



***MUNSTER RUGBY RETURN TO PLAY  
GUIDANCE FOR COACHES***

## Overview

This document is designed to guide decision making for a safe and successful return to play for all players. This document is only guidance and coaches are asked to use their discretion alongside the outlined information provided.

## What should training look like upon returning to rugby?

Coaches should be mindful that when players return to training following easing of restrictions, some players despite best efforts in remote training programs may have been relatively inactive for the last 3 months. A slow and steady return is needed to allow all players to get back up to the level they were at before this break.

## What intensity should we train at?

Training intensity should be gradually increased over the first 3–4-week period. Use the RPE scale to judge how difficult the players are finding the session. This can be done by randomly asking 3 -4 players across different positions how hard that game or drill was out of 10. A game in the first few weeks

Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE Scale)	
10	Maximal
9	Really, Really, Hard
8	Really Hard
7	
6	Hard
5	Challenging
4	Moderate
3	Easy
2	Really Easy
1	Rest

should be a 6-7 out of 10. However, be mindful that what was a 6-7 before the break may now be a 9-10 for some. So, be conservative in your first few weeks and don't be afraid to regress a drill if too difficult or advance if players are finding it too easy. The best blend of return to rugby is an intermittent type of session switching between games and drills. The games will be fun and intense allowing the players to get back up to previous training levels and have some fun. While the drills will allow for a lower intensity of a 3-4 out of 10 allowing the players to get a break from the higher intensity activity will also allowing them to

focus on honing their skills which may be rusty after the break. As the players get used to training again their skills will simultaneously improve allowing for a greater quality games as the weeks progress. Be patient and trust the process.

## How long should training last?

Training duration is an important consideration, in the first few week's coaches should aim for 2-3 rotations of a game and drill. Games should last 5-10 minutes with coach using discretion for quality and intensity of the game to judge duration. Drills should last 5-10 minutes also, giving the player time to practice the skill and recover before the next game. A 10-15 minute warm up to prepare the players appropriately should proceed this so the players are prepared for the session. For a sample warm up

click [here](#). Including the warm up, it is advised sessions are 45-60 minutes in duration. For some ideas on games and drills to use check out our coaching resources page [here](#).

## How should this be done?

- Fitness through the game using variations of tag/touch by changing the game constraints (wider pitch, fewer players, run to try line after you tag/touch). For examples click [here](#)
- Animal Movement challenges will require full body movement and control and could be a fun addition to the warm up or in between games. For examples click [here](#).
- Skills sections to incorporate learning/coaching breaks within session.

### Sample session Plan

TIMING	DRILL/SKILL	GAME/ACTIVITY	COACHING POINTS/DETAIL
<b>A</b> 7 minutes	<b>Warm Up -Dynamic Movements (and Games)</b>	Game-stuck in the mud, end ball etc. <a href="#">See warm up videos</a>	<i>Dynamic Movements</i> <i>Muscle Activation</i> <i>Prep for session</i>
<b>B</b> 5-10 mins	<b>High tempo touch/tag game</b>	Small sided continuous gameplay <a href="#">See Examples Here</a>	<i>Intensity kept high (6-7 out of 10)</i> <i>Coach while play continues and during planned breaks. 'No Stop and Tell'</i>
<b>C</b> 5-7mins	<b>Activity</b> <b>Skills and integrated movements</b>	Skills Block 1 <a href="#">See Examples Here</a>  Movement challenges <a href="#">See Examples Here</a>	<i>No static – maintain dynamic skill development i.e. keep players moving</i> <i>Lower intensity but a focus on strength and movement through the exercise</i>
<b>D</b> 5-10 mins	<b>High tempo touch/ tag game</b>	Change game conditions (wide pitch, two touch turnover etc)	<i>Intensity kept high (6-7 out of 10)</i> <i>Coach while play continues and during planned breaks. 'No Stop and Tell'</i>
<b>E</b> 5-7mins	<b>Activity</b> <b>Skills and integrated movements</b>	Skills Block 2 – progression or regression from skills block 1 <a href="#">See Examples Here</a>  Movement challenges <a href="#">See Examples Here</a>	<i>Skills – Coaches choice. Sample Activities <a href="#">here</a></i> <i>Lower intensity but a focus on strength and movement through the exercise</i>
<b>F</b> 5-10 mins	<b>Players Choice</b> <b>Let the players decide the game</b>  <b>Warm down (3min)</b>	Change game conditions (wide pitch, two touch turnover etc)	<i>Intensity kept high (6-7 out of 10)</i> <i>Coach while play continues and during planned breaks. 'No Stop and Tell'</i>

\*Athletic development - For coaches comfortable with coaching S&C – a more definite conditioning program and circuit block (push ups, squats, lunge, planks etc) could be introduced after week 3, with a strength focus and good movement. With no competitions then the preference should be to graduate players back by using games and movement challenges for exercise!

## Coaching Code:

- Keep It Simple
- Keep It Safe
- Make it FUN and Enjoyable
- Ask Questions – don't tell, tell, tell..
- Listen to them – don't ignore their feedback
- Be Positive – encourage and praise
- Take water breaks during games and activities

## Session Review (APES Principle):

- Was the session **Active** and varied?
- Did it have **Purpose** – what were my objectives?
- Did the player **Enjoy** the session – how do you know, did you ask them?
- Was the environment **Safe** – did I ensure the players and the area we trained was safe?

## IRFU #READYFORRUGBY ROADMAP

IRFU #READYFORRUGBY ROADMAP				
	COVID-19 SAFETY PLANNING PHASE	NON-CONTACT PHASE	CONTACT PHASE	STRUCTURED RUGBY PHASE
WHEN CAN 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 four weeks contact readiness training, when government measures allow.
WHAT CAN WE DO?	Ensure COVID-19 Safety Plan is up to date Reengage COVID-19 Safety Officers Reengage COVID-19 Compliance Officers	Non-contact training Fun, Social & Competitive Non-Contact Rugby e.g. Touch Rugby & Tag Rugby matches Open your club as an outdoor amenity for your community	Contact training All clubs & schools who wish to play structured contact rugby will need to undergo a minimum of 4 weeks of contact readiness training	Localised Rugby Matches
WHAT SUPPORT IS THERE?	#ReadyForRugby Support Webinars & Resources Provincial Support & Resources	#ReadyForRugby Support Webinars & Resources Provincial Support & Resources	#ReadyForRugby Support Webinars & Resources Provincial Support & Resources	#ReadyForRugby Support Webinars & Resources Provincial Support & Resources
<b>#ReadyForRugby</b> is an IRFU campaign to help rugby communities come together safely when government restrictions are eased. There are three key elements. <b>Rugby Roadmap:</b> A roadmap for a safe and graduated return to contact rugby <b>Rugby Offerings:</b> Options to keep rugby in line with public health measures <b>Rugby Support:</b> A programme of development and education opportunities				
<b>ALWAYS:</b> STAY AT HOME IF FEELING SICK   OBSERVE HAND HYGIENE & COUGHING ETIQUETTE   KEEP SOCIAL DISTANCING				

## COVID-19 Guidelines For Rugby Clubs And Schools

### IRFU GUIDELINES FOR LIVING WITH COVID-19: OVERVIEW

	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
TRAINING	Normal training sessions can take place with protective measures	Contact training in pods of up to 15*	Non contact training only in pods of up to 15	Non contact training only in pods of up to 15	Individual Training Only
MATCHES	Permitted	Permitted	None	None	None
SHOWER & CHANGING FACILITIES	Open with protective measures	TBC	Closed	Closed	Closed
SPECTATORS	200 permitted**	100 permitted**	None	None	None

Further Details:

<https://www.irishrugby.ie/2021/03/31/readyforrugby-support-webinar-an-introduction-to-coaching-touch-rugby/>

<https://www.munsterrugby.ie/domestic/coaching/>