



Return to Rugby Stage 4 Guidance

In line with the Scottish Government Phase 4 announcement on Thursday 10 September, Scotland Rugby League will continue to progress its Return to Rugby Stage 4 for clubs and schools on Monday 14 September. The updated stage 4 guidance has been developed by Scotland Rugby League and its specific Return to Rugby Clubs & Schools sub-group. This updated Stage 4 guidance comes into effect from Monday 14 September 2020.

Please note that at any time Scotland Rugby Leagues Return to Rugby guidance could change when updates are received from the Scottish Government.

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1. Overview

Scotland Rugby League Return to Rugby Stage 4

Next steps (date TBC):

- Indoor non-contact activity - Allowed to resume for adults and young people aged 12 and over, following relevant SGB guidance. (Currently only allowed for children under 12).

Clubs can already (as per Stage 2, 3 and 4 guidance):

- Adults and Youths can participate in restricted rugby activities.
- Indoor gyms can re-open - further guidance to follow *
- Re-open outdoor pitch spaces for training. *
- Re-open outdoor and indoor hospitality / catering areas. *
- Re-open indoor toilets. *

*Club should be aware that the easing of restrictions does not mean that all facilities/venues can open immediately. Owners/operators (e.g. local authorities) require time to consider implications of opening facilities and venues and put plans in place to ensure the safety of participants, staff and volunteers.

2. Mini and Youth Game

- 2.1. Players aged under 18 on 1st September 2020 are permitted to undertake restricted rugby activities in line with Scotland Rugby League guidance.
- 2.2. Only players aged 17 and under can participate in these activities due to their reduced risk profile associated with Covid-19 transmission and infection.
- 2.3. Players can participate in max groups of 20 per 1/2 pitch. Please see separate activity document for details.
- 2.4. During these activities, players are not required to physically distance from one another, unlike those in the adult game. However, players aged 12-17yrs must physically distance before and after the activity when with adults.
- 2.5. 1v1 tackle only permitted in skill practices (max groups 5) and in game play (max groups 20 / 10v10).
- 2.6. Max 30mins of modified full contact per session.
- 2.7. Wrestling type of activities permitted in skill practices only.
- 2.8. Players/Parents or Guardians must not arrive more than 5 minutes prior to their allocated training time and must leave immediately after training.
- 2.9. All youth coaches are required to be a PVG member before coaching.
- 2.10. Players should only use their own water bottle.
- 2.11. Players and coaches must not mix with another training bubble.
- 2.12. Coaches and other adults supporting organised activity should attempt to keep physically distant where possible, but it is recognised that this will not always be possible. In such circumstances the club Covid-19 Safety Coordinator' should consider appropriate mitigating actions as part of the risk assessment.
- 2.13. Players must turn up changed and be ready to train, no changing facilities will be available.

3. Open Age Game

- 3.1. Players aged 18 and over can (as of 24 August) undertake restricted rugby activities in line with Scottish Government guidance.
- 3.2. Players can participate in max groups of 20 per 1/2 pitch. Please see separate adult activity document for details.
- 3.3. Players do not need to physically distance whilst on the pitch. It is only away from the pitch where they need to maintain physical distancing.
- 3.4. 1v1 tackle only permitted in skill practices (max groups 5) and in game play (max groups 20 / 10v10).
- 3.5. Max 30mins of modified full contact per session.
- 3.6. Wrestling type of activities permitted in skill practices only.
- 3.7. In addition to touch rugby, all players are also permitted to undertake skill development activities (e.g. ball handling practices).
- 3.8. Players must not arrive more than 5 minutes prior to their allocated training time and must leave immediately after training.
- 3.9. Players should bring and only use their own water bottle.
- 3.10. Players and coaches must not mix with another training bubble.
- 3.11. Players must turn up changed and be ready to train, no changing facilities will be available.

4. Wheelchair Game

- 4.1. Players who are shielding during this period should continue to do so
- 4.2. Players who have a high or moderate health risk if infected with COVID-19 need to seek advice and be signed off by a medical professional, such as their GP prior to participating in any group activity (this is the responsibility of the individual or a parent/guardian if a player is under 18 years old)
- 4.3. Proceed with caution if you are signed off and decide whether you are individually ready to participate in any activity your club may start to deliver safely
- 4.4. If you are unsure on your risks, seek advice from a medical professional who can advise you on the risks and whether to return to group activity or not
- 4.5. Wheelchair players will be allowed to commence a phased return to training from 14 August.
- 4.6. No tackling can be carried out indoors, but can be outdoors.
- 4.7. Tags as used for Wheelchair RL will be treated as a fomite transmitter and subject to the hygiene and preparatory guidance utilised for balls.
 - 4.7.1. All tags will be sanitised, in the same way as hands and balls, prior to the game taking place.
 - 4.7.2. Each player will be responsible for a single set of tags for the duration of the game.
 - 4.7.3. Each game will factor in at 8/10/15/20 minutes (delete as appropriate) hygiene and sanitisation break in that each set of tags will be sanitised in preparation for continuation or substituted for new (pre-sanitised tags) whilst the starting tags are re-sanitised.
 - 4.7.4. Half-Time will be used as a natural break point for further hand, ball and tag hygiene and sanitisation protocols to be completed.

5. Adult coaching (Over 18)

- 5.1. Coaching activities should be age and stage appropriate.
- 5.2. Coaches can now deliver sessions to an unlimited number of households per day, up to a maximum of 30 people per session (e.g. 2 bubbles of 15 players).
- 5.3. Max 2 coaches per group in addition to player limits.
- 5.4. Coaching of people who are shielding is now permitted and physical distancing and hygiene guidelines are strictly observed.
- 5.5. Physical distancing and hygiene measures must be fully implemented and maintained.
- 5.6. When participating in training or coaching, where possible, avoid touching surfaces and touching your mouth and face.
- 5.7. Coaches should risk assess and plan appropriately for the session in advance, be aware of responsibilities and be clear on expectations with participants. They should also build in a review period to reflect on effectiveness and safety of the session.
- 5.8. Coaching is permitted as long as government guidelines are followed at all times.

Further guidance on appropriate steps for providing coaching are available through the [sportscotland Getting coaches ready for sport](#) document.

6. Mini and Youth coaching (Players aged 17 and under)

- 6.1. Coaching activities should be age and stage appropriate.
- 6.2. A maximum of 15 people per ½ pitch, with no limit to the number of households may be coached at one time.
- 6.3. Coaching of people who are shielding is now permitted, provided it takes place outdoors and physical distancing and hygiene guidelines are strictly observed.
- 6.4. When participating in training or coaching, where possible, avoid touching surfaces and touching your mouth and face.
- 6.5. Coaches should risk assess and plan appropriately for the session in advance, be aware of responsibilities and be clear on expectations with participants. They should also build in a review period to reflect on effectiveness and safety of the session.
- 6.6. Coaches should maintain a 2 metre physical distance at all times from all participants.

Further guidance on appropriate steps for providing coaching are available through the **sportscotland** [Getting coaches ready for sport](#) document.

7. Covid-19 Officer

- 7.1. To support a Return to Rugby, Scotland Rugby League will support each club to appoint a Covid-19 Officer to address the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 7.2. Clubs are to appoint someone to this role before any official club activity takes place.
- 7.3. To nominate a Covid-19 Officer, please complete and return a nomination form to info@scotlandrfl.com
- 7.4. Covid-19 Officer should complete the **sportscotland** [COVID e-learning module](#)

8. Parent behaviours

- 8.1. No spectating should take place other than where a parent is supervising a child or vulnerable adult.
- 8.2. All parents and guardians must check in and provide their contact details
- 8.3. All parents and guardians must maintain 2 metre physical distancing from anyone else attending the session at all times
- 8.4. They must stay outside the pitch that is being used. They must not enter the pitch other than if invited onto the pitch by the coach to assist with an injury
- 8.5. They must not enter the area between quarter/half pitches. They must stay outside the playing area for what would be a full sized pitch

9. Recording attendance

- 9.1. All players, coaches and support staff must sign in and have their contact details recorded at each session.
- 9.2. This is absolutely crucial if contact tracing is required
- 9.3. Any parents or guardians who is supervising the session must also sign in and have their contact details recorded
- 9.4. These details should be kept by the lead coach for each year group and the Covid-19 safety officer
- 9.5. Please consider the GDPR regulations when managing this data

10. Test and Protect

- 10.1. Test and Protect, is Scotland's way of putting into practice NHS Scotland's test, trace, isolate and support strategy.
- 10.2. The gathering of contact information from anyone attending sport/leisure activities or facilities in a secure and safe manner, will assist NHS Scotland's Test and Protect service to identify any clusters of cases, contact those who may have been exposed to the virus, and request them to take appropriate steps to prevent potential onward spread.
- 10.3. A leaflet providing information on the Test and Protect service from NHS Scotland is also available [here](#).

11. Test and Protect

- 11.1. NHS Scotland has launched a free mobile app designed to help with contact tracing efforts and slow the spread of COVID-19. The app will alert users if they have been in close contact with another app user who tests positive for coronavirus.
- 11.2. Supported by a dedicated Protect Scotland website, the app is an extra tool complementing existing person-to-person contact tracing which remains the main component of NHS Scotland's Test and Protect system.
- 11.3. Further information on the Protect Scotland app is available at www.protect.scot
- 11.4. If a person has a continuous cough, high temperature, or loss or change in taste or smell, they should self-isolate and request a coronavirus test right away. Further information is available at www.NHSinform.scot/test-and-protect or by calling 0800 028 2816 if they cannot get online.
- 11.5. The Coronavirus (COVID-19): Test and Protect information leaflet provides information on the Test and Protect service from NHS Scotland.

12. Physical distancing and participation numbers

- 12.1. Children aged 11 years and younger are not required to physically distance at any time, as set out in Scottish Government guidance.
- 12.2. For those 12 years of age and over taking part in sport or leisure activity, normal Scottish Government physical distancing and household number guidelines should be followed unless taking part in approved Scotland Rugby League activities.
- 12.3. Normal physical distancing and household number guidelines will however be applicable before and after the sporting activity or when taking breaks.
- 12.4. Coaches, officials, parents and guardians should continue to observe physical distancing when involved in children's activity as a coach, official or spectator. Please refer to specific club or facility guidelines.
- 12.5. Where access through an indoor space is provided it should be for one person at a time, ideally with a one-way system in operation. Participants should ensure not to make contact with hard surfaces such as door handles and move through the area without stopping or congregating at any time.
- 12.6. Further information on physical distancing guidance is available at [Staying Safe and Protecting Others](#).

13. Health, safety & hygiene

All individuals and clubs must:

- In the event of first aid treatment being required it is recognised that a suitably qualified coach/supervising adult may require to attend to a child. The sports organisation 'Covid Officer' should

consider processes for managing this as part of the risk assessment. This could include but not be limited to;

- Provision of suitable PPE
 - Training of coaches/supervising adults
 - Presence of one parent/guardian being required at the activity
- Ensure access to first aid and emergency equipment is maintained. Where equipment is stored indoors please ensure public access to enclosed indoor areas is restricted as much as possible with hygiene and safety protocols reviewed as part of the risk assessment.
- Please ensure that first aid equipment has been updated appropriately for the COVID pandemic and first aiders have appropriate training.
 - In the event of first aid treatment being required it is recognised that a suitably qualified person, coach or supervising adult may require to attend to the injured participant. The 'Covid Officer' should consider processes for managing this as part of their risk assessment. This could include but not be limited to;
 - Provision of suitable PPE
 - Training of coaches/supervising adults
 - Presence of one parent/guardian being required at the activity for children/vulnerable adults.
- Cleaning of equipment, hand and respiratory hygiene are core measures to be implemented and provision should be made for these.
- Clear guidance and plans are needed for cleaning of facilities and equipment, and waste disposal. For instance, common touchpoint surfaces (gates, door handles, handrails etc) should where possible be left open but if not possible, regular cleaning with disposable gloves should be undertaken.
- Sports facility operators should ensure participants and visitors wear face coverings, if indoors, before and after activity or when in non-playing areas of the facility e.g. reception, locker rooms and storage areas. This is a mandatory requirement.
- Face coverings may not be required when using hospitality services such as café's, bars and restaurants. For further information refer to Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): tourism and hospitality sector guidance](#).
- Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces and equipment, before and after every training session. Cleaning products should conform to **EN14476** standard.
- Ensure that the use of communal facilities such as stands/patios and toilets is limited.
- Wash hands thoroughly and often, with soap and water or an alcohol based sanitiser. Allow for participants to wash hands before and after training sessions.
- Establish a regular monitoring and cleaning routine for essential communal areas such as public toilets.
- Be mindful when sneezing or coughing; cover with your elbow or tissue and turn away from others.
- Display prominent signage at the venue specifically related to Personal Hygiene and Transmission; Cold and Flu Symptoms and Social Distancing.
- Upon entering activity site all players must sanitise their hands before play. Hand sanitiser will be provided by each organising club, but players can also bring their own. Hand sanitiser should be at least 60% alcohol based.
- At regular moments throughout a session, all players should sanitise their hands.
- Avoid touching your face throughout the session.
- There is a strict no spitting policy at all times
- Ensure that you follow access protocols to leave the pitch. e.g. if your club has introduced a one way system
- You must leave the venue immediately once training has concluded no social activity is to occur. Wash any clothing that may have come into contact with the balls or common touch points

14. Safeguarding

As government restrictions ease and we gradually move out of lockdown, supporting children and young people to reintegrate back into rugby will be a key focus for your club.

14.1. Protection of Vulnerable Groups

- To recap, No PVG = No coaching
- There will be no alteration to the standards we had in place pre-Covid 19, therefore PVG's will still need to be in place for designated roles, or new recruits to roles prior to any activity resuming with children and youth teams.
- Child Protection Officers may wish to recap on their Club Safeguarding Policy and/or refer to the Scotland Rugby league Safeguarding webpage in advance of any return.

14.2. Post COVID-19

Experiences of lockdown will have varied significantly for children and young people. Many families may not have had access to a garden or a safe space to continue exercising. Rather than home being a safe and secure environment, for some children it may have been chaotic and stressful.

It is reported that the number of referrals of domestic abuse and child abuse increased during the lockdown period. There will be many children who have heard, seen or experienced some traumatic or difficult events during this time. Coaches and Child Protection Officers will have to be alert to the signs and indicators of possible abuse or stress, and be prepared for potential disclosures.

Coaches and CPO's will know what to do if they observe something that causes them concern or if they are approached with a concern, and who they should speak to; but as a reminder, there are many signs and indicators that a child is being harmed. Often one of these signs alone is not cause for concern however cumulatively they should form a picture and be taken seriously.

If a child discloses or you observe any concerns or are told about concerns from someone else, follow the 4 R's.

- RECOGNISE
- RESPOND
- REPORT
- RECORD

sportscotland have released guidance on the Delivery of sport at a distance: Child wellbeing and protection considerations in the return of children and young people to sport which can be found [here](#).

You can email Scotland Rugby league directly with any concerns or advice at safeguarding@scotlandrl.com
External Contacts which may be useful

- ChildLine | 0800 1111 | www.childline.org.uk 24/7 helpline
- NSPCC | 0808 800 500 | www.nspcc.org.uk 24/7 helpline
- Children 1st | 0800 282223 | www.children1st.org Includes information on Safeguarding in Sport
- Police Scotland | 101 non-emergency

15. Changing rooms, showers, toilets and Locker Rooms

- 15.1. Use of changing rooms and showering facilities should be avoided where possible, although from the 31 August 2020 they may be made available for participants with disabilities or special needs.
- 15.2. Sports facility operators may open toilets for public use if they follow the guidelines outlined on the Scottish Government website [Opening Public Toilets Guidelines](#).
- 15.3. **For detailed facility guidance including a checklist that covers use of changing rooms, showers and toilets visit [Scottish Government Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on the opening of indoor and outdoor sport and leisure facilities](#).**
- 15.4. From the 31 August 2020 access to indoor locker rooms and storage areas is permitted for the dropping off and collection of sports equipment or clothing. The sports facility operator should ensure mitigating actions are put in place to minimise the risk of virus transmission including physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning measures.

16. Wellbeing

These are uncertain times for everyone with routines disrupted and more people spending time alone.

- In these uncertain times it's important for all of us to try to maintain our mental health as well as our physical health. Click [here](#) for a few resources to help you
- The Performance Psychology team at the sportscotland institute of sport regularly uses mindfulness techniques to support athletes and staff. Click [here](#) for their top tips
- If you feel like your mental wellness is worsening, if you feel like you are struggling to stay connected or that you feel more low or anxious you are not alone. Self-help resources that may be helpful:
 - Scottish Government's [Clear Your Head campaign](#)
 - [SAMH](#) has useful information on maintaining mental wellness
 - [Young Scot](#) this is a difficult time for young people too
- If these measures do not help and you feel that your mental health is worsening or is a concern to you or others:
 - Tell someone how you are feeling.
 - Contact your GP practice (8am - 6pm week days).
 - Out of hours – NHS 24 on 111 (6pm - 8am weekdays and 24 hours at weekends).
 - [Samaritans](#) 116 123 (open 24/7).
 - [Breathing Space](#) 0800 83 85 87 (open Mon to Thurs 6pm to 2am, 24 hours over the weekend. Online chat also available).

17. References

- [Scottish Government Coronavirus guidance and routemap](#)
- [Test and Protect](#)
- [NHS Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) General advice](#)
- [NHS Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) check your symptoms](#)
- [sportscotland Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information and resources](#)
- [Health Protection Scotland: General guidance for non-healthcare settings](#)
- [Health Protection Scotland: Cleaning in a non-healthcare setting](#)
- [Health Protection Scotland: Hand hygiene techniques](#)
- [St. John's Ambulance: Covid-19 advice for first aiders](#)
- [HSE: First Aid during the coronavirus](#)
- [Getting your Facilities Fit for Sport](#)

Please be aware guidance can change and restrictions may be reintroduced.