

League & Venue Oversight/Management: COVID-19 Officers

Each Try Tag Rugby league venue will have a Venue Supervisor acting as the COVID-19 officer. Their job will be to deal with the logistics of teams leaving and arriving and to do spot checks on who is playing in each fixture to ensure accuracy of data for Test & Trace purposes and to ensure teams are complying with the revised rules & regulations. The COVID-19 officer will work with the appointed referees and players to carry out the necessary sanitisation of all of equipment. The COVID-19 officer will be a Try Tag Rugby employee who will be provided with training and guidance on how to carry out the plans.

Test & Trace

Try Tag Rugby will leverage our sports management system, Spawtz, to support Test & Trace requirements. Additional functionality will be developed on the platform for team captains to record and update who has played in their weekly fixture. Team captains will be required to do this prior to their fixture but will have the ability to revise the submission the following day if required. This provides an exact record of who participated in each game. Try Tag Rugby will back this up with strict punishment (be it league points or removal from the league) for teams who have incorrect fixture data or incomplete registration data. Teams will be required to update the squad lists to ensure it is 100% current and accurate.

Through these measures, an accurate and effective database will be available if required for Test & Trace purposes.

Pre-attendance Official Symptom Check & Adherence to Measures

A communications plan will be carried out to highly publicise and encourage a culture of self-assessment, to ensure anyone who displays symptoms does not travel to the venue / does not participate in a match and returns home to self-isolate.

Participants will be made aware of any increased risk associated with taking part in activity.

Try Tag Rugby's administration team and Venue Supervisors will ensure players are adhering to the necessary measures. A code of behaviour, including sanctions will be communicated to all players.

Arrival & Departure at the Venue

The principle of "get in, play and get out" will apply.

- Players and teams should not arrive pitch-side at the venue more than 15 minutes before the scheduled start of their match. This will still allow sufficient time for players to warm up and avoid the risk of injury. Players will be encouraged to show up for their matches already changed and ready to go.
- Try Tag Rugby will work closely with venues to have separate entry and exit points to the playing area. In open parks, teams will be directed to alternate sides of the pitch for alternate timeslots i.e. game 1 – the two teams set-up their bags and enter from the east side and south side. Game 2 - teams enter from the West side and north side. Hence all players must enter the playing area through the allocated entry point only.

- No teams will be allowed on the designated pitch until the previous teams have left.
- No shared warmup balls will be provided, and the match ball must not be touched until it has been sanitised between matches.
- Where possible game times may be staggered in larger venues, to minimize the amount of people arriving and departing at same time. However, if each team has a designated waiting area around the pitch, then this shouldn't be necessary.
- The Captain only must approach the Venue Supervisor/COVID-19 officer to find their allocated pitch, team meeting point and collect their match tags.
- Players will be provided with a set of 12 tags and will not be required to swap tags when making a substitution. Players will also be responsible for carrying out the sanitisation of tags at half time and full time.
- Teams will be asked to leave the venue as quickly as possible - hanging around the venue with teammates after will be discouraged.
- Players will be encouraged to shower as soon as they get home.
- Players will be encouraged to refer to the latest PHE guidelines for travelling to and from the venues i.e. only to travel in cars with players from the same household.
- Players will be required to sanitise their hands prior to commencing any activity at the venue and at the conclusion of the matches.

Further League Regulations

Players will not be permitted to register for multiple teams on the same evening, except for a small number of select leagues where different categories run on the same night (i.e. a mixed and a men's or women's league which take place at the same venue with some players playing two fixtures on the same evening).

If a team is short on players, no ringers from other teams within the same league can play in the fixture i.e. each team must play with their own unique squad. However, in exceptional circumstances, where a team will be short of players and are able to source other players to play in their scheduled match, who are not from another team playing at that venue, then they can play subject to the player(s) being registered by the team captain/organiser on the squad list.

Social Distancing in Play

In Try Tag Rugby where a "tackle" or "tag" is initiated by pulling off a tag at arm's length, there are no high-risk factors involved in this version of the sport. Whilst on occasions players would be closer than 0.5 metres, there would be limited if any face to face time and any such instances would be fleeting in nature. There are a few occasions in Try Tag Rugby where the 'play the ball' can last longer than three seconds in a face to face situation. This can be mitigated through a rule amendment.

To mitigate this, we will amend the rules to make the “marker” (the person who has made the tag) to stand at least two metres away from the play the ball. To stand within two metres will be punished with a penalty. Referees will be instructed to use the full power of the rule book to police this new rule (penalise and then sin bin or send off for repeat offenders).

On the small number of occasions in a match where a player is tagged within two metres of the try line, instead of playing the ball at that location they will be asked to retreat two metres from the try line / defensive line. Pitch markings will have an additional side-line cone two metres from the try line so that referees and players can measure this distance accurately.

Further game changes would include;

- Teammates remaining two metres apart at all times during team talks or while on the side-line as a substitute etc. Team huddles will be prohibited.
- Removal of the pre-game coin toss / rock paper scissors. The referee will decide which team kick-offs / goes to which end. This will free up time for the referee to undertake sanitisation of the ball between each fixture.
- No pre or post-match handshakes, or alternatives of any sort e.g. elbow bump
- Spitting will become an offense and will be dealt with by the referee penalising the offending player.

Use of Equipment

Try Tag Rugby will carry out the following to make sure all equipment is regularly sanitised:

- Balls will be sanitised by referees before kick-off, at half time and at the conclusion of each game.
- Tags will be sanitised at half-time and full-time of each match by the players. Each player will have their own set of tags which they will keep for the duration of the game. Each pitch will have a sanitisation station for each team. Tags will be washed by the COVID-19 officer / Venue Supervisor at the conclusion of each daily league.
- At the end of each daily league, the COVID-19 officer should ensure any other equipment which has been handled (such as cones / pitch markers) is sanitised.
- Teams should bring their own hand sanitiser for interchanging and half time.
- The practice of having Tag Rugby shorts available to be hired or bought at the venue will be discontinued. All Tag Rugby shorts will need to be purchased online in advance of playing. Leagues run by licensees will be allowed to sell shorts by a person separate to the COVID-19 officer.
- Furthermore, players subbing on and off will strictly not be allowed to share Tag Rugby shorts

Match Officials, Coaches, Medics and Injury Treatment

The game play of Try Tag Rugby allows match officials to remain further than one metre from players at all times. Hence refereeing Tag Rugby is low risk.

Very few Try Tag Rugby teams have coaches, but rolling substitutes are common. Substitutes (and any coaches) will be encouraged to spread-out along the side-line.

First aid is carried out by the Venue Supervisor. Try Tag Rugby will provide face masks for the Venue Supervisors to wear when treating any injuries and hand sanitiser.

After contact with an injured participant, Venue Supervisors will be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly with soap and water or hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity. Records will be kept by the Venue Supervisor of any injury treated so that we have the details of each participant they have come into close contact with for track and trace purposes. This is detailed in nightly duty reports which capture all the key updates from the matches and this data is retained in Spawtz.

Facility Usage

Try Tag Rugby use many different types of venues such as wide-open council parks, schools or managed leisure facilities. Collaboration with venues will take place in regard to individual risk assessments and health & safety plans.

Social

Try Tag Rugby is very much a social sport and socialising has always been heavily encouraged. To address the risk around this, Try Tag Rugby will discourage players from socialising in the pub post game and continually remind all players that outside of playing they must adhere to current government social mixing guidelines.

When finals take place, instead of having an end of season presentation at the pub, prizes for winning teams will be handed out pitch side.

Other & Further Communication Notes

Try Tag Rugby's detailed communications plan featuring a mix of database, social media (Facebook, Instagram & Twitter) and verbal communication at the venue will address all aspects of the government's return to recreational sport framework. As well as changes outlined in detail in this submission, the communication will address the following additional points:

- Travel to and from games
- Social distancing & risky behaviour outside of playing
- Risks involved with shouting whilst in close proximity to other players

- Spectators adhering to current government guidance on social mixing.
- All players must bring their own water bottle – no sharing is permitted.
- No sharing of other personal belongings will be permitted.