

Return to Rugby update

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Return to Rugby Roadmap

We are pleased to be able to publish our provisional plan for a phased return to full contact rugby. It's wonderful to see light at the end of the tunnel and we are as delighted as clubs and players across the country that they will soon be able to resume training and, subject to each step on government's roadmap being achieved, progress towards contact fixtures and an exciting season of rugby for 2021/22 from September.

Please note the Return to Community Rugby Roadmap has been revised to follow steps on the government roadmap. Please therefore disregard previous versions and only share the new 'green for go' roadmap below. We have removed Stages B and C as they are no longer currently relevant due to changes in government restrictions.

Over the next couple of weeks, we will provide stage-by-stage guidance on our **Return to Rugby** page which will include all the information you'll need for a gradual return to contact rugby. Guidance will include equipment that can be used at each stage and videos with our coach development team.

While we are all incredibly excited about getting back out on the pitch, we should also be conscious of the need to build-up gradually after a long lay-off. The focus for all activity over the next three months should be on player retention and player safety.

Until Monday 29 March, unless you are an age grade player taking part in organised school or college rugby activity, we remain at Stage A on the Return to Rugby Roadmap. This means individuals are only allowed to exercise alone or with one other from another household.

[Roadmap PDF](#)

[Roadmap Image](#)



Video explaining our planned return to rugby

RFU Rugby Development Director Steve Grainger talks through the planned timeline and stages of progression. References to contact rugby includes 15s, 10s and 7s.

Over the next couple of weeks, RFU Head of Game Development, John Lawn, and Coaching Development Manager, Phil Kearns, will provide advice and guidance that can be used to re-engage players and develop their skills and fitness over the coming months, ahead of an anticipated full season in 2021/22.

[Watch Video](#)



Age Grade adjustments

When the Government Roadmap moves to Step One A - Schools return

- From Monday 8 March, schools and colleges may be permitted to follow the Stage D1 guidance for internal rugby activity only – no external matches, in line with DfE guidance.
- All other age grade rugby must remain at Stage A until 29 March - meaning individuals can exercise alone or with one other from another household until Monday 29 March.
- Current lockdown restrictions remain.
- The current age grade match season will end on Monday 31 May. The focus for the remainder of the season should be on maximising the number of players safely getting out on a rugby pitch.
- The age grade out of season regulations are suspended for 2021 and replaced with a range of permitted non-contact and contact training & playing. The purpose of this is to support player safety, contact preparation and player retention for any out of season age grade activities.
- The process for 17-year-olds playing adult rugby is suspended from now until Saturday 1 January 2022. These are some of the players at greatest safety and retention risk due to the rugby they have missed. While this may impact some clubs at adult level, the longer-term safety and participation picture outweighs the short-term impact.

- In season 2021-22, the shift to the next set of age group rules is delayed until Saturday 1 January 2022. (E.g. U10s in 2021-22 will play U9 rules before Christmas and U10 rules after Christmas.) For girls that are in the multi-age U13, U15 and U18 bandings, they will move into that age band and play to those rules from September. Training and playing guidance will be provided to ensure safe progression and transition.



Return to Adult and Age Grade Rugby Timeline

When the Government Roadmap moves to Step One A on 8th March

- Current lockdown restrictions remain.
- Adult rugby remains at Stage A on the Return to Rugby Roadmap.
- This means individuals can exercise alone or with one other from another household until Monday 29 March.

When the Government Roadmap moves to Step One B – no earlier than Monday 29 March

- Adult and age grade community rugby (including schools and colleges) may resume at Stage D1.
- O2 Touch, Tag and Ready4Rugby training and matches are permitted within the club and against other clubs. We will confirm travel guidance when published by government.
- Contact training (excluding scrums and mauls) is permitted to introduce contact gradually and prepare players physically for the next stage on the Return to Rugby Roadmap. Our guidance strongly recommends a maximum of 20 minutes contact in total per session, with regular hand sanitising breaks during and after contact skills training and equipment should be cleaned after use. Players should avoid face-to-face exposure of more than three seconds and more than 15 minutes of exposure at less than one metre with another player.

From Monday 26 April

- Having had four weeks of contact training, adult and age grade community rugby will be able to return to Stage D2 on the Rugby Roadmap from Monday 26 April.
- Again, guidance will recommend 20 minutes of contact training to be permitted (still excluding scrums and mauls).
- Matches will be permitted with adapted laws (no scrums & mauls) against other clubs. Again, travel guidance to be confirmed as above.
- Guidance for playing friendly matches over the summer will follow over the next few weeks to support maximising player retention and welfare.
- Matches will not be obligatory. It will be clubs' and players' individual choice as to when they feel ready to return to contact rugby. Please ensure players are given enough time to condition themselves physically, with a gradual return to contact built in. Ready4Rugby, O2 Touch and Tag can still be played if preferred.

When the Government Roadmap moves to Step Three – no earlier than Monday 17 May

- Adult and age grade community rugby likely to progress to Stage E1.
- It's anticipated that full contact training will be permitted (including scrums and mauls).

Two weeks after Stage E1 has been reached – no earlier than Monday 31 May

- It is anticipated that adult community rugby will progress to Stage E2.
- Adult full contact matches would then be permitted.
- The current age grade season ends on Monday 31 May. (See above for further information).
- Some off-field restrictions likely to still apply.

When the Government Roadmap moves to Step Four – no earlier than Monday 21 June

- It is anticipated that adult community rugby will progress to the final Stage F.
- At which time we expect all remaining restrictions will be lifted.

Next Season

- All adult and age grade competitions are currently anticipated to start in September, as normal, under full laws.



Facilities Update

As more guidance is published by government, we will provide facilities guidance on changing rooms, club houses and off-field protocols. This information will be housed on our Return to Rugby page below.

We will update FAQs next week as queries come in. Please visit our Club Support Helpdesk on the link below or contact ClubSupport@RFU.com.

You can also see all our previous [Coaching](#), [Refereeing](#), and [Club](#) webinars to help you prepare for the Return to Rugby.

[Return To Rugby](#)

[FAQs](#)

Teamwork Respect Enjoyment Discipline Sportsmanship



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