

Setting up a Disability Section



Guidelines for the development of a Disability Rugby Section in a Club

This document is a guidance to clubs regarding the set up and support of a disability rugby section. The objective is to provide clubs with appropriate and timely information at the various stages of development of the programme. There are three phases in the development of a disability rugby section:

- Phase 1 - Getting Ready (Research / Establishing a rugby Disability section)
- Phase 2 – Developing Your Club’s Disability Section
- Phase 3 – Playing, Reviewing and Expanding



Delivery

The timing/completion of each stage can vary from club to club and can depend on several factors across the clubs. It is important that those involved in starting a disability rugby section equip themselves with the relevant information and that the club executive is kept informed. Branches, with the support of the IRFU Spirit of Rugby Committee, will endeavour to support clubs in the process. It is envisaged that clubs with a disability rugby section would offer mutual support and advice to clubs seeking to develop a similar programme. **It is not intended that every club should have a disability section but that players with a disability can access the game within a reasonable distance of their home. Before starting a disability section you should contact the Spirit of Rugby Officer in your area.**

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the development of a disability rugby section is with the club’s executive committee. The club executive committee must ensure that there is coordination and support from the club’s welfare officer, facilities committee and rugby committee and seek advice from the Branch CRO and/or IRFU Disability & Inclusion Officer

The executive committee can set up a task group to scope and report on the development of a disability rugby section within the club. The task group could comprise of nominated club members, club welfare officer, sports inclusion/disability officer (check with the local authority), club executive member(s) and a suitably qualified coach. The group may be invited to form the Disability Rugby Committee by the club executive.

Resources

A number of Disability Rugby Resources are available on IRFU website (<https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/>) and can be used as a tool to assist clubs in setting up and developing a disability rugby section. These include coaching supports, rules and factsheets.

Phase One – Researching / Establishing the Disability Rugby Section in Your Club

| Step | What | How | Who |
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| 1. Research | <p>Following approval by the club executive to establish a task group, the research phase can include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable venue • Facilities • Availability of a qualified coach(es) • Volunteers/Assistant Coaches • Explore player interest/manageable numbers/age ranges/levels of ability and behaviour challenges • Visit a rugby club with a disability section playing a similar format of the game • Report back to the club executive and seek approval for next step | IRFU Disability Club Resources and Contact IRFU Disability & Inclusion officer David McKay | Task Group established by the club executive |
| 2. Strengthen link with the Club | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet other players/coaches/ officials in the rugby club to discuss setting up disability section • Request club members to check for an interest in disability among family/friends/contacts • Recruit volunteers interested in supporting a disability rugby section. • Discuss how the disability rugby section operates, (format of the game, age of players, etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep sheet for club meeting of membership | Club Executive and Task group |
| 3. Information Evening and taster event | <p>A taster event early in the process allays fears and highlights that rugby can be played by players with a disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold an 'Information Session' for all interested in the community inviting those consulted in the research phase e.g. service providers/carers etc. • Plan a taster session • Invite local special schools/ service providers /families/carers and volunteers to participate. Include potential disability rugby players. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyer / Power-Point Presentation • Expression of Interest forms • Input from an experienced coach/volunteer from a club with | <p>All interested members</p> <p>Invite families/ carers/ service providers/</p> <p>special schools/ disability sports officer/</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request players/families/carers to complete an expression of interest form Outline next steps Consider a local launch and/or local press release | <p>a similar disability rugby section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input from Spirit of Rugby Officer / Branch CRO and/or Local Authority's Sports Inclusion Disability Officer | <p>Sponsors/ Spirit of Rugby Officer Branch CRO/CCRO</p> |
| <p>4. Assess level of interest and formalise structures</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess feedback from taster event/session Assess expression of interest forms Assess interest from club members/ coaches/ volunteers/ family members to form a disability rugby committee. Formally establish a disability rugby committee with club executive approval Nominate a representative to link with the club executive Agree a manageable number of players to support (taking age and ability levels into account) Recruit enough volunteers/assistant coaches (male/female) to satisfy coach to player ratio (1:5 ratio recommended depending on nature of disability) Consult the Local Authority's Sports Disability Inclusion Officer re support (where applicable) and explore grant opportunities with Local Sport Partnerships (ROI) and/or Local Councils (NI) Propose membership fee for players Propose a budget and submit to club executive Identify specific roles for members of the disability rugby committee e.g. Chairperson, Head Coach, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IRFU player Registration Branch handbook IRFU Safeguarding Policy Vetting forms (IRFU website) where applicable Branch CRO Disability Club Resources on IRFU website Season plan/budget Grant Application | <p>Disability Rugby Committee</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a player registration process that should include relevant information for players with a disability • Ensure all coaches/volunteers follow the IRFU recruitment procedures, including vetting, signed Codes of Conduct & Declarations of Intent, where applicable. Ensure all coaches and volunteers read and follow the IRFU Safeguarding Policy and/or related adults at risk policies if applicable • Maintain contact with other clubs with a disability rugby section for advice • Liaise with Branch CRO regarding the possibility of delivering a number of taster sessions at local special needs schools for tag rugby and/or other local services for mixed ability/wheelchair/deaf rugby. Distribute a leaflet with information relating to the disability section of the club. | <p>forms where applicable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact IWA or Deaf Sport Ireland where applicable | |
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Phase Two – Developing Your Club’s Disability Section

| Step | What | How | Who |
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| 1.Organising a training session | <p>Plan with coaches/assistant coaches to organise training sessions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision on and off field of play • Attendance sheets • Coach rotas • Coaching plan for training sessions • Divisioning if applicable (matching ability of players) • Application of the laws of disability rugby (tag, mixed, wheelchair, etc.) • Safety on and off the field of play • Equipment (tags, cones, bibs etc.) • Accident and incident reporting procedures used by the club • Contact details for parents/carers of players • First Aid kit • Social function after training • Organise a visit for coaches and volunteers to a club with a disability rugby section prior to the first session • Consider inviting coaches and or players from a club with a disability rugby section to the first session to advise/lead the session/provide structure | <p>Disability Rugby Resources, including Disability Coaching Manual and HIVE online resources</p> | <p>Club Head Coach Disability Rugby Coaches and Disability Rugby Committee members</p> |
| 2.Informing players/families/carers | <p>Keeping families informed is important as training sessions sometimes clash with other commitments for the players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet and communicate with players/families/carers to discuss training sessions and timetable • Outline plans for the section for the season | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club pitch allocation and facility plan | <p>Players/families/carers/ Disability Rugby Committee</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss club kit• Discuss divisioning process (matching players by ability for training) if appropriate• Protocol re cancellation of training and agree a notification process by texts or emails• Provide contact details for designated Disability Rugby Committee members and coaches | | |
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Phase Three – Playing, Reviewing and Expanding

| Step | What | How | Who |
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| Information meeting or AGM of the Disability Rugby Committee. | Invite players/parents/carers/club members. Topics could include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about club activities and upcoming events. • Update and/or feedback on Disability Rugby laws and divisioning process • Feedback on training sessions including timetable and location • Training kit/ relevant equipment, etc. • Bad weather policy • Schedule for the season • Q & A | Hand-out on the club activities Survey Monkey Consultation with Players – contact Cara/Spirit of Rugby Officer/IRFU Disability and Inclusion Officer | Coaches Disability Rugby committee Club President Exec members Spirit Officer / Branch CRO |
| Topics for discussion with coaches and assistant coaches members | Presentation and/ or facilitated discussion, Q&A session, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing team for match readiness • Preparation for matches • Proposed schedule of friendly games • Policies and Procedures for travelling away • Families/carers Liaison information | Hand-outs | Coaches, Disability Rugby Committee |
| Continuing Coach Education/ Recruitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up skill/recruit/train-up a minimum of 1 new coach over course of first year or season • Consider succession planning for coaches • Avail of opportunities to learn more about disability rugby | IRFU Coaching & Disability Inclusion Training | New and potential coaches |
| End of season | End of season evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting more players • Support structures going forward • Schedule for following season | Resources to be decided based on club requirements | Disability Rugby Committee, Coaches and Club Exec |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/carers meeting • Social function to ensure club integration • Replace individuals retiring from Disability Rugby Committee (proposed names to Club Exec.) • Issue a local press release announcing progress to date and inviting new players • Submit a report to the Club Exec for AGM • Appoint team captain for the coming season • Disability Rugby Player Awards. | | Parents/players |
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For **further information** contact IRFU Disability & Inclusion Officer David McKay at david.mckay@irfu.ie