

Feedback from grassroots community to help shape direction of male adult domestic rugby

Feedback from the grassroots community around Scotland will help shape the direction of the male adult domestic rugby season going forward.

Scottish Rugby received more than 600 feedback submissions over the course of February and March and has committed to engaging with key stakeholders in the club game to review the male adult season structure on an annual basis going forward.

A number of key themes have emerged loud and clear throughout the engagement:

Start dates matter: There's a growing appetite to review when the club season begins. The majority of the feedback suggests earlier starts – potentially in late summer – to make the most of better weather and lighter evenings, while still maintaining a proper off-season for recovery.

Breaks in the calendar: Many expressed support for planned breaks during the season. Structured non-rugby weekends were seen as vital – not just for physical recovery, but also for maintaining long-term engagement in the game.

International windows: The question of playing through these

periods drew opinions on both sides. While some welcomed uninterrupted league flow, others highlighted reduced availability and split focus during these international weekends. It's clear there's a need for balance – and flexibility – when it comes to managing the domestic calendar alongside the international stage.

Public holidays: Almost universally, players and volunteers supported a proper festive break in December and early January. A scheduled pause over the holidays isn't just sensible from a player welfare point of view – it also gives everyone involved in the game a chance to step back and recharge.

Regional league redraws: Travel remains a major talking point, particularly for clubs in rural or remote areas. Long journeys week after week can stretch squads, budgets, and commitment. Many voiced support for redrawing regional leagues to better reflect geography and reduce unnecessary strain.

What's next?

This review is only the beginning. Feedback will inform the next phase of discussions and planning, with the goal of making practical, player-friendly, and sustainable changes to Scottish Rugby's male adult season structure in season 2025/26, but also to future seasons.

Scottish Rugby's Head of Competitions and Compliance, Vicky Cox said: "Firstly, I'd like to thank everyone for their insights, which have been honest, thoughtful, and above all, passionate about the future of our game. This feedback is shaping meaningful discussions about how we design a season that not only supports player welfare but strengthens rugby at every level.

"We've seen some key themes emerge from this engagement, and we'll look to get confirmation on addressing some of these as we go forward with this process."