# **Roster & Salary Rules:**

1. 30 total players with a max of 5 foreign players (all 30 players are eligible to be selected to join the 23-player active squad).
2. Salary = MLR players must earn USD $25,000 per season, with the national team players earning USD $40,000; All player contracts will be held by the league, and not by the individual teams​.
3. **Positions:**
	1. Each team has 15 players on the field.
	2. There are 8 forwards in a team. Forwards are typically the larger, more physical positions on the pitch and are responsible for the scrum, line-out and mauls.
	3. There are 7 backs in a team. The backs provide more of the speed, agility and evasiveness required in many cases to score tries.
4. **Replacements & Substitutions:**
	1. During the match, players may be replaced (for injury) or substituted (for tactical reasons).
	2. A player who has been replaced may not rejoin play unless he was temporarily replaced to have bleeding controlled; a player who has been substituted may return temporarily, to replace a player who has a blood injury, or permanently, if he is replacing a front-row forward.
	3. In international matches, up to 7 replacements are allowed; in domestic or cross-border tournaments, at the discretion of the responsible national union(s), the number may be increased to eight, of whom three must be sufficiently trained and experienced to provide cover for the 3 front row positions.

# **Season Structure:**

1. **Uniform Rules:**
	1. *Both teams must wear their dark color uniforms during games (similar to this* [*NAL Championship Game*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gMMdVxPCN4&feature=youtu.be)*) unless either of the following occurs (i.e. mandatory “Color Rush”):*
		1. The teams share similar colors.
		2. If someone is colorblind (i.e. teams with red or green uniforms will not participate).
		3. MLR Example: Glendale Raptors vs San Diego Legion
	2. *If that is the case, the designated home team will wear their dark color uniforms and the away team will wear either of the following:*
		1. Their lighter color uniforms.
		2. An alternative darker color uniform.
2. **Each team will play 1 preseason game a nearby USA Rugby club team (within 500mi / 804km) to determine appropriate expansion markets for MLR 1 week before the start of the regular-season:**
	1. *The Americas Championship will start before the preseason & finish early on into the regular-season:*
		1. All 6 countries (Argentina XV, Brazil, Canada, Chile, USA, & Uruguay) will play each other once in a round-robin tournament.
		2. 2019 Example = February 1 to March 3.
3. **The MLR regular season is an 18-week season that starts on the third Friday of February and runs to the third Sunday in July, with all teams having a month-long break / light exhibition schedule during the June international test window as teams lose players to the national teams:**
	1. All teams play the other 4 divisional teams twice (1h/1a).
	2. All teams play the other 5 non-divisional teams once (either 3h/2a or 2h/3a).
	3. All teams will also play 1 team from the other conference 3 times (either 2h/1a or 1h/2a) based on the final regular-season standings from the prior season (i.e. East #1 plays West #1, etc.).

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| *East Conference:* | *West Conference:* |
| North Division: | Chicago Hounds | Central Division: | Austin Gilgronis |
| New England Free Jacks | Dallas Griffins |
| Ohio Aviators | Glendale Raptors |
| Rugby United New York | Houston SaberCats |
| Toronto Arrows | Utah Warriors |
| South Division: | Rugby ATL | Pacific Division: | LA Giltinis |
| Kansas City Blues | Las Vegas Blackjacks |
| Miami Sharks | San Diego Legion |
| New Orleans Gold | Seattle Seawolves |
| Old Glory DC | Vancouver Royals |

* 1. *All MLR teams will have a month-long break with a 2-game exhibition schedule in June for the international test window:*
		1. All MLR Teams may play a max of 2 international friendlies (1h/1a) against teams in either SuperRugby, the SRA, & the European Rugby Association (ERA) pyramid. However, they don’t have to play any games if they don’t want to.
	2. *The postseason is an 8-team single-elimination tournament in which the top 4 teams from each conference compete for the North American Cup:*
		1. The format for the 1st round (Conference Semifinals) is 1v4 & 2v3.
		2. The format for the 2nd round (Conference Finals) is (1/4) vs (2/3).
		3. *The North American Cup is a neutral-site game that can only held in a stadium that has hosted the USA or Canadian national rugby teams at least once:*
			1. USA Examples = Soldier Field (61,500), Stubhub Center (27,000), Red Bull Arena (25,000), BBVA Compass Stadium (22,039), Toyota Park (20,000), PPL Park (18,500), DSG Park (18,061), Avaya Stadium (18,000), Lockhart Stadium (17,417), Dell Diamond (11,631), Papa Murphy's Park (11,569), Titan Stadium (10,000), Toyota Field (8,296), Torero Stadium (6,000), MUSC Health Stadium (5,100), Infinity Park (5,000),
			2. Canada Examples = BC Place (54,500), Commonwealth Stadium (56,302), BMO Field (30,000), Tim Hortons Field (24,000), Richardson Memorial Stadium (8,000), Wanderers Grounds (7,000), Swilers Rugby Park (6,500), Swangard Stadium (5,288), Royal Athletic Park (3,800), York Stadium (3,500), Fletcher's Fields (3,200), Westhills Stadium (1,718),



* 1. *After the postseason, the MLR Champion will compete in the Rugby Union World Club Challenge (i.e. a 5-team round-robin tournament) against the following teams 2 weeks after the Super Rugby Finals:*
		1. European Rugby Association (ERA) Champions & Challenge League winners, Super Rugby, Major League Rugby (MLR), & Súper Liga Americana de Rugby (SLAR).

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| #1 = ERA Champions#2 = Super Rugby#3 = ERA Challenge#4 = MLR#5 = SLAR | **Round 1** | **Round 2** | **Round 3** | **Round 4** | **Round 5** |
| 1v4 | 3v1 | 5v3 | 2v5 | 4v2 |
| 2v3 | 4v5 | 1v2 | 3v4 | 5v1 |
| Bye -5 | Bye-2 | Bye-4 | Bye-1 | Bye-3 |

1. **Broadcast Rules:**
	1. TV Broadcasts = ESPN, CBS Sports Network, AT&T Sports Networks, NBCSN, & Channel 4 YurView California (local – San Diego).
	2. Online Streaming = WatchESPN, One World Sports and AOL.com
2. **Bonus Points System:**
	1. 4 points for winning a game.
	2. 2 points for drawing a game.
	3. 0 points for losing a game.
	4. 1 "bonus" point for losing by 7 points (or fewer) or in overtime.
	5. 1 "bonus" point for scoring at least 4 tries.
	6. 1 "bonus" point for winning while scoring at least 3 more tries than the opponent.
	7. All teams are allowed no more than 2 bonus points per game.
	8. *At the end of the regular-season, the team with the best regular season record (i.e. the highest point total) is awarded the MLR Supporters' Shield:*
		1. For those who don’t know, it echoes the practice of the top European soccer leagues in which the team with the best record is the champion.
		2. The MLR Supporter’s Shield winners are guaranteed home-field advantage in all rounds of the playoffs they compete in (excluding the MLR Championship).
	9. *Tiebreaker criteria when competitors are level on points:*
		1. *The team that won the head-to-head match (if applicable):*
			1. For divisional rivals, this becomes the team with the higher aggregate score (i.e. the combined total score from both games).
			2. If this is a draw, then the team with the most wins is ranked first.
		2. Points difference (PD) = is the number of points scored n all league matches minus of points conceded.
		3. Points For (PF) = the total number of points scored by a team over the course of the regular-season.
		4. Points Against (PA) = the total number of points scored against them by their opponent’s over the course of the regular-season.
		5. Fewest disciplinary problems
		6. Strength of schedule (SOS) = two-third (66 2/3%) for the opponent's record and one-third (33 1/3%) for the opponents' opponents record.
		7. Points scored on the road
		8. Difference for points scored on the road
		9. Points scored at home.
		10. Difference for points scored at home.
		11. If still identical, then a playoff is required.
		12. Coin toss (two teams) or drawing of lots (three or more teams)

# **Gameplay Rules:**

1. **Scoring System:**
	1. *Try (T or PT):*
		1. Regular = 5 points
		2. Power Try = 9 points; tries scored from a play beginning inside a team’s defensive 22-meter box.
		3. There will be no conversion with a power try
	2. *Drop Goal (DG):*
		1. Inside 50-meter line = 3 points.
		2. Outside 50-meter line = 4 points.
	3. *Conversion (C):*
		1. Worth 2 points
		2. Conversions must be taken within 90 seconds of scoring a try.
	4. *Penalty Kick (PK):*
		1. Inside 22-meter box = 2 points.
		2. Outside 22-meter box = 3 points.
2. **The Ball:**
	1. The rugby ball is oval in shape (technically a prolate spheroid), and is made up of four panels.
	2. The ball was historically made of leather, but in the modern era most games use a ball made from a synthetic material.
	3. *Specific Dimensions:*
		1. 280-300mm in length
		2. 740-770mm in circumference of length
		3. 580-620mm in circumference of width.
3. **The Referee:**
	1. Many signals that a referee makes are immediately understandable. They reflect the play that has just occurred. Signals are used by the referee to indicate to the players and spectators why penalties have been awarded, when a team has been awarded a free kick, given advantage in play, and for scoring play. The referee is the person responsible for knowing how much time has been played and is left to be played.
	2. Challenges = All coaches have 1 challenge per game (by throwing a red flag onto the field, leading to video review) unless they are right, in which case they are awarded a second.
4. **Match Structure:**
	1. At the beginning of the game, the captains and the referee toss a coin to decide which team will kick off first.
	2. Play then starts with a drop kick, with the players chasing the ball into the opposition's territory, and the other side trying to retrieve the ball and advance it.
	3. If the ball does not reach the opponent’s 10-meter line the opposing team has two choices; 1) To have the ball kicked off again, or 2) to have a scrum at the center of the half-way line and they throw in the ball. If the player with the ball is tackled, frequently a ruck will result.
	4. Games are divided into 40-minute halves, with a break in the middle. The sides exchange ends of the field after the half-time break.
	5. Stoppages for injury or to allow the referee to take disciplinary action do not count as part of the playing time, so that the elapsed time is usually longer than 80 minutes. The referee is responsible for keeping time, even when—as in many professional tournaments—he is assisted by an official time-keeper.
	6. If time expires while the ball is in play, the game continues until the ball is "dead", and only then will the referee blow the whistle to signal half-time or full-time; but if the referee awards a penalty or free-kick, the game continues.
	7. The line where the lineout is taken by the opposition where the ball went into touch, but if the ball is kicked into touch directly by a player outside the 22-meter line the lineout is taken level to where the kick was taken.
5. **Passing & Kicking:**
	1. Forward passing (throwing the ball ahead to another player) is not allowed; the ball can be passed laterally or backwards.
	2. The ball tends to be moved forward in three ways — by kicking, by a player running with it or within a scrum or maul.
	3. Only the player with the ball may be tackled or rucked.
	4. When a ball is knocked forward by a player with his/her arms, a "knock-on" is committed, and play is restarted with a scrum.
	5. Any player may kick the ball forward in an attempt to gain territory.
	6. When a player anywhere in the playing area kicks indirectly into touch so that the ball first bounces in the field of play the throw-in is taken where the ball went into touch.
	7. If the player kicks directly into touch (i.e. without bouncing in-field first) from within their own 22-meter line the lineout is taken by the opposition where the ball went into touch, but if the ball is kicked into touch directly by a player outside the 22-meter line the lineout is taken level to where the kick was taken.
6. **The Playing Field:**
	1. The field of play on a rugby pitch is as near as possible to a maximum of 144 meters long by 70 meters wide (130yd long by 77yd wide).
	2. In actual gameplay there should be a minimum of 94m to a maximum of 100m (103-109yd) between the two try-lines, with anywhere between 5-22m behind each try line to serve as the in-goal area along with a width of 68-70m (74-77yd).
	3. There are several lines crossing it, notably the half way line and the "twenty two", which is 22m (24yd) from the goal line.
	4. Rugby goalposts are H-shaped, and consist of two poles, 5.6m (6.1yd) apart, connected by a horizontal crossbar 3m (3.3yd) above the ground.
7. **Rugby Terminology:**
	1. ADVANTAGE LAW – Allows play to proceed after an infringement in the case of the non-offending team receiving an advantage.
	2. ATTACKING TEAM – The team in possession of the ball.
	3. BACKS – Players who spread out and attempt to run the ball delivered from a scrum or lineout.
	4. DEAD BALL LINE – The limit to which a try can be scored beyond the goal line.
	5. DEFENDING TEAM – The team not in possession of the ball.
	6. DROP KICK – A kick made after the ball has reached or bounced off the ground. Worth three points if it clears the goalposts; also used to restart play after a score or certain other occasions.
	7. FORWARD PASS – A violation that usually results in a scrum to the non-offending side.
	8. FORWARDS – Players who pack in a scrum or throw and jump in a lineout.
	9. FREE KICK – A relatively minor law violation that allows the non-offending side to restart play in an unopposed fashion. Opponents must retreat 10-meters and wait for the non-offending team to kick the ball through the mark. A free kick cannot be taken for goal.
	10. INFRINGEMENT – A breaking of a law (i.e. a foul or penalty).
	11. INTERCEPT – To catch a pass intended for a member of the opposition.
	12. KNOCK ON – The accidental hitting of the ball from the hands or arms toward the dead ball line. Results in the same scenario as a forward pass — a scrum to the non­ offending team.
	13. LINEOUT – Restarts play after the ball goes out over the touchline. The team that didn’t touch the ball last has the throw-in.
	14. MARK – The place where the referee signals play will be restarted. For example, the referee marks where the scrum will take place, or where the penalty has occurred.
	15. OFFSIDE – Players in front of a member of their own team who was last in possession of the ball, or in front of established lines at a scrum. Lineouts of loose play are said to be offsides. In some instances, one can retreat to an onside position without penalty; other times the infraction is automatically a violation.
	16. PACK – Forward unit of a team, engages in scrum and lineouts.
	17. PENALTY – Awarded after a serious infringement of the laws. Offenders are required to retire 10-meters while the opposition is given possession to restart play unopposed. Many times the non-offending team will attempt a kick at goal, worth three points.
	18. PUT IN – Rolling the ball down the center of the scrum tunnel.
	19. RUCK – A ball-winning activity following a tackle and release; a ruck is formed if a player from both teams is in physical contact over the ball.
	20. SCRUM – A way to restart play where a bound group of players form a tunnel with the opposition.
	21. SEVENS – An abbreviated game of rugby that follows the same laws but for the number of players and time of the contest. A 7s team fields only seven players; each half is seven minutes long. Much like a game of three-on-three full court basketball, it’s a wide-open contest.
	22. SET PIECE – A term for scrums and lineouts.
	23. SUPPORT PLAYERS – Players who position themselves to increase the ball transfer options of the ball carrier.
	24. TAP KICK (OR “TAP MOVE”) – A gentle kick to oneself, followed by a pick up, used to restart play after either a penalty or free kick is awarded.
	25. THROW IN – Throwing the ball down the middle of a lineout.
	26. TOUCHLINE – The side boundary of the field (sideline).
	27. TRY – Forcing the ball onto the ground with downward pressure over the opposition’s goal line. The equivalent of a touchdown.
	28. 22-METER LINE – Balls kicked out of bounds from behind the “22” restarted by a lineout where the ball went out; balls kicked out of bounds from in front of the 22 are restarted by a lineout where the ball was kicked. The exception is a ball kicked out of bounds immediately after a penalty has been awarded; the lineout is held where the ball went out and the non-offending team retains the throw-in.



