

#READYFORRUGBY OVERVIEW



The IRFU is launching a #ReadyForRugby initiative to help rugby communities come together safely when government restrictions are eased.

There are three key elements to the campaign:

1. Rugby Roadmap: A roadmap for a safe and graduated return to contact rugby
2. Rugby Offerings: A suite of rugby offerings designed to ensure rugby activity is in line with all steps/levels of public health measures
3. Rugby Support: A support programme of development and education opportunities for clubs and schools

IRFU #ReadyForRugby Roadmap

	COVID-19 Safety Planning Phase	Non-Contact Phase	Contact Phase	Structured Rugby Phase
When Will This Happen?	Can commence any time.	If government restrictions allow non-contact sports only	When government measures allow for contact sport	After a minimum of 4 weeks contact readiness training, when government measures allow
What can we do?	<p>Ensure COVID-19 Safety Plan is up to date</p> <p>Reengage COVID-19 Safety Officers</p> <p>Reengage COVID-19 Compliance Officers</p>	<p>Non-contact training</p> <p>Fun, Social & Competitive Non-Contact Rugby e.g Touch Rugby & Tag Rugby matches</p>	<p>Contact training</p> <p><i>All clubs & schools who wish to play structured contact rugby will need to undergo a minimum of 4 weeks of contact readiness training</i></p>	<p>Localised rugby matches</p>
What supports are available?	<p>IRFU Resources & Webinars</p> <p>Provincial Support</p>	<p>IRFU Resources & Webinars</p> <p>Provincial Support</p>	<p>IRFU Resources & Webinars</p> <p>Provincial Support</p>	<p>IRFU Resources & Webinars</p> <p>Provincial Support</p>



It is a priority for the IRFU that clubs and schools have the opportunity to come together as a community once current restrictions are eased and it is safe to do so. This will be directed by dates announced at government level.

In line with the current Government of Ireland's 'Path Ahead' document and Northern Ireland Executive's 'Moving Forward' document, the phases of the IRFU's #ReadyForRugby roadmap will not list particular dates or timeframes.

If restrictions are eased substantially before the start of the 2021/22 season, clubs and schools may have the option to open their gates for summer rugby.

All rugby should be on an opt-in basis with a focus on fun and participation.

This will be encouraged by the IRFU and provinces to offer players a choice in how and when they reengage with clubs and schools and ensure the domestic game is fully operational ahead of the new season.

COVID-19 PLANNING PHASE:

Clubs and schools should start the process of ensuring all appropriate measures are in place to be #ReadyForRugby.

Every club and school must have an active COVID-19 Safety Officer and/or COVID-19 Safety Committee.

Each team/squad must have an active COVID-19 Compliance Officer.

[LINKS required] [Click here for more info on the role of a COVID-19 Safety Officer](#)
[Click here for more info on the role of a COVID-19 Compliance Officer](#)

Clubs and schools must ensure their COVID-19 Health & Safety Plan is up to date.

The IRFU and provinces will offer support with this process, including a webinar for all club officers and volunteers.

The webinar will take place on Tuesday March 23rd under the theme:

Considerations For COVID-19 Safety Planning Updates.

Presenters on the webinar will include IRFU Medical Director Rod McLoughlin and Eamon O'Boyle Associates (EOBA). EOBA have provided Health and Safety advice to the Government of Ireland during the COVID-19 Pandemic and designed the COVID-19 Safety Plan (inc. risk assessment) template for clubs and schools on behalf of the IRFU.

Further details about this webinar will be made available in due course.



NON-CONTACT PHASE:

Public health measures may only permit non-contact rugby for a period of time in clubs and schools as part of the easing of government restrictions.

Given the considerable period of inactivity, this phase should be used by clubs and schools as an opportunity to retrain and recondition players in core rugby skills and multi-directional movement.

Fun and social rugby is encouraged. Competitive non-contact rugby can take place during this phase on an intra-club or school basis. Matches between clubs and schools will not be permitted.

Blitzes will not be permitted.

The IRFU and provinces have a series of resources in place to help clubs and schools during this time.

Additional webinars (details to be announced) will help refresh players, coaches and volunteers on how to make the most of this phase.

CONTACT PHASE:

Safety is of paramount importance in any contact sport and contact rugby will be strictly reintroduced on a graduated basis. This contact phase will be in place for all clubs and schools for a minimum of four weeks.

The IRFU and provinces will offer a template for a contact readiness training period to help clubs and schools minimise injury and return safely.

A webinar will also be offered (details to be announced) to help coaches and volunteers who'd like to know more about contact readiness training.

STRUCTURED RUGBY PHASE:

When restrictions allow, clubs and schools will have the option to offer 15-a-side and other formats of contact rugby matches.

Details of options for all clubs, including Energia All-Ireland League clubs, will be confirmed in due course.

All teams who wish to play structured contact rugby will need to undergo a minimum of four weeks of contact readiness training.

The IRFU and provinces will facilitate structured rugby with the provision of match officials where appropriate and match management guidelines to help ensure activity is compliant with all public health measures.



2 #ReadyForRugby Offerings

As government timelines on easing of restrictions become clearer, the IRFU and provinces will announce a suite of offerings to help clubs and schools maximise the rugby opportunities available to them.

This will include:

- Making rugby clubs an amenity for the wider community
- Non-Contact Rugby Offerings
- Modified Contact Rugby Offerings
- 15-a-side Contact Rugby Offerings

3 #ReadyForRugby Support

Support for Clubs and Schools to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 Risk has been available since the start of the pandemic.

The IRFU and provinces have also found new ways to connect with the rugby community in the past 12 months by making resources and expertise directly available in the form of webinars, video and written material.

These have focused on areas such as skill development, injury prevention and using modified formats of the game to provide greater choice to players.

As we emerge from this prolonged period of physical inactivity, these supports will continue so that clubs and schools can keep pace with the easing of restrictions and reengage with their players in a meaningful way.

4 Insurance

The Compulsory Group Personal Accident Scheme For Clubs will provide cover for official games and training in the event that the 2020/21 season be extended into the summer to facilitate rugby activity in line with the easing of government restrictions.

The scheme is arranged by the IRFU to provide fixed benefits for death or catastrophic injury following accidents incurred while playing or officially training for rugby.

Clubs are expected to contact their insurance provider for clarity on all other forms of cover, including public liability.



We want to see rugby in our community as soon as it is permitted, practicable and safe to do so.

#ReadyForRugby is about the IRFU and provinces putting adaptable structures and resources in place so that clubs and schools are ready when the time comes.

Our community invested a huge amount of time in putting in place the correct infrastructure for a safe return to rugby at the start of the 2020/21 season. Unfortunately, clubs and schools never got the chance to reap the rewards for all their work. I share your frustration in that regard.

But I believe that this work will stand to us as governments put plans in place to ease restrictions across the four provinces.

Not knowing when these restrictions may be eased remains an issue. Once anything is certain, we will communicate directly to clubs and schools as a matter of urgency.

Announcements around public health measures may come to us with little notice so now is the time for clubs and schools to reengage their various COVID-19 Safety Officers, Committees and Compliance Officers.

Some things have changed since COVID-19 Safety Plans were first prepared, but we will offer the appropriate medical, health and safety expertise to ensure they are up to date.

If our sport is to resume as soon as it is permitted, it is clear that clubs and schools will need to consider opening their gates for summer rugby.

The IRFU and provinces will support summer rugby across a number of formats with a focus on fun for anyone who wants it in 2021. Of all of the values of Irish Rugby, fun is the one we've missed the most in the last year.

In summary - If we stay connected, have our plans in place and remain flexible for what comes next, we can hope for fun and rugby before too long.

Regards,

Colin McEntee
IRFU Director of Rugby Development

