



LMRFC Guidance on Restarting Competitive Rugby after Covid-19

Introduction

Following approval for the return to competitive grassroots rugby, this document provides guidance for players, coaches, match officials, volunteers, first aiders and spectators taking part in both adult and age grade rugby.

The game can now move from Stage C to Stage D on the RFU's Return to Community Rugby Roadmap from the 1st September 2020, where limited contact rugby is permitted at Stage D – full contact match play will only return when we reach Stage F on the Return to Community Rugby Roadmap.

The RFU continues to take a phased approach to enable a safe return to grassroots rugby training and match play, initially through an adapted non-contact form of the game. Stage C has focused on Ready4Rugby, a non-contact game, enabling two teams of up to 10 players to engage in training and match activity in their own club environment.

As we move to phase D we can introduce contact activities into training for a maximum of 15 minutes around rucking (maximum 2 on 2), unopposed lineout drills and lifting a jumper (U16 and above only) and 1 on 1 tacking below waist height. There is still no scrum or maul activity permissible at Stage D. It is now also permissible to organise non-contact fixtures with other clubs using Ready4Rugby or other Touch formats, however the clubs need to ensure they are appropriately set up and prepared for safely welcoming other clubs to their venues. At this time we in LMRFC are not at this stage where we feel we are ready to start welcoming other clubs to our facilities.

Those with underlying health conditions, who may be at greater risk from Covid-19, should consider the transmission risk in group activity and decide whether to return to rugby. There is no pressure for anyone to come back to training, playing, coaching or match officiating.

The reintroduction of contact activity is important to ensure players can continue to practice core skills and are able to start preparing and conditioning themselves appropriately as the game continues to progress back to normality with regular training and matches. Our coaches, players and spectators must adhere to the permitted and non-permitted activities to ensure that Covid-19 airborne transmission risk exposure is reduced.

The UK Government social distancing guidance should be adhered to where applicable. All attendees must abide by social distancing measures, except during permitted training activity and matches, keeping a 2m distance between themselves and others where reasonably practical in and out of the sporting environment.

Before Rugby activity

All participants (and parents/guardians) need to be aware of good personal hygiene before, during and after activity.

No one should feel pressured to return to training, playing, coaching or match officiating until they feel comfortable to do so, it is participants own (or where applicable their parents/guardians) decision to opt in to participate in rugby activity

As part of the ongoing staying aware coaches will perform regular coaching risk assessments. All coaches should be instilling into players and guardians where necessary, the individual should only be at training if they are safe to be there. We expect people to bring their own drinks bottle, sanitiser and towel. It will be the coach's responsibility to sanitise equipment, but use of equipment should be limited and the individuals should sanitise their hands after use.

Each individual should self-screen before attending the club looking for:

1. High temperature
2. New continuous cough
3. Short of Breath
4. Sore throat
5. Loss of or change in normal sense of taste or smell
6. Feeling generally unwell
7. Persistent tiredness
8. Been in close contact with/travel from a high risk region/living with a suspected or confirmed case of covid in the previous 2 weeks

Please think of others, if they have any symptoms or feel unwell they should not attend. If your son/daughter tests positive for Covid please let us know immediately by contacting your coach or age group manager.

Each coach will keep a register of all attending the session, including parents and guardians where applicable and ensure these records are kept for a minimum of 21 days before being securely destroyed. This information is collected under the "Legitimate Interests" requirement for processing in line with Government requirements on Test and Trace.

For age grade rugby we recognise that for some children a return to rugby may be their first contact with peers in many months. For age grade coaches you can refer to the [DfE guidance](#) on protective measures for out-of-school settings to set out practical steps to minimise the risk of transmission for children attending training and matches. Coaches and managers must also work with parents or guardians to safely manage the need for social distancing especially with younger children and to this end all instructions from the coaches must be followed.

Where more than one age group is training please stagger start and finish times so not all are congregating in the carpark together.

All activities will be outside, however in emergencies the toilets in the club house will be available, but please encourage all children to have been before arriving to limit the use. If they do need to visit the toilet they must ask either the coach or team manager, follow the one way signs, ensure they wash/sanitise their hands after use before returning to the session.

When travelling to training or matches participants and parents should follow best practices for travel to and from venues, where possible walking or cycling should be used as an alternative mode of transport and the use of public transport should be kept to a minimum.

People from a household or support bubble can travel together in a vehicle. Wider car sharing/pooling should be limited and follow the Government's safer travel guidance when it cannot be avoided, this includes:

- All passengers should wash their hands (for at least 20 seconds) or sanitise their hands before entering and after exiting the vehicle.
- Sharing transport with the same people each time.
- Opening windows for ventilation.
- Passengers facing away from each other.
- Traveling side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them, where seating arrangements allow.
- Consider seating arrangements to maximise distance between people in the vehicle.
- Cleaning the car between journeys using standard cleaning products – cleaning the door handles and other areas that people may touch.
- Ask the driver and passengers to wear a face covering.
- Limiting the time spent at garages, petrol stations and motorway services. Passengers should wash their hands (for at least 20 seconds) or sanitise before re-entering the vehicle.

During Rugby activity

Summary

- All activity should take place outdoors.
- Limited and adapted contact activity is permitted in a training session
- No scrum, maul, opposed lineout or upright tackle training activities are permitted.
- Players placed in groups of a maximum of 6 for adapted contact and non-contact skill development activities.
- A maximum 15 minute total duration of any of the adapted contact activities within a single training session.
- Tackles - at waist or below only, 1 on 1 tackles only, no upright tackles
- Ruck – maximum 2 v 2 players (ball carrier, tackler, plys 1 v 1 on their feet over the ball
Lineout – unopposed drills, lifting a jumper (U16s and above), Ball thrown to catcher.
- **NO Scrum and NO maul**
- Restrict team play activities to the approved Ready4Rugby and Touch formats.
- Maximum of 20 players per group.
- Minimum half standard size rugby pitch per 20 player group.
- Sessions should have regular breaks at a maximum of 15 minutes to ensure the ball and equipment can be cleaned and sanitised.
- Players and coaches should remain socially distanced during breaks.
- Total durations for training sessions must not exceed: 60 minutes for Under 7 & Under 8 and 75 minutes for Under 9 and above.
- Everyone should refrain from touching their faces.

Social distancing should be maintained by anyone involved in rugby activity during all breaks in activity and post activity. Players are advised to bring their own water bottles and towels that are clearly identified and stored away from others. Sharing of water bottles, towels or clothing should always be avoided.

Use of Equipment

- Equipment sharing should be minimised with only essential equipment shared at appropriate stages of return to play.
- Limited and adapted contact activity is permitted in a training session at Stage D.
- Where possible, use temporary line markings to mark out pitches during this period to reduce the need for cones.
- Cones should be put out and collected by the same person on each pitch; preferably by the coach.
- Where possible, players should arrive in washed kit and take it home to wash.
- If players need to wear bibs / vests for the activity, they should be allocated to a player at the start of the activity. Bibs / vests must NOT be shared between players during the activity. If the bibs / vests require collecting at the end of the activity, the person collecting the bibs/ vests must wash and sanitise their hands after doing so.
- All bibs / vests must be cleaned after each use.
- Pitch checks should be carried out by the coaches before the activity takes place including any goal post protectors.
- Goal post protectors should be cleaned after each activity.
- Team water bottles WILL NOT be provided.

- Strapping or tape should NOT be shared.
- Any other equipment used should be cleaned after each use.
- Where possible, more than one ball should be available for the activity.
- Ensure the rugby ball is cleaned and sanitised before, during and after the activity.
- The following processes should be followed:
 - Minimum of one bucket with clean water and soap.
 - Towels to dry the balls on both sides of the field.
 - Hand sanitiser for the person washing the balls.
 - If there is no natural stoppage after a maximum period of 15 minutes, the coach or match official should temporarily call time off whilst the ball is cleaned or changed for a clean one.

When Running Activity

The following applies for coaches and match officials.

- Complete the coach Covid-19 risk assessment before activity
- Ensure the pitch area is correctly marked out and safe to use prior to activity with a minimum of half pitch per 20 player group.
- Consider how to instruct, demonstrate, observe and feedback to players in a way that adheres to social distancing guidance.
- Manage activity time so no periods of activity last more than 15 minutes without the ball being cleaned or changed for a clean one, and players cleaning and sanitising.
- Design sessions that follow the current guidance and regulations
- Only use equipment relevant to the stage of the return to rugby roadmap for community activity.
- Remind participants to maintain social distancing in the transition between activities or during rest periods.
- Clean any equipment after each use.
- Refrain from shouting where possible.

Injury Treatment

As with normal practice, first aiders should only carry out first aid treatment that they have been trained to do. The club will ensure first aid provision continues to be in place and ensure that all first aiders are made aware of the updated guidance on first aid treatment during the Covid-19 pandemic. Additional guidance on safe first aid practice, including the use of equipment, PPE and performing specific treatment can be found [here](#).

General

- Parents/carers are permitted to observe a session at a distance from a safeguarding perspective but should observe social distancing guidelines.
- Supporters, parents, and other spectators to remain socially distanced whilst attending events.
- Numbers must comply with Government guidelines and the space available identified through the risk assessment.

Session Design

ALL SESSIONS SHOULD CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

INJURY PREVENTION (SMALL GROUPS SOCIALLY DISTANCED)

Use of the specific ACTIVATE injury prevention programme designed to comply with social distancing guidelines: Ages 7-13 & Ages 14+

PREPARATION (SMALL GROUPS SOCIALLY DISTANCED)

- Players introduced to a pulse raising warm up before main activity starts that involves twisting, turning, starting and stopping. Dynamic stretching of muscles should also be integrated into this section.
- Passing of a clean sanitised ball between small groups of players who are socially distanced.
- This activity must be non-contact and should comply with social distancing.

GAME ZONE/ SKILL ZONE (MAXIMUM 20 PLAYERS)

- Touch and Ready4Rugby are the only approved activities for training and match play.
- Maximum 15-minute continuous activity at any one time.
- All activity should be non-contact, comply with the risk exposure framework and RFU guidance referenced in the return to rugby roadmap.
- Equipment sharing should be kept to a minimum.
- Players should remain socially distanced during breaks and after a score.
- Team huddles should be avoided.
- Spitting and chewing gum should be avoided by all.

CONCLUSION (SMALL GROUPS SOCIALLY DISTANCED)

- Players should cool down by reducing their heart rate via a slow jog/walk with some static stretching.
- All players, coaches and match officials should be socially distanced throughout this.