



Atlanta Youth Rugby

Guidance for Return to Rugby

The COVID-19 pandemic presents rugby associations and Atlanta Youth Rugby with a myriad of challenges. AYR offers this document to outline how AYR can consider returning to rugby in both community programs and competitive programs.

AYR believes it is essential to the physical and mental well-being of the young persons across the Atlanta Metro Area to return to physical activity and athletic participation. There will likely be variation in how rugby is re-introduced across Atlanta due to varying local government responses and differing trends of the virus. AYR endorses the return to rugby in any and all situations where it can be done safely and consistently with national, state and local guidelines.

AYR's Return to Rugby is based on the information and guidance of World Rugby, United States Rugby Union, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Federation of State High School Associations, Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and SafePlay.

This document outlines the intended structure and considerations for AYR's Return to Rugby based on a phased approach. These guidelines are in accordance with state and local restrictions.

Point of Emphasis:

- AYR practices social distancing and the use of face coverings to reduce potential exposure to respiratory droplets.
- As state and local guidelines change to accommodate changes in COVID-19 prevalence. AYR will continuously monitor state and local health departments for guidance.
- The CDC advises the use of simple cloth face covering to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and not know it from transmitting it to others.”
 - Recognizing the benefits and limitations of face coverings during strenuous physical activity, AYR will:
 - Comply with state, local, or site specific requirements.
 - Permit athletes' use of simple cloth or medical face coverings, per the preference of the individual.
 - Ensure all coaches wear face coverings during Phases 1 - 5. (Artificial noise makers such as air horns can be used to signal in place of a traditional whistle)
 - Ensure athletes are encouraged to wear face coverings when social distancing is not possible.
 - Athletes will be required to wear a face covering during non athletic times (chalk talks, board sessions, sitting on the bench)
 - Plastic shields covering the face will not be allowed during the contest as this will increase the risk of unintended injury. Coaches are permitted to wear plastic shield covering.
- Any athlete testing positive must remove themselves from play immediately for 14 days and notify their head coach. Upon return must provide a negative test following their 14 days of “stand down”.

- Players and coaches connected with a player/coach who tests positive must “stand down” for 7 days. If asymptomatic AND with a negative test (after 7 days) athletes and coaches may return to activity.
- As state and local guidelines change to accommodate changes in COVID-19 prevalence, AYR will alter these guidelines accordingly. Such change could include periodic isolation periods, limitations on travel for matches, postponing matches against teams operating under different guidelines..
- With the uncertainty of which phase will be attained at the beginning of the competitive season or maintained during the season, scheduling decisions will be made that require less travel and remain within the same state and local guidelines. If opponents at the time of a match are subject to different restrictions, re-scheduling that contest for a later date will be considered or cancellation of said event.
- The phase based information provided in this document is to be applied to practices, scrimmages, matches, tournaments and events. The extent of the spread of respiratory droplets during these activities is of primary concern and further guidance will be issued as it becomes available.
- “Vulnerable individuals” are defined by CDC as people age 65 years or older and others with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.



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Guidance for Return to Rugby Phases of Return

Phases are in accordance with guidelines published by the CDC, USAR and World Rugby's Return to Play Guidelines. AYR will continuously monitor state and local health departments regarding their plan for "opening up" and adapt accordingly.

AYR will communicate with partners, coaches, parents and players which Phase AYR is operating under. Changes to Phases will be based on data released from CDC and in compliance with state and local health departments. As Phases progress and regress, coaches and staff are to operate with the following standards.

Phase 1: Shelter in Place

- All AYR events and activities will be conducted remotely. If an event can not be conducted remotely, it will be cancelled.

Phase 2: Limited Play

- All coaches and players will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participation in an in person AYR event. Screenings include a temperature check.
- Responses to screening questionnaires will be recorded and stored for accurate recording of participants should a participant develop COVID-19.
- Any person with positive symptoms reported will not be allowed to participate in any AYR events and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.
 - Any participant who exhibits symptoms is unable to participate in AYR events for 14 days. Any participant who exhibits symptoms must present AYR with a negative COVID-19 test result to return to play after 14 days.
- Vulnerable individuals should not oversee or participate in any AYR event in Phase 2.
- No gathering of more than 10 people (outside only events allowed in Phase 2) including coaches.
- Events should be conducted in "pods" of athletes with the same 5-9 athletes always participating together. Coaches should remain with the same pod throughout the event. This will limit exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Social distancing should be observed at all times. If (6) feet can not be maintained, the number of participants will be decreased until proper social distancing occurs.
- Spectators, parents, or fans will not be allowed at AYR events during Phase 2.
- Adequate and thorough cleaning of equipment between "pods" and events will be completed to mitigate any communicable diseases.
- All events must be conducted outside
- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of (20) seconds with warm water and soap before participating in any AYR event. Hand sanitizer is an approved substitute when hand washing is unavailable.

- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces.
- Participants are encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning for any AYR event.
- There should be no shared personal equipment (water bottle, towels, clothing) between participants.
- Coaches and participants should wash their clothing and all personal equipment between AYR events.
- Individual drills requiring the use of equipment should be minimalized and equipment should be cleaned between “pods”.
- All coaches and participants must bring their own water bottles. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations including water fountains should not be utilized.
- All team meetings, film review and communication should be done via virtual methods.
- Strength and conditioning, individual skills, body profiling, and body weight movements.
- Intrasquad rugby is prohibited. Lineouts, scrums, live rucks, live mauls, wrestling are all prohibited.
- **ALL COACHES MUST WEAR MASKS AT ALL TIMES AT AYR EVENTS**

Phase 3 Allowances for Larger Outdoor Gatherings

- All coaches and players will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participation in an in person AYR event. Screenings include a temperature check.
- Responses to screening questionnaires will be recorded and stored for accurate recording of participants should a participant develop COVID-19.
- Any person with positive symptoms reported will not be allowed to participate in any AYR events and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.
 - Any participant who exhibits symptoms is unable to participate in AYR events for 14 days. Any participant who exhibits symptoms must present AYR with a negative COVID-19 test result to return to play after 14 days.
- Vulnerable individuals should not oversee or participate in any AYR event in Phase 3.
- No gathering of more than 10 individuals (including coaches and other adults) indoors. Up to 30 individuals (including coaches and other adults) may participate in outdoor events.
- Events should be conducted in “pods” of athletes with the same 5-9 athletes always participating together. Coaches should remain with the same pod throughout the event. This will limit exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Social distancing should be observed at all times. If (6) feet can not be maintained, the number of participants will be decreased until proper social distancing occurs.
- Adequate cleaning schedules and policies must be followed for all indoor AYR events to mitigate communicable diseases.
- Prior to an individual or group of individuals entering a facility for an AYR event, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture, computers, rugby equipment).
- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of (20) seconds with warm water and soap before participating in any AYR event. Hand sanitizer is an approved substitute when hand washing is unavailable.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces.
- Participants are encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning for any AYR event.
- There should be no shared personal equipment (water bottle, towels, clothing) between participants.

- Coaches and participants should wash their clothing and all personal equipment between AYR events.
- All rugby equipment, including balls, should be cleaned intermittently during practices, community programs, events, and matches.
- All coaches and participants must bring their own water bottles. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations including water fountains should not be utilized.
- All team meetings, film review and communication should be done via virtual methods.
- Focus on technical skills but no interplay. Pad work is allowed within pod practices. Strict cleaning must be conducted between pods.
- Intrasquad rugby is prohibited. Lineouts, scrums, tackle, live rucks, live mauls, wrestling are all prohibited.
- **ALL COACHES MUST WEAR MASKS AT ALL TIMES AT AYR EVENTS**

Phase 4 The “Almost There”

- Any person (coach, parent, or participant) who has had a fever or cold symptoms in the previous (24) hours should not be allowed to participate, or spectate on-site, in any AYR event. The individual should contact their primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.
 - Any participant who exhibits symptoms is unable to participate in AYR events for 14 days. Any participant who exhibits symptoms must present AYR with a negative COVID-19 test result to return to play after 14 days.
- A record should be kept of all individuals present.
- Vulnerable individuals can resume public interaction, but should practice physical distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.
- Gatherings of individuals indoors will be subject to review based on indoor space/ventilation. Gatherings of individuals outdoors can increase to 50 individuals (including coaches and parents) at approved outdoor settings while maintaining social distancing and **ALL NONPARTICIPANTS NEED TO WEAR MASKS..**
- When not directly participating in practices, events, or matches, care should be taken to maintain a minimum distance of (3) - (6) feet between each individual. Special care should be taken when awaiting entry into a match/scrimmage or waiting in line during drill at trainings.
- Adequate cleaning schedules and policies must be followed for all indoor AYR events to mitigate communicable diseases.
- Prior to an individual or group of individuals entering a facility for an AYR event, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture, computers, rugby equipment).
- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of (20) seconds with warm water and soap before participating in any AYR event. Hand sanitizer is an approved substitute when hand washing is unavailable.
- Participants are encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning for any AYR event.
- There should be no shared personal equipment (water bottle, towels, clothing) between participants.
- Coaches and participants should wash their clothing and all personal equipment between AYR events.
- All coaches and participants must bring their own water bottles. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations including water fountains should not be utilized.
- All team meetings, film review and communication are PREFERRED to be done via virtual methods.

- Interplay is allowed. Inter-squad scrimmage is permitted with limited contact.
- Lineouts, scrums, live rucks, live mauls, wrestling are all prohibited.
- **ALL COACHES MUST WEAR MASKS AT ALL TIMES AT ALL AYR EVENTS**

Phase 5 The “New Normal”

- Any person (coach, parent, or participant) who has had a fever or cold symptoms in the previous (24) hours should not be allowed to participate, or spectate on-site, in any AYR event. The individual should contact their primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.
Any participant who exhibits symptoms is unable to participate in AYR events for 14 days. Any participant who exhibits symptoms must present AYR with a negative COVID-19 test result to return to play after 14 days.
- A record should be kept of all individuals present.
- Vulnerable individuals can resume public interaction, but should practice physical distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.
- Gatherings of individuals indoors will be subject to review based on indoor space/ventilation. Gatherings of individuals outdoors can increase to 50 individuals (including coaches and parents) at approved outdoor settings while maintaining social distancing and **ALL NONPARTICIPANTS NEED TO WEAR MASKS.**
- Participants should practice social distancing when able.
- Adequate cleaning schedules and policies must be followed for all indoor AYR events to mitigate communicable diseases.
- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of (20) seconds with warm water and soap before participating in any AYR event. Hand sanitizer is an approved substitute when hand washing is unavailable.
- Participants are encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning for any AYR event.
- There should be no shared personal equipment (water bottle, towels, clothing) between participants.
- Coaches and participants should wash their clothing and all personal equipment between AYR events.
- All coaches and participants must bring their own water bottles. Water bottles must not be shared.
- All team meetings, film review and communication are allowed in person.
- Interplay is allowed. Inter-squad scrimmage is permitted with live contact.
- Lineouts, scrums, live rucks, live mauls, wrestling are all allowed.
- Matches can occur. Contact will be live. Scrum level will be reviewed and advised.
- **ALL COACHES MUST WEAR MASKS AT ALL TIMES AT ALL AYR EVENTS**

Risk Level

Rugby is classified as a “Higher Risk” sport as defined as a sport that involves close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.

Hygienic

- Illness reporting
 - If a coach, player or participant demonstrates symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, that individual must immediately notify AYR’s Safety Officer: Russ Wofford at info@atlantayouthrugby.com .
- AYR’s RESPONSE TO TESTING POSITIVE / EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS

- Any participant who exhibits symptoms is unable to participate in AYR events for 14 days. Any participant who exhibits symptoms must present AYR with a negative COVID-19 test result to return to play after 14 days.

Continue To Practice Good Hygiene

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for (20) seconds multiple times throughout the day. Utilize hand sanitizer when hand washing is unavailable.
- Avoid touching your face or the face of others.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.
- Disinfect/clean personal belongings frequently. AYR will clean/disinfect AYR's equipment thoroughly and frequently.
- Use face covering when in public, especially when social distancing is not possible.

Participants, Coaches or Players Who Feel Sick Should Stay Home

- Do not attend any training, events, scrimmage or matches.
- Notify Russ Wofford at info@atlantayouthrugby.com from AYR.
- Contact and follow the advice of your medical provider.



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COVID-19 Athlete/Coach/Participant Monitoring Form

Coaches and AYR staff will be responsible for completing Atlanta Youth Rugby's [Monitoring Form](#) upon arrival/start of each AYR event. This includes but is not limited to Community Programs, practices, clinics, scrimmages, matches and/or tournaments. Each participant, coach, and player must complete the symptom check and Monitoring Form must be kept on file for notification if an individual becomes infected with COVID-19.



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COVID-19 Resources

We have compiled the best practice standards for COVID 19 infection prevention based on national, state, local, professional and national sport governing body guidelines. Based on this research we have generated the COVID19 safety guidelines for Atlanta Youth Rugby to implement for a safe and effective return to sport.

Resources include the following:

- "GUIDANCE FOR OPENING UP HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES." National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)
https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15_2020-final.pdf -Accessed: 5/18/20
- "USA RUGBY Return to Play Guidelines COVID 19 Guidelines to be implemented June 1, 2020." USA Rugby
https://assets.usarugby.org/docs/medical/USAR-R2P.pdf?fbclid=IwAR04sYyZECBm3tv7iGRcDdP3rk7g_ZagOrK2do4al-fw39QE9vtenAw7Mml&utm_campaign=503628_Member%20Newsletter%20%20May%2028&utm_medium=email&utm_source=USA%20Rugby&dm_i=60LF,ASLO,4MMI8U,14K08,1 . Accessed 5/27/2020.
- "COVID19 Return To Play Guidelines." World Rugby
<https://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/covid-19> . Accessed: 5/18/20
- "Opening up America Again." The White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>. Accessed: 5/6/2020.
- "Protection Concept for Exit from the Corona-Lockwood and Resumption of Sports Activities." Swiss Rugby Union.
http://www.suisserugby.com/fileadmin/content/Medical/Coronavirus/Suisserugby_Protection_Concept_EN_20200508.pdf, Version 1.0. Accessed: 4/29/2020.
- "Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community Based Transmission." Center for Disease Control and Prevention.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>. Accessed: 5/6/2020.
- "Return to Training Considerations Post-COVID-19." United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee - Sports Medicine, Version 0.12. <https://www.teamusa.org/coronavirus>. Accessed: 4/28/20.