



COVID-19 RETURN TO RUGBY POLICY AND GUIDANCE 2020 (Version 6)

These are truly unprecedented times and Oakmeadians RFC is committed to return to rugby through all age groups and sections when it is safe for everyone to do so. Government guidelines are changing from week to week, with the easing of the 2nd lockdown training is now a possibility as long as we take care and follow all the health and safety guidance. The following procedure is a working document and can change at any time. Oakmeadians RFC has taken advice from RFU government and local council.

This document covers:

- RFU road map for return to rugby. Version December 2020.
- RFU covid-19 Law variations. 02/12/2020
- Stage E guidance for adapted games. 02/12/20
- Oakmeadians RFC Procedure for Training and games during COVID-19.

RFU roadmap for return to rugby. Version 6 - December 2020

RFU roadmap status has changed to 'Stage E,' allowing 15-a-side training from 2nd December and adapted games can take place from 18th December.

Please see guidance and the new roadmap below. 02/12/2020

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) welcomes the news that Government has given its approval for 15-a-side contact rugby union to return at grassroots level, subject to adaptations.

This comes after extensive research and consultations with Government into mitigating the risks of close contact. By using law variations, this will limit the risk of prolonged face-to-face contact, allowing the community game to resume (everything below the Greene King IPA Championship and Allianz Premier 15s).

Clubs will be able to begin adapted training from Wednesday 2nd December in preparation for local friendly fixtures recommencing from Friday 18th December when the following law variations will come into effect:

- There will be no scrums or mauls in the game.
- Instead of a scrum, the game will begin with a free kick. This free kick cannot be taken quickly.
- A minimum of five and a maximum of seven players from each team are required to form a lineout.
- A team awarded a penalty or free kick will no longer be able to choose a scrum option.
- A team awarded a penalty or free kick at a lineout can instead choose another lineout at the same mark.

There is no obligation for players and clubs to play 15-a-side adaptations. Clubs will still be able to play Ready4Rugby matches up until and beyond 18th December.

Adapted Stage E rules/laws for Age Grade Rugby have also been approved for Under 7-13s and Under 14-18s. The move to Stage E will allow the recommencing of Tag Rugby for U7s and U8s.

Department for Education (DfE) has confirmed schools/colleges can return to playing sport in line with approved National Governing Body action plans.

01/12/2020

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.
- 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.
- No maul to be formed after ball secured.



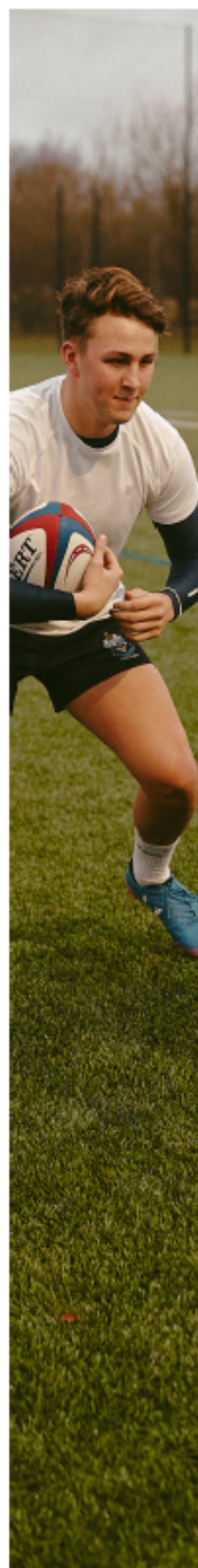
SCRUM

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



MAUL

- None.
- 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	Game Zones - Tag, touch, Ready4(Rugby with rule variants). Skill Zones - Handling, body movements decision making.
Contact- max 2x 10 minutes	Game Zone <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tailor rules to the needs of the group• Progressive return to adapted contact games Encourage the use of skills developed in skill zone. Skill Zone <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](#)





RETURN TO RUGBY ROAD MAP: COMMUNITY GAME



TIME SCALES TO ALLOW PROGRESSION BETWEEN STAGES WILL BE CAREFULLY MANAGED AND DETERMINED BY MEDICAL & GOVERNMENT ADVICE. REGULAR UPDATES WILL BE ISSUED BY THE RFU ALONG WITH DETAILED GUIDANCE AS EACH PROGRESSION TAKES PLACE



MATCH OFFICIAL TEAM

COVID-19 Law Variations 2020/21 FACT SHEET

The principal changes are to:

1. Suspend Law 19 (other than the amended Law 19.1 below) in its entirety.
2. Suspend Law 16 in its entirety.

Law 16: The Maul is suspended in its entirety

Players must not bind onto a team-mate who is in possession of the ball. *Sanction: Penalty kick.*

When one or more players come into contact with an opposing ball carrier and do not bring that player to ground, those players may attempt to gain possession of the ball if done immediately, but thereafter must not prevent the ball carrier from playing the ball. *Sanction: Penalty kick to the team in possession of the ball.*

No other player may join these players in contact. *Sanction: Penalty kick against arriving players.*

The ball carrier must play the ball immediately. *Sanction: Penalty kick to the team not in possession.*

Law 18 Lineout

18.11 – Forming a Lineout. The throwing team must, when forming the lineout, have a minimum of five players and maximum of seven players. *Sanction: Free-kick to the non-throwing team.*

18.14 - Amend to 'The non-throwing team must match the number of players in the lineout with the throwing team. *Sanction: Free-kick to the throwing team.*

The player winning the ball in the lineout must either pass the ball immediately, release it to a teammate or leave the lineout as soon as they land on the ground. *Sanction: Free-kick.*

NB: Law 18.3 & 4 (quick throw) have not been varied.

Law 19 Scrum

19.1 - Principle. Amend to 'Where the game would restart play with a scrum, is replaced with a Free-kick in all circumstances.'

Law 5 Time

5.7 a: Delete 'scrum'.

5.7 b: Amend to 'The referee awards a Penalty or Free-kick, other than a Free-kick for which a scrum would have been awarded previously.' (This will end the half or full-time.)

5.9 - Irrespective of the weather conditions, the referee has the discretion to allow water breaks at any stage of the match.

Law 20 Penalty and Free-Kick

20.3 - Amend to 'A team awarded a Penalty or Free-kick may not choose a scrum.'

20.4 – Amend to 'A team awarded a Penalty or Free-kick at a lineout may instead choose another lineout at the same mark.'

20.11 - Amend to 'Taking a Penalty or Free-Kick. The ball must be kicked a visible distance. If the kicker is holding it, it must clearly leave the hands. If it is on the ground, it must clearly leave the mark. Other than on either of the five metre from goal lines, once the free kick has been taken legally, the kicker may not run with the ball. *Sanction: Free-Kick*

NB: There is no change to taking a penalty kick quickly

To view two short videos on the law variations click on the two links below:-

<http://jwp.io/s/ZCPXaW8X?spMailingID=11337742&spUserID=MjY5ODA2ODIzNzAyS0&spJobID=1650118321&spReportId=MTY1MDExODMyMQS2>

www.englandrugby.com/news/article/community-rugby-in-england-set-to-return?utm_source=011220CGUEmail&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=011220CGUEmail&utm_content=Community&spMailingID=11337742&spUserID=MjY5ODA2ODIzNzAyS0&spJobID=1650118321&spReportId=MTY1MDExODMyMQS2

Oakmeadians RFC Procedure for Training during COVID-19.

Please be aware that the RFU have made a statement regarding accountability and responsibility to adhere to their regulations and roadmap.

- A risk assessment must be completed and sent to Jane Hart (Chairman) before any activities take place. The risk assessment will need updating as lockdown regulations change and shows that you acknowledge the risks being taken and measures put in place to minimise them.
- *Risk assessments must now include use of all equipment - 02/12/2020.*
- *Risk assessments must now include, full squad training, the 15-a-side game, ready-4-rugby, touch games and training. 02/12/2020*
<https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/playing/game-on/ready-4-rugby>
- Limited face to face contact - see guidance 02/12/2020
- RFU and Oakmeadians RFC safeguarding procedure must be followed.
- Covid-19 return to play forms must be completed.
- **Section managers must make sure Track & Trace forms are completed by all supporters who are pitch side or use QR code provided. 02/12/2020**
- **Section managers must make sure all supporters social distance and stay 2 metres apart. 02/12/2020**
- A register must be kept of all training and sent to Jane Hart.
- All age grades must adhere to RFU Regulation 15 at all times.
- There will be a sanitizing station at the front of the clubhouse to be used at beginning and end of sessions, and all sections to use sanitizer for breaks issued by Oakmeadians RFC.
- Kit and equipment can now be used but sections must be mindful of cleaning equipment.
- See guidance for how equipment is to be used and how often equipment must be cleaned.
- Disinfectant buckets will be available for use around the pitches.
- Tags and bibs can now be worn.
- The clubhouse will be open on Sundays for take away food only. The bar will remain closed for the time being.
- Two sets of toilets will be open in the changing rooms for Sunday training.
- The referee room only will be open for toilet facilities for evening training.
- Changing rooms will not be open for changing or showering.
- All players must bring their own water bottles and hand sanitizer and come ready to train.
- Contact sessions should be no longer than 20 minutes and have a sanitizer break after 10 minutes.
- First aid can now be offered from qualified volunteers during contact sessions only. Gloves and masks should be worn when in close contact.
- All age groups need to register time and day of training with Jane Hart, harthouse43@hotmail.co.uk for U7-U12s and Dave Corbin, davencorbin@gmail.com for youth and girls, so as not to double book an area. Once the areas are booked, we would ask you not to move to another area.
- Please wash your hands as soon as you get home. Use sanitizer regularly during training sessions.
- Do not train if you are showing any coronavirus symptoms. Dry cough, Temperature, Change in taste or smell.
- Please inform the club (Jane Hart, harthouse43@hotmail.co.uk) if anyone that has been training is isolating due to Coronavirus symptoms.
- For more information go to:-

[Community rugby set to return \(englandrugby.com\)](https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/playing/game-on/ready-4-rugby)

<https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/playing/game-on/ready-4-rugby>

If you have any questions or need more information from Oakmeadians RFC please contact,

Neil Bibby, DOR mb: 07725 593646

Jane Hart, Chairman mb: 07715 531143 harthouse43@hotmail.co.uk