

Kicking COVID into touch: Rugby stars support vaccine roll out

- Rugby stars urge young people to get their COVID-19 vaccine in new short film
- Sam Underhill, Alex Goode and Dan Robson among players sharing personal experiences of COVID-19
- Film can be downloaded [here](#)

Some of the country's top rugby players have today (Tuesday 28 September) encouraged young people to get their COVID-19 vaccine as they discuss their personal experiences of the pandemic.

Ahead of Round 3 of the Premiership Rugby this weekend, a new film has been released featuring key players Sam Underhill (Bath Rugby), Alex Goode (Saracens), Nathan Earle (Newcastle Falcons), Ollie Hassell-Collins (London Irish), Marland Yarde (Sale Sharks) and Dan Robson (Wasps) who discuss the importance of the COVID-19 vaccine and the impact the virus has had on them in the past year.

The players also share their thoughts on who to look out for this season. While their player predictions might be different, they all agree that the most important thing everyone can do this season is to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

The film will be played out at stadiums across the country from this weekend (1 -3 October) and comes as more than 82% of over-16s in the UK have now received both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Earlier this month, the booster programme was also rolled out, with those eligible being invited to book their jab as soon as possible in order to keep the virus under control for the long term and protect the most vulnerable through the winter months.

The latest data (23rd September 2021) also shows that in particular, younger men have been more reluctant than younger women to take up both doses of the jab – in those aged 18-49, 70% of men are double vaccinated vs 76% of women in this group.

In the film, the players discuss how the pandemic has directly affected their lives. Sam Underhill talks about how his dad was hospitalised with COVID-19, and Nathan Earle's partner had their first child in the pandemic, meaning he wasn't able to be in the hospital to support her through the birth.

The film is part of a wider partnership with the Premiership Rugby League,

and follows the “Every Vaccination Gives Us Hope” campaign launched earlier in the year to encourage the public to get their COVID-19 vaccinations.

Over 48.7 million people have now received a first dose of a vaccine – over 89.7% of the UK over-16s population – with 44.7 million receiving their second dose. This means over 82.4% of over-16s in the UK have now received both doses of a vaccine, with 93.5 million vaccines administered overall.

Phil Winstanley, the Rugby Director at Premiership Rugby, said:

It’s been so fantastic to have sports fans back in stadiums all over the country, and this couldn’t have been done without the COVID-19 vaccine programme. It’s been so instrumental in getting us back to normal, and as we get going with this year’s season, we need to make sure all our fans are as safe as they can possibly be – and that includes making sure they get the vaccine to protect themselves and those around them.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid said:

It is fantastic to have these rugby legends come out and back the life-saving jabs. A massive thank you to Sam, Alex, Nathan, Ollie, Marland and Dan.

It is thanks to the wall of defence built up by the vaccines that fans of all sports can get back to seeing their favourite players at the grounds.

Please get your jab as soon as possible, to protect yourself, your family and your loved ones.

Vaccines Minister Maggie Throup said:

The vaccine’s impact in giving us protection against COVID-19 has allowed us to return to doing the things we love – whether that’s going out for dinner with friends, taking a trip abroad or watching your favourite sports players live in the stadium.

It’s brilliant to see so many famous faces pledge their support for the vaccination programme – and we continue to urge all those who haven’t yet had theirs to come forward for the life-saving jab as soon as possible.

Nathan Earle of Newcastle Falcons said:

It’s been a really rough 18 months for everyone, but finally we’re seeing light at the end of the tunnel. Having the fans back in the

crowd has been incredible – it just gives you that extra boost you need on the pitch. I'd say to anyone make sure you get your jab if you haven't already – it's quick and easy and has meant we can get back to the game we love!'

Vaccinated people are far less likely to get COVID-19 with symptoms and are less likely to get serious COVID-19, to be admitted to hospital, or to die from it.

The latest data from Public Health England shows that the vaccine rollout has saved more than 123,000 lives and stopped nearly quarter of a million hospital admissions.

For more information on the COVID-19 vaccine, visit: www.nhs.uk/covidvaccine