



SUISSE  
**RUGBY**  
— FSR —

# SWISS RUGBY UNION

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**RETURN TO PLAY DIRECTIVE: PHASE 6  
RETURN TO COMPETITIONS, SEASON 2020-2021**

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Swiss Rugby Union

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## **Introduction**

Like the rest of the World, Switzerland has been impacted strongly by the Coronavirus. While all activities have experienced an impact, sports are among the activities most heavily impacted by the Virus, due to the closures, restrictions, and lock-down measures we have all experienced. Although primary health care and the saving of human lives must stay at the top of the list of priorities, sport nevertheless plays an important role in getting society back into a functioning economic and social life.

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 COVID-19 pause.

Since Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, Sporting events with up to 1000 persons are officially authorized to take place, in all disciplines including contact sport. Together with Swiss Olympic and the Federal Office of Sport (BASPO) the Swiss Rugby Union has therefore created a Return to Play concept, naturally accompanied by a concept of protection for its members and their families and communities. The concept is designed to gradually re-start our sport, all while respecting the rules issued by the Federal Office of Public Health (BAG) as well as the Federal Council, and at the same time guaranteeing Player Welfare and safety while maximizing injury prevention strategies. A sport can not resume its activities without a federally approved exit concept. The Swiss Rugby Unions' concept has been approved by the Federal Council. The Swiss Rugby Union's Concept has presented a gradual Return to Play in 5 Phases, with the 6<sup>th</sup> one being the full return to competitions, matches, and tournaments.

Naturally, this concept will be continually adapted depending on the rules and regulations issued by the Swiss Federal Council. World Rugby, the International Federation of our sport, is also issuing sport-specific directives for a return to play, which the Swiss Rugby Union will incorporate into its technical concept.

This concept applies for adult players as well as U18 and U16, U14, and kids. For school children, this concept applies only as far as rugby activities are concerned in their club. When they are playing rugby in their primary school or in another setting, different concepts or rules may apply.

### **Phase VI: Return to Competitions**

Starting from: September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

#### **Premise:**

Number of People: Phase VI can be deployed if the Swiss Federal Government allows groups of 50 or more people to gather.

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

#### **General Practice:**

Start of new season, whole-team training sessions, Full-contact competitive matches and tournaments.

#### **Specific Activities:**



Full-team training, match preparation, playing competitive matches and tournaments.

## **1. Risk Evaluation, Triage, and Hygiene**

Throughout all the Phases, the following rules always remain in place:

- A. Hygiene: Players must wash or sanitize hands before and after each training or competition session, avoid touching their faces, and cough or sneeze into their elbow. Each player must bring their own water bottle, labelled with their name. Players and staff should wear masks when indoors or when keeping distances is not possible, except when in training or competition on the rugby pitch. In addition, they must strictly follow the Swiss, Cantonal, and municipal hygiene rules and respect health, prevention, and all other recommendations.
- B. Self-Assessment: before going to their training or competition session, each player and coach/staff must complete a daily health self-assessment. Most importantly, players and staff must answer the following questions:
  - i. Do I have one of the following symptoms: symptoms of acute respiratory disease (including Cough, sore throat, shortness of breath) OR 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.
  - ii. Have I or anyone in my household been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have I been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 10 days?

If the answer to any of the questions above is YES, then the player must not go to training or to the game and must inform their coach. 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 symptoms or been tested positive.

- C. 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 as well as each match.
- D. Player Safety: as is always the case in the sport of rugby, player safety must remain at the Center 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.

## **2. Transportation to and from Training and Competitions**

Most Rugby Players in Switzerland 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, 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.

### **3. Infrastructure**

Rugby in Switzerland is practiced on grass fields. Usually they are soccer football pitches, which belong to the local municipality. The rugby club usually pays for 4-10 hours of usage per week. The municipality or their Sports Bureau 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 for the specific infrastructure they are using.

### **4. Club Protection Concepts and Local Rules**

- A. Protection Concept: Each club can return to contact training and play but must always follow the conditions given by their local authorities. Each club must prepare their own protection concept, by filling in or adapting the template to be found at <https://www.swissolympic.ch/ueber-swiss-olympic/news-medien/fokus-coronavirus.html>
- B. Local Rules: Each club must stay up to date with the local requirements of their own canton, municipality and owner of their sporting infrastructure. Latest 5 days before the match, the host club must inform the traveling club of the local requirements, as concerns the players, the team staff, and the supporters / spectators.

### **5. Positive COVID-19 Case in a club**

In case a player in a club tests positive for COVID-19:

He/She (or the parents) must contact the cantonal health authorities and inform them.  
He/She (or the parents) should inform the Club right away.

The Club must immediately take the following measures:

- A. The entire training group and competition team of the positive player (any person he has been in contact with) must go into quarantine from all rugby activities for 10 days (no training, no games).
- B. The club shall inform the FSR at [dtn@suisserrugby.com](mailto:dtn@suisserrugby.com), and send a copy of the test result as proof.  
The players and staff must inform their employers and/or school that they have been in contact with a positive case.  
The FSR will inform the last opponent of the Club that they too must go into quarantine from all rugby activities for 10 days if the player was present at the last match.
- C. During the 10 days isolation: perform the Coronavirus Check every day: <https://check.foph-coronavirus.ch/screening>
- D. If anyone experiences symptoms: Contact cantonal health authorities and get tested.
- E. If after 10 days no symptoms have been experienced, then the entire group can re-start training and competitions.
- F. If the team concerned has a match scheduled within the 10-days quarantine period, then they must ask the FSR to re-schedule the match. The club must send proof of the positive test to the



FSR. If the case is in a 1st or 2nd men's senior team: both 1st and 2nd team matches are postponed.

General Guidelines of the BAG regarding quarantine and isolation must be followed:

<https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov/selbst-isolierung-und-selbst-quarantaene.html>)

### **5.1 In Case of Suspicion of COVID-19**

A member of a club is considered a "Suspected" case if:

The person has symptoms of COVID-19.

The person has been in contact with someone with symptoms of COVID-19.

The person has been in contact with someone tested positive for COVID-19.

If a team has a case of suspected COVID-19, they must do everything they can to get a test result as quickly as possible in order to confirm or deny the suspicion. If it is not possible to get a test result in time before the next match, and the player suspected to have COVID-19 has been in physical contact with other people on the team in the last 10 days, then the club can ask for the match to be re-scheduled, following the procedures found above, in Section 5.

Once the test result has been obtained:

If the player is indeed positive, the entire training group and competition team of the positive player (any person he has been in contact with) must continue their quarantine from all rugby activities for 10 days (no training, no games).

If the test result is negative, then the team can go back to training and playing respecting the COVID-19 Guidelines for Phase 6 as outlined in this document.

In any case, a copy of the test must be sent to the FSR ([dtn@suisserrugby.com](mailto:dtn@suisserrugby.com)).

## **6. Other Guidelines!**

- A. Match Postponements or cancellations: In case any Cantonal or Municipal restrictions prevent the hosting club from hosting a match as planned, the same procedure as outlined in Art. 62 of the Competition Regulations must be followed, in particular:
  - a. The hosting club must try to find an alternative pitch in its same region or area so that each scheduled match can take place as planned.  
If the restrictions are such that this is not possible, the match will automatically be played on the same day on the pitch of the opponent, who is obligated to reserve his pitch for this eventuality. The return match will be automatically reversed.
  - b. The hosting club must communicate to the FSR and the opponent as soon as they find out the match can not be held as scheduled, including the relevant cantonal or municipal legislation which causes the match not to be hosted as planned.
- B. Water Break: Two water breaks will be called by the referee each halftime, to allow players to go and drink from their own bottle, without sharing.
- C. Post-Match functions: individual food portions must be served, no food sharing, no sharing of drinks. Limit the contact and proximity, hold the functions outdoors if possible. Respect the hygiene and health rules and regulations.
- D. Recommendation for Kids' Tournaments: isolate the age groups as much as possible. If possible organize separate tournaments by age group.



## **7. Contact persons and responsibilities**

- A. Each player, coach, parent, and club administrator is 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.
- B. 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 presences, supervising the sessions and the compliance to the special constraints dictated by the current situation.

## **8. Communication of the Concept**

- A. The Swiss Rugby Union (Schweizerischer Rugby Verband / Fédération Suisse de Rugby) is responsible for communicating this concept to its clubs and regional associations, as well as to the public. This will be done through the creation of graphics, posters, and documents, which will be made available to all clubs and regional associations and will be made available on its website and spread through social media channels.
- B. Each club is then responsible for communicating to all of its members, and for ensuring the good understanding and implementation of the concepts throughout its own activities.