

# GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DISABILITY SECTION WITHIN A CLUB

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The guidelines aim to offer guidance to clubs with regard to 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 a number of 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 Disability Sub-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.

## 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 contact listed at the end of this document or your CRO.

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's welfare officer, sports inclusion/disability officer (check with the local authority), club executive member(s) and a qualified coach(es). Ultimately the task group may be invited to form the Disability Rugby Committee by the club executive.



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## RESOURCES

A number of Disability Rugby Resources are available on IRFU website ([www.Irishrugby.ie/disability](http://www.Irishrugby.ie/disability)) 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.

## THE FOLLOWING USEFUL LINKS CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.IRISHRUGBY.IE/DISABILITY/

- Disability Club Guidelines
- Disability Coaching Guidelines
- Disability Tag Laws
- Disability FAQs
- Medical Form
- Case Studies – Disability Rugby Clubs

For further Information contact your Branch Disability Advisory Group

Leinster: Stephen Gore ([Stephen.gore@leinsterrugby.ie](mailto:Stephen.gore@leinsterrugby.ie))

Munster: Emily O'Leary ([emily.oleary@munsterrugby.ie](mailto:emily.oleary@munsterrugby.ie))

Ulster: Kerry Spence ([kerry.spence@ulsterrugby.com](mailto:kerry.spence@ulsterrugby.com))

Connacht: Lyndon Jones ([lyndon.jones@connachtrugby.ie](mailto:lyndon.jones@connachtrugby.ie))



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# PHASE ONE – RESEARCHING/ESTABLISHING

Step	What	How	Who
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"> <li>Suitable venue</li> <li>Facilities</li> <li>Availability of a qualified coach(es)</li> <li>Volunteers/Assistant Coaches</li> <li>Explore player interest/manageable numbers/age ranges/levels of ability and behaviour challenges</li> <li>Visit a rugby club with a disability section</li> <li>Report back to the club executive and seek approval for next step</li> </ul>	<p>IRFU Disability Club Resources  <a href="http://www.irishrugby.ie/disability">www.irishrugby.ie/disability</a></p>	<p>Task Group established by the club executive</p>
2. Strengthen link with the Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet other players/coaches/ officials in the rugby club to discuss setting up disability section</li> <li>Request club members to check for an interest in disability among family/friends/contacts</li> <li>Recruit volunteers interested in supporting a disability rugby section.</li> <li>Discuss how the disability rugby section operates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback report given to club executive</li> </ul>	<p>Club Executive and Task group</p>
3. Information Evening and taster event	<p>A taster event early in the process allays fears and highlights that disability rugby is a <b>non-contact</b> form of the sport (TAG).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold an 'Information Session' for all interested in the community inviting those consulted in the research phase e.g. service providers/carers etc.</li> <li>Plan a taster session</li> <li>Invite local special schools/ service providers /families/carers and volunteers to participate. Include potential disability rugby players.</li> <li>Outline next steps</li> <li>Consider a local launch and/or local press release</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could also use Power-Point Presentation</li> <li>Input from an experienced coach/volunteer from a club with a disability rugby section</li> <li>Input from Branch staff</li> </ul>	<p>All interested members. Invite families/ carers/ service providers/ special schools/ disability sports officer/ Sponsors/ Branch staff</p>
4. Assess level of interest and formalise structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess feedback from taster event/session</li> <li>Assess interest from club members/ coaches/ volunteers/ family members to form a disability rugby committee.</li> <li>Formally establish a disability rugby committee with club executive approval</li> <li>Nominate a representative to link with the club executive</li> <li>Agree a manageable number of players to support (taking age and ability levels into account)</li> <li>Engage sufficient volunteers/assistant coaches (male/female) to satisfy coach to player ratio.(1:4 ratio recommended)</li> <li>Consult the Local Sports Disability Inclusion Officer re support (where applicable) and explore grant opportunities with Local Sport Partnerships (ROI) and/or Local Councils (NI)</li> <li>Propose membership fee for players</li> <li>Propose a budget and submit to club executive</li> <li>Decide on club name for disability section</li> <li>Identify specific roles for members of the disability rugby committee e.g. Chairperson, Head Coach, etc.</li> <li>Agree a player registration process to include the completion of the IRFU medical form for Disability Rugby.</li> <li>Ensure coaches/volunteers follow the IRFU recruitment procedures, including vetting and Declarations of Intent.</li> <li>Ensure coaches and volunteers read and follow the IRFU Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>Maintain contact with other clubs with a disability rugby section for advice</li> <li>Liaise with Branch staff regarding the possibility of delivering a number of taster sessions at local special needs schools. Distribute a leaflet with information relating to the disability section of the club.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IRFU Medical form to be completed with IRFU Player Registration form</li> <li>Branch handbook</li> <li>IRFU Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>Garda Vetting forms (IRFU website) /Access NI forms (Ulster Branch website)</li> <li>Branch staff</li> <li>Disability Club Resources on IRFU website</li> <li>Season plan/budget</li> <li>Grant Application forms where applicable</li> </ul>	<p>Disability Rugby Committee</p>



# THE DISABILITY SECTION IN YOUR CLUB

## PHASE TWO – DEVELOPING YOUR CLUBS DISABILITY SECTION

Step	What	How	Who
1.Organising a training session	<p>Plan with coaches/assistant coaches to organise training sessions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision on and off field of play</li> <li>• Attendance sheets</li> <li>• Coach rotas</li> <li>• Coaching plan for training sessions</li> <li>• Divisioning (matching ability of players)</li> <li>• Application of the laws of disability rugby</li> <li>• Safety on and off the field of play</li> <li>• Equipment (tags, cones, bibs etc.)</li> <li>• Accident and incident reporting procedures used by the club</li> <li>• Contact details for parents/carers of players</li> <li>• First Aid kit</li> <li>• Social function after training</li> <li>• Organise a visit for coaches and volunteers to a club with a disability rugby section prior to the first session</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	Disability Rugby Resources, including Disability Coaching Guidelines	<p>Club Head Coach</p> <p>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"> <li>• Meet and communicate with players/families/carers to discuss training sessions and timetable</li> <li>• Outline plans for the rest of the season</li> <li>• Discuss club kit</li> <li>• Discuss matching players by ability for training/matches according to tag laws</li> <li>• Protocol re cancellation of training and agree a notification process by texts or emails</li> <li>• Provide contact details for designated Disability Rugby Committee members and coaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Club pitch allocation and facility plan</li> </ul>	<p>Players/families/carers/ Disability Rugby Committee</p>



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# PHASE TWO – PLAYING, REVIEWING AND EXPANDING

Step	What	How	Who
<b>Information meeting or AGM of the Disability Rugby Committee.</b>	Invite players/parents/carers/club members. Topics could include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about club activities and upcoming events.</li> <li>• Update and/or feedback on Disability Rugby laws to forward to IRFU National Disability Committee</li> <li>• Feedback on training sessions including timetable and location</li> <li>• Training kit/ sport glasses policy</li> <li>• Bad weather policy</li> <li>• Schedule for the season</li> <li>• Q &amp; A</li> </ul>	Hand-out on the club activities  Download disability laws from website	Coaches  Disability Rugby committee  Club President Exec members Branch CRO
<b>Topics for discussion with coaches and assistant coaches members</b>	Presentation and/ or facilitated discussion, Q&A session, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessing team for match readiness</li> <li>• Proposed schedule of games / festivals</li> <li>• Policies and Procedures for travelling away including families and carers (safeguarding)</li> </ul>	Use of IRFU Coaching Guidelines and Safeguarding Policy	Coaches, Disability Rugby Committee
<b>Continuing Coach Education/Recruitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up skill/engage/train-up a minimum of 1 new coach over course of first year or season</li> <li>• Consider succession planning for coaches</li> <li>• Avail of opportunities to learn more about intellectual disability</li> </ul>	IRFU Coaching & Disability Inclusion Training	New and potential coaches
<b>End of season</b>	End of season evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruiting more players</li> <li>• Support structures going forward</li> <li>• Schedule for following season</li> <li>• Parents/carers meeting</li> <li>• Social function to ensure club integration</li> <li>• Replace individuals retiring from Disability Rugby Committee (proposed names to Club Exec.)</li> <li>• Issue a local press release announcing progress to date and inviting new players</li> <li>• Submit a report to the Club Exec for AGM</li> <li>• Appoint team captain for the coming season</li> <li>• Disability Rugby Player Awards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources to be decided based on club requirements</li> </ul>	Disability Rugby Committee, Coaches and Club Exec Parents/players



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