



RFU RugbySafe Refresher 2021/22 - Adult Game

- **Activate - RFU Injury Prevention Exercise Programme**
- **HEADCASE - concussion awareness and education programme**
- **First Aid**
- **Return to full contact guidance**

Ahead of the new season, we are sharing a reminder of player welfare resources and training and education programmes.

Player welfare is at the heart of all training delivered to coaches, match officials and medics at all levels of the game in England.

While rugby is a contact sport, and risk is inherent in that, the care and focus on injury prevention and concussion education, recognition and management for players is the best that it has ever been.

We all need to stay alert and make sure players, coaches, match officials, teachers and first aiders understand how to minimise and manage risk.

It is also important to remember the enjoyment and physical and mental health benefits that rugby brings, keeping people active and healthy. The team environment and support network are elements that many of us missed acutely during the pandemic. Rugby also instils values of teamwork, respect, discipline and sportsmanship, and the game has been shown to increase confidence, self-esteem and build character.

RFU RugbySafe programme

The RFU has an overarching **RugbySafe programme** which covers all player safety and wellbeing projects to support clubs, colleges, schools, universities and participants at all levels of the game.

Clubs and organisers of rugby activities have a responsibility for the health and safety of players, staff and volunteers.

A number of Essential Guides and Resources are available [here](#) and on the [RugbySafe homepage](#) to deliver rugby to the highest standards in a safe and enjoyable environment.

More information is available on being a [RugbySafe Club here](#)

A 2021/22 RugbySafe Toolkit will be available on the RugbySafe homepage in mid-August.

Rugby in England exists in different formats; contact, modified contact and non-contact. There's a game type and position for everyone from XV-a-side contact to Touch. More info on formats available [here](#)



Concussion awareness and education programmes

Launched in 2013, the RFU's [Don't be a headcase concussion awareness & education programme](#) covers all levels of the game from grassroots to elite, and was developed in consultation with leading experts in the field.

At the core of the campaign are two simple messages:

- **Four Rs (Recognise, Remove, Recover, Return)**
- **If in doubt, sit them out**

Player welfare must always come first. No risk should ever be taken. **Players must not go back on the pitch if they have had a head knock.**

Recognised as one of the UK's leading concussion awareness and education resources, the RFU's **HEADCASE** programme aims to increase understanding and provide information on concussion and other related topics, including how to prevent and manage suspected concussions.

HEADCASE offers online and hard copy resources to support clubs, colleges, schools, universities, players and parents. It is an integral part of our training and education for coaches, match officials and medics.

The **HEADCASE** online education module is open to all and is a pre-requisite to training courses. Participants must provide evidence they have completed the concussion module and passed the test. The module provides information on how to recognise signs and symptoms of a suspected concussion, as well as concussion management and Graduated Return To Play protocols. (See below.)

[HEADCASE overview](#)

[HEADCASE Extended Guide](#)

[HEADCASE Graduated Return to Play](#)

The **HEADCASE** programme guidelines were adopted as the national concussion guidelines for the education sector in England published in 2015.

We believe there is now a good awareness around concussion following increased education for coaches, players, teachers and parents on what must happen if a player receives a head injury. However, we can always increase awareness further. Please help us achieve this by sharing information contained here as widely as possible.

Injury prevention and research

The RFU also conducts research and rugby union is leading the way in injury surveillance.

The [Community Rugby Injury Surveillance Project \(CRISP\)](#) collects match exposure and match injuries from adult men's and women's community rugby clubs in England.

CRISP is just one of the ongoing research studies, run in conjunction with the University of Bath. It is now recognised as one of the largest and longest running community level injury surveillance studies in the world.



Activate is the RFU's Injury Prevention Exercise Programme.

Activate is the RFU's primary prevention intervention for injuries and is available for players, rugby coaches and teachers across the country, via a suite of online resources.

Exercises focus on three areas: General movement control, Pre-activation and Functional Conditioning. These aid activation of stabilising head and neck muscles reducing the potential whiplash effect that can cause concussion.

Developed through a collaboration between researchers at the University of Bath and England Rugby, Activate launched in 2017 and since then has been rolled out to 120 nations and evidence shows the programme can result in 26-40% fewer soft tissue injuries and 29-60% fewer concussions when players complete the exercise programme at least three times a week.

First Aid Provision

RFU regulations state that all clubs and those involved in arranging any rugby activity must ensure that there is an appropriate level of immediate care and/or first aid cover and equipment provided for that rugby activity with these being determined by a risk assessment. There must be access to a telephone to ensure that the emergency services can be contacted immediately when needed and clear vehicular access for an ambulance or other emergency vehicle.

The RFU recommends that all clubs have at least one first-aider per team. To support this, the RFU runs its own first aid course for rugby clubs and schools, which is a nationally recognised qualification.

Visit Courses and Booking [here](#) for further information about training courses or resources.

Below are some additional links and resources that may help clubs and organisers of rugby activities:

- [The Community Rugby Pitch-side First Aid and Immediate Care Provision Guidelines](#)
- There is also a [webinar to help](#)
- [Risk Assessment tool](#)

Returning to scrummaging guidance

As previously shared in Community Game Updates, guidance and webinars to support the return to scrums and mauls is available below.

Return to scrummaging should be introduced incrementally, with the initial emphasis on individual scrum specific conditioning and technique work.

When players are ready, they can move to 1 v 1 building to 5 v 5 before finally practising 8 v 8 in a controlled environment.

We recommend keeping the number of match intensity scrums to a minimum. Instead, the focus should be on individual and unit body position/posture and building time in players respective positions.



We have a **three stage Return to Scrummaging Guide** available for coaches:

1. **Crouch**
2. **Bind**
3. **Set**

As part of the ongoing support for getting players back to rugby safely, we have the following webinars that we hope match officials, coaches, players and club officials will find useful.

#SCRUMTOGETHER

Scrum Together – Episode 1

Scrum Together – Episode 2

Mauling - Players will also need to be reintroduced to mauling incrementally. The focus should be on individual body technique first before 'live' mauling is introduced.