



BRITISH

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

COVID-19 RETURN TO PLAY ACTION PLAN

INTERIM PHASE 3 GUIDANCE FOR SCOTLAND - UNDER 18s

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Effective from: 21 August 2020

These guidelines apply to Scotland only and have been produced in line with the Scottish Government guidance on public spaces, outdoor activity and exercise published on 9 July 2020, which can be viewed at [Scottish Government: Exercise & Activity Guidance](#)

As a National Governing Body, we appreciate that the three nations of the UK that have teams under BAFA's auspices have different timelines for easing restrictions using their devolved powers. We're factoring these differences into the detailed guidance we're creating for approval by each of the Home Country Sports Councils.

However, we also appreciate that in Scotland, children's organised outdoor contact sports for under 18s may be resumed. We have created this interim guidance for submission to **sportscotland** to enable a return to activity for children's American Football to take place without further delay.

While phase 3 provides us with new opportunities to increase American Football activity across Scotland, we must be cautious in our approach to this to ensure the safety of our members. **We want to be clear at this stage that the focus of these guidelines is on a return to American Football non-contact training and intra-club non-contact games, not any form of competition between clubs.**

This guidance will be updated following progression through Scotland's Covid-19 route map and to reflect any relevant changes to advice from **sportscotland**.

Make sure you read this guidance carefully and fully understand the requirements in place to meet with the varying restrictions outlined by Scottish Government.

Please also be aware that guidance can change, and restrictions may be reintroduced at short notice – make sure you check with BAFA, **sportscotland** and the [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland](#) website for any updates or changes.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PHASE 3 - REMINDER

From Friday 10 July:

- People can meet in extended groups outdoors (with physical distancing). Max 15 people from max 5 households.
- Households can meet indoors with up to a maximum of two other households at a time (with physical distancing).
- A house can meet up to 4 other households per day in total.
- The limit on the number of other households you can meet per day (indoors or outdoors) does not apply to young people who are under 18.
- Children aged 11 or under no longer need to physically distance indoors. Young people aged 12-17 must continue to physically distance.

From Monday 13 July:

- Organised outdoor contact sports, play and physical activity can resume for children and young people under 18 (subject to guidance).

From Thursday 30 July:

- Those testing positive should self-isolate for 10 days (increased from 7 days previously). No change to 14 days self-isolation for those in contact with someone who tests positive or entering/returning from international travel from relevant countries.

From Saturday 1 August:

- Shielding paused from 1 August

From Monday 24 August:

- Indicative date for adult contact sport to resume outdoors

It's everyone's responsibility

During Phase 3, the various changes that are due to come into effect will result in larger numbers of people moving around and coming together across a variety of settings and sectors, both indoors and outdoors. This will give the virus more opportunities to spread. There is a risk of outbreaks and while we should strive to avoid them, we must also prepare for them and our Test & Protect system will help us to contain them. Staying safe and keeping others safe is as important as ever which is why, for example, we have made face coverings mandatory on public transport and in shops. And it is especially important to be considerate of people whose health conditions mean that they haven't been able to enjoy the easing of restrictions that the rest of the population has benefited from.

To prevent spread of the virus we should all follow the FACTS. It is the sum of our individual actions, our collective endeavour, that is suppressing the virus.

FACTS:

- Face coverings.
- Avoid crowded places.
- Clean hands regularly.
- Two metre distance.
- Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms.

Remember FACTS for a safer Scotland

- F** Face coverings 
- A** Avoid crowded places 
- C** Clean your hands regularly 
- T** Two metre distance 
- S** Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms 

nhsinform.scot/coronavirus
#WeAreScotland

Healthier Scotland
Scottish Government

CORONAVIRUS
STAY SAFE
PROTECT OTHERS
SAVE LIVES

NHS
SCOTLAND

GENERAL GUIDANCE

1. Club management should ensure all appropriate management processes are in place so that they can effectively oversee and maintain the implementation of measures outlined in this document.
2. It is the responsibility of club management to undertake a documented risk assessment, based on their local circumstances, prior to the activity taking place. Consider safety first, particularly focusing on minimising the risk of infection/transmission. Appropriate measures must be put in place to ensure participants, staff and volunteers are always protected.
3. A BAFA risk assessment template is available [here](#) and example **sportscotland** risk assessment template is also available [here](#).
4. Only outdoor sport and physical activity should be undertaken at this time with all indoor exercise and changing areas remaining closed, although toilets can be reopened in line with Scottish Government [guidance](#).
5. BAFA clubs should adhere to the Scottish Government's physical distancing guidelines in force at the time.
6. Travel guidance outlined by the Scottish Government should always be adhered to. No carpooling is permitted – players, parents, coaches and staff should arrive separately unless they are part of the same household. Guidance is available at [Staying Safe and Protecting Others: Travel](#)

FACILITY GUIDANCE

7. We know that our member clubs are reliant on third party owned or managed facilities. Adherence to the following guidelines should be worked out collaboratively between club and facility. Clubs should request information from their facility provider on venue operations plans, risk assessments and any special requirements relating to Covid-19 to help inform their planning and understand requirements around the following:
 - Entry exit and parking arrangements in place at venues to ensure social distancing can be maintained.
 - Traffic flow systems and signage at entry and exit points, to ensure that people maintain social distancing rules.
 - Socially distanced areas for teams, officials, and spectators.
 - Hygiene provisions in place.

More information can be found in **sportscotland's** guidance on [getting facilities fit for sport](#).

8. No spectating should take place other than where a parent is supervising a child or Vulnerable adult. Physical distancing guidance should always be followed.

9. Activity or exercise undertaken in sports areas, courts and pitches must fully comply with Scottish Government household and physical distancing guidance with appropriate hygiene and safety measures also in place.

CLUB COVID-19 OFFICER / COVID-19 TEAM LEADS

10. Each club should appoint a Club Covid-19 Officer to help assist in ensuring that the club has taken the appropriate measures to resume activity. The club ultimately has the responsibility to ensure that there are risk assessments in place for the club and the activity that is taking place, however, to assist in the implementation of these a Covid-19 Officer should be introduced to ease the burden and be a lead in this area.
11. As we appreciate many of our clubs comprise multiple teams operating across different third party provided facilities, and running to different timings, we know that having a single club Covid-19 Officer may be impractical. In these instances we request that each team within the club has a designated Covid-19 Team Lead, reporting to an overall Club Covid-19 Officer.
12. Club management shall ensure that the appointed persons will receive all necessary support to undertake their roles.
13. The Club Covid-19 Officer and any Covid-19 Team Leads should not put themselves at risk whilst carrying out the role. Duties of these role should include:
 - Completing documented risk assessments and ensuring all appropriate mitigations are put in place by the club before any outdoor activity is undertaken.
 - Being aware of and understanding government guidelines, communicating these with relevant club volunteers and monitoring that these are strictly adhered to especially in terms of the 2m social distancing rules and the practice activity undertaken by the club. (This is subject to change)
 - Ensuring that players have completed the Return to Play health questionnaires for each practice session and game or tournament and shall ensure the club keeps records of these as they may be requested by BAFA. (Covid-19 Team Leads should share these with the Club Covid-19 Officer on a weekly basis for their team).
 - Providing safety information and protocols to all players, coaching personnel and parent/guardians prior to the resumption of club activities.
 - Keeping a record of attendees practicing or attending games or tournaments within the club. (Covid-19 Team Leads should share this with the Club Covid-19 Officer on a weekly basis for their team).
 - Ensuring relevant club volunteers are aware of the need to regularly clean and sanitise all equipment after each session (e.g. balls, flags).
 - Making necessary representations to club management about any COVID-19 concerns. (Covid-19 Team Leads should raise any issues with the Covid-19 Officer to share first).
 - Reporting any areas of non-compliance immediately to club management and ensuring that these are addressed. (Covid-19 Team Leads should raise any issues with the Covid-19 Officer to report first).

- Keeping up to date on all relevant guidelines issued by BAFA. In the case of players or coaching personnel experiencing or displaying COVID-19 symptoms the Club Covid-19 Officer should Inform club management if there is a confirmed case or if they have been made aware of an individual with COVID-19 symptoms. (Covid-19 team leads should advise the Covid-19 Officer first)
- If there is a confirmed case ensuring that track and trace protocols are followed

A [Club Covid-19 Officer](#) role summary is also available from **sportscotland** to help guide you.

TEST AND TRACE

14. GoMembership! Is BAFA's member registration system. Accurate player, coach and support staff data including full name, email address and phone number is collected upon registration. Only members registered in the BAFA GoMembership! System are eligible to participate in sanctioned American football activity.
15. Club Covid-19 Officers or Covid-19 Team Leads will be required to make a record of attendees practicing or attending games or tournaments within the club. (Covid-19 Team Leads should share this with the Club Covid-19 Officer on a weekly basis for their team).
16. Clubs will be regularly spot-checked by BAFA to make sure this information is accurately captured and will have strict sanctions failing to produce records or ensure members are registered.
17. Through these measures, an accurate and effective database will be available if required for Test & Trace purposes.

PRE-SCREENING

18. Prior to attending practice or games, all participants in community American football should complete a pre-practice health questionnaire. As part of this, participants will be asked to confirm that they have read and understood the risks associated with playing American football and the transmission of COVID-19. This should be completed by a parent or guardian for members under 18. A template form is available [here](#).
19. Clubs may create and use an equivalent electronic form to capture this information instead if appropriate but must have access to view and validate the information ahead of activity taking place.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

20. Children aged 11 years and younger are not required to physically distance, as set out in [Scottish Government guidance](#). This extends to organised sports activity and the field of play.
21. For all other participants a 'field of play bubble' can be created during organised sports activity that allows contact whilst the activity is taking place, in effect suspending

physical distancing guidelines for the duration of the activity. Normal physical distancing guidelines will however apply before and after the activity takes place - players aged 12-17yrs MUST physically distance before and after the activity when with adults.

22. Coaches and others supporting organised activity should attempt to keep physically distant (2m) from each other and from players where possible, but it is recognised that this will not always be possible. In such circumstances the Club Covid-19 Officer should consider appropriate mitigating actions as part of the risk assessment.
23. Specific consideration should be given to supervision of children under the age of 5 years as it is not appropriate for young children to maintain the models of physical distancing that are suitable for older children, either practically or in terms of child development. You may, for instance, ask a parent to be present.
24. Parents/guardians who are supervising their children should abide by Scottish Government physical distancing guidance and stay at least 2m away from those out with their own household. Groups of parents from different households should not congregate before, during or after the activity.
25. The limit on the number of other households you can meet per day (indoors or outdoors) does not apply to young people who are under 18.

FIRST AID / MEDICS

26. In the event of first aid treatment being required it is recognised that a suitably qualified person, coach or supervising adult may require to attend to the injured participant. The Club Covid-19 Officer should consider processes for managing this as part of the risk assessment. This could include but not be limited to:
 - Provision of suitable PPE
 - Training of coaches/supervising adults
 - Presence of one parent/guardian being required at the activity for children/vulnerable adults.
27. After contact with an injured participant, medics, physios or first aiders are encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly with soap and water or hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity. Records should be kept of any injury treated and passed to the Covid-19 Officer or Covid-19 Team Lead so there is a record of the participants medics, physios or first aiders have come into close contact with for track and trace purposes.

SAFEGUARDING

28. The lockdown period will have affected children in many ways. While most will have had a positive time with family, others may have had negative experiences and could be at increased risk. Please continue to follow the process outlined in your club Safeguarding

Policy and report any concerns to BAFA by contacting Safeguarding lead [Claire Elton](#).

29. There will be no alteration to the standards we had in place pre-Covid 19, therefore Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme membership will still need to be in place for designated roles, including coaches, and for any new recruits to roles, prior to any activity resuming with children and youth teams.
30. Coaches and those working with children should familiarise themselves with the additional considerations developed by **Children 1st**: [Child Wellbeing and Protection Considerations](#).

EQUIPMENT

31. Clubs should carry out the following to make sure all equipment is regularly sanitised:
 - Balls should be sanitised at the start, halfway through, and at the conclusion of practices or games as a minimum.
 - Each player should have their own set of flags which they will keep for the duration of the practice or game. Flags and belts will be sanitised halfway through, and at the conclusion of practices or games by either the individual, coach, team manager or Club Covid-19 Officer or Covid-19 Team Lead.
 - Each pitch area should have antibacterial wet wipes or spray available to enable this.
 - At the end of each practice or game, the Covid-19 Officer or Covid-19 Team Lead should ensure any other equipment which has been handled (such as cones) is sanitised.
33. Participants should be encouraged to bring their own hand sanitiser to practices and games and use it at regular intervals in activity.
32. Participants should bring their own water to practice and not share it under any circumstances.
33. Participants must not share towels, toiletry products, clothing such as practice jerseys or bibs, water bottles, boots, gloves, mouth guards, or disposables such as tape or ice packs.
34. As the virus is transmitted from respiratory secretions, mouthguard etiquette is very important. Players should refrain from touching or removing their mouthguard, and if they do so must sanitise their hands. Mouthguards must not be left on shared surfaces or public places but be placed in a personal container and stored with personal possessions.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

35. Players aged 17 and under (on the day of activity) are permitted to undertake non-contact American Football practice and game activities in line with BAFA rules. This is due to their reduced risk profile associated with Covid-19 transmission and infection.

36. At this time only intra-club non-contact games are permitted, and travel to take part in competition with another club or clubs outwith your normal practice venue is not permitted.
37. Maximum non-contact practice or play groups of 10 individuals can take place per 1/4 pitch or 20 individuals per 1/2 pitch – this is based on either a full-sized rugby pitch or 11s soccer pitch. The maximum number includes coaches.
38. In addition to non-contact flag football, players aged 17 and under are also permitted to undertake non-contact skill development (ie, ball handling, route running) or fitness activities.
39. During these activities, players aged 17 and under (on the day of activity) are not required to physically distance from one another. However, players aged 12-17yrs MUST physically distance before and after the activity when with adults.
40. No traditional American Football contact activities (e.g. tackle or blocking practices) are permitted at this time.
41. Only members registered in the BAFA GoMembership! System are eligible to participate in sanctioned American football activity.
42. The contact details of any new playing members should be captured as per BAFA's existing three-trial session process. New playing members MUST be registered after their third trial session.
43. Players, coaches and support staff registered for any BAFA football format may participate in non-contact flag American football activities.
44. Non-contact practice and game activity should reflect the following existing age bandings:
 - U16 - players must be under 16 on the 31 August in the year preceding the playing season. The minimum age is 13.
 - U13 - Players must be under 13 on the 31st of August in the year preceding the playing season. The minimum age is 7.
 - U19 – Players who are aged 17 or under (on the day of activity) can participate in non-contact practice and game activities together as a group. The minimum age is 16.
45. As per [BAFA Competition rules and regulations](#) item 3.4, mixed age ranges may practice alongside each other in the same facility or field but must operate distinctly from each other. No game like scenarios should take place across (or mixing) any age ranges.

46. Huddles – it is recommended that where possible team huddles do not take place before, after and during practice or non-contact game activities. If these are essential, it is recommended that teams all face in the same direction to receive instructions.
47. Coaches should risk assess and plan appropriately for each session in advance, be aware of responsibilities and be clear on expectations with participants. They should also build in a review period to reflect on effectiveness and safety of the session. Further guidance on appropriate steps for providing coaching are available [here](#).
48. No pre or post-game handshakes, or alternatives of any sort e.g. elbow bump or foot taps are permitted.
49. No spitting is permitted during practice or play.

GUIDANCE TO SUPPORT PARTICIPANTS

The following guidance can be used to support participants. Consider sharing it using it in the context of before, during and after the activity.

50. Stay up to date

- Scottish Government information is available at [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland](#) .
- Be aware that guidance can change, and restrictions may be reintroduced - ensure you have checked the latest version of guidelines for your activity.

51. Travelling to and from an activity/venue

- Please check before you leave that toilet facilities will be available at the venue.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before leaving home. Information on hand hygiene is available at: [Health Protection Scotland: Hand hygiene techniques](#) .
- Where possible avoid using public transport and adhere to Scottish Government physical distancing and travel guidelines.
- Arrive as close as possible to when you need to be at the venue/facility and allow others to leave before you enter. If you need to wait, then do so away from the facility and clear of the gates.
- Take your own hand sanitiser to the venue and use regularly throughout the activity.
- If driving, park your car in such a way as to facilitate physical distancing.
- Avoid touching fixed equipment including gates, fences or benches.

- After completing your exercise/activity return directly to your car (if appropriate) and leave.

52. Health and Hygiene

- If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve. Dispose of your tissue into an appropriate bin supplied at the venue or place in a plastic bag and take home. Wash your hands afterwards for 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your face and ensure to clean your hands with at least 60% alcohol gel when you finish participating.

53. Maintaining physical distancing

- At all times, participants should adhere to the Scottish Government's physical distancing guidelines including before, during and after the activity or when taking breaks.
- Coaches, officials, parents and guardians should continue to observe physical distancing when involved in children's activity as a coach, official or spectator. Please refer to any specific club/venue guidelines.
- Where access through an indoor space is provided it should be for one person at a time, ideally with a one-way system in operation. Participants should ensure not to make contact with hard surfaces such as door handles and move through the area without stopping or congregating at any time.
- Further information on physical distancing guidance is available at [Staying Safe and Protecting Others](#).

54. Spectators

- No spectating should take place other than where a parent/guardian is supervising a child or vulnerable adult. In all cases physical distancing should always be followed.

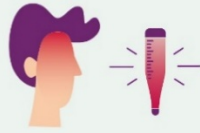
USEFUL INFORMATION

- [Scottish Government Coronavirus guidance and routemap](#)
- [Test and Protect](#)
- [NHS Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) General advice](#)
- [NHS Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) check your symptoms](#)
- [sportscotland Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information and resources](#)

TEST & PROTECT: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Following these steps is vital to tackle coronavirus in Scotland

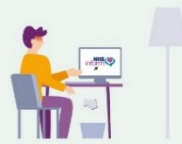
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RECOGNISE SYMPTOMS

A new persistent cough, fever, or loss or change in sense of taste or smell means you should immediately begin household isolation.

2



REQUEST A TEST RIGHT AWAY

It is important to get a test as soon as possible. Visit [NHSinform.scot/test-and-protect](https://www.nhs.uk/111) or call **0800 028 2816** if you cannot get online.

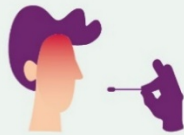
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ISOLATE

Isolate for 10 days from symptom start date, longer if fever continues and 48 hours after fever ends. Others you live with should isolate for 14 days.

4



GET TESTED

When isolating, you should only leave home to get tested. There are various ways of having this done.

5



GET RESULTS

They should be with you within 48 hours and no more than 72 hours.

6



PROVIDE DETAILS

If you have coronavirus, NHS contact tracers will contact you to ask who you have had close contact with recently.

7



NHS INFORMS CONTACTS

The NHS will then contact the people you have had close contact with. Your name will not be shared unless you give permission. All data will be held safely and securely.

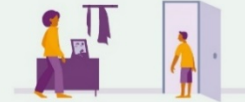
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CLOSE CONTACTS ISOLATE

They will be asked to isolate for 14 days from the last time they had contact with you.

9



HOUSEHOLD OF CLOSE CONTACT

If the close contact has no symptoms, others in their household don't need to isolate. If the close contact develops symptoms, they should begin household isolation and request a test straight away.

If you do not have community or family support and need essential help, call the National Assistance Helpline on **0800 111 4000** (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm) or via textphone on **0800 111 4114**. The helpline is for those who cannot leave their home or get the help they need elsewhere.

For current health advice and more information about the Test & Protect service visit [NHSinform.scot/test-and-protect](https://www.nhs.uk/111)