

Reviewed and Approved by GNL Amended Return to Rugby Plan June 23, 2021



Newfoundland & Labrador Rugby Union

Request - Return to Play Plan - March 30th 2021

Newfoundland and Labrador moved to **Alert Level 2** on March 27th 2021 allowing teams to train/practice under the guidelines listed in Phase 1 below. This request for Return to Play will outline revisions and updates to the Newfoundland and Labrador Rugby Union (NLRU) plan for 2021 required to comply with each phase.

During Phases 1-6, the NLRU will adhere to all provincial COVID-19 **revised** Guidance, including COVID-19 protocols as were initiated in 2020 and including Sport Guidance for any issues that may arise including complying with a return to Rugby in the context of COVID-19 variants requiring a modified and phased in approach.

www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/information-sheets-for-businesses-and-workplaces/sport-guidance

NLRU Return to Play - Phase Plan:

- Phase 1** Skills, drills for individuals and team-based practice, plus intra-squad games. (Indoors)
- Phase 2** Skills, drills, plus intra-squad games, plus light contact. (Indoors)
- Phase 3** As above, plus moderate contact, plus small-sided games. (Indoors/Outdoors)
- Phase 4** Full contact and games with progression via practice matches in 20 min. blocks (Outdoors)
- Phase 5** Shortened games with modified rules. This will return Rugby to where we were when we finished last season. (Outdoors)
- Phase 6** Unfettered Rugby. Back to playing under the World Rugby Charter. (Outdoors)

The NLRU's regular schedule includes one to two practices per week, per team, year-round and increasing in number and intensity from May to mid-November as well as:

- League games,
- Exhibition games
- Tournaments both locally and provincially.
- High Performance Camps (including Canada Games)

In accordance with the revised Public Health Guidelines www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/

- Capacity at any events will comply with maximum gathering sizes and will include team staff (indoor and/or outdoor gathering size restrictions).
- Activities will only include those in accordance with the Public Health approved RTP Sport Plans.
- The same screening tools to be used in the resumption of activities in compliance with www.811healthline.ca/COVID-19-self-assessment/ www.gov.no.ca/education/files/Screening-Questionnaire-2.PDF
- Spectators will be permitted, however spectators must maintain physical distance from individuals from separate households at all times and events must comply with maximum gathering sizes restrictions. The following public health measures will be followed:
 - Spectator name, contact information and player-connection will be gathered and records retained for a period of at least 14 days.

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- Spectators from different households should be separated by at least 2m/6ft.
- Spectators must wear non-medical masks at all times, including while seated.
- The NLRU would like to point out that we will continue to **emphasize the importance of the protocols** already in place including but not limited to:
 - Use online attestations prior to every event (practice, game, meeting, etc.)
 - Temperature checks at all events.
 - Individuals should arrive dressed and ready for activities and change room access is permitted, as long as physical distance may be maintained between individuals. All individuals are required to wear a non-medical mask at all times when using change rooms. To move outdoors as soon as possible.

Key Messages:

The NLRU is very aware of the presence of COVID-19 variants (including B.1.1.7), and the new challenges and will ensure all members are aware of the following and adhere strictly to the screening tools, safety protocols and sanitation measures in place:

- COVID-19 variants may spread more rapidly than the original strains of the virus;
- Given that COVID-19 is transmissible by asymptomatic individual insinuates, it may go undetected, thus the more rapid spread of COVID-19 variants can lead to more cases, and potentially more deaths;
- The potential risk of COVID-19 spread, is highest when individuals are indoors, within two metres of each other, in a small space with limited ventilation and sharing equipment and taking deep breaths. Therefore, when we are training indoors and/or in close proximity to others, we are at higher risk. Maintaining physical distance during training is very important, especially, as Alert Level 2 commences, particularly in the context of COVID-19 variants.
- All members, clubs and teams returning to Rugby will be instructed 'NOT to pick up where things left off' in mid-February, but rather only to resume activity in the context of COVID-19 variants using a modified and "phased-in" approach.
- Additionally, although Public Health is allowing practices and training groups up to 50-individuals (including coaches/staff), the NLRU will recommend to our teams/programs to start where practical with training pods of 10-Players and 1-Coach for Phase 1 and 15-Players and 1-Coach for Phase 2 and full-squad for Phase 3 and 4.

Additionally, the NLRU proposes several modifications to further reduce risk:

- More emphasis around non-medical mask wearing; if non-medical masks can be worn during activity, it is recommended. Coaches, instructors, leaders and officials who are not engaged in the activity (e.g. coaching) should wear non-medical masks.
- More emphasis around COVID-19 protocols.
- More emphasis around socialization before and after activities/events.
- Where practical, training and practices are limited to one hour, and in cases where it is determined that more than one hour is required, additional enforced hygiene breaks, where all participants will be required to sanitize again.

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NLRU Schedules:

Who	What	Where	When	Why
U19 Girls Club teams: (Bay, Dogs, Swilers, Vandals,)	Training -2/wk Games 1/wk Plus games vs. NL team x 3/summer.	St. John's, Mt. Pearl, CBS	Training: May-November May-mid-Nov.	Develop skills and the game / fun!
U17 & U19 NL Rock Girls	Training -2/wk Games 1/three weeks;	St. John's, Mt. Pearl, CBS	Training is year-round; Games: May-mid-Nov.	Develop skills and preparation for Atlantics
Canada Games NL U18 Girls (including U19)	Specific Rugby Training -2/wk Games 1/month, plus tournaments if/when allowed.	St. John's, Mt. Pearl, CBS and if Atlantic Bubble and restrictions allow travel to NB for Atlantics	Training: year-round; Games: May-Nov. Away competitions dependent on travel restrictions.	Preparation for Canada Games 2022
U17 & U19 Rock Men's Juniors	Training 2/wk. Games 1 Wk	St. John's and if Atlantic Bubble and restrictions allow travel to NB for Atlantics	Feb-mid-Nov	Develop Skills and Preparation for Atlantic Festival
Senior Rock Men	Training 2wk	St. John's/ Mt. Pearl and if Atlantic Bubble and restrictions allow travel to NS for Championship	Feb -mid-Nov	Develop skills and preparation for Atlantic Rugby Festival
Mens Club Teams (Baymen, Dogs, Swilers, MUN)	Training 2wk Games 1wk	St, John's, Mt. Pearl, CBS	May-mid-Nov	Introduction and development of rugby locally

Return to Rugby Competition Plans will be submitted for review and approval prior to participation in events outside of the province.

Provincial/Local Competitions

High School Rugby - Fall League runs Sept-end of October; Spring League - 2-weeks in late May. The NLRU fully understands the High School tournaments are decided by the NLESD.

U19 Women's Club Competition - competing teams Baymen RFC (CBS), Dogs RFC (Mount Pearl), Swilers RFC (St. John's) with competitions- May to mid-November.

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MUN Women's Club - presently small number of players training under the men's MUN Club umbrella. Competition during the period of growth and would expect possibly 1-2 exhibition games.

U19 Men's Competition Junior Club Rugby Competition, competing teams Baymen RFC (CBS), Dogs RFC (Mount Pearl), Swilers RFC (St. John's) with competitions- May to mid-November.

Senior Mens Club Senior Men's A & B division club competition, competing teams Baymen RFC (CBS), Dogs RFC (Mt. Pearl), Swilers RFC (St. John's), MUN-men (St. John's) with competitions- May to mid-November.

GSF 7's is traditionally a 1-day 7-a-side (small-sided games) tournament however, NLRU is prepared to stretch the event over two days if needed to lower interactions. Maximum of 5 games per team per day. Teams have designated areas, Under 19, social, competitive divisions.

Return to Rugby Competition Plans will be submitted for review and approval prior to hosting/participating in tournaments.

Competitions within the Atlantic Bubble

U16 - U20 MALE & FEMALE ATLANTIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

For more than 25-years Newfoundland and Labrador has sent teams to the Atlantic Tournament, traditionally held in each of the Atlantic Provinces, with each province hosting every fourth year (NL in 2022).

The event is being delayed to August in 2021, in an effort to allow the NL teams to have adequate preparation as permitted within our present guidelines (traditionally the event is held in July). Proposed dates are August 6-8, 2021 or August 15-17, 2021 (teams would travel 2-3 days early). The event is scheduled to be hosted at Mount Allison University, NB.

Return to Rugby Competition Plans will be submitted for review and approval prior to participation in events outside of the province.

SENIOR MEN

The Atlantic Senior Men's super league is traditionally a home and away league based tournament, culminating in an end of season playoffs held over a finals weekend in one of the Atlantic provinces. This is the highest form of competition open to our provincial athletes and is also used for talent identification for national team programs and professional teams in North America. Tournament scheduling would be semi-final games based on (2019) finishing positions held on Thursday and finals and a 3 vs 4 game held on Sunday. The proposed dates for this competition are currently September 2-5, 2021 in Halifax Nova Scotia. Return to Rugby Competition Plans will be submitted for review and approval prior to participation in events outside of the province.

CANADA GAMES SQUAD

Presently a squad of 28-players have been doing rugby-skills, drills & intra-squad games training (until the lockdown) once per week, with additional times when gym-time is available. Strength & Fitness at the Provincial Training Center three times per week.

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Future plans

- Continue Strength & Fitness;
- Increase specific rugby training to 2/week and up to daily 10-days prior to and event. Competition - May-August;
- Camps - One each month - June - September (duration 2 or more hours complying with guidelines);
- Players compete under 15s team competition (lack of 7s opportunities) at Atlantics in August 2021 in NB.
- Exhibition games with local clubs - July-August 2021
- GSF7s tournament - July 2021
- TBD - 7s games vs. NS team, July or August (if permitted under Atlantic Bubble)
- TBD - Youth International 7s in Orlando, Florida, April 2022 (if permitted at the time).

A reviewed and approved by GNL Return to Rugby Plan was received by the Newfoundland and Labrador Rugby Union (NLRU) on April 8, 2021. **The following amendment is being submitted for review and approval prior to participating in events outside of the province.**

On June 2, 2021, the Government of NL launched [Together. Again.](#), which allows a phased approach to reduced public health measures and travel to and from the province.

NL Rugby will follow all Provincial Health guidelines both in Newfoundland and wherever team travel. NLRU would like to submit the below amendment to our approved RTP Plan that requests further approval regarding holding tournaments locally and attending tournaments out of the Province.

Locally

GSF 7's is traditionally a 1-day 7-a-side (small-sided games) tournament held outdoors, but the NLRU is prepared to stretch it over two days if needed to reduce interactions. Maximum of 5 games per team per day. Teams have designated areas, Under 19, social, competitive divisions.

Dates: July 30-31, 2021.

Out of Province

U16-U20 MALE & FEMALE ATLANTIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Atlantic event is the biggest and strongest venue to provide adequate high level game competition for Junior athletes in the Atlantic Provinces. It is an opportunity for players to gain adequate game-experience as well as the potential for talent identification to the National program.

Dates: August 5-8, 2021 or August 12-15, 2021 (dates to be confirmed). Location: Mount Allison University, Sackville, NB.

SENIOR MEN RUGBY SUPER LEAGUE

The highest form of competition that is open to our provincial athletes and is also used for talent identification for national team programs and professional teams in North America.

Dates: 1st week in December 2021.

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CANADA GAMES SQUAD

To provide competition for the Canada Games 2022 squad, the NLRU will look to take players prior to the Atlantic Tournament (in NB) or games – to be arranged. The players will then join the remaining 15s-players to play in the Atlantic event.

Competitions away:

Who	What	Where	When	Why
U16 - U20 Male and Female NL Rock Teams	Compete at the annual provincial Championship tournament - ATLANTICS	Mount Allison University Sackville, New Brunswick	August 5, 6, 7 & 8, or 12, 13, 14 & 15,2021.	High level competition allowing players to be tested and gain critical competition experience for further development. It is also an opportunity for talent ID to National team programs.
Senior Men	Rugby Super League	Halifax, Nova Scotia	December 2021	Men's elite level competition, testing players to perform and the opportunity for further selection to National programs.
Canada Games NL U18 Girls (including U19) for 7s Rugby.	7s Games vs. NS or NB prior to the Atlantics.	NS and/or NB NLRU expects the team will fly to Halifax and drive to NB, so the ground travel part can be easily adjusted depending on PH requirements/ restrictions at the time.	August 2-5, 2021; or 10-to 12. Linking with the Atlantic Tournament event.	Preparation for Canada Games 2022. The team has experienced a very rocky year with NO opportunity for any competition to prepare players.