



COMMUNITY GAME UPDATE

Distribution list: **Thursday 24 September**

Constituent Bodies Chairs, Constituent Bodies Honorary Secretaries, Constituent
Bodies Treasurers,
Club Presidents, Chairs, Honorary Secretaries, Treasurers

Coronavirus (Covid-19) update

This week's edition of the Covid-19 Community Game Update has been delayed from Tuesday to provide up to date information on the revised coronavirus guidelines announced by the Government this week.

Most importantly, we have provided an **update on the decision made today to delay the return to competitive play for the 2020/21 season until January 2021 at the earliest.**

You may also want to read RFU CEO Bill Sweeney's statement, issued on Tuesday, regarding the financial impact on the RFU and the wider game if matches at Twickenham Stadium are played behind closed doors. **Read Bill Sweeney's statement.**

Please visit our dedicated web portal on the England Rugby website to access coronavirus information and updates [here](#).

Past editions of these weekly updates can be found on this part of the website. Click [here](#) if you need to find a previous edition.



RFU Headlines

Return to competitive play in 2020/21 season delayed to January 2021 earliest

Under powers delegated by Council, the RFU Governance Committee today made a difficult decision that, with the exception of Premiership, Championship and Premier 15s rugby, no organised* RFU or non-RFU Leagues including merit tables, adult or age grade competitions will be played before January 2021 at the earliest.

With the increased uncertainty caused by Government's additional restrictions to curb the increase in Covid-19 cases across the country, the decision has been made so that we can provide clubs with some certainty over the next few months.

The rugby community can continue to organise non-contact fixtures with other clubs using Ready4Rugby and other touch rugby activity. Limited and restricted contact rugby training can also be continued.

The RFU continues to be in active dialogue with government about moving to Stage E on the **Roadmap** should we reach this point at any time before Christmas, competitive friendly matches could commence.

The Adult and Age Grade Competitions Groups will be making recommendations to Governance on what they can do to ensure that any competitions from January are meaningful, including whether to make changes to the structured season.

Governance also agreed that any decision to suspend promotion and relegation for the 2020/21 season would be referred to Council once the nature of the competitions is known.

Further guidance will be provided in due course to support clubs, schools, colleges and universities in playing to the relevant stage of the appropriate Roadmap stage.

Jeff Blackett, RFU President, comments: "We are very keen to see competitive rugby being played again. However, given the introduction of further restrictions to curb the increase in Covid-19 cases, we will not be able to move to Stage F on the Roadmap until a later date. This announcement gives clubs clarity over the immediate term to help them with their planning. We will continue to liaise with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Public Health England to accelerate a return to competitive play as soon as it is safe to do so."

Although social gatherings of more than six people were banned in England from Monday 14 September and a number of local lockdown restrictions put in place in some areas of the country, the Government has confirmed that organised sports and activities that have been through return to play protocols can continue. With the exception of clubs impacted by local lockdown restrictions, we continue at Stage D on the Roadmap.

Clubs in areas where additional local lockdown measures have been introduced may need to limit their activities in line with any local restrictions. All are advised to consult with their local authority should they be in any doubt.

**Organised competition in this instance includes any competition organised by the RFU, its delegated competition organising committees, or any other league or cup organiser.*

Return To Play



Other important updates

Update regarding revised Covid-19 guidelines

In addition to local lockdown measures already in place, the Government announced further restrictions this week aimed at curbing the rise in coronavirus cases in England. Once we have fully assessed their impact, we will provide more detailed guidance to support clubs.

In the meantime, we wanted to highlight the following important changes to these guidelines, which you can read via the link below:

From today, Thursday 24 September:

- With the exception of those clubs impacted by restrictions already in place in local lockdown areas, in licensed premises, food and drink must be ordered from, and served at, a table.
- Customers must eat and drink at a table in any premises selling food and drink to consume indoors, on site.
- The wearing of face masks is compulsory for bar staff and waiters. In addition, customers will need to wear a mask when inside a club, except when seated at a table to eat or drink.
- Clubs selling food or drink must be closed between 10pm and 5am each day until further notice. This will include takeaways but delivery services can continue after 10pm.
- Clubs will need to display the official NHS QR code posters so that customers can 'check-in' at different premises using the app rolled out nationally as an alternative to providing their contact details.

From Monday 28 September:

Businesses and organisations will face stricter rules to make their premises Covid-19 Secure:

- Clubs must not knowingly require or encourage someone who is being required to self-isolate to come to work.
- Clubs must remind people to wear face coverings where mandated.
- A wider range of leisure and entertainment venues, services provided in

community centres, and close contact services will be subject to the Covid-19 Secure requirements in law and fines of up to £10,000 for repeated breaches.

Updated Guidelines

Local Restrictions

Local lockdown guidelines

Clubs are reminded that the powers around local restrictions lie with their local authorities.

We are advised that unless local restrictions specifically mention restrictions on team sports and/or rugby, clubs should follow the NGB guidelines. In all cases, clubs must conduct a risk assessment and ensure compliance with Covid-19 secure guidance.

Spectators, including parents, must abide by the Rule of Six, as defined by the Government's current advice on staying safe and social distancing, which you can read below.

This currently includes the following areas, however, clubs in each of the areas below need to be aware of the impact of any local restrictions applicable to their individual area. More information regarding the impact on each area is available in a detailed schedule via the link below.

Bolton

Leicester

Greater Manchester

Northampton

North East of England

North West of England

West Midlands

West Yorkshire

Clubs may need to limit their activities in line with any local restrictions and all are advised to consult with the local authority in which their facilities are

located should they be in any doubt. Information regarding any new local lockdown restrictions will be posted on the Government website below.

We will provide an update to the game if there is any change in guidance to playing rugby union. You can read more information on the **Government local lockdown updates**.

Rule of Six

Local Restrictions

Handling positive Covid-19 cases

We continue to liaise with Public Health England (PHE) to seek additional clarity on the process and requirements for a club to follow in the event of a positive Covid-19 case within their club.

Currently, in the case where a positive test is a player, providing all rugby activities that the player participated in were within RFU Return to Community Rugby and Stage D guidelines, then there is no requirement for other players to self-isolate.

For any non-playing positive cases, e.g. spectators, the general Government guidance must be followed – see link below.

Further information will be published in due course. In the meantime, following a positive test, a representative from the club should contact the local PHE centre to inform them of the development and seek further advice. Clubs should also ensure that they have an appropriate risk assessment in place and are operating within Government and RFU guidelines for all facility usage and rugby activity.

Test And Trace Guidance

Community rugby - current status

Although social gatherings of more than six people were banned in England from Monday 14 September and a number of local lockdown restrictions have been put in place in some areas of the country, the Government has confirmed that organised sports and activities that have been through return to play protocols can continue. With the exception of clubs impacted by local lockdown restrictions, we continue at Stage D on the **Return to Community Rugby Roadmap**. The rugby community can continue to organise non-contact fixtures with other clubs using Ready4Rugby, which you can read more about in the link below, and other touch rugby activity.

Limited and restricted contact rugby training can also be continued. Details of the permitted training activity are available in the return to contact training guidance link below.

Clubs should continue to follow current guidance of no more than 20 players per half pitch in training.

RFU guidance as well as **Government Coronavirus (Covid-19) Guidelines** must be followed.

[Contact Guidance](#)

[Ready4Rugby](#)

Webinars and podcasts

Eddie Jones Coaching Podcast

This week Joe Roff, Rugby World Cup winner and ex-Australia back, is featured on the Eddie Jones Coaching Podcast, and you can listen below.

[Listen Now](#)

Good Club Governance Webinar | Thursday 1 October at 7pm

The next webinar in the Club Support legal series with Irwin Mitchell will cover good club governance. During this event we will discuss what good governance looks like, as well as providing top tips for your club - you can register below.

Governance Webinar

Catch up on previous webinars

For those who want to catch up on previous webinars, these are available on the England Rugby website. Please click on the links below:

Club Webinars

Referee Webinars

Coach Webinars

Other news

Covid-19 Business Interruption Insurance

A decision was handed down by the High Court last week in favour of policyholders in the FCA business interruption test case. The FCA brought the case on behalf of policy holders against 8 insurers to try to resolve the lack of clarity in business interruption claims due to Covid-19. The decision considers 21 different policy wordings and could help clubs making claims under business interruption insurance.

Following the recent judgement, clubs that have/had business interruption insurance and affected claims should have been contacted by their Insurance Broker / Insurer as to how they intend to respond to the judgment. If clubs

have not heard then it would be worthwhile making contact. Please note that the test case was not intended to encompass all possible disputes, but to resolve some of the key contractual uncertainties and causation issues to provide clarity for policy holders and insurers.

There is a chance that the judgement will be appealed but this does not stop policy holders seeking to settle their claims with the insurer before the outcome of any appeal is known.

Please find a link below to a document that has been provided by Howdens that gives further detail and information regarding this judgement – however please note that clubs should make contact with their own insurer or insurance broker direct if they don't use Howdens.

[Read Document](#)

Rugby community doing great things

Today we highlight some of the activities that took place over the Pitch Up for Rugby Weekend when rugby returned to more than 300 clubs across the country.

In addition to clubs helping their communities, we are now highlighting on englandrugby.com: clubs' self-help initiatives, as well as activities to improve diversity and inclusion at clubs.

Mitsubishi Motors in the UK are proud supporters of the rugby volunteers across England who make up an integral part of the game. Help us recognise your work by sharing your club and individual stories and videos with veemontebello@rfu.com or patriciamowbray@rfu.com.

Click below to find out more about the Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer Recognition Programme.

[Pitch Up Weekend](#)

[Recognition Programme](#)

