brought onside before they can take part in play

Hand Off

Stage 1 & 2

Not allowed

Stage 3

No hand off to the head or neck area. Penalty awarded if this offence is committed

Scrum

Stage 2: (3 man)

1. All players stay bound until ball has emerged.
2. No push or contesting allowed, ball must be put in straight.
3. Opposition scrum half behind his forwards – **no follow around allowed.**
4. Scrum is over when ball is in the hands of the attacking scrum half.
5. Scrum half must pass the ball – **no break allowed.**
6. Both back lines 5m back to allow attack.
7. Always 10m from touch line and 5m from goal line.

Stage 3: (5 man)

1. All players stay bound until ball has emerged.
2. Scrum may not move further than 1 step from the mid point of original scrum. Only strike can be contested (hooker v hooker).
3. Scrum half to feed the ball into the scrum with two hands and straight.
4. No forward allowed to pick up the ball from the scrum.
5. Opposition scrum half behind his 2nd Rows – **no follow around allowed.**
6. Both back lines 5m from scrum to allow attacks.
7. Always 10m from touchline and 5m from goal line.
8. Scrum is over when referee calls “scrum over” or when the ball is in the hands of the scrum half who may break.

Line out (No Lifting or Quick throw allowed)

Stage 2: (2 man)

1. Line out 2m from touch line.
2. No contest.
3. Line out is over when the scrum half passes the ball.
4. Both hookers must be at the front of the line-out and both scrum halves behind their forwards.
5. Scrum halves must pass the ball. No break allowed.
6. Both back lines 5m back to allow attack.
7. Ball must be thrown straight into the line-out – no over throw.
8. No catch and drive allowed.

Stage 3: (5 man)

1. 2m from touch line.
2. Only the jump can be contested.
3. A space of one metre (arms length) between all players in the line-out
4. Both hookers must be at the front of the line-out and both scrum halves behind their forwards.
5. Both back lines 5m back to allow attack.
6. Hookers must throw to players (2m.), no over throw allowed and must be straight.
7. Line out is over when the scrum half passes the ball/ makes a break or when team catching the ball – catch & drive (5 seconds – “use it or lose it”) to apply.

Rucks and mauls:

Referees to talk players through it and after 5 seconds “use it or lose it.” The 5 seconds starts from the time the ruck or maul is formed NOT when the maul stops moving.

For safety reasons it is **ILLEGAL to COLLAPSE** a maul.

Discipline

No sending off in Mini Rugby only compulsory substitutions to ensure same numbers on the pitch at all times.

Dangerous Tackles-High tackles/swing tackles

Player to receive 1 (**one**) verbal warning from the referee. If the player offends again compulsory substitution to be made by coach on request by the referee. Player allowed to participate in next match/ rest of the day's event unless there is a repeat of the offence.

Punching/ kicking of an opponent:

No warning – immediate compulsory substitution and the player is not allowed to participate in next match or rest of the day's event

Squeeze ball and Bridging

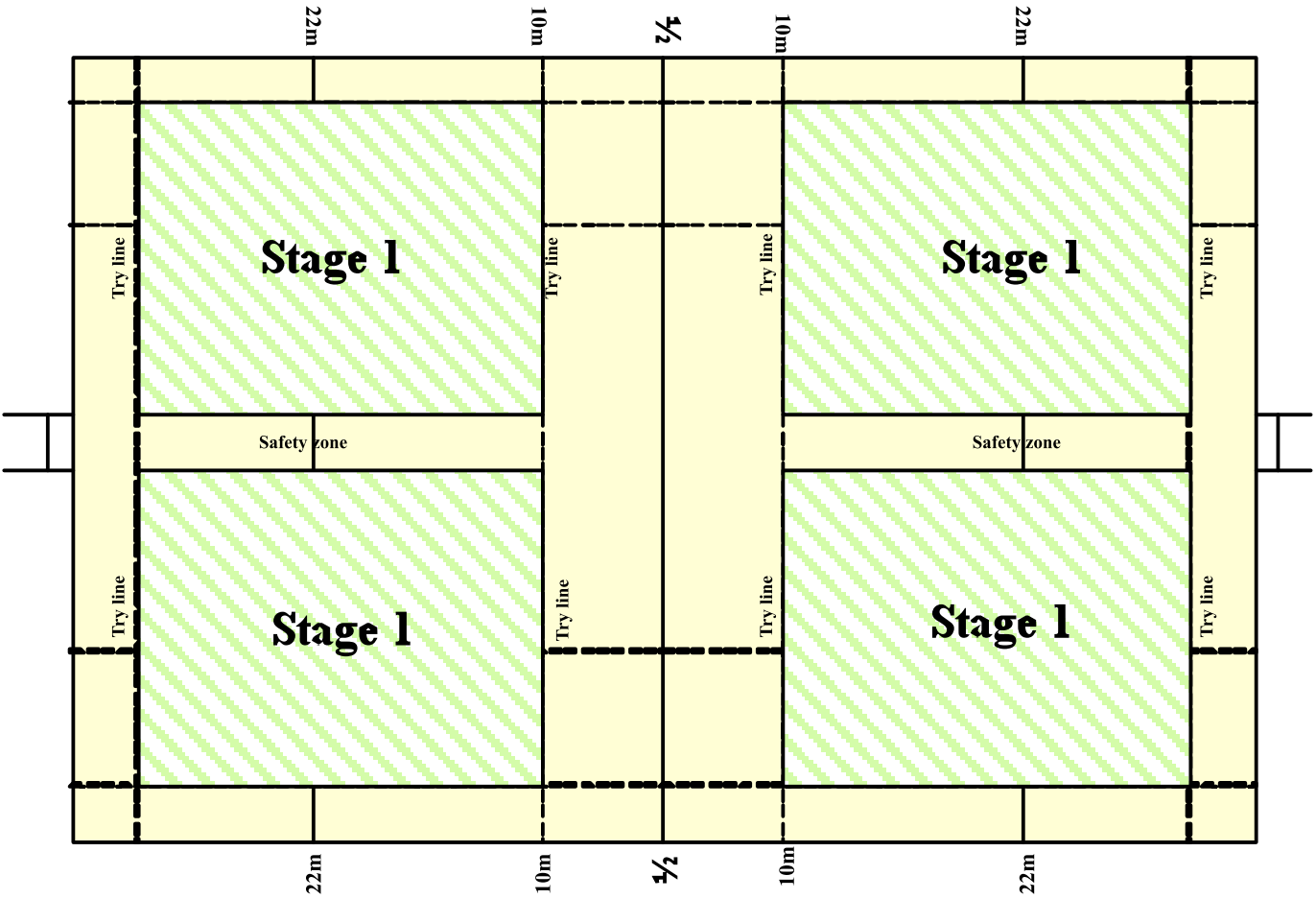
Not allowed

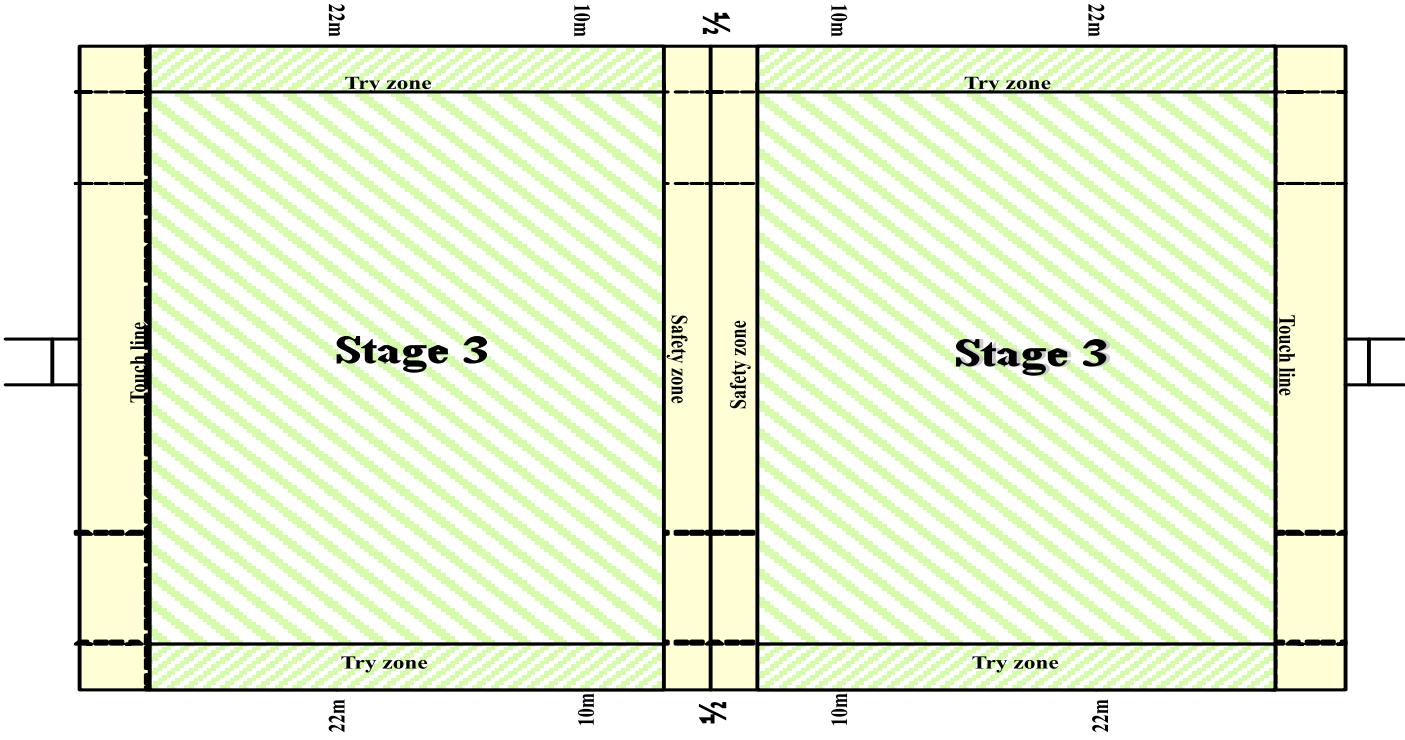
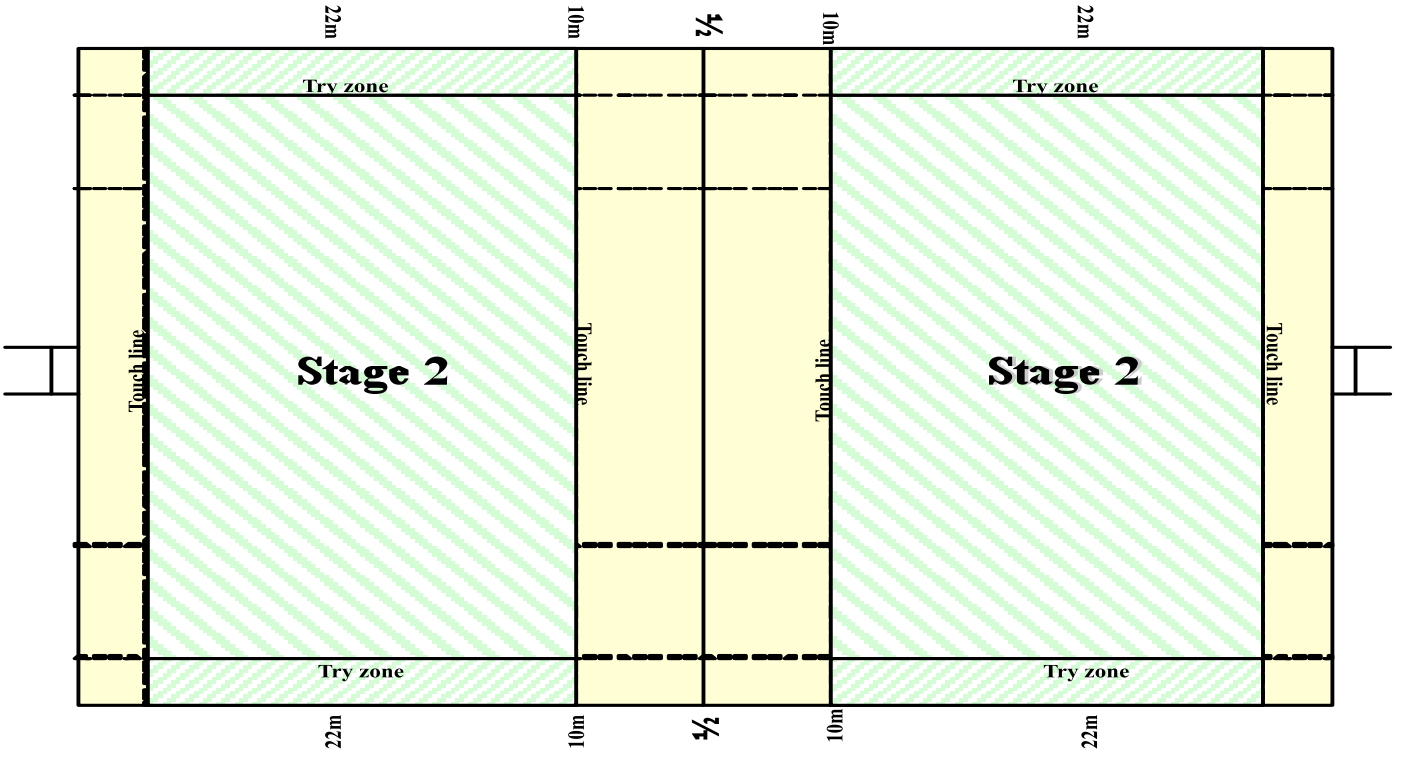
Ball in one hand

If carrying the ball in one hand (*which should be discouraged*)

The free hand must not be used to fend off another player or prevent the tackle other than when used properly to hand off in stage 3.

Pitch regulations





Leprechaun Rugby **LTPD Stage 1 (Fundamental)**

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Number of players

Can vary from 4-a-side to 8-a-side and or 10-a-side games and the emphasis is on the introduction of the skills, inclusion of all participants; safety and enjoyment.

Playing area

Depends on the number of participants and vary from 10m x 20m to 30m x 40m and or 50m x 70m.

Duration of games

Depends on the time available and can vary from 5 min. each way to 10 min. or 15 min. each way. Young players (beginners) playing non-contact rugby can only play a maximum amount 30 min. of rugby per day.

Start of play

The game starts by a pass-off with the referee indicating the mark. The opposition must be 5 to 10 m away depending on the size of the playing area and the size of the teams.

Attacking team

The attacking team carries the ball downfield, running, passing (or handling) back to score try by placing the ball over or behind the opposition goal line. The ball can only be transferred to a player behind the ball carrier. No forward (handling) or passing allowed.

Defending team

The defending team attempts to halt the running progress of the attacking team by tagging the ball carrier.

Tagging and ball take

To tag a player must contact the ball carrier with two hands (one on each side of the hips). The ball carrier must then (immediately) pass backwards within a maximum of 3 steps. Any attempt to deliberately gain territory without trying to pass, will result in loss of possession.

OR

If the ball carrier can't see anyone to pass to he/she should (immediately) stop, turn and present the ball immediately to a support player. The support player must then take the ball and pass to another player without running.

Off-side

Applies only to the pass-off and the ball take.

Gaining possession

The defending team can gain possession as follows:

Intercepting the ball

An opposition pass can be intercepted.

Gathering a dropped ball

If the attacking team drops or throws the ball to the ground, the defending team can pick up the ball and play on.

Knock on

If the attacking team knocks the ball on (dropping a pass forward) the defending team will restart with pass-off.

Forward pass

Forward passes are not allowed and a pass-off is awarded to the non-offending team.

Ball in touch

If the ball or attacking player carrying the ball crosses the touchline, play is restarted by a pass-off awarded to the non-offending team.

Penalties

All penalties are taken with a pass-off. A player from the non-offending team taps the ball on the ground with his foot and then passes to a team mate. Opposing players must 5 to 10 m back depending on the size of the team and or the pitch.

Reasons for penalties:

1. Ball carrier hands-off a player.
2. Interference by a defending player not allowing a transfer, pass or ball take immediately after a tag.
3. Ball carrier makes further ground after a tag without passing, transfer or ball take.
4. A defending player takes the ball from the ball carrier.
5. Deliberate obstruction of an opponent.
6. A defending player is offside.
7. In all instances the opposition must be 5 to 10m backs depending on the size of the teams or the pitch.

Regulation	Leprechaun	Notes
Age group - Age on 1st. January	U7's	
Ball size	3	Must be adhered to
Maximum time per half – single match	15 min	No injury or extra time allowed
Maximum time per half – blitz days	7 min	No injury or extra time allowed
Maximum time allowed to play per day/ event	70 min	No injury or extra time allowed
Minimum time allowed for half time	1 min	
No of players in team	Teams to have equal numbers	No set number-emphasis is on participation & enjoyment
No of forwards	N/A	
No of backs	N/A	
Safety zone between pitches	6m	
Tackle height	Touch on shorts/ pull Tag	
Hand off	Not allowed	Players should carry the ball in two hands
Time allowed for rucks & mauls	N/A	
No of players allowed in rucks & mauls per side	N/A	
Kicking	Not allowed	
Start match	Pass off	
Method of scoring	Try	
Line out	N/A	
Scrum	N/A	

If you would like more information about Mini Rugby or would like information on coaching courses, refereeing, or additional coaching material, please contact your Provincial Rugby Development Department:

Connacht

IRFU Connacht Branch,
Galway Sportsground,
College Road, Galway

Tel: 091 561568
Fax: 091 560097
Email: info@cbirfu.com

Leinster

IRFU Leinster Branch,
55 Main Street, Donnybrook,
Dublin 4

Tel: 01 2693224
Fax: 01 2693142
Email: information@leinsterrugby.ie

Cork

IRFU Munster Branch,
Musgrave Park, Pearse Road,
Cork

Tel: 021 4323563
Fax: 021 4323956
Email: info@munsterrugby.ie

Limerick

IRFU Munster Branch,
Thomond Park, Limerick

Tel: 061 451392
Fax: 061 325000
Email: info@munsterrugby.ie

Ulster Branch

IRFU Ulster Branch
Ravenhill Grounds, 85 Ravenhill Park,
Belfast, BT6 0DG

Tel: 048 90 493111
Fax: 048 90 491522
Email: info@ulster-rugby.co.uk

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