



IRFU Recommendations To Clubs On Updated Government Guidelines

August 19th, 2020

The Government of Ireland have updated public health measures in response to a recent surge in cases of COVID-19.

Irish Rugby is committed to assisting efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and the IRFU would like to offer guidance to clubs to help them adhere to these measures while continuing to provide a health and wellbeing outlet for their community.

As clubs prepare for matches in the coming weeks, these new restrictions pose serious challenges - particularly in relation to the advice on training numbers.

However, it is paramount that the rugby community continues to demonstrate safe and responsible behaviours for ourselves and for society.

In this respect, please note the following:

- Do not attend the club if you feel unwell.
- Social (Physical) distancing, hand hygiene and good respiratory etiquette remain key practices in lessening the risk of COVID-19 transmission and should be observed by all (children, parents, coaches and spectators).
- Players should travel alone to rugby training or with members of the same household.
- Ongoing completion of the [Pre-Rugby Personal Assessment Declaration](#) is mandatory for all club members.
- Clubs should limit the size of training groups in line with public health measures to minimise the impact of the symptom/case response plan and contact tracing.
- Use the COVID-19 Tracker App or StopCOVID NI Proximity App.
- Wear face coverings where appropriate.
- Observe any travel restrictions in place.

KNOW YOUR ROLE **SHOW** RESPECT **GO** TRAIN WELL

ALWAYS: STAY AT HOME IF FEELING SICK OBSERVE HAND HYGIENE & COUGHING ETIQUETTE KEEP SOCIAL DISTANCING



What are the new government measures?

Previous guidelines stated that outdoor gatherings of up to 200 people when conducted in line with public health advice were permissible.

Outdoor gatherings and events are now limited to 15 people, however, sporting events and matches can continue to take place behind closed doors.

These measures are in place until September 13th at the earliest.

What does this mean for rugby matches?

Friendly fixtures are permitted August 28th – August 30th between clubs within the same province. The Competition Stage of the IRFU's Return To Rugby Summary Roadmap for Clubs commences on September 5th.

These matches will be able to go ahead as planned, however, there will be a strict ban on the attendance of any spectators.

Gatherings, including social gatherings, before or after events must be avoided.

Participants should practice 2 metre physical distancing before and after events, during breaks in play, on the touch lines and team huddles should be avoided.

The IRFU will issue further match-day guidelines to clubs ahead of the start of competitive fixtures.

What about training?

The government have advised that groups exercising outdoors should be limited to 15 people, including training sessions. There should be no mixing between groups.

The IRFU advises clubs to work in set training groups/pods during this period. There should be one team per pitch at any one time and as directed there "should be no mixing between groups."

Numbers of coaches and players per group:

- **Under U12:** Under these restrictions, at least 2 coaches and a COVID-19 Club Compliance Officer must be present for groups of up to 15 players. (A Coach may act as a COVID-19 Club Compliance Officer if already assigned the role)
- **U12-Adult:** A COVID-19 Club Compliance Officer and at least one coach must be present.

***Training Plans:** Suitable training plans should be prepared, electronically sent to the COVID-19 Club Safety Officer for approval and such plans should be in line with government advice.

***Minimising numbers in the Clubs:** The number of players/coaching staffs in the club should be limited depending on government advice at any one time. Training session(s) should be appropriately arranged so that players are absolutely clear as to the date and time of their training.

Once arranged, players must stay in their allocated day/time slot and cannot observe, participate or otherwise be involved on other sessions.

Multiple additional training sessions may be required to ensure that all players can access training safely.

The club should also consider and implement all activities that can be completed from home, such as Strength and Conditioning programmes.

*Source: [IRFU COVID-19 Health & Safety Operating Procedures For Clubs.](#)

Is contact allowed?

Contact in training is still permitted under government guidelines. The IRFU's [Contact Stage Guidelines](#) recommend the introduction of Match Contact Skills from August 17th, but this type of training must adhere to the current measures.

What about IRFU Participation Programmes?

IRFU sanctioned tag rugby and touch rugby events are classified as sporting events and may take place behind closed doors in line with the latest public health measures. However, such games will be limited to one game per pitch.

The IRFU's Canterbury Give It A Try programme is classed as a training session. This means that numbers are limited to 15 players per pitch per session while adhering to the appropriate player/coach/COVID-19 Club Compliance Officer ratios.

Participating clubs should consider multiple additional training sessions to ensure that all players can access training safely.

Participants of all IRFU programmes must adhere strictly to government guidelines and public health advice at all times.



If our club has a gym, can it stay open?

Gyms can remain open with strict distancing and other appropriate protective measures in place.

Where clubs offer or host exercise classes in their gyms, these should be limited to 6 people and observe physical distancing rules.

It is recommended that those responsible for managing these facilities should have completed a risk assessment before reopening to manage the public health risk for their customers, attendees, participants, and staff.

The government recommends a completed risk assessment before reopening. What does that mean for my club?

Under the IRFU's Return To Rugby Guidelines, all clubs are required to have a completed risk assessment and a COVID-19 Health & Safety Plan in place prior to commencing any rugby activity.

This update to public health measures should not affect a club's current Health & Safety Plan, however they will be expected to account for spectators and match-day activities in due course.

We have an AGM coming up. Can it go ahead?

Indoor gatherings and events are now limited to 6 people from no more than 3 households. Clubs should look at online alternatives where possible.

My club is based in Northern Ireland. Are we affected?

There is currently a 30 person limit in place for gatherings in Northern Ireland but it does not apply to gatherings of a particular nature, including those organised for cultural, entertainment, recreational, outdoor sports, social, community, educational, work, legal, religious or political purposes.

The organiser must have carried out a risk assessment which meets the requirement of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 and take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus.

For further detailed information and sources of advice and assistance visit:

- [The Safe Phased Return of Sport, Leisure and Recreation in Northern Ireland](#)
- [The Sports Grounds Safety Authority - Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds](#)
- [Guidance for people who work in grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities](#)

