



# **Restarting Competitive Grassroots Rugby**

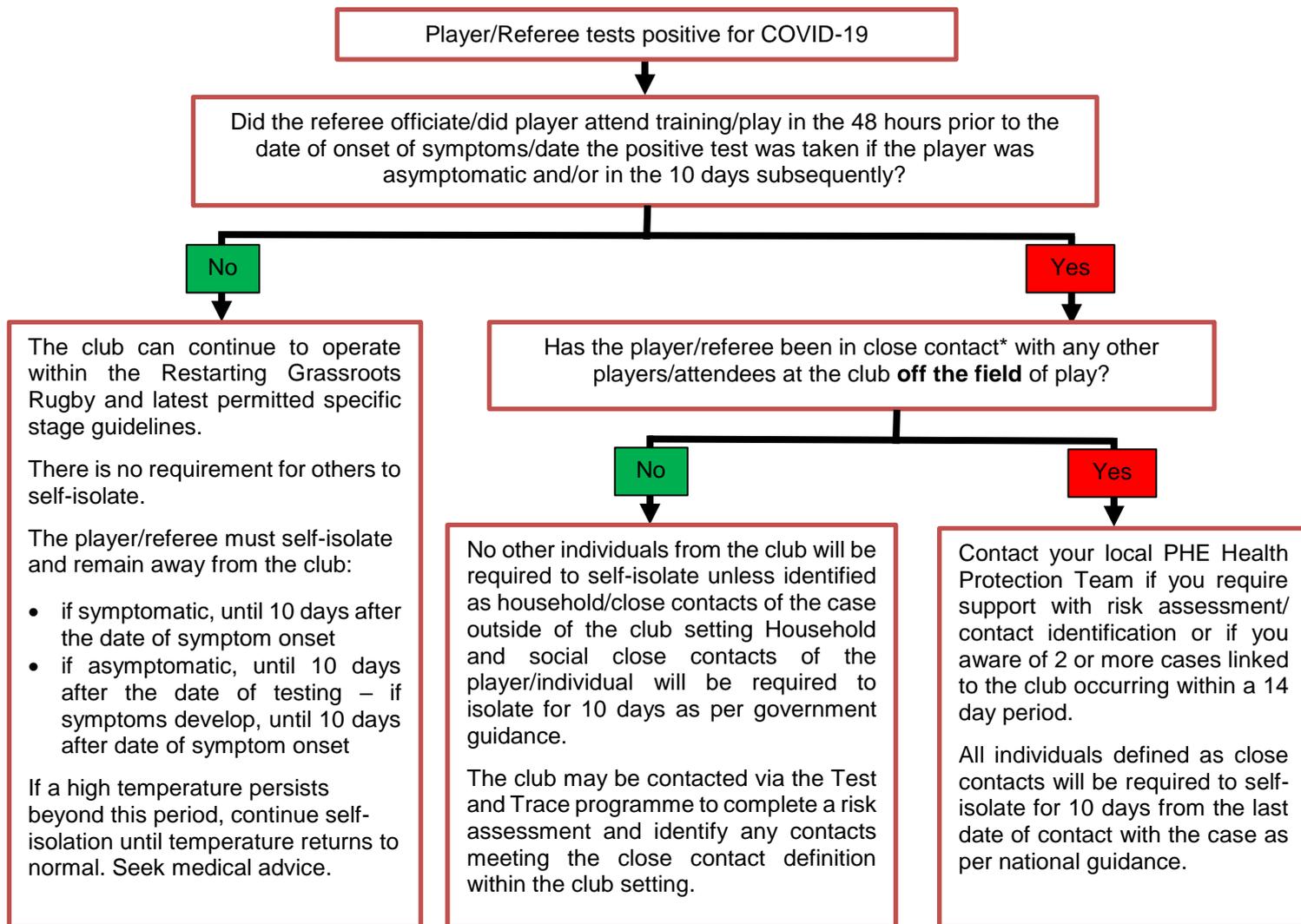
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## **EXTENDED GUIDANCE FOLLOWING A POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST BY A COMMUNITY PLAYER/REFEREE**

December 18 2020

## Guidance for Clubs following a Positive COVID-19 Test by a player/referee

Our nationally agreed position with government (as part of approval for return to Stage E on the Return to Rugby Roadmap) is that should there be a positive test from a player/referee there is no routine need for other players/referees on the field of play to self-isolate as long as there has been no deviation from Stage E protocols (and referees have not been involved in direct face to face conversations within 1 metre for more than 3 seconds with players) and that all other relevant protocols on changing, travel etc have been followed. **However local public health officials do have the powers to insist on self-isolation based on the context at that time in the local community. This is the same in Rugby as for other sports and the same for sport as in other aspects of community life – e.g. pubs (where open), schools etc.**



***\*Close contact for players is defined by the Team Sport Risk Exposure Framework.  
Close contact for all other individuals (non-training/playing) is defined by the government guidelines***

Following a positive test please visit the page for [RFU Coronavirus Hub](#) to:

- report this case to the RFU via the [online Coronavirus reporting form](#)
- find guidance for clubs/players on [returning to activity after having COVID-19](#)

## Extended Guidance following a Positive COVID-19 Test by a player/referee

The following guidance provides information on what actions should be taken following a positive COVID-19 case within a club. This guidance has been developed in collaboration with and endorsed by PHE.

A positive test is one confirmed via a NHS approved swab test. For more information go to the [Government Get Coronavirus Test](#) page.

Government guidelines state that individuals have to self-isolate if they have been in 'close contact' with someone who is COVID-19 symptomatic.

Action by a club is required if the referee officiated/player attended training/played in the 48 hours prior to symptom onset or the date of a positive test, if the case is asymptomatic and/or in the 10 days subsequently. If players/individuals (who have visited the club) develop symptoms of COVID-19 they should seek testing as soon as possible. The individual and their household contacts should isolate whilst awaiting test results as per the Government current [Stay at Home Guidance](#).

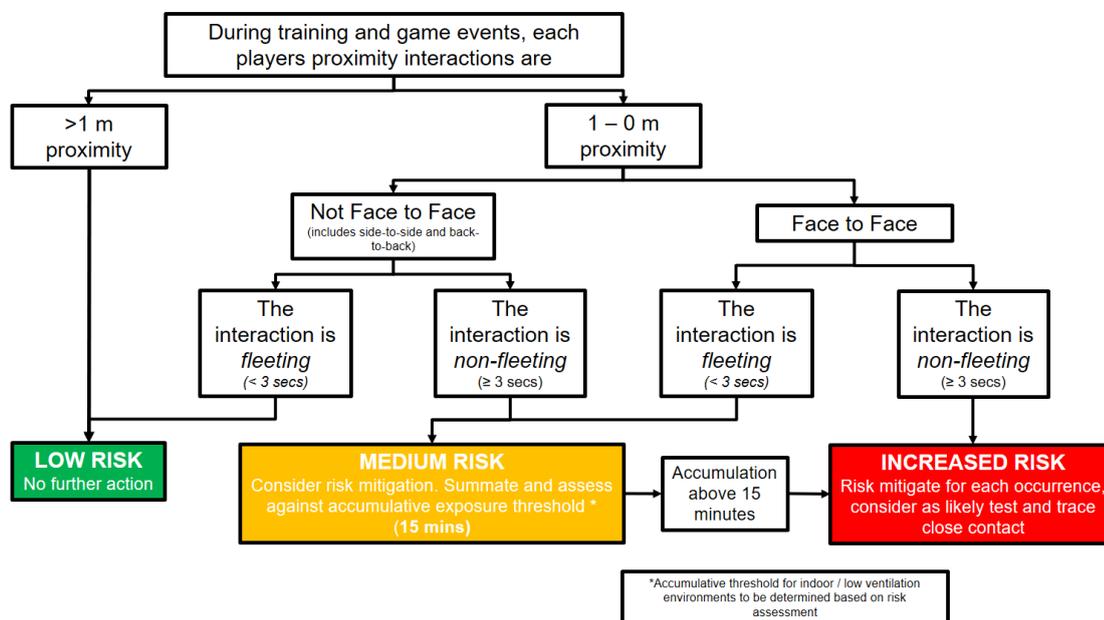
### Contact during on-pitch/training activities

For referees that have officiated/players that have participated in any rugby training and/or playing activities, the Team Sport Risk Framework should be applied:

## A Team Sport Risk Exposure Framework

to inform risk mitigation strategies and support test and trace

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As set out in the RFU Restarting Grassroots Rugby and different Return to Rugby stage specific guidelines, specific risk mitigation measures should be implemented across clubs to ensure that players only undertake low and limited medium risk activities and do not therefore meet the 'close contact' threshold. We do not, therefore, expect at this time that a confirmed case of COVID-19 amongst players would routinely result in other players or the referee being identified as contacts as a result of rugby activity. If contacts are identified as belonging to the 'increased risk' category of exposure, the club should promptly review the implementation of the specific Return to Rugby stage

guidelines within their activities.

A staged and progressive approach to returning to contact has been taken to ensure that clubs can remain operational and players remain safe and COVID-secure. Clubs and coaches should be aware that moving forward in the Return to Rugby roadmap and introducing more contact rugby activity will inevitably result in increased exposure time and/or amount of non-fleeting time. As such, players may in future be exposed to activity in the 'increased risk' zone, meaning that players may exceed the 'close contact' threshold and require contact identification and isolation as detailed above.

**It is vitally important that training sessions / matches and all 'off the pitch' club activity remain within the guidelines to ensure that the risk of transmission is reduced and that should there be a positive test, the need for others having to self-isolate and any potential club closure is minimised.**

## **What happens if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 linked to the club?**

If a player/referee receives a positive test result following testing for COVID-19, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and requested to share information about their activities and close contacts just before and/or after developing symptoms/testing positive. Referees/Players who have taken part in matches/training/club activities during this period should be encouraged to identify this activity on their Test and Trace record to support the contact tracing process. Further information is available on the [NHS Test and Trace webpage](#).

If the club is notified of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a referee/player has attended/taken part in matches/training/club activities during the 48 hours prior to symptom onset/date of the positive test and/or if the individual is symptomatic and/or in the 10 days after this, the club should promptly conduct a risk assessment to identify any close contacts of the case as set out above.

Should the club have any concerns about this risk assessment or have identified contacts that meet the 'increased risk' exposure category, the club should contact their [local PHE Health Protection Team](#) for advice and support.

Should the confirmed case be unable to identify all those they may have had contact with during play/training at the club, they should state this on their NHS Test and Trace record and this will be escalated through the NHS Test and Trace system who may make contact with the club directly to see if contacts may be identified. Evidence of risk assessments, training session plans and other relevant documentation may be requested as part of this review and should be ready to share with PHE.

If the club believe that the 'close contact' threshold has been exceeded, all affected individuals should self-isolate immediately as a precaution until further advice is sought from PHE. In such circumstances, the club should also carry out a prompt review of their training/other activities to ensure all future rugby activity is appropriate and within the relevant RFU Return to Rugby stage guidelines.

Following a positive testing there is no requirement for mass testing within the club. It should be remembered that if someone has been identified as a contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19, a negative test result does not remove the requirement to complete the period of isolation as set out in the [national guidance for contacts of people with confirmed COVID-19](#).

The RFU requests that all positive cases are reported, via the online Coronavirus reporting form on the [RFU Coronavirus Hub](#). This is to allow the RFU to monitor the number of confirmed positive Covid-19 cases occurring in clubs and provide support where appropriate.

The importance of following the RFU's Restarting Grassroots Rugby and stage specific guidelines, should not be underestimated. If, following a positive test and completion of the risk assessment, the

'close contact' threshold hasn't been met then provided the positive test player/individual follows the appropriate national guidance, including isolation requirements and the club follow all other guidelines; other individuals will not be required to self-isolate and the club can continue to train and operate in line with current RFU guidelines.

To ensure clubs are prepared to deal with a positive case effectively, reduce the risk of transmission and reduce the need for others having to self-isolate, it is important that the following is in place within all clubs:

1. An **appropriate risk assessment** including COVID-19 specific operating procedures.
2. Well **planned training sessions**\* with adherence to the Restarting Grassroots Rugby guidelines and stage specific permitted activity, including:
  - Players don't exceed the total permitted time for one session (this includes total playing time at a multiple match event)
  - Limited contact activity in each session.
  - Regular cleaning and sanitising of equipment is in place
  - Personal hygiene measures are in place as per latest government and RFU guidelines

(\*Evidence of training sessions plans may be requested by the local PHE centre as part of a positive test review)
3. A **Test & Trace process** that meets the requirements of the [NHS Test & Trace Programme](#)

For more information, including risk assessments guidance and Return to Rugby stage specific activities please go to the [RFU Coronavirus Hub](#)