

Return to recreational team sport framework

Updated 19 August 2020

Key principles - prior to activity

Club preparation

Each club must only return to sport when they have the appropriate measures in place as developed by the NGB and general [government guidance in relation to recreational sport](#).

All recreational clubs must develop a written COVID-19 plan and risk assessment prior to activity. Preparation must include those in charge of the session taking part in specific training, as necessary, and participants being asked to consider if their underlying health, may caution against participation. A checklist to support clubs to put the appropriate measures in place will be made available. All the above documents must be promulgated to all coaches, assistant coaches and welfare officers.

Risk assessments should be completed in line with [guidance from the Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#).

All clubs running activities for children should also consult the DfE guidance on [Protective measures for out-of-school settings](#), which sets out further practical steps providers of community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children should follow to minimise the risk of transmission for children attending their settings.

Test and trace

Activity organisers should support test and trace efforts by collecting written information on participants at both individual training sessions and all matches. This must be detailed enough to allow NHS Test and Trace to contact all participants if a player becomes ill with COVID-19. These records must be kept for 21 days. Each sport/ NGB will determine in their action plan or guidance the process their sport will go through to enable test and trace efforts to happen by providing the way in which all information on participants will be collected at

both training and matches. [Appendix 4](#) explains the government expectations with further developments to follow in due course.

Organisers should maintain a [record of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace](#).

Pre-attendance official symptom check

All players, officials, volunteers and spectators must undergo a self-assessment for any COVID-19 symptoms. No-one should leave home to participate in sport if they, or someone they live with, has symptoms of COVID -19 currently recognised as any of the following:

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough
- A loss of, or change to, their sense of smell or taste

Should an individual have demonstrated any such symptoms, they must follow [NHS and PHE guidance on self-isolation](#)

Participants will be made aware of any increased risk associated with taking part in activity, based on the assessment undertaken by the governing body. They should also be strongly advised to comply with public health restrictions and avoid high risk behaviour outside the sports setting to reduce the risk to their fellow participants when they do attend.

Travel to training and matches

Participants are encouraged to follow best practice for travel including minimising use of public transport and limiting car sharing. Walk or cycle if you can. People from a household or [support bubble](#) can travel together in a vehicle. See the government's [safer travel guidance](#) for passengers for further information.

Arrival at venues

Clubs should strictly limit the time spent congregating at a venue before activity begins. Meet-up times should reflect this. This includes arriving changed and ready to begin the warm up., Exceptions may be made where safety and safeguarding measures require this, for example supporting disability athletes with minimum time spent waiting or in changing rooms.

Key principles - during activity

Social distancing in play

All sports must adhere to social distancing throughout warm-ups and avoid equipment sharing. The sport specific action plan must address the issue of how the sport can best mitigate the risk of social distancing in competitive matches and training.

Having completed the droplet transmission risk assessment each sport may introduce 'COVID-19 adaptations' to lower the frequency of activities that cannot be done whilst socially distanced. Avoid unnecessary breaking of social distancing such as pre-game handshakes, huddles, face-to-face confrontation with opponents and officials, and scoring celebrations.

Social distancing during breaks and post-game

All participants must remain socially distanced during breaks in play with spaced areas for equipment and refreshment storage for each individual including officials and substitutes. Coaching staff and substitutes, should, for example, spread out and avoid sharing a dug out or bench if social distancing cannot be observed.

Water bottles or other refreshment containers, should in no circumstances be shared. Participants are advised to bring their own, in a labelled or highly distinguishable container.

After activity participants must maintain government mandated social distancing for social interaction. This includes in any available clubhouse facilities or other venue participants congregate in afterwards.

Use of equipment

The sharing of equipment must be avoided where possible, particularly that used around the head and face e.g. helmets. Where equipment is shared, equipment must be cleaned before use by another person.

Sports should give consideration on how to protect participants in relation to all equipment use and the risk of transmission, including checking ongoing Government research and advice on transmission of the virus and ensuring their guidance reflects it.

Participants should take their kit home to wash it themselves, rather than have one person handling a large quantity of soiled materials. Where kit absolutely has to be shared or kept together (for example last minute stand-in players, shortage of kit, or an essential club function), each person handling it must wash or sanitise their hands immediately after.

Ball transfer

Based on the fomite transmission risk assessment sports where a common ball needs to be handled by multiple players (e.g. basketball, cricket, football) will produce a plan to reduce this risk following advice from their governing body.

Match officials, medics and coaches

Match officials should observe the governing body guidance in the same way as participants are required to. Match officials must remain socially distanced from players where possible during play. Should match officials not be able to remain socially distanced due to their role in the sport, their sport should conduct a risk assessment to see if other mitigations may be necessary.

Adherence to measures

A code of behaviour should be developed by each sport to ensure a commitment for all involved to adhere to COVID-19 adaptations, match officials will be empowered to ensure measures are adhered to through appropriate sanctions designed by the NGB. Participants must be clear that they are opting in to participating as defined in the sport-specific guidance with regard to risk and risk mitigation.

Shouting

There is an additional risk of infection in close proximity situations where people are shouting or conversing loudly. This particularly applies indoors and when face to face. If possible, players should therefore avoid shouting or raising their voices when facing each other during, before and after games.

Injury treatment

Injuries during play should still be treated as participant wellbeing is utmost. The best way to protect yourself and others is through rigorous cleaning, personal hygiene and regular hand hygiene. An increased frequency of cleaning and

disinfection of all surfaces and equipment, using standard household cleaning and disinfection products, is recommended. Face coverings are also advisable when undertaking treatment.

After contact with an injured participant, clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity. This advice is applicable to all situations, regardless of whether there was close contact or the minimum social distancing was maintained. Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose.

Physios or their equivalent, should keep a record of each participant they have come into contact with for test and trace purposes.

See [further information](#) for those who may need to act as a 'first responder' role in a sports setting.

Spectators

Supporters, parents, and other spectators to remain socially distanced whilst attending events. Spectator groups must be restricted to discrete six person gathering limits and spread out, in line with wider government guidance.

Where it is anticipated that an activity will attract spectators, there should be a named person or persons with responsibility for ensuring adherence with these guidelines and ensuring the facility is COVID-19 Secure. The person should carry out and publish a risk assessment for the activity which limits the number of spectators and focuses on the need to maintain social distancing on arrival, for the duration of the activity, and on departure.

Arrangements should also be put in place to support test and trace efforts by collecting information from spectators which is detailed enough to allow NHS Test and Trace to contact them if necessary. See the [maintaining records guidance](#) for further information.

Source: Dept for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

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