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| **Next stage of phased return to community rugby following Welsh Government update** |

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| Ahead of the next phase of the Welsh Rugby Union’s, Return to Community Rugby roadmap (Phase 2b), and following today’s Welsh Government update (Friday 31 July), the national governing body has issued a clear reminder of the processes that must be followed before clubs and teams can start to organise club-organised rugby training.The Welsh Rugby Union recently outlined a phased, safety-first Return to Rugby plan for the community game following Welsh Government guidance which stated that clubs can start to organise non-contact, small group training **from** August 1st, provided they, along with players and coaches first fulfil a set of strict safety criteria [[SEE THAT UPDATE HERE](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=bGpvbmVzQHdydS53YWxlcw==&i=493A501A1A1398)].Since then, detailed advice has been issued to those involved in the community game in Wales and a series of webinars have been held with Club Operations Managers and other key volunteers covering key areas such as the practicalities of preparing players, volunteers and club facilities for training sessions; changes to first aid procedures; the registration process and a return to training fund for clubs. In addition, the WRU Community coaching department will publish an activity guide and webinar for coaches to support the safe return to training at all levels of the game which includes safety guidance and ideas for session plans within the current restrictions. **This coaching guidance will now be updated following today’s news that there is no longer the need for social distancing within the under 11 age group from Monday 3 August, therefore tag and touch rugby activities can now be included in mini rugby training sessions once the below protocol has been followed. This applies to under 7 to under 11 rugby only, with under 7s and under 8s playing tag rugby as per the WRU player pathway and under 9s to under 11s able to take part in touch rugby activities. Strict social distancing is still in place for all other age groups.****With player welfare of paramount importance, and in order to help reduce the spread of Covid-19, the Welsh Rugby Union is not sanctioning contact rugby of any kind even within this age bracket at present, but will review this area of the game periodically as part of a phased approach and in line with Welsh Government guidance.With all community rugby in Wales having been suspended for the last four months, it is vital to re-introduce contact rugby safely and in a progressive way during this period. Therefore there should be no tackling, rucking, mauling, line-outs, scrums or matches against other clubs or teams during this initial return to rugby phase at any level of the game.****REMINDER OF KEY STEPS THAT NEED TO HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED BEFORE ATTENDING OR ORGANISING CLUB TRAINING SESSIONS:****The WRU online registration process** – which must be complete for players, coaches, referees and team administrators in order to take an active part in the community game in Wales – has been suspended until now along with all rugby activity in Wales. Registration will reopen on Saturday 1 August but before WRU registration can be complete, all senior and youth players, coaches, referees, administrators and parents of junior players must complete **World Rugby’s Covid-19 awareness course**. Once players have completed the World Rugby course and the WRU online registration process, and clubs have fulfilled the **WRU Community Covid-safe checklist** provided to ensure they are 'good to go', they can start to welcome players, coaches and volunteers back to training, non-contact training sessions can start to be organised in small groups. **ALL INDIVIDUALS PLANNING ON ATTENDING A TRAINING SESSION MUST FIRST COMPLETE AN ONLINE SYMPTOM CHECKER ON** [**WRUGAMELOCKER.WALES**](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=bGpvbmVzQHdydS53YWxlcw==&i=493A501A1A1390)**. THIS MUST BE DONE BEFORE EVERY TRAINING SESSION BY PLAYERS, COACHES AND OTHER SUPPORT STAFF.**WRU Operations Director Julie Paterson said, “The safety of everyone involved in Welsh community rugby and their wider communities is of paramount importance and as we prepare for the next stage of the phased return of community rugby in Wales, we are very grateful to the 300 + Club Operations Managers and other volunteers throughout our clubs and groups who have worked closely with us over the past month to get us ready for this first stage of club-organised training.“We all want to continue to progress towards the next phases of our return to rugby so it’s vital that safety remains everyone’s top priority as we return to our club environments. We are determined to be part of the solution to Covid-19 and for that to happen it is important we all continue to work together.”WRU Community Director Geraint John added, “From a rugby perspective, we are asking everyone within the game, from players, parents, coaches and other volunteers to adhere to the guidance we have provided to help us return safely and progressively to rugby activities as government advice allows. “The re-introduction of touch and tag rugby activities will be welcomed by those involved in mini rugby and this initial return to non-contact rugby will give all players and coaches the chance to get back up to speed using skills-based activities, honing individual and team skills that will benefit the game in the long-term. The activity guide for coaches will provide ideas for safe sessions but we are also asking them to be innovative and to encourage creativity.” **ALL THE LINKS YOU NEED:**Last season’s registered players, coaches, referees along with Club Operations Managers and club secretaries have received an easy-to-follow, step-by-step guide regarding the whole registration process. However, [click here](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=bGpvbmVzQHdydS53YWxlcw==&i=493A501A1A1393) for all the relevant guidance to date.\* [CLICK HERE](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=bGpvbmVzQHdydS53YWxlcw==&i=493A501A1A1396) for the **World Rugby** Covid awareness course. \*Go to [wrugamelocker.wales](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=bGpvbmVzQHdydS53YWxlcw==&i=493A501A1A1397) to complete all other Return to Community Rugby steps - the WRU online registration process, the Covid symptom checker and for all coaching support. Any new players, coaches or volunteers to the game will also need to follow the above process before attending club training.  |

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