**RETURN TO COMMUNITY RUGBY UPDATE**

Following the latest Welsh Government update, the Tier 4 measures announced this week by First Minister Mark Drakeford include a suspension of all community sport in Wales from Monday 28 December. This includes every level of community rugby in Wales.
The WRU continues to work towards the phased return of community rugby in Wales and continues to work closely with the National Sport Group, established to oversee the response of sports in Wales to the current pandemic.
With this in mind, a series of recommendations have been agreed by the WRU’s Community Board and approved by the full WRU Board, **to be implemented when conditions allow**, in consultation with the National Sport Group.
These include:
- The re-introduction of an element of contact rugby and some form of competition with modified laws and regulations, starting with Premiership and Championship clubs. Clubs in those divisions will be contacted before this phase is sanctioned and given a six weeks’ training period before any level of competitive contact rugby is authorised. When Welsh Government guidelines allow, all other levels of the game in Wales will be able to resume touch rugby within the current guidelines and will be given six weeks’ notice before the contact rugby phase is rolled out further.
- The Welsh Rugby Union is still very confident that some form of competitive community rugby will take place in Wales before the end of the current season, and has decided to extend the current season beyond May 2021 to ensure every effort is made to allow this to happen.
- However, the decision has been reached that National League rugby will not take place this season. This covers all male and female senior and youth WRU National Leagues and as a result there will be no promotion or relegation this season; current league status will be carried into next season.

**WRU Community Director Geraint John said, “We are working hard with all partners to bring some form of competitive community rugby back before the end of the season and we feel this plan reflects that.**We are acutely aware how much people are missing rugby. We also know that our clubs, who have been fantastic throughout this public health crisis, continue to face challenges. We have heard loud and clear their concerns about people potentially leaving the game during this enforced change to all our rugby lives.
“However, we need to bring the game back safely and sustainably when Welsh Government guidelines allow. These new measures have been submitted by our Community Game Board and have the approval of the National Sporting Group and the full WRU Board. We want to provide clarity to our clubs and the people who make up our game in Wales. Whilst we acknowledge this not a return to normal, it signposts a route back to competitive rugby.”

**WRU Operations Director Julie Paterson added, “We continue to work closely with Welsh Government and other partner bodies to progress with our Return to Community Rugby plan and bring rugby back safely.**. These measures, and particularly the phased return to contact rugby, are important milestones on our journey, and hopefully the extension of the season will provide us with a further step back to full fitness.”