



Rocky Mountain Rugby Return to Play Guidelines

Last Updated: 27 April 2021

The purpose of this document is to supplement and augment the current USA Rugby Return to Play Guidelines (USAR R2P), most recently updated on March 9, 2021. The purpose of this document is also to allow for training and play with the understanding that Clubs and participants FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES.

Rocky Mountain Rugby (RMR) is clear that neither these guidelines nor any guidelines make playing rugby safe during a pandemic. RMR still advises against gathering and training until everyone who is willing and able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine gets the COVID-19 vaccine(s), completes the treatment, and does not participate until the recommended waiting period for vaccine effectiveness and/or when the pandemic is considered “over.” With that in mind, RMR will also not allow matches onto the master calendar or sanction matches until it has determined that sufficient time has passed for members of the community to have built immunization. These guidelines are meant to REDUCE THE RISK of infection while participating in rugby; they do not eliminate the risk. Athletes who do not consistently adhere to [social distancing](#) (staying at least 6 feet apart), [mask wearing](#), [handwashing](#), and other prevention behaviors pose more risk to the team than those who consistently practiced these safety measures. Written confirmation from players and staff that they understand the risks involved in returning to training and playing is recommended.

Clubs who are governed by RMR are required to follow these guidelines if they choose to participate in in-person club/team training and scrimmages/matches. If a club is found to not follow the guidelines, the club as well as its members will be liable to sanction, penalty, and/or suspension by Rocky Mountain Rugby. This includes event organizers, event participants, and members affiliated with event participants/organizers if they violate the policies, orders, and guidelines in place. At a minimum, discipline for violating these guidelines shall include:

- First Offense - a 2-week mandatory shut-down of your club’s physical in-person activities. This means no trainings, matches, or in-person sessions of any sort that can be perceived to be organized by your club. All matches that occur during this period will be forfeited.
- Second Offense - a 2-week mandatory shut-down of your club’s physical in-person activities and the loss of eligibility for playoffs for the following competitive season. A shut-down means no trainings, matches, or in-person sessions of any sort that can be perceived to be organized by your club. All matches that occur during this period will be forfeited.
- Third Offense - a mandatory shut-down of your club’s physical in-person activities, a loss of “good standing” status with the union, and a hearing before the Rocky Mountain Rugby Executive Committee. A club that demonstrates an inability to conduct its business and deport itself in accordance with generally accepted principles and practices may be placed in this status by vote of the Executive Committee. Decisions of the



Executive Committee made concerning loss of “good standing” may be overturned at a Union meeting by a two-thirds majority of members. The club in question, or any club of similar status, cannot vote on the matter.

How things changed from the previous R2P format:

There will continue to be level-of-play determinations by the RMR Board of Directors. The levels of play for RMR, the State, or the county as a whole will be determined at least every two weeks, and MAY OR MAY NOT CHANGE. (See Appendix: Rocky Mountain Rugby Metropolitan Designations for Amateur Senior Clubs) This will be communicated to the clubs on this page. If you find that the date of the last update is past 2 weeks prior, please email Jeanna Beard. Please do not contact Jeanna about an update if it has not been two weeks.

RMR will not be accepting any variance requests for amateur senior clubs at this time. We are still in a pandemic, and to grant a variance for a senior club without the resources to follow less stringent guidelines is irresponsible on RMR’s duty for player welfare.

Please remember that Clubs and individuals are not to make the determination of the USAR R2P Stage. This Guidance is intended to augment and not replace the USAR R2P Guidelines. Please take note of the language used below. “Must” is a term that indicates a requirement by RMR while terms like “should,” “can,” and “could,” indicate recommendations to further reduce risk of infection, but not required.

Requirements of each club:

- Clubs must submit a [RMR Return To Play Request Form](#) no later than 7 days prior to first training.
- The coaching staff, president or vice-president of the club, and at least two player leaders (captains, etc.) - at minimum- must complete the [World Rugby COVID-19 Return To Play Awareness for Coaches & Players Course](#) and submit the accumulated records in one email to their associated Executive Director. For clubs with only one coach, this means the minimum number of certificates is four (1 coach, 1 president/vice-president, 2 player leaders). Note that if it is discovered your club has more than one coach and you misrepresent this, you may be subject to enforcement for violating these guidelines as stated above..
- There must be at least one administrator (Club Compliance Officer) who is responsible for the sensitive medical information to complete the [World Rugby COVID-19 Return To Play Awareness for Administrators Course](#) and submit the certification(s) in the RMR Return to Play Request Form. You should also keep them available for review upon request.
- All clubs must review the *NEW* [USAR R2P Guidelines](#) (updated as of March 9, 2021).
- All clubs must create a COVID-19 Return To Play Safety Plan and submit the Plan to the Union. Please also keep the Plan available for review upon request and to reference



within your own club. The Plan must adhere to the minimum requirements of the Guidelines AND the minimum guidelines of your Local Public Health Agency.

- The Plan must name a Club Compliance Officer who is responsible for their club's adherence to the Plan.
- The Plan must identify a dedicated isolation area for management of an individual who becomes unwell at the facility.
- See COVID-19 Return To Play Safety Plan Checklist
- Clubs must document training and competition rosters for each club event. The document must also be kept in a secure, reviewable format (such as a Google Sheet) available for RMR administrators to review if necessary. The document must include the date of the event, the location of the event, the names, phone numbers, and email addresses of participants, and the following screening information: Temperature check, [asking of symptoms](#), if the person has been in close physical contact within the last 14 days with anyone who is known to have COVID-19 or anyone who has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, if the person is currently waiting on results for a PCR COVID-19 test.
 - Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment provides a useful tool to determine what is needed for an adequate pre-event screening.
<https://covid19.colorado.gov/symptom-screening>
 - The Center for Disease Control provided a CDC Facilities COVID-19 Screening if you are looking for something more robust for your club:
<https://www.cdc.gov/screening/paper-version.pdf>
 - Clubs must cooperate with their Local Public Health Agency when contact-tracing efforts are being made.
- Athletes, coaches, administrators, or spectators with suspected or known [COVID-19 exposures](#) must stay at home and adhere to [requirements for quarantine and/or isolation](#).
- Coaches must prioritize extensive hygiene practices for player welfare. Examples may include, but are not limited to:
 - Actively discourage huddling, high fives, hugs, spitting, snot rockets, rubbing eyes, hand-licking, signing, chanting, shouting, etc.
 - Actively encourage and create a culture of courtesy where everyone should cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or the crook of their elbow when coughing or sneezing
 - Provide adequate time between drills or activities to clean equipment, if necessary
 - Encourage players to wash hands with soap and water (if available) or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Encourage players to wash or sanitize hands frequently throughout each team event.
 - Encourage players to bring multiple masks to training so they can swap out sweaty ones for clean, dry ones and encourage them to [wash them as soon as possible](#).
- Spectators will only be allowed with the permission of your facility, the government in which your facility is located, and enforcing that spectators wear masks and/or stay at least 6' from members of other households. The Club is responsible for spectators on match days.



Overview:

- In general, outdoor sports present less risk of infection compared to indoor sports. Please prioritize training outdoors whenever possible.
- At training, scrimmages, and matches, clubs should make every effort to limit spectators and non-essential persons.
- Anyone not actively participating in physical activity must wear masks (unless medically unable to do so) and practice social distancing of at least 6-feet apart. **This requirement is regardless of the mask mandate in any State or local municipality.**
 - Coaches
 - Administrators
 - Medical personnel
 - Spectators (not recommended to be allowed at training)
 - Players who are not actively participating in training (not recommended to be allowed at training)
- Perform cohorting practices at all times. **USAR R2P requires cohorting, or “pods,” of no more than 15 people per pod.** Cohorting is the practice of maintaining a stable group with fixed membership. Cohorting facilitates disease control by minimizing the number of new contacts each individual interacts with and limits the scope of dismissal and closure activities in the event of a detected case of COVID-19 or other disease.
 - This could mean variables such as roommates, significant others, and position on the field are considerations for cohorting.
- During times when players are not actively participating in practice or competition, attention should be given to maintaining [physical distancing](#) by increasing space between players on the sideline or bench. Additionally, coaches should encourage athletes to use downtime for individual skill-building work or cardiovascular conditioning, rather than staying clustered together.
- Spectators will only be allowed with the permission of your facility, the government in which your facility is located, and with a spectator plan included in your Plan.

USAR R2P Stage Augmentations:

While each club and individual is required to follow the guidelines of the USAR R2P and the following additional measures required by Rocky Mountain Rugby, each club has the ability and should feel empowered to create more safety requirements in their Plan.

USAR R2P Stage 1

- No in-person contact at all between players, coaches, administration and referees
- This is a Stage where your Public Health Order either requires a Stay-At-Home Mandate or has a Status of “Stay at Home.”



USAR R2P Stage 2

- Stay at Home is lifted, the suggestion for individuals to stay at home remains, however, some restrictions have loosened.
- States that have a “groups of less than 10” requirement for group sports are usually in this Stage.
- **NO CONTACT** is permitted. No contact means all spectators, referees, coaches, and noncompeting individuals, and players must adhere to the 6-foot physical distance requirement. No sharing of equipment, no touch rugby, no tackling, no scrimmaging, no matches... **NO CONTACT**.
- All players are required to wear masks even during participation. [Masks must cover the mouth and nose in their entirety.](#)
 - If a player or participant cannot medically tolerate wearing a mask, the athlete may obtain a medical exemption from a medical professional.

USAR R2P Stage 3

- **NO CONTACT** is permitted. No contact means all spectators, referees, coaches, and noncompeting individuals, and players must adhere to the 6-foot physical distance requirement. No touch rugby, no tackling, no scrimmaging, no matches... **NO CONTACT**.
 - At this stage, clubs may share equipment while following proper cleaning protocols.
- All players are required to wear masks even during participation. [Masks must cover the mouth and nose in their entirety.](#)
 - If a player or participant cannot medically tolerate wearing a mask, the athlete may obtain a medical exemption from a medical professional.

USAR R2P Stage 4

- Limited contact is permitted, such as touch rugby. **Full-contact is not permitted.**
 - [Masks must be worn during scrum, lineout, ruck, & maul drills](#)
 - **NO TACKLING**
- All players are required to wear masks even during participation. [Masks must cover the mouth and nose in their entirety.](#)
 - If a player or participant cannot medically tolerate wearing a mask, the athlete may obtain a medical exemption from a medical professional.
- No inter-squad friendlies or competition is permitted.



USAR R2P Stage 5

- Vaccines are readily available to most of the playing population and reasonable time has passed for the population to get vaccinated and produce immunity.
- All players are required to wear masks when performing no or limited-contact activities. Masks must cover the mouth and nose in their entirety.
 - If a player or participant cannot medically tolerate wearing a mask, the athlete may obtain a medical exemption from a medical professional.
- Masks must be worn during scrum, lineout, ruck, maul, & tackle drills
- Full-contact inter-squad friendlies permitted under these circumstances:
 - All participants - individuals and Clubs - must be properly registered with USA Rugby.
 - Your club must request permission from your Executive Director or League Commissioner to play a match. A Request form will be available on the RMR R2P Page. Request of a match does not guarantee the request will be granted. The match must be requested at least two weeks (14 calendar days) in advance.
 - Only when the request is approved IN WRITING, is the request considered officially approved.
 - If you do not receive explicit, in-writing permission to participate in a match, and you or your club members knowingly participate in a match, you are liable to disciplinary action.
 - If your club is permitted to schedule and play matches, you are limited to scrimmages and competitions to opponents in other USAR R2P USAR Stage 5 counties within the same State and are sanctioned to play by RMR.
- Referees are required to submit the same pre-event screening as all other participants for the “Home” club, which will be kept by the Club Compliance Officer.
- Each tournament event, whether Mountain League or Sevens, must prepare a COVID Safety Protocol for events and may not happen unless under the following circumstances:
 - The tournament location must be within a County that is considered Stage 5
 - Each participating team must be located within a Stage 5 in order to allow participation
 - The Tournament Director, or other appointed official(s) must adhere to the tournament COVID Safety Plan and enforce the requirements of all participants, staff, and officials including wearing masks at ALL TIMES unless actively playing or reffing in a match. Masks must cover the mouth and nose in their entirety.
 - Spectators will only be allowed with the permission of your facility, the government in which your facility is located, and enforcing that spectators wear masks and/or stay at least 6’ from members of other households. The Club is responsible for spectators on match days.



Appendix

Rocky Mountain Rugby Metropolitan Designations for Amateur Senior Clubs

Rocky Mountain Rugby (RMR) is using the U.S. government's designation for metropolitan areas to determine the 'home' of each of its clubs, as opposed to simply going off of the location of your training facility. RMR recognizes that players that play for a club in a given area are generally drawn from all over their metropolitan statistical area. To that end, teams must adhere to the *most restrictive* government guidelines for your region.

Example: if your club is in an area with two counties, and County A has guidelines in line with Stage 4 and County B has guidelines in line with Stage 3, your club is in Stage 3. It does not matter if you train in County A that is in Stage 4, as it is likely you still draw members from County B which is in Stage 3.

NOTE: No new or potential club that has any intent of ever competing against teams within the Rocky Mountain Rugby organization may organize activities without the explicit, written consent of Rocky Mountain Rugby. No 'motley' clubs or clubs from outside the region will also be permitted to compete comprised of, or against, clubs from Rocky Mountain Rugby without the explicit, written consent of Rocky Mountain Rugby. All approved rugby activities will be listed on the [RMR Summer 2021 Master Calendar](#).

--COLORADO--

Boulder-area clubs:

[Boulder MSA](#). "Boulder County comprises the Boulder, CO Metropolitan Statistical Area"

*Boulder-area clubs include**:

Boulder Babes (W), Boulder Rugby (M)

Colorado Springs-area clubs:

[Colorado Springs MSA](#). "The Colorado Springs MSA encompasses El Paso County and Teller County, Colorado."

*Colorado Springs-area clubs include**:

Colorado Springs Grizzlies (M), Pikes Peaks Rugby (W)

Denver-area clubs:

[Denver MSA](#). "The United States Office of Management and Budget has delineated the Denver–Aurora–Lakewood, CO Metropolitan Statistical Area consisting of ten Colorado counties: the City and County of Denver, Arapahoe County, Jefferson County, Adams County, Douglas County, the City and County of Broomfield, Elbert County, Park County, Clear Creek County, and Gilpin County."

*Denver-area clubs include**:

Black Ice Rugby (W), Colorado Gray Wolves (W), Denver Barbarians (M), Denver Harlequins (M), Denver Highlanders (M), Denver Water Dogs (M), Littleton Scots (M), Marauders Rugby (M)**, Rocky Mountain Magic (W), Queen City Rugby (M)



**The Marauders must also include Boulder County in their determination but are not required to include Douglas County.

Fort Collins / Northern Colorado-area clubs:

[Fort Collins MSA](#) & [Greeley MSA](#). "Larimer County comprises the Fort Collins, CO [Metropolitan Statistical Area](#)." & "Weld County comprises the Greeley, CO Metropolitan Statistical Area."

Northern Colorado-area clubs include:*

Northern Colorado Flamingos (M)

Mountain League clubs*:

Mountain League clubs must follow the stage status for their micropolitan areas and/or counties (if not located in a micropolitan area) and may not use players from outside of their areas (e.g. the Front Range) without the explicit, written consent of Rocky Mountain Rugby.

Steamboat Springs Rugby: [Routt County](#)

Gentlemen of the Blue Goose: [Summit County](#)

Gentlemen of Aspen: Pitkin County

Defiance Rugby: Garfield County

Vail Rugby: Eagle County

Grand Junction Griffins: [Mesa County](#)

--UTAH--

Salt Lake City-area clubs:

[Salt Lake City MSA](#). "The Office of Management and Budget and the United States Census Bureau currently define the Salt Lake City, Utah Metropolitan Statistical Area as comprising two counties: Salt Lake and Tooele."

Salt Lake City-area clubs include:*

Haggis Rugby (M), Peaks Rugby (M), Peaks Rugby (W), Salt City Slugs (W), Utah Vipers (W)

--WYOMING--

Wyoming-area clubs*:

[List of micropolitan areas of Wyoming](#).

Jackson Hole Moose: Teton County, ID & Teton County, WY

Laramie Lumberjacks: Albany County, WY

Prairie Fire Rugby: Campbell County, WY

Speedgoat Rugby: Fremont County, WY

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*and any new or potential club that has any intent of ever competing against teams within the Rocky Mountain Rugby organization.