



SUOMEN RUGBYLIITTO

FINNISH RUGBY FEDERATION

PROTECTION CONCEPT FOR EXIT FROM THE CORONA-LOCKDOWN AND RESUMPTION OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Introduction

The government has recently restricted the activities of sports and those restrictions are in the process of being lifted.

While it is logical that individual outdoor sports, as well as those where participants don't come closer than several meters, may be resumed more easily in full, compared to indoor sports, team sports, and contact sports, it is nevertheless important and necessary that a sport such as rugby (a team contact sport) can gradually and safely make its way out of the lock-down.

Naturally, this concept will be continually adapted depending on the rules and regulations issued by the Finnish Government and input from World Rugby and Rugby Europe, the SRL based on this provided information will issue sports specific directives for a return to play.

This concept applies for all players.



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Risk Evaluation, Triage, and Hygiene

Throughout the phases, the following rules always remain in place:

1. Hygiene: Players must wash or sanitize hands before and after each training or competition session, avoid touching their faces, especially nose, eyes and mouth, and cough or sneeze into their elbow. Each player must bring their own water bottle, labelled with their name. They are encouraged to strictly follow the confederation hygiene rules and respect health, prevention, and general recommendations.
2. Self-Assessment: before going to their training or competition session, each player must complete a daily health self-assessment:
Do I have one of the following symptoms: symptoms of acute respiratory disease (including any flu-like symptoms as well as cough, sore throat, shortness of breath) OR a fever over 38 degrees OR sudden loss of smell or taste. If YES: do not go to training/competition, follow the advice of local health authorities. Each player must inform their coach if the answer to the question above is YES. Each club has the responsibility to ensure this information is provided by their players and that the rest of the group is informed if a player has such symptoms.
A player may not go to training if he/she has any of the symptoms above or if he/she or anyone in their household has been diagnosed with COVID-19
3. Tracking Presences: at each training/competition session, the club must keep track of the first name, last name, e-mail address, and phone number of each person present at the training session.
4. Player Safety: as is always the case in the sport of rugby, player safety must remain at the centre of each activity, be it in training or in competition. This rule takes on an extra-special importance in the current time, as injury prevention not only serves to keep players healthy, but also to avoid overburdening our emergency health care system.

Transportation to and from Training

Most rugby players in Finland train and play in or near the city where they live. They are encouraged to go to training by bicycle. Those who live further, are encouraged, in the current situation, to use private transportation, if you must share a car, ensure to do so with the same persons from the 10 person





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training group, to avoid overcrowding public transport. Those who must use public transport, should try to avoid peak hours to avoid overcrowding. If needed, training hours and duration will be adapted where possible.

Infrastructure

Rugby in Finland is practiced on grass fields and artificial turf. Usually they are soccer football pitches, which belong to the local municipality. The municipality is normally in charge of the management, maintenance, and cleaning of the structures. All rugby clubs are obligated to cooperate closely with their local Sports Authorities and municipalities regarding the re-opening and use of the sports facilities, as well as regarding observing all hygiene rules put in place by the local sports authority and city for the specific infrastructure they are using.

It is presumed that in the 1st phase, the dressing rooms, showers, normally provided by the sports facilities might remain closed. Players are recommended to come to training already in their training outfits, to bring a change of clothes, and to shower after training back at their homes. In addition, they are expected to bring any nutrition and beverages with them and keep them separated and always well-marked with their name. No organized or spontaneous social gatherings are to be held, besides the training sessions.

If possible: dispensing points for hydro-alcoholic gel and disposable paper with waste bins are to be put in place.

Organisation of Training and Competitions

The re-start strategy for rugby training and competition is designed to be deployed in phases. Each phase is of course contingent on the government and municipalities' individual decisions to re-open their sports facilities and to implement the new sets of rules.

It is recommended for clubs to set up online or phone team groups to organize training, follow-up, and information remotely.

Phase I

Duration: ~2 Weeks.

Before re-starting club training after the lock-down, each player must, in addition to the daily self-assessment, go through the following questions:

1. Do I currently have any of these symptoms: symptoms of acute respiratory disease (including Cough, sore throat, shortness of



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breath) OR Fever over 38 degrees OR sudden loss of smell or taste.

YES -> Don't start training, follow instructions of local health authorities:

Make the online COVID-19 assessment and management:
<https://omaolo.fi>

NO -> Next question

2. Do I currently have COVID-19 or did I have it in the past 2 months, to my knowledge? YES -> Don't start training, ask doctor if and when you can start
NO -> Next question

3. Do I have a history of cardiac problems or other pre-existing health conditions? YES: Don't start training, ask doctor if and when you can start NO: OK, you can go to training starting with Phase I

Premise:

The Finnish Government has put in place the following rules & constraints, valid from May 14 2020:

- a. Number of people: No more than 10 people can gather at any one time or place
- b. Social Distancing: 2 meters of distance must be observed at all times between one individual and the other.
- c. Any directives regarding the manipulation of balls and other sports equipment must be followed at all time.

General Practice:

Small-Group training sessions, max 10 people.

No close contact, keep a distance of Min 2 meters between individuals, keep a distance of 10 meters when running behind another athlete.

Try to keep the training groups always to the same 10 people (no mixing), to avoid cross contagion.

The intensity and duration of the training sessions must be moderated.

Specific Activities:

Global physical preparation:

Strength
Plyometric



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Aerobic conditioning
Stretching
Neuro-muscular
Technical work
Individual skills
Tactical work, etc.
Individual Kicking
Games involving these skills, always observing the 2-meter rule

Please note:

To avoid Cluster creation, if 1 person in the Training-Group of 10 is diagnosed with COVID-19, his entire training group must return to self-isolation unless a test can exclude that they have contracted COVID19. Isolation must be kept for 14 days. Those without symptoms for 14 days can go back to the training sessions.

Phase II

Duration: ~9 Weeks.

Premise:

Number of People: Phase II can be launched from 01.06.2020 as the Finnish Government will ease the rules on the number of people who can gather, from 10 to 50. (as of 04.05.2020 press release)

Social Distancing: Further guidelines will be announced regarding distancing, and contact. For now, we work on the 2m ruling.

General Practice:

Larger-Group training sessions, (Maximum 50 people, according to advice of the government).

General Practice:

Whole-team training sessions, light contact

Specific Activities:

Strength & Conditioning
Passing, Kicking, Lineout Throws
Small-and large-unit play with light opposition.



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Backline, forward play with light opposition.
Touch rugby with full team.

Please note:

To avoid Cluster creation, if 1 person in the Team is diagnosed with COVID-19, the entire training group must return to self-isolation unless a test can exclude that they have contracted COVID-19. Isolation must be kept for 14 days. Those without symptoms for 14 days can go back to the training sessions

Phase III

Duration: Continual

Premise:

Number of People: Phase III is hopefully the return to normal game activities from 01.08.2020

Social Distancing: Phase III can be launched once the social distancing rules are eased by the government and body contact is allowed.

General Practice:

Whole-team training sessions, friendly Matches, re-start of competitive league.

Specific Activities:

Full-team training, match preparation, playing friendly matches.

Please note:

To avoid Cluster creation, if 1 person in the Team is diagnosed with COVID-19, the entire training group must return to self-isolation until a test can exclude that they have contracted COVID-19.

1. Contact persons and responsibilities



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Each player, coach, parent, and club administrator are responsible for taking responsibility in playing his or her part in implementing this concept, and in standing together in solidarity to ensure the health and safety of all those involved.

Each club is further responsible for nominating one person in charge of each training session (generally coach or team manager), who will have the duty of completing the list of those presence, supervising the sessions and the compliance to the special constraints dictated by the current situation.

2. Communication of the Concept

The Suomen Rugbyliitto is responsible for communicating this concept to its clubs and members, as well as to the public. This will be done through the creation of graphics, posters, which will be made available to all clubs and will be made available on its website.

Each club is then responsible for communicating to all its members, and for ensuring the good understanding and implementation of the concepts throughout its own activities.