



**TO:** Member Presidents & Representatives

**FROM:** Myles Spencer, Chief Executive Officer

**CC:** Rugby Ontario Board of Directors

**DATE:** June 26, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Rugby Ontario Return to Play Process Update

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Dear Member Presidents & Representatives:

The purpose of this communication is to provide you with additional detail regarding the **Rugby Ontario Return to Play (RTP)** process and impending application for sanctioning of activities.

As you will have seen the Rugby Canada Return to Play working group has completed the National RTP Framework. Rugby Ontario is now in the process of finalizing the provincial protocols, ensuring the framework meets the Ontario Government and public health requirements for a safe return to rugby. The final Rugby Ontario Return to Play document will be provided to all Members once approved by Rugby Canada, following our internal review process, both of which are being worked towards with high priority. To provide further clarity on the RTP process, sanctioned activities are not permitted until:

1. Rugby Canada approves our provincial Return to Play Plan and authorizes Rugby Ontario to provide sanctioning to Member Organizations (Clubs & Branches);
2. Clubs submit sanctioning applications to and receive approval from Rugby Ontario (see below);
3. The Sportlomo registration system is reopened and Rugby Ontario/Clubs complete the required setup; and,
4. All participants are duly registered and have completed the necessary participant agreements and waivers of liability.

There is no set timeline for this process; however, we are working diligently to complete step 1, and finalize the logistics for steps 2-4.

#### **Rugby Ontario COVID-19 Manager & Points of Contact**

Please note in an effort to provide the most efficient communication and response possible we have assigned two staff members as the *Rugby Ontario COVID-19 Managers*. The COVID-19 Managers will be the key resource and central points of contact for all matters in relation to COVID-19 for our members. The COVID-19 Managers will be responsible for liaising with Rugby Canada, all our Member Organizations and other relevant stakeholders in relation to Rugby Ontario's response to COVID-19. The Rugby Ontario COVID-19 Managers are:

- Joe Schissler: [jschissler@rugbyontario.com](mailto:jschissler@rugbyontario.com)
- Ryan Jones: [rjones@rugbyontario.com](mailto:rjones@rugbyontario.com)

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- COVID-19 Manager dedicated email address: [covid19manager@rugbyontario.com](mailto:covid19manager@rugbyontario.com)

To support our response to COVID-19 and Return to Play, an advisory panel is in the process of being formed to provide operational and clinical knowledge to our COVID-19 Managers and the community. Additionally, Rugby Ontario staff will be assigned to groups of Clubs to provide assistance as you work through the development and revision of your Club's RTP plans and application for sanctioning – the pace of which will of course be determined by you, the Member.

A return to play is optional – but Rugby Ontario will be here to support all clubs through this unprecedented time.

### **RTP Documentation & Sanctioning Process**

The gradual RTP plan will be based on a progression through “Phases”, each with specific restrictions and activities permitted. We have received many inquiries about clubs facilitating Touch/Flag Rugby activities as part of their return to play. Based on current regulations, these activities will only become permitted once the Emergency Orders and regulations of the Ontario Government advance to a stage where certain restrictions are lifted. While physical distancing measures remain in force, all forms of contact rugby will remain prohibited. This will be fully outlined in the final RTP documentation and timelines will be driven by our Provincial authorities.

While the final documentation and resources are presently in development and have not been approved, in an effort to give you a head start on the impending release of RTP protocols and sanctioning process, here is a summary of the tasks your Club can begin to consider and complete:

- Identify and appoint one or more COVID-19 Safety Coordinator(s):
  - Job description attached;
  - Collect/organize contact details;
- Member Organization President & COVID-19 Safety Coordinator(s) complete [World Rugby's COVID-19 Return to Play Awareness for Administrators Course](#)
  - Highly recommended: all Club Executive and administrators should complete;
  - Collect and file all certificates of completion for future submission to Rugby Ontario;
- Member Organization Coaches complete [World Rugby's COVID-19 Return to Play Awareness for Coaches Course](#)
- Risk Assessment Tool & Mitigation Checklist:
  - Excel tool attached;
  - Review and attempt first draft completion;
  - This will form part of the required documentation for the club sanctioning process.

### **Membership & Registration**

We understand a major consideration of return to play is the management of membership and registration. Rugby Ontario continues to work closely with Rugby Canada as we anticipate changes to the Sportlomo system to prepare registration to reopen as return to play is authorized in each province. Our office shared an update on June 24<sup>th</sup> from Rugby Canada noting the system has been temporarily disabled

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to make necessary development changes to registration and refund processes. As a result of opening registration in mid-January this year, we have a number of clubs with currently active/existing registrants. We are working diligently to confirm the best process to address these registrations, and possible need for refunds, to provide the most practical options for our community members at this time. We are awaiting confirmation from Rugby Canada/Sportlomo on these and other logistics and will communicate clear direction as soon as possible. Further information regarding the membership dues for Rugby Canada and Rugby Ontario will be communicated once finalized. We know this information is a significant priority need for you – and we apologize for any difficulties this is creating for you and your members.

## Resources

As was shared during our recent regional RTP club engagement sessions, Rugby Ontario will be producing a series of shared RTP resources and activities that will align with the released protocols. Our objective is to share resources that will help you take much of the thinking out of what activities can be delivered during the various phases of the gradual return to rugby plan and that adhere to the government and public health restrictions. This information will be available on the Rugby Ontario website once the RTP Plan is approved/released.

### *Additional Resources/Links:*

- Rugby Canada & Rugby Ontario RTP Update Press Release (June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020) can be found here: [https://www.rugbyontario.com/news-detail/10063999/?tag\\_id](https://www.rugbyontario.com/news-detail/10063999/?tag_id)
- Rugby Canada & Rugby Ontario RTP Update Press Release (June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020) can be found here: [https://www.rugbyontario.com/news-detail/10063845/?tag\\_id](https://www.rugbyontario.com/news-detail/10063845/?tag_id)
- Details of the Ontario Government's *Reopening Ontario* plan can be found here: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario>
- World Rugby's COVID-19 Return to Play Awareness Courses can be found here: <https://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/covid-19-courses>
- Risk Assessment Tool & Mitigation Checklist: Excel file attached

Thank you for your attention to all of this important information. It is my hope this information provides greater clarity on what is ahead as we all prepare for rugby's return. There will be considerably more to come regarding the Return to Play plan and process, and your continued patience is appreciated.

If you have any further questions on this information, please reach out to us for support. If we don't have an immediate answer for you we will find one as quickly as we can. I will be in touch again next week with further updates.

Sincerely,

**Myles Spencer**  
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Rugby Ontario

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