



# HAMPSHIRE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LIMITED

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12<sup>th</sup> August 2020

## To all Hampshire RFU Clubs

Further Update – 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Following my update last week that was circulated to Hampshire Club Chairs and Secretaries, as well as posted on the HRFU Website, I have had a number of individuals approach me for clarification of the RFU position on Return to Rugby and RDO Resource.

As a result, I have been in dialogue with the RFU CEO, Bill Sweeney and RFU Board Members, as well as taking part in an RFU Council meeting yesterday, giving me the opportunity to express the concerns of my Hampshire constituent clubs.

Specifically, concern was raised with me over the much amended Return to Play Roadmap and it's specific statements on Redy4Rugby and Two Touch. I asked specifically what the process for agreement to move to Stage C was and how was this communicated. As a result, the Community Game Update yesterday advised the challenge our game has in re-introducing contact activity, when social distancing remains a core part of Government policy to fight the Covid19 virus. The process and update is included below, but with one important change that should be highlighted.....and that is the opportunity to develop non-contact skills based training in the larger groups, an important step towards preparation to play the XV-a-Side game, as and when we are able to do so.

Update on the return to community rugby

Last Saturday we announced a positive step forward on the **Return to Community Rugby Roadmap**, which has been updated to move from **Stage B to Stage C**.

Our roadmap was first published ahead of the Government releasing its framework for return to recreational team sport. When that Government guidance was issued there was a requirement to provide a detailed assessment of exposure risk through face to face contact across both contact and non-contact rugby together with evidence of mitigations put in place to allow for safe return in some format of the game. The latest roadmap reflects those discussions and provides further guidance to clubs on acceptable rugby activity within Stage C, as defined

The fact based medical assessment highlighted a significantly increased risk in transmission when playing full-contact rugby and therefore any form of contact rugby is still NOT permitted. Premiership Rugby will return this week but they are operating under Elite Sporting Guidance and strict Covid-19 testing regimes.

In order to move from group training in teams of six, we undertook an extensive process of submitting detailed fact based medical proposals to be scrutinised by the Government - including DCMS, Public Health England and N0 10. These proposals were approved last week and clubs can now play [Ready4Rugby](#). Subject to satisfactory operation through August we hope to be able to move to inter-club Ready4Rugby in September. Other Touch Rugby activity (including O2 Touch centres) will also be able to recommence.

The introduction of these options is in addition to non-contact skills based group activity, carried out following the Government's social distancing guidelines, which clubs would normally develop as part of their pre-season training. Guidance on acceptable training activity is provided in the [Guidance on Restarting Competitive Grassroots Rugby](#), and also in this [on-demand webinar](#). We would encourage coaches and clubs to share their best practice with others.

At the RFU Council meeting we were also provided with more information on the resources that will be available to the Community game, following the notice last week of a restructuring of the Development function at the RFU. Whilst employee consultation continues, it is important that the opportunity for those applying for new positions are not prejudiced and so I can only provide you with an overview of the strategic priorities going forward. Specifically, the resource will be focussed on club support and player development with each function having dedicated development officers to deliver the support and infrastructure our clubs identify as their specific needs. Player development includes the critical elements of coaches and match officials, so important to player retention and quality of experience. Whilst the detail of how that resource will be allocated to each County is still being worked on, HRFU is looking at our options on how best to support our clubs and rugby communities and this may include a dedicated in-County development role. We recognise the great work our Development team has undertaken, but also know that our clubs are resilient and forward thinking in their approach and have developed to their present position through the strong entrepreneurial base of their dedicated volunteers, in the past and now more than ever with recent events. We have a strong cluster network that we can expand and support and a strong County identity that will bring us together.

Many of you will be aware of the role I have played at the RFU, as Chair of Adult Competitions in bringing the 19/20 season to a close and then producing the roadmap to league rugby, once we reach the appropriate stage on the Restart Roadmap referred to earlier. I have also been a member of a Group that has been looking at Future Competitions Structures, which following a comprehensive survey and dedicated Webinars is in the process of publishing its recommendations to Clubs for their views and insight. This should be with clubs later this week or over the weekend and I would urge all clubs, if they have any questions to contact me or members of the HRFU Competitions Committee. Please offer either endorsement, hopefully, or constructive thoughts on changes or implementation. It is still intended to work towards implementation in September 2021, notwithstanding the uncertainty that surrounds the 2020/21 season.

Finally, a huge thank you to the members of the HRFU Board and Committees for their work over the past 5 months and the resilience and strength our Clubs have shown in very challenging circumstances. The teamwork and focus on our member clubs has been very well received and the results you have achieved in your rugby communities has been inspiring and supportive in return. We

are very fortunate to have such a talented group of volunteers, holding the values of our sport together, thus ensuring we have a solid future to look forward to.

Terry Burwell  
RFU Council Member, Hampshire