



PROVIDENCE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB RETURN TO RUGBY

Plan Summary

The Providence Rugby Football Club recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted sports on a global level. Ensuring that our club and players display the utmost consideration for the Rhode Island Department of Public Health (RIDOH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, in addition to any local city ordinances, is essential and a key component of our return to play protocol. We acknowledge that it is on all of us to exemplify the values of rugby and respect the wellbeing of our communities.

The highlights of our plan include:

- General guidelines on education, screening, sanitation, and physical distancing
 - Practice plans: non-contact conditioning, skills-building and physically distanced drills (ex. sprints, kicking practice, passing)
- An Administrator Checklist
- Our understanding of the risks

This plan was developed based on Rhode Island [Phase III: youth & adult sports guidelines](#) and [USA Rugby Return to Play Guidelines](#). This plan will be available to all players and coaches during practice and will be available publicly on our website: www.providencerugby.com.

General Guidelines

1. Education

- Regularly remind players of Rhode Island legislation and advice of medical officials as it pertains to the risk of COVID-19.
- Regularly remind players of the symptoms of COVID-19.

2. Daily Screening

- Require every player to complete a COVID-19 symptom check before leaving home.
- Every player will have their temperature checked before participating in rugby activities. If a player's temperature is above 99.6 degrees they will not be allowed to participate.

3. Practice extensive hygiene protocol

- Players are asked to sanitize or wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap, or use hand sanitizer before coming to practice and when returning home. Hand sanitizer will be available on site for player use.
- Players should avoid spitting.
- Players should use their elbow or a tissue (dispose of tissues immediately after use) when coughing or sneezing.
- Players must not share water bottles or use team water bottles or communal supplements.
- Players or coaches experiencing symptoms within the previous 14 days will not be allowed to practice
- Should a player develop an infection, all of those who have participated in practice will require isolation and testing.
- Any communal equipment used will be cleaned before and after practice.

4. Observe Physical Distance and Gathering Rules

- A distance of at least 6 feet between players helps to reduce the probability of virus transmission. Due to the movements involved in rugby, the distance will be kept as generous a distance as possible.
- Weekly practice plans regarding sport-specific drills and fitness training will be tailored to meet current city, state, and national guidelines regarding distancing, levels of contact, masks, etc. We are mindful that regulations constantly evolve with science and local levels of outbreak and will adapt our weekly practices accordingly to meet those standards.
- Players will be required to wear masks whenever distancing is not possible.
- Practice size will be under the number approved by the State of Rhode Island.

5. Reduce Body Contact to a Minimum

- Hand shaking, high fives, embracing, etc. in a group must be avoided.

6. Temporary Suspension of Car Pooling

- The formation of carpools for practice should be avoided unless traveling with an existing housemate.

7. Club events such as meetings and celebrations

- Social events will not be held.
- Team and board meetings should be held virtually.

PRFC Administrator Checklist

Area Preparation/Field Space

- Ensure activities and space is permitted for use.
- Extensively clean and sanitize shared contact materials and equipment
- Prepared temperature-check station
- Provide Social Distancing Rules, whether by signage or verbal communication
- No shared water bottles

Players

- Ensure players have not shown any of the following recognized COVID-19 symptoms in the last 14 days:
 - Currently diagnosed or believe you may have COVID-19?
 - High temperature/fever or chills?
 - New continuous cough or sore throat?
 - New unexplained shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
 - New unexplained muscle pain or headache?
 - New nausea, vomiting or diarrhea?
 - Recent loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you been in contact with a COVID-19 confirmed or suspect case?
 - Have you recently (within 14 days) traveled out of the country or to a state with a higher than 5% positivity test rate?

If a player answers YES to any of these questions, they will not be permitted to participate and should follow Rhode Island Department of Health guidance for quarantine.

- Ensure players (other than housemates) not carpool to venue
- Ensure players are following the extensive hygiene protocol
- Ensure players are bringing their own equipment and not sharing any of the following: boots, clothing, water bottle, supplements/food, PPE
- Communicate the rules to all players

Coaches

- Ensure coaches have not shown any of the following recognized COVID-19 symptoms in the last 14 days
 - Currently diagnosed or believe you may have COVID-19?
 - High temperature/fever or chills?
 - New continuous cough or sore throat?
 - New unexplained shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
 - New unexplained muscle pain or headache?
 - New nausea, vomiting or diarrhea?
 - Recent loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you been in contact with a COVID-19 confirmed or suspect case?
 - Have you recently (within 14 days) traveled out of the country or to a state with a higher than 5% positivity test rate?

If a coach answers YES to any of these questions, they will not be permitted to participate and should follow Rhode Island Department of Health guidance for quarantine.

- Ensure coaches did not carpool to venue with players
- Ensure coaches are following the extensive hygiene protocol
- Ensure coaches brought their own equipment and not sharing any of the following: boots, clothing, water bottle, supplements/food, PPE
- Ensure coaches have PPE and wear it throughout training
- Ensure coaches have prepared a training plan with non-contact drills
- Ensure coaches maintain a detailed list of participants to verify with admins

Down Time

- Players must wear PPE while not engaged in training activities
- Players and coaches must maintain social distancing of 6 feet
- Players and coaches should continue not sharing materials or equipment

Leaving the Area

- Extensively clean and sanitize all equipment and any shared contact surfaces
- Follow city/town disinfection procedures as required
- Ensure players and coaches do not congregate after practice and do not share personal items

Confirmed Cases

- If a player or coach tests positive for COVID-19
 - Individual must isolate until medically cleared to participate
 - PRFC Administrators will inform all participating individuals of a confirmed case and have them follow Rhode Island Department of Health guidelines for symptom recognition and isolation
 - Suspend future gatherings as needed for a period of time to minimize virus spread

Our Understanding of the Risks

RISK IN RUGBY

Rugby is a contact sport. To fully train and even further play matches requires intermittent physical contact. High-risk physical contact, where players are in very close proximity (such as scrum, or face to face tackle), most likely poses a greater risk should one player be an infected person.

At this stage of training, close contact will be limited until it is allowed under RI guidelines.

PERSONAL RISK

- Regular exercise is beneficial for the immune system. Prolonged, high intensity exercise may dampen the immune system, particularly when the individual is not used to such high-level activity. Therefore, there is

a potentially increased susceptibility to COVID-19 infection in athletes. This risk is probably small and if a practical approach is applied, where players do not exceed normal training load, they should be at no higher risk than the non-exercising population.

- Those who suffer from underlying illness such as cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease (asthma), diabetes and some forms of cancer appear to be more severely affected by COVID-19. So too are older individuals (>60) and those who are severely obese (BMI 40+).
- Players without underlying conditions are not part of the vulnerable group.
- Players who have suffered a COVID-19 infection should self-isolate for 14 days and not engage in exercise until their symptoms settle. When player symptoms have settled, they should consult with their primary care doctor for clearance to return to activity.
- Information from China and Italy shows that up to 20% of those hospitalized have cardiac involvement – likely thought to be myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle). Specialist Cardiology review may be required after prolonged hospitalization.
- If players have concerns about exercising after a COVID-19 infection they should discuss it with their primary care doctor.