



**IRFU Guidelines For Match Officials**

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## **BEFORE You Officiate**

All Match Officials must complete the Return to Refereeing course on Gainline, our e-learning platform. Completing this course is compulsory for ALL Match Officials (including referees, touch judges, evaluators, referee coaches and mentors) in order to re-commence activity. On successful completion of the course Match Officials will be available to the relevant Associations/Society for appointment to fixtures.

All Match Officials must complete match day Covid clearance on Gainline within the stipulated time as advised by the IRFU before each match. Match Officials will receive email confirmation of clearance to attend fixtures at 9am on the morning of the match.

You must stay at home if you answered 'yes' to any of Questions 1-5 on the match day Covid clearance on Gainline and advise the relevant personnel in your Association/Society.

If you answered 'yes' to any of the questions:

- A medical practitioner can assess the case and determine the need for PCR Testing.
- If the test is negative, you can return to activity once symptom free for 48 hours.
- If you are confirmed as having COVID-19 (PCR test positive), you must self-isolate and follow medical advice.

### **A. COVID-19 Declaration Officer**

Each Referees Association/Society will appoint a COVID-19 Match Official Compliance Officer.

The COVID-19 Match Official Compliance Officer will ensure:

- IRFU match day Covid clearance on Gainline is completed within the stipulated time as advised by the IRFU before each match.
- All guidelines are being followed during this time.
- Queries or issues arising are managed.

### **B. Pre-Match Preparation**

- Each match official is responsible for ensuring they are up to date on all government guidelines.



- Within the stipulated time as advised by the IRFU, referees must complete the match day Covid clearance on Gainline to demonstrate adherence to the guidelines.
- Ensure Association/Society has up to date contact details for you.
- Contact the COVID-19 Club Safety Officer in the home club you are visiting if you have any concerns or questions around their process.
- Match officials should sanitize all equipment that will be used for the match.
- Hand Sanitizer - bring one with you to use before, during & after your visit to a club.
- Each match official is responsible for bringing their own equipment if required:
  - Whistle, cards, pen, coin, flags, water bottle - attendees must bring their own water bottle and must NEVER share it.
  - All of the above must be sanitized before and after the game.

### C. Travel to / from Club

- Associations/Society are to ensure match officials have been briefed on guidelines regarding travel to and from club.
- Anyone attending a club should, where possible, travel alone, or with a member of the same household.
- Only one parent/guardian should travel with younger match officials where possible – no parents/guardians are permitted to attend or observe the match.
- The driver must either stay in the vehicle or leave the grounds and return at the appointed collection time.
- Match officials to arrive no more than 45 minutes prior to match commencing.
- Match officials must not physically greet anyone at any stage.
- Match officials should arrive ready to officiate, as there will be no access to changing rooms.

### D. Check in (registration) Process/Pre-Match

- Match Officials must check in with the COVID-19 Club Compliance Officer of the home team on arrival at the venue.
- Match officials must sanitize their hands upon arrival at the venue.
- Match officials must go immediately to the pitch post check-in.
- Arrive in match gear with only boots to change into.
- Communicate plan for Pre-Match Stud Check, Front Row Chat and Coin Toss to players to allow them to plan for social distancing.
- All meetings must take place on pitch, adhering to social distancing, and must take no longer than 5 minutes.
- Ensure the referee is the only one to touch the coin at the pre-match coin toss.
- Match officials should refrain from touching the ball.

- Pre-match preparation with touch judges should be done with social distancing in mind.

#### **E. Clubhouse and Facilities**

- All Clubhouses are to remain closed during this period, except for toilet facilities.

#### **F. Match Situations**

- Match officials to maintain social distancing where appropriate/possible.
- No spitting or clearing of nostrils on pitch or grounds. If seen – the referee should remind a player of his/her responsibilities.
- Respiratory Hygiene - avoid touching your mouth etc. good cough and sneeze etiquette should be followed.
- Try and refrain from shouting/talking with others in close proximity.
- Half time – stay on field.
- Team huddles to be discouraged – COVID-19 Club Compliance Officer to manage if reminder from match official not actioned.
- Warm-up to be done as directed by the COVID-19 Club Compliance Officer.

#### **G. Post-Match**

- After the match, all match officials must leave grounds immediately without using the facilities or mingling.
- Hands should be sanitized as soon as possible.
- Ensure all equipment is cleaned thoroughly/sanitized.
- Should you have a mentor/evaluator/coach at the game – the post-game debrief should happen by telephone/video call.

#### **H Training in a Club**

- All Match Officials who train in Rugby clubs must follow the IRFU Return to Rugby Guidelines as set out below:

<https://www.irishrugby.ie/running-your-club/return-to-rugby-for-clubs/>

## I. COVID-19 Reporting

### In the event of you displaying symptoms of COVID-19 following a rugby event (training or game):

1. You should refrain from activity and seek medical advice.
2. You should inform your Association/ Society COVID-19 Match Official Compliance Officer.
3. The medical practitioner will assess the case and determine the need for PCR Testing.
4. If the test is negative, you can return to activity once symptom free for 48 hours.
5. If you are confirmed as having COVID-19 (PCR test positive), you will need to self-isolate and follow medical advice.
6. Once a confirmed case of COVID-19 occurs, Public Health will be informed and carry out contact tracing.
7. Public Health will determine who are the close contacts who will have to 'restrict movement' for a minimum of 14 days. These people will be actively monitored and guided by Public Health. Public Health will also passively follow up all who are deemed to be casual contacts).

### In the event of you displaying symptoms of COVID-19 at a rugby event (training or game):

1. Ideally the designated COVID-19 Club Compliance Officer, staff member or volunteer should take charge of the management of any persons with COVID-19 symptoms.
2. Immediately separate from other participants, staff and spectators.
3. Wear a face covering if possible.
4. Use tissues, hand sanitizer and appropriate PPE.
5. If you are well enough to go home, arrange to be transported home by a household member, as soon as possible and advise your GP by phone of your symptoms.
6. If you are well enough, you should inform your Association/Society COVID-19 Declaration Officer.
7. If you are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect.
8. You should have a medical assessment (GP or Hospital) and they will inform Public Health if needed and if case positive, Public Health will decide appropriate contact tracing.

## J. Behaviours

- Match Officials must refrain from handshakes and high fives.
- Practice good cough/sneeze etiquette and dispose of any used tissue in a responsible manner.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Remain apart from other players when taking a break.



- If a ball from another zone comes across, send it back with a kick on the ground - refrain from picking up the ball.
- Social distancing is advised when travelling in vehicles to/from match/training.
- No spitting or clearing of nostrils on pitch or grounds.
- All Match Officials to remind fellow officials of guidelines should they witness poor practices.
- Repeated poor practice should be reported to the relevant Association/Society as soon as possible.
- “The IRFU notes the recommendation from the HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre) in relation to use of whistles and will provide guidance in advance of the Competition Stage of the IRFU's Return To Rugby Summary Roadmap.”