RETURN TO RUGBY STAGE D:

30/09/2020

A GUIDE TO ADAPTED CONTACT RUGBY ACTIVITY

England Rugby

INTRODUCTION

The progression to Stage D on the Return to Rugby Roadmap means that limited and adapted contact activity can now be included in a training session and inter-club Touch/Ready4Rugby fixtures are allowed.

The following information explains permitted and non-permitted activity within Stage D. This is an extension of the overall guidance outlined in the Return to Community Rugby Guidance. Clubs must continue to work within these guidelines to ensure that all facility, pre-activity and other general operation practices are safe and appropriate.

Clubs are now able to organise Touch/Ready4Rugby fixtures with other clubs. Clubs should only do this once they have carried out an appropriate risk assessment to take into account additional considerations that may be required during the Covid-19 pandemic, for example total number of people of site and adhering to social distancing. Clubs should ensure they are appropriately set up and prepared for safely welcoming other clubs and individuals to their facilities. More information is available in the Return to Community Rugby and Facility Reopening Guidance.

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. It is essential that clubs and coaches adhere to the permitted and non-permitted activities to ensure that Covid-19 airborne transmission risk exposure is reduced. Clubs found to be in breach of this guidance may face disciplinary action and/or invalidate their liability insurance.

STAGE D - TRAINING ACTIVITY GUIDANCE

In Stage D a maximum 15 minutes (total duration) of adapted contact activities within a single training session is permitted. In the remainder of the training session, players are permitted to undertake socially distanced strength and conditioning activities, small group non-contact skill development practice and/or Touch/Ready4Rugby games (the only other permitted game training activity).

Coaches and session organisers should apply the following key mitigations to reduce exposure risk amongst players.

• No scrum, maul, opposed lineout or upright tackle training activities are permitted.

• A maximum 15 minute total duration of any of the adapted contact activities within a single training session.

• Restrict team play activities to the approved Touch and Ready4Rugby formats, with a maximum of 20 players per half pitch.

• Players placed in groups of a maximum of 6 for adapted contact and non-contact skill development activities. Groups should be selected appropriately based on a player's age, size and competence.

• During a session (contact activities and Touch/Ready4Rugby activities combined) players should avoid face to face exposure of more than 3 seconds and more than 15 minutes of exposure at less than 1 metre with another player.

• Coaches and players should remain social distanced during breaks.

• Coaches should remain socially distanced when giving players instruction, observing and giving feedback.

• Ensure all players clean and sanitise after the contact skills training.

• Team huddles should be avoided. Spitting and chewing gum should also be avoided.

• Ensure there is appropriate first aid cover for a contact session.

THE FOLLOWING TABLE EXPLAINS THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF RUGBY ACTIVITIES AND WHAT IS/ISN'T PERMITTED DURING TRAINING SESSIONS.

TOTAL TIME OF ALL CONTACT ACTIVITY MUST NOT EXCEED 15 MINUTES PER SESSION

ALL CONTACT ACTIVITY MUST BE CARRIED OUT IN SMALL GROUPS (MAXIMUM 6 PLAYERS PER GROUP).

TACKLING

• Tackles at the waist or below only. • 1 v 1 tackles only. • Small group activity, preferably with players working in pairs for the entire activity. • Use of tackle bags, shields and pads that are cleaned and sanitised after each player use.	✔
• No upright tackles. • No tackling above the waist including trying to hold the ball carrier up or prevent an offload. • No team game play activity. • No equipment such as tackle pads, bags and shields to be used by multiple people without cleaning and sanitising. • Coaches must NOT hold pads or shields or bags for age grade players.	X

RUCK

• Maximum 2 v 2 players in a ruck (ball carrier and tackler, plus 1 v 1 on their feet over the ball).	✔
• No team game play activity.	X

LINEOUT

• Unopposed lineout drills. • Lifting of a jumper (under 16 and above only). • Ball thrown to a catcher. • Reduce the time the front lifter and a jumper are face to face in lineout set up to under 3 seconds.	✔
• No opposed jumping. • No maul to be formed after ball secured.	X

SCRUM

• None.	✔
• No scrum practice allowed, including use of scrum machines, sleds and unit practice.	X

MAUL

• None.	✔
• No maul practice activity allowed, including from a lineout.	X

EQUIPMENT

• Any equipment such as tackle pads, shields, bags should be cleaned and sanitised after each individual players use.

• All other equipment including rugby balls must be cleaned and sanitised after a maximum of 15 minutes activity.

• The holding of tackle shields, pads or bags must not be carried out by a coach or adult for any age grade player. Watch the Holding a Tackle Pad Safely video for more information.

• Sharing of equipment should be avoided at all times.

• Players should refrain from touching or removing their mouth guard, and if they do so must wash their hands. Mouth guards must not be left on shared surfaces and should be placed in a personal container and stored with personal possessions.

• Any protective clothing such as head guards and shoulder pads must comply with World Rugby guidance. Head guards and shoulder pads must not be shared during sessions.

SESSION PLAN EXAMPLE

Below is an example of a how coaches may want to structure a Stage D session.
As players return to rugby activity it is important that coaches provide the support players need, remember:

• Player welfare first • Be patient • Little and often practice

SESSION ACTIVITY	SESSION GUIDANCE
Injury Prevention (small groups socially distanced)	• Use of the specific ACTIVATE injury prevention programme designed to comply with social distancing guidelines: Age 7-13 & Ages 14+
Preparation (small groups max of 6)	• 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. • Activities requiring players to adjust their body height and foot placement, activate upper body muscles and joints.
Game Zone/ non- contact Skill Zone	• Touch and Ready4Rugby are the only other approved activities for training and match play. • Consider the use of the pressure zone variant in Ready4Rugby to develop breakdown skills. • Maximum 15-minute continuous activity at any one time. • All activity should be non-contact, comply with the RFU Stage D guidance referenced in the Return to Rugby Roadmap.
Adapted Contact Skill Zone	• Max of 6 players to be grouped based on age, size, competence and experience. • Maximum duration total of 15 minutes in a session. • Staged progressive introduction. • Only tackles at the waist or below permitted. • Only 2 v 2 maximum players to compete at a single ruck. • Only unopposed lineouts with no maul allowed to form once possession is secured. **Key skill focus on:** • Tackle – Fall to floor, front and side tackles waist and below 1 tackler per tackle. • Ruck 2v2 in a single ruck - adjusting body height safe contacts within the laws of the game to clear players from the ruck. • Lineout – unopposed, throw, jump, catch and lift (under 16 and above).
Conclusion	• Participants should cool down by reducing their heart rate via a slow jog or walk along with some static stretching. • All participants should be socially distanced throughout this. Participants are advised to not shake hands or form a tunnel to clap opponents. • In keeping with the tradition of rugby union and its values, players on the same team may line up side by side >2m apart and facing the opposition >5m apart.

GUIDE RESOURCES

All resources referenced in this guidance documents can be found on the Coronavirus Resources Page

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