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RETURN TO RUGBY STAGE E:

A GUIDE TO ADAPTED CONTACT RUGBY ACTIVITY



England
Rugby

INTRODUCTION

The progression to Stage E on the [Return to Rugby Roadmap](#) means that limited and adapted contact activity can be included in a training session and inter-club contact fixtures are allowed.

The following information explains permitted and non-permitted activity within Stage E. 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 Tag/Touch/Ready4Rugby and contact fixtures (under adapted law variations) 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 on site and adhering to social distancing. Clubs should ensure they are appropriately setup 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 activities only 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 E - TRAINING ACTIVITY GUIDANCE

In Stage E a maximum of 2 x 10 minutes (total duration 20 minutes) 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, uncontested lineouts and/or Tag/Touch/Ready4Rugby.

Restrictions on group sizes have been replaced with recommended coach to player ratios.

U7 1:6 | U8 1:8 | U9-U18 1:10 | Adult 1:15

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

- No scrum, maul, or upright tackle training activities are permitted.
- A maximum 2 x 10 minutes total duration of any of the adapted contact activities within a single training session.
- Restrict team play activities to the approved Tag/Touch/Ready4Rugby formats.
- Training groups should be selected appropriately based on a player's age, size and competence.
- During a session (contact activities and Tag/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 keep 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 how to avoid non fleeting Face to Face contact exposure during training sessions.

TOTAL TIME OF ALL CONTACT ACTIVITY MUST NOT EXCEED 20 MINUTES PER SESSION
WE RECOMMEND THAT ANY CONTACT ACTIVITY IS CARRIED OUT IN SMALL GROUPS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE



TACKLING

- Tackles that bring the ball carrier to ground safely.
 - No holding the ball carrier up in the tackle.
 - Utilise small group activity.
 - Use of tackle bags, shields and pads that are cleaned and sanitised after each player use.
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- No upright tackles.
 - Coaches must NOT hold pads, shields or bags for age grade players.



RUCK

- To avoid unnecessary Face to Face contact minimise the number of players in a ruck.



LINEOUT

- Unopposed lineout drills. (To avoid unnecessary face to face contact minimise the time the front lifter and jumper are face to face).
 - Lifting of a jumper (under 15 and above only).
 - Ball thrown to a catcher.
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- No maul to be formed after ball secured.



SCRUM

- Individual body position and shape practice.
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- No opposed scrum practice, including use of scrum machines, sleds and unit practices.



MAUL

- None.
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- No maul practice activity allowed, including from a lineout.



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

When designing sessions it is important to remember, players have had limited contact exposure over the last few months, so need to be reintroduced at a pace suited to the individual to reduce risk of injury and build confidence.

To help build confidence and reduce the risk of injury we recommend starting with a higher Skill Zone amount of skill zone activity focussing on technique and body movements in smaller groups with small amounts of Game Zone contact activity. This ratio of Skill Zone to Game Zone may change as the players become more physically and mentally adapted to contact again, however it is good practice to revisit this throughout the season.

| SESSION ACTIVITY | SESSION GUIDANCE |
|----------------------------|--|
| Injury Prevention | Activate/ movement skills |
| Preparation- warm up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise heart rate - small sided games • Prepare for activities in the game - run , jump, stop, start, change direction, adjusting body height, catch and pass. |
| Non contact | <p>Game Zones - Tag, touch, Ready4Rugby with rule variants.</p> <p>Skill Zones - Handling, body movements decision making.</p> |
| Contact- max 2x 10 minutes | <p style="text-align: center;">Game Zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailor rules to the needs of the group • Progressive return to adapted contact games <p style="text-align: center;">Encourage the use of skills developed in skill zone.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Skill Zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technique focussed initially • Controlled reintroduction to contact elements- pairs or small groups • Allow for repetition for confidence/competence • Progressive build-up of contact activity. |





GUIDE RESOURCES

All resources referenced in this guidance documents can be found on the Coronavirus Resources Page [CLICK HERE](#)