



## Return to Youth Rugby in Northern California as of June 19, 2020

As we work our way back to the pitch amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic, it is vital that Rugby NorCal member clubs are prepared for safety in all elements of your organizations.

Local/community Covid-19 rules and guidelines take precedence and should be adhered to. See links below for more information on guidelines:

Each county has differing interpretations and mandates, so please check your [County Guidelines](#) closely. Also see this helpful [County Map](#) via the LA Times for a quick look at all counties.

[Youth Camp/Day Camp Guidelines](#) provide important guidance during this “practice” phase of return to play. Youth sports are not yet allowed, however, youth/day camps are which can include small group practices obliging the day camp guidelines.

The return to youth rugby will be a graduated system and many organizations have recommended guidelines to assist your club in communication and to help build your own expectations.

**NOTE: FAILURE TO FOLLOW USAR RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES WILL NULLIFY INSURANCE.**

[USA Rugby Return to Play Guidelines](#)

[CDC Considerations for Youth Sports](#)

Coaches, administrators and volunteers should complete all [World Rugby Coach & Administrator COVID-19 Courses](#).

The National Council of Youth Sports has created this helpful [Return To Play](#) document, which includes this checklist to get you started:

### Monitor When to Return

- Review state and local guidelines and orders
- Check the ability to secure your place of play
- Assess your organization's readiness and ability to meet local guidelines
- Establish that safety, financial and other risks are understood and acceptable

## **Understand Liability & Minimize Risk**

- Alignment of return to government orders
- Organizational readiness and willingness to comply with operating considerations
- Understand insurance considerations
- Understand waivers and communication
- Understand appropriate signage
- Understand the current legal environment
- Develop a policy for anyone in your community doesn't comply with new guidance

## **Create an Operating Playbook**

- Review operating considerations from various authorities
- Create a playbook and assign a team leader
- Communicate plans to all parties
- Secure your playing space
- Order any new requisite supplies (e.g. masks for coaches, hand sanitizer)

## **Communicate to Field Owners, Parents, Referees and Coaches**

- Communication plan to secure playing spaces
- Communication plan to parents, coaches and officials

## **Create a Learning & Feedback Plan**

- Open communication channels to parents and coaches for adjustments
- Create a communication process for parents and coaches, if someone on the team becomes sick

# **RUGBY NORCAL -- RULES OF PREVENTION**

*RNC Clubs are encouraged to use the below Rules of Prevention as a framework for your Club and provide even more specificity as needed.*

Every person involved in a rugby team or game will have a responsibility to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Personal hygiene, self-isolation with symptoms, social distancing, group numbers and restricting travel are the most effective means of prevention of the spread.

Below are measures and expectations of RNC athletes, coaches, and volunteers:

### **1. Understand the Coronavirus**

- Know the Coronavirus measures being implemented by your Club.
- Know the health parameters and guidelines of your local community.

### **2. Daily screening**

- Complete a World Rugby symptom COVID-19 questionnaire before leaving home (appendix 1). This will require you to identify if you have had a high temperature or fever overnight or if you have developed cough, shortness of breath, sore throat or you are feeling unwell. If you do, you should remain at home and contact your primary care doctor.

- Have your temperature checked prior to gathering with the team, so you can determine whether it is safe to participate or not. If your temperature is taken at the pitch and above 99.6 degrees F, you will be sent home and advised to contact your primary care doctor.

### **3. Adhere to hygiene rules**

- Frequent hand washing, regular disinfection of heavily used areas and surfaces and the use of gloves can reduce the risk of infection. In some situations the use of face masks are recommended.
- You should also either sanitize or wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap frequently throughout the day. This is especially important as you return home from being out in public areas.
- Avoid touching high-contact surfaces such as door handles, public computer keyboards
- Use hand sanitizers, which should be available by your Club
- No spitting
- Use the crook of your elbow or a tissue (always dispose of used tissues) when coughing or sneezing
- Do not share water bottles or use team water bottles

### **4. Observe social distance rules**

- A distance of at least 6 feet between the people present helps to significantly reduce the probability of virus transmission. Due to the movement involved in sports, the distance should be kept as generous as possible.
- Where possible any communal areas should be well ventilated, preferably outdoors.

### **5. Minimal body contact**

- Shaking hands, clapping hands, embracing and cheering is to be avoided. Until stay-at-home measures are reduced, physical contact must be avoided, *so initially only individual training or small groups can take place.*

### **6. Change and shower at home**

- The use of changing rooms and showers in sports halls and sports clubs should be suspended until further notice from your Club.

### **7. Temporary suspension of car pooling**

- While social distancing measures are in place, the formation of carpools for training and competitions should be avoided.

### **8. Refrain from gatherings**

- In order to comply with the distance rules, no social events should be held.
- While social distancing remains, team meetings should be held outdoors or in spaces which allow for 1 person per 6 feet • Online meetings are recommended.

### **9. Adhere to small training groups**

- While social distancing and public gathering restrictions are in place, clubs will need to train in small groups which are aligned to government measures in place at that time (such as groups of 12 with one coach). When small groups train, sessions should be staggered with no overlapping or cross squad contact between groups.

### **10. Train outside**

- Sports and exercise in the fresh air make it easier to keep to distance rules and reduce the risk of infection through the permanent exchange of air.

# HOW CLUBS PREPARE IN ADVANCE OF RETURN TO ACTIVITY

**CLUB COVID MANAGER:** ***Each Club is required to appoint a COVID-19 Manager.***

The manager should have operational knowledge regarding COVID-19. Where possible, clinical knowledge of COVID-19 is preferable, but if not the COVID-19 manager should have access to appropriate clinical advice. The manager will coordinate efforts within their organizations for a phased approach to training and play. They will coordinate with teams and competitions providing information and strategic support. They will outline equipment cleaning measures and social distancing expectations.

## **INSURANCE:**

Each Club should ensure that it has liaised with its insurers before permitting return to activity or play to ensure that any such activity is adequately insured and that any additional steps required by a particular insurer are considered.

Clubs are encouraged to develop their own Covid-19 specific waivers. These waivers must stand alone in a registration package and should not be included with other liability waivers.

Once we are given the greenlight to commence with practices and games, **RNC will require signed waivers by all participants** and will be administered through our registration platform.

## **DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES:**

***All Clubs are required to submit to RNC a Practice and Coronavirus Prevention Plan.***

This plan details your policies for return to activity, practicing, playing, sanitizing, social distancing, spectator expectations, etc. In doing so, clubs need to be sure to comply with local laws and any policies implemented by government or local authorities.

## **PRACTICE PROCEDURES FOR RETURN TO PLAY**

*These return to play procedures are the expectations of Rugby NorCal and should be used as a framework for your own club's Coronavirus prevention plan. Your local and community Covid-19 guidelines take precedence in all situations.*

### **Pre-Practice RSVP**

All players must RSVP to attend each practice. The rugby club will send an email with Practice RSVP links for the upcoming week. This assists with contact tracing and small group planning. Contact tracing is especially crucial and essential in the return to play guidelines via the state of California.

### **Arrival/Check In**

#### *Player Drop Off*

- Players must arrive ten minutes before practice starts and arrive wearing a cloth face covering.
- Players will be directed to the designated waiting area.

### *Waiting Area for Symptom Check*

- Assigned waiting spots for players are clearly marked and oblige physical distancing.

### *Symptom Check by the Club*

- Players will be asked if they have any symptoms as per the Health Self-Check (Appendix 1)
- Players answering YES will not be allowed to enter the facility or practice.

### *Temperature Check*

- Players will have their temperature checked.
- A temperature above 99.6 F will not be allowed to enter the facility or practice. If a fever is found, the athlete should contact their local physician and self-isolate for 14 days unless a negative test is confirmed beforehand.

### *Hand Sanitizer*

- Players must disinfect their hands with hand sanitizer before entering the facility.
- The club is encouraged to provide but could mandate players to bring their own.

### *Designated Kit Area*

- Players must drop any items they have in the designated kit area.
- The kit area to drop items is marked to observe social distancing.
- Players will be directed to their assigned training area.

### *Assigned Training Area*

- Each player will have an assigned training area.
- Assigned training areas observe social distancing.
- Assigned training areas are marked.

## **Practice**

### *Practice Size/Type/Equipment*

- Group size must meet the local government approved amount.
- Only non-contact drills and activities are allowed.
- No use of communal equipment, including balls.

### *Coaches*

- Coaches must follow the same check-in procedures as players.
- Coaches must always observe social distancing.
- Role/confirmation against the RSVP sheet must be taken of all players, coaches, and others in attendance.

### *Spectators*

- Spectators are discouraged for practices. It is best to drop-off and pick-up.
- Anyone who does stay at practice will be directed to the designated area.
- The designated area for spectators observes social distancing.
- Carpooling is not allowed.

### *Departure*

- After practice players will retrieve any items they brought with them from the kit area.
- A 15-minute gap will be placed between practice groups to limit the number of persons in contact and provide a connected group for contact tracing purposes.

### *Sanitation*

- Balls and equipment must be sanitized prior to practice, during breaks, and at the conclusion.
- Hand sanitizer must be available by the club and used by all in attendance prior to taking the pitch for practice, during breaks, and at the conclusion.

### *Restrooms*

- Only one person at a time can use the restroom.
- Locker rooms, changing rooms and showers should remain closed and inaccessible.

### *Athlete Fitness and Return to Participation*

After many months of downtime, it's critical to take into consideration athlete fitness upon return. Injuries could occur if the athletes are pushed too hard too soon. Clubs and coaches should develop plans that ramp up players gradually and assume a low baseline of fitness. Safety is paramount.

## **MATCH DAY EXPECTATIONS**

Once we are granted full contact play, the items below will supplement the Practice Procedures.

**FIELDS** -- All fields will be set with the required [Technical Zone](#) as per USA Rugby standards with the expectation that there is larger space for team benches to oblige social distancing. We are actively encouraging parents and family members to drop the athletes off and pick up once the game is complete to minimize the volume of people around the field. If absolutely necessary to attend, spectators should be on the opposite side of the field to the players and must be appropriately socially distanced from one another. Please see below for more info specific to spectators.

**REFEREE** -- Pre and post game referee meetings will be held in the open area of the pitch away from all other persons and with six feet of social distancing upheld.

**ATHLETIC TRAINERS** -- Only one person allowed at the AT table at a time. No grouping/oblige social distancing. Hand sanitizer will be utilized by both the AT and athlete pre and post treatment. Cloth face covering is recommended for the athlete during AT treatment. Trainers will be required to wear masks and other protective gear. The trainer will ensure sanitation of the AT area after each athlete.

**SPECTATORS** -- It is recommended that vulnerable populations such as the elderly and those who may be experiencing any symptoms refrain from attending youth rugby matches. Spectators should also answer the health self check questionnaire below. Spectators that do attend must uphold six foot distancing from other spectators and will be required to wear masks.

**APPENDIX 1**



**ATHLETE/COACH/REF/AT/VOLUNTEER  
HEALTH SELF-CHECK**

The below "health self-check" should be used by athletes and families before gathering for any type of fitness or rugby training.

**Are you currently diagnosed with or believe you may have COVID-19? \* Yes No**

**Have you had any of the below symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?**

**High temperature (fever) \* Yes No**

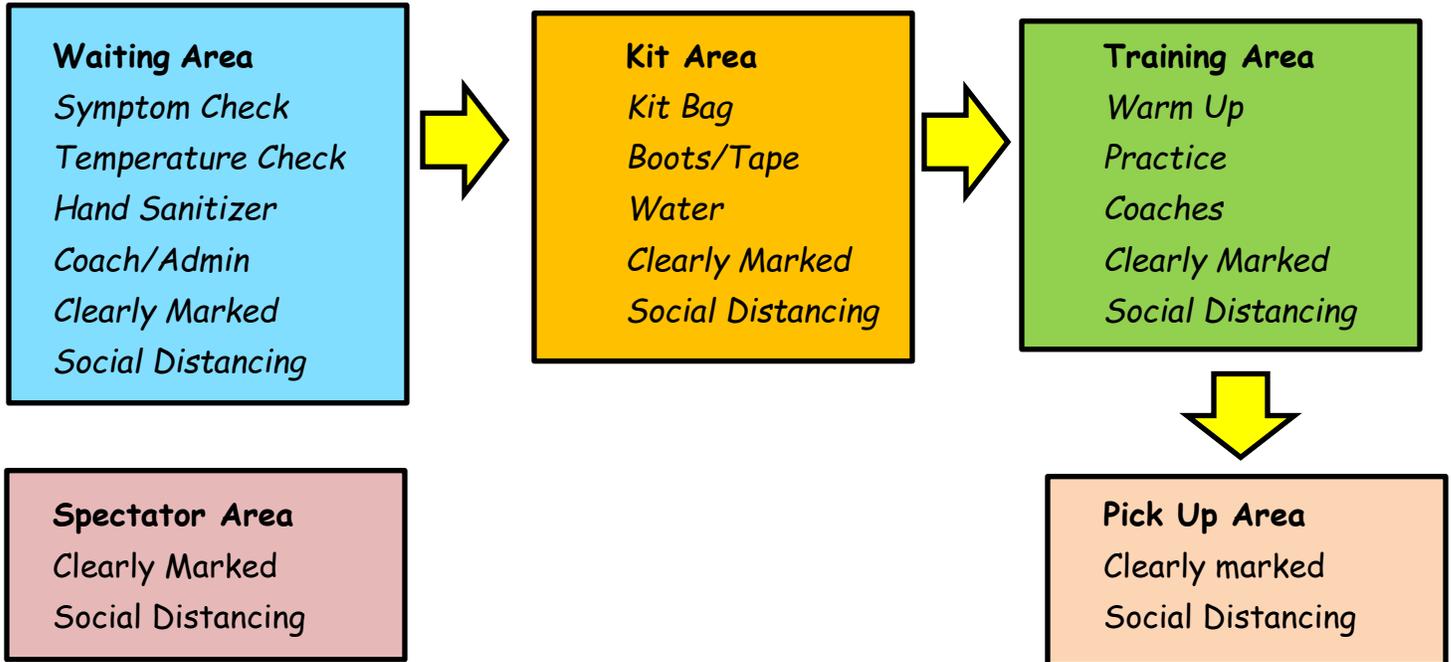
**A new continuous cough \* Yes No**

**New unexplained shortness of breath \* Yes No**

**Have you been in contact with a COVID-19 confirmed or suspect case in the previous 14 days \* Yes  
No Maybe**

\*\* If you have answered YES to any of these questions you should stay at home and inform your Club COVID Manager and medical practitioner. You should follow your local government's current Public Health guidance.

## APPENDIX 2



### Example Field Set Up

