

Valley Rugby Union

Return to Rugby COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Protocol

Overview:

For a safe and successful return to playing rugby Valley Rugby Union (VRU) is implementing protocols to align with public health measures, Rugby Nova Scotia's return to play plan, and Rugby Canada's return to play plan. The protocols will be updated as recommendations from these organizations change. All updates will be communicated through the communication plan identified below.

To ensure the safety of ourselves, our families, and our community, and to ensure we do our part in meeting public health's goals of preserving our healthcare system and our public health system during the pandemic **all members, coaches, volunteers, participants and parents must comply with all protocols to participate.**

Every individual has their own personal, and family risk factors to consider. Anyone who is not yet comfortable to participate will be welcome when they are ready.

Communication Plan:

The Club currently communicates with its members through text, Facebook Groups and Email. All COVID related communications will be relayed through these. Updates will also be posted to our social media pages.

Further, an initial video call will be set up through Zoom to review the protocols including changes or areas for improvement and other relevant information. These will be mandatory and notes will be posted for participants that are unable to attend the scheduled time.

Respecting Social Distancing measures:

- Participant close contact groups will be kept to the limits prescribed by Public Health (10 currently) and be kept consistent to the extent possible and will be labelled by Team and a number (e.g. Group 1, 2, 3, 4). They will have designated areas for training, play, equipment and preparation that will be marked on the field and sideline.
- Total number of participants (including coaches, volunteers and parents) will be limited to the number prescribed by Public Health (50 currently).
- Participants will be grouped, to the extent possible, within pre-existing close contact groupings (families, cohabitation, close social groupings)
- Activities will be limited to outdoor facilities.

Hand Hygiene

Hand sanitizer will be made available at the field and all participants will be required to sanitize their hands before and after a session and prior to using water bottles.

Cough Hygiene

Participants will be expected to use proper cough/sneeze etiquette - turn away and cover mouth with elbow.

Environmental Changes

- The field will be clearly marked to accommodate the social distancing requirements.
- Each group will have its own staging and training area
- An area will be designated in the event a participant arrives with symptoms or develops symptoms after arriving.

Equipment Protocols

Control Sharing

- Equipment will be labeled and assigned to specific groups as per current social gathering limits or close contact group limits and kept separate (including ball pump, kicking tees, flags) and sanitized before and after sessions (see below).
- If flags are used they will be assigned to a group and sanitized before/after session.
- If there is use of tackle shields, it will remain in their designated group with sanitized before/after session.
- Cones will only be handled by coaches and practice facilitators.

Cleaning/disinfection

- Equipment will be cleaned with a bio-safe cleaner. It will be sprayed on equipment and left to drive. Alternatively, the use of bleach (9 parts water to 1 part liquid bleach) - sprayed on to equipment, left for a minimum of 1 minute then wiped down, or water and detergent may be used with a brush.
- Jerseys (for games) will be kept in separate sealed bins for clean and soiled. They will be laundered with laundry detergent and hot water that meets current disinfection standards (minimum 60 degrees C). Hand hygiene must be completed before handling clean jerseys and after handling soiled jerseys.

First Aid

- First aid kit will include disposable masks and extra hand sanitizer.

Attendance/Contact Tracing

Attendance of all participants (coaches/volunteers/athletes/parents) will be tracked to assist in the event of Public Health requiring assistance with contact tracing.

Screening/Attestation/Liability

On the day of an event (training and/or games) all participants must complete the screening protocol and attestation. This can be found [online here](#) and includes:

- Symptom check (using 811.ns),
- Current NS public Health travel restrictions within 14 days,
- close contact exposure (confirmed by public health),
- Attestation and liability waiver.

It can be completed in minutes and must be completed prior to participation. Prior to each session, participants must sign in with a clipboard, which will restate the information in the online form.

Participant/Athlete Protocols

All athletes are required to:

- Evaluate their personal/family risk and decide when it is appropriate for them to return to play
 - At-risk populations include anyone with compromised immune systems, older individuals (>65), those with co-existing medical conditions including, but not limited to: diabetes, cardiac disease, severe asthma, chronic lung conditions and autoimmune diseases.
- Register with the club <https://reg.sportlomo.com/rugbycanada>
- Complete the [screen/attestation/waiver](#) prior to their first session
- Safely arrive ready to go
 - Travel to and from rugby via the safest option available to them
 - Attend rugby activities already dressed in the appropriate kit. There are no change rooms
 - Sign-in when they arrive at the training location.
- Be self sufficient
 - Fill and bring own water
 - Sharing of water bottles is not permitted so be sure to bring enough to last the session
- Be Considerate, Be Honest
 - To keep everyone safe, be aware of the current public health requirements and be honest and upfront if having any COVID related symptoms

Positive test or onset of symptoms at an event

If a participant develops symptoms they must immediately remove themselves from the event and inform the COVID safety coordinator or their delegate.

The individual must go to the designated area to ensure adequate social distancing and provide a disposable mask. They will be asked to contact 811 and must be excluded from any further events/activities until cleared by public health.

The close contact list and full participant list for the will be provided to the RNS COVID Safety Manager and shared with Public Health if requested.