

STAGE 4 - RETURN TO FULL CONTACT RUGBY LEAGUE



PRE, DURING, POST ACTIVITY SUMMARY

GUIDANCE | SUMMARY

For Clubs, Players, Coaches, Volunteers, Match Officials, Parents/Carers and Spectators.

This document outlines actions to be taken before, during and after full contact Rugby League activity in England. It should be read in conjunction with the latest UK Government Covid-19 guidance available [HERE](#) and the more detailed guidance document produced by the RFL, available [HERE](#).

Maximum groups of participants as set out in relevant government guidance (currently 30) are now able to gather on the playing area and for social distancing to be breached in the narrow circumstances required by Rugby League during training and play, but for all other activity (e.g. warm-ups/cool-downs) the Government guidance on social distancing should be observed.

Should Government guidance change in response to the current Covid-19 Alert Level, this guidance will be updated accordingly.

BEFORE THE FIXTURE

- Each club shall ensure they have provisions in place for safe entry and exit to their facility alongside suitable parking arrangements. Appropriate signage should be displayed at all entry and exit points along with a traffic flow system to aid social distancing.
- All participants should be registered on the LeagueNet system for the 2020 season and have completed the player declaration form opting in to activity, confirming that they are aware of and understand the risks associated with breaching social distance guidelines.
- Everyone should self-assess for Covid-19 symptoms before every training session or match. If you are symptomatic or living in a household with possible or actual Covid-19 infection you must not participate or attend. You should stay home and follow the latest Government guidance.
- If participating in Stage 4 Step 4 contact training (introduced from 28th September) or match activity, there will be a requirement that temperature checks are undertaken before starting activity. We have updated the Health Check Form which can be found [HERE \(PDF\)](#) or [HERE \(EXCEL\)](#). At these levels of activity Clubs should also ensure they are following the RFL's First Aid Guidance available [HERE](#).
- Clubs should appoint a Covid-19 officer and conduct a thorough risk assessment before re-opening or re-starting activity. A template risk assessment is available [HERE](#). They should also be aware of and follow the information set out in the RFL's Test & Trace Protocol document available [HERE](#).
- Clubs are required to maintain records of all staff, volunteers, members, and visitors in attendance at their venue. This information should be collected via an NHS QR code or a paper form.
- Personal hygiene measures should be carried out by everyone and hand sanitisers brought and used at the training/match venue.
- The sharing of kit and equipment should be avoided, but where equipment is shared, it must be cleaned before use by another person.
- Follow Government guidance for travel, including the use of public transport.
- Active participants should arrive changed and ready to take part.
- Junior and Youth teams should re-acquaint themselves with all safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Meet-up times should be adjusted to avoid time spent congregating at a venue.
- Use of clubhouses, hospitality facilities, and toilets must adhere to Government guidance. Changing rooms are not permitted. Participants must turn up ready to play and then leave after the fixture.
- Clubs may wish to consider introducing holding areas. These should be external and used for a minimal amount of time and well ventilated, with social distancing always maintained. Once players are ready, they should vacate the holding area and move to designated warm up or playing area.
- Anyone who is deemed vulnerable in respect of Covid-19 is reminded to follow the Government's guidance, only returning to activity when it's right for them to do so.



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DURING ACTIVITY

- Training and matches (subject to any additional restrictions) can take place, in an outdoor setting provided this takes place in groups of no more than 30 (including coaches) per pitch. There should be no more than 30 participants on a pitch at any one time. Substitutes (if present) should be socially distanced, as should associate staff present on the side-line.
- Must abide by strict social distancing measures at all times, except during essential risk assessed training and matches, keeping a 2m distance between themselves and others at all times where reasonably practical in and out of the sporting environment.
- On match days teams will warm up using their own sanitised Rugby League balls. Match Balls will be provided by the Home Club. It is recommended that 4 balls are to be used in rotation during the Match. All balls must be sanitised before use. The Home club should ensure on each side of the pitch there is a bucket with clean water and soap. Balls should be air dried or dried with single use towels on each side of the field
- In the event a ball leaves the field of play then it should be collected and returned to the nearest bucket to be cleaned before it can be returned to the field of play. The ball shall be cleaned at every stoppage where this is possible without delaying the match. When the ball goes out of play it must be retained and cleaned and a new sanitised ball used for the restart. If there is no natural stoppage after each period of 10 minutes, the Match Official shall temporarily call time off whilst the ball is changed for a clean one.
- Team talks before the game must take place in holding areas or during the warmup. At half time, this must be done on the pitch.
- The sharing of kit and equipment should be avoided, this includes towels, clothing, water bottles, boots, headgear, guards, lip balm, sun cream, shampoo, strapping etc. Participants should bring their own drinks or refreshments, in named containers. Where equipment is shared, equipment must be cleaned before use by another person. This will include tackle bags and shields.
- Pitch surroundings such as post protectors and corner posts must be washed before, during half time and after.
- Goal kickers who use a kicking cone shall bring their own. It is their responsibility to collect this from the bench area. In an occurrence where the kicker changes and they do not have their own, then the original kicking cone should be well cleaned before it is shared.
- Participants must not spit or chew gum. As the virus is transmitted from respiratory secretions, mouthguard etiquette is very important. Players should refrain from touching or removing their mouthguard, and if they do so must wash their hands. Mouthguards must not be left on shared surfaces or public places but be placed in a personal container and stored with personal possessions.
- Injuries during play should still be treated as participant wellbeing is utmost. The best way to protect yourself and others is through rigorous cleaning, personal hygiene, and regular hand hygiene. After contact with an injured participant, clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity.
- In terms of the attendance of spectators, subject to any local authorities' further restrictions, we would ask that only one parent attends training and matches. This will assist Clubs on managing people attending the venue.



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AFTER THE FIXTURE

- Hands should be washed at the earliest opportunity and personal equipment should be wiped down with a disinfectant.
- Participants should take their kit home and wash it themselves, or by family members. Post activity showers should be taken at home.
- Everyone must continue to maintain social distancing including in any facilities where groups of people congregate.
- After match refreshments should not be offered. Players from both teams must bring their own refreshments and eat them after leaving the facility.
- Everyone should leave following the traffic-flow system the club or facility provider has put place.
- Anyone who becomes infected after training/matches should report this to the NHS test and trace system. In the event there is a positive case then the Club Covid Officer should also complete a COVID-19 incident report form available [HERE](#).
- Physios or their equivalent, should keep a record of each participant they have treated for track and trace purposes.

DISCLAIMER

This guidance is for general information only and does not constitute legal advice, nor it is a replacement for such, nor does it replace any Government or PHE advice; nor does it provide any specific commentary or advice on health-related issues. Affected organisations should therefore ensure that they seek independent advice from medical practitioners, or healthcare providers, prior to implementing any re-opening plan, as required. Independent legal advice should be sought, as required and depending on your, or relevant circumstances. While efforts have been taken to ensure the accuracy of this information at the time of publication, the reader is reminded to check the Government website to obtain the most up-to-date information regarding social distancing and any other Government measures.