

Season 2020/21 'Return to Rugby Roadmap' unveiled by Scottish Rugby

Scottish Rugby unveiled their roadmap earlier today (3rd July 2020) on how clubs and schools could manage the return to playing rugby in Scotland for the 2020/21 season.

The six-stage roadmap for clubs and schools is aligned to the Scottish Government's own phased exit from lockdown and in line with recommendations from World Rugby.



Stewarts Melville College v George Watsons College

Taking physical distancing and Scottish Government's own phased routemap into account clubs are being advised that no adult competitive rugby is envisaged before October 2020. This is due to the number of stages to be worked through and, specifically, the uncertainty around timing of when full adult contact rugby training and therefore matches can resume.

Clubs should not expect a traditional season in 2020/21. The rugby season may look very different, with regional and/or local fixtures likely to replace the competitive league programmes at many levels in order to stay in line with Scottish Government Guidelines, physical distancing and travel restrictions.

Clubs and schools will be required to meet three specific criteria before any rugby activity can begin and meet further requirements before full contact training and matches can begin.

Compliance with the public health, hygiene and physical

distancing requirements in place locally at that time will be required at all times.

Clubs will be required to meet the following criteria;

- Undertake regular risk assessments of indoor and outdoor facilities, (when appropriate), including checks across club utilities such as electricity, fire alarms, gas and water and such factors to ensure a safe environment for players, coaches, volunteers and visitors to return to.
- Appoint a Covid-19 Safety Co-ordinator in each club before any activity can begin. The purpose of this role is to oversee public health and safety measures across the club, ensuring that the club is operating in a safe manner and adheres to Scottish Government and Scottish Rugby guidelines.
- All coaches, match officials and volunteers to have completed a mandatory online Scottish Rugby online course before traditional full contact training and matches encompassing a specific World Rugby endorsed Covid-19 module.



Linlithgow v Hillfoots

Scottish Rugby is committing support and resources to help clubs meet the criteria and ensure the resumption of training, leading to competitive rugby, is undertaken safely and in line with Scottish Government Guidelines.

To address the most common question posed by clubs around when certain activities can take place Scottish Rugby's Return to Rugby Roadmap illustrates the sequence of events which need to happen until such time as competitive rugby can resume.

The implementation of Phase 3 by the Scottish Government of its lockdown easing will enable Scottish Rugby to begin Stage 3 of its own roadmap which could allow the adult game to "Return to Train" for small groups, with potential for gyms to open. Further guidance on the return of contact rugby for

Children and Young People, (as per the Scottish Government announcement on 24 June), will be issued to clubs soon.

Scottish Government's Phase 4 will begin once the Covid virus is suppressed to low levels and is no longer deemed a significant risk to the public. This could trigger Scottish Rugby to move to its final set of stages, starting with Stage 4 which could enable a "Return to Train" for larger groups with the introduction of modified contact, activities (e.g. small sided games with a modified tackle and breakdown area).

The game may then be able to progress to Scottish Rugby's Return to Rugby Stage 5 which opens up "Return to Play" opportunities, with potential friendly matches and full team training possible, Stage 5 also indicates the potential opening of club houses and indoor facilities.

The Return to Rugby Roadmap will conclude with Phase 6 which could allow competitive matches to commence.

Scottish Rugby continues to work closely with Scottish Government and sportscotland to ensure a Return to Rugby is undertaken in a safe manner as Scotland recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. A specific adult competitive season start date will be issued in due course as more clarity emerges and will be subject to the latest government advice at the time.



Watsonians v Hillhead-Jordanhill

Scottish Rugby will also provide clarity soon on the return of competitive rugby in youth and women's rugby season.

Speaking about the announcement, Sheila Begbie, Scottish Rugby's Director of Rugby Development said: "These are really uncertain times and our priority is to ensure that a return to rugby is done only when it is safe to do so. Despite Scotland making good progress in relation to Covid-19 we must all remember that the virus has not gone away.

“The safety of our rugby community is paramount, and we hope the Return to Rugby Roadmap provides some clarity for clubs to support them with their planning and re-engaging with their players, volunteers and parents. Following discussion with the Scottish Government a potential re-start to the season in October seems realistic.

“Our re-start to the season will be highly dependent on Scotland’s continued progress out of lockdown and against the Scottish Government’s Routemap phases.

“We would very much like to communicate to clubs and schools that the 2020-21 season will be different, and we look forward to being able to specify more details in the very near future.”



Edinburgh University v St. Andrews University

Ian Barr – Vice-President of Scottish Rugby said: “I am delighted Scottish Rugby is in a position to share this important Roadmap guidance with clubs.

“I know there has been a lot of work undertaken by the Threat Management Group and Rugby Development on this plan and the clarity being issued is very welcome.

“The support of the Scottish Government has been hugely helpful and I fully endorse the responsible approach we are taking.

“I know clubs will be itching to return to play but it is vital this phased approach is followed and we continue to keep everyone involved in the sport we love both safe and informed.”

Click to view the [Roadmap Infographic](#).