

Embargoed until: 12pm, Monday 13 December 2021

## **Media Release: NZR directive for 15-a-side community rugby under Covid-19 Protection Framework**

- Decision made to ensure community rugby can kick off in all three traffic light settings.
- All 15-a-side teenage and senior community rugby competitions to require Covid-19 Vaccination Certificates.
- Other community rugby offerings that comply with the Covid-19 Protection Framework will be available to ensure all New Zealanders can play.
- Guidance to come in early 2022 on Small Blacks rugby and players aged five to 11 years.
- Rugby community is encouraged to get vaccinated to protect against Covid-19.

New Zealand Rugby (NZR) has today issued a directive for all 15-a-side teenage and senior community rugby competitions to require Covid-19 Vaccination Certificates, as part of participation in 2022.

Under the Government and Sport New Zealand's Covid-19 Protection Framework, gatherings in the Red traffic light setting which do not use Covid-19 Vaccination Certificates are limited to 25 people.

In the Red setting, 15-a-side rugby competitions would be unable to proceed without the use of Covid-19 Vaccination Certificates due to the restriction on numbers.

The decision is supported by the 26 Provincial Unions and is intended to ensure 15-a-side community rugby competitions can continue without disruption in all three traffic light settings.

NZR General Manager Community Rugby Steve Lancaster said the decision provided the rugby community with a level of certainty ahead of the 2022 season.

"We've taken the time to review the Government and Sport New Zealand's guidance and what's clear is that vaccine certificates will be needed for fifteen-a-side competitions to play with minimal disruption and not be at risk to changing traffic light settings next year.

"Over the past couple of seasons the rugby community has dealt with a lot of challenges and cancellations. This decision gives some early certainty and will reduce the impact on teenage and senior competitions when there's unexpected moves between traffic light settings in 2022."

Lancaster said both NZR and the Provincial Unions were committed to providing rugby for all New Zealanders, in compliance with the Covid-19 Protection Framework.

“New Zealand Rugby continues to support the rugby community getting vaccinated as the best way to protect everyone against Covid-19. But we’re also mindful that rugby is our national game, it brings people together and remains a huge part of our communities.

“We want to see rugby available to all New Zealanders so we’ll work with the Provincial Unions to provide other rugby offerings that follow the health and safety guidance and comply with the Government’s framework. There’s a range of options available - like sevens and 10s – that work within traffic light settings and we’ll know more about what that looks like early next year.”

The Covid-19 Protection Framework guidelines for sport and recreation gatherings apply to the players, referees, coaches, management and support staff. The framework also applies to spectators and separate guidance will follow from NZR for clubs and schools to implement these.

NZR continues to work with the Ministry of Health and Sport New Zealand. Further Covid-19 Protection Framework guidance will be issued by NZR in early 2022, including for Small Blacks rugby and players aged five to 11 years.

Increased vaccination rates in the rugby community remains a key priority and NZR is actively seeking to partner with health agencies ahead of the 2022 season to support vaccination uptake.

**MEDIA OPPORTUNITY: NZR General Manager Community Rugby Steve Lancaster will be available via Zoom at 2.15pm today. Please contact Paul Stevens using the details below.**

## **How sport and recreation will operate under the Covid-19 Protection Framework**

Note: Playing gathering limits apply to the players, referees, coaches, management and support staff.

Red:

- CVCs = 100 people per playing gathering
- NO CVCs = Up to 25 people per playing gathering

Orange:

- CVCs = Open, no limits
- NO CVCs = Up to 50 people per playing gathering

Green:

- CVCs = Open, no limits
- NO CVCs = Up to 100 people per playing gathering

**Further information:**

Follow New Zealand Rugby on twitter @nzrugby for all media releases and other important information.

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