



**COVID-19 RETURN TO PLAY ACTION PLAN**

**BAFA STAGE 4 COMMUNITY CLUB GUIDANCE FOR  
SCOTLAND**

# BAFA STAGE 4 COMMUNITY CLUB GUIDANCE FOR SCOTLAND

**Effective from: 12 April 2021**

These guidelines apply to Scotland only and have been produced in line with sportscotland's latest [sport and physical activity guidance](#).

The Scottish Government introduced a new [strategic framework for managing Covid-19](#) from 2 November 2020. This provides a five-level approach to restrictions with each local authority area (or sub-area) placed into a relevant protection level depending on its Covid-10 status, which is reviewed weekly.

**These guidelines have been updated to reflect lockdown easing measures announced by the Scottish Government that come into effect from 12 March 2021.**

## Protection levels

It is the responsibility of clubs to be aware of their local area protection level and the associated restrictions that may be placed on American football activity and consider this at all times as part of their risk assessment and activity planning.

Clubs must use the [post-code checker](#) to confirm which protection level their club activity will take place in, and then review the protection level activity guide on page 5 for an overview of what activity is permitted in which level. **Given the small number of BAFA clubs in Scotland, particular notice must be taken of any travel restrictions in place and what this may mean for members who live outside of the local authority region in which the club operates and who may be in a higher or lower [protection level](#).**

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. Where a locality or region is subject to

localised restrictions, guidance in this document may not apply. Please also make sure you check with BAFA, [sportscotland](#) and the [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland](#) website for any additional updates or changes.

**If you have any questions relating to this document or the guidance contained within, please contact [covid-19@britishamericanfootball.org](mailto:covid-19@britishamericanfootball.org) in the first instance.**



# BAFA Return to Play Road Map - Scotland Stage 4

Levels 0-4 overview (With effect from 12 March 2021)

The Scottish Government has moved to a strategic approach to manage Covid-19 based on five graduated levels of protection. American football activity in Scotland is currently at Stage 4 in BAFA's Return to Play Roadmap. Below is a table showing what this means for each protection level. Please refer to the Stage 4 Community Club Guidance for Scotland for more information.

	LEVEL 0	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
<b>NON-CONTACT PRACTICE</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓ Over 18s - 2m physically distanced group activity or exercise only	✓ Over 18s - 2m physically distanced group activity or exercise only
<b>NON-CONTACT INTRA-CLUB GAMES</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓ Under 18s Only	✗
<b>NON-CONTACT INTER-CLUB GAMES</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓ Under 18s Only	✗
<b>FULL CONTACT TRAINING/GAMES</b>	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
<b>GROUP SIZES</b>	Max 30 participants (including coaches) in a wholly separate group - per half full sized pitch	Max 30 participants (including coaches) in a wholly separate group - per half full sized pitch	Max 30 participants (including coaches) in a wholly separate group - per half full sized pitch	Max 30 participants (including coaches) in a wholly separate group - per half full sized pitch	U12s max 30 participants and over 12s max 15 participants (including coaches) in a wholly separate group per half full sized pitch.
<b>INDOOR ACTIVITY</b>	✓	✓ Under 18s Only	✓ Under 18s Only	✓ Under 18s Only	✗
<b>TRAVEL - OVER 18s</b>	Over 18s who live in Level 0-2 areas can travel to and from other Level 0-2 areas for practice and play. Travel into a Level 3 or 4 area to take part in American football activity is not permitted.	Over 18s who live in Level 0-2 areas can travel to and from other Level 0-2 areas for practice and play. Travel into a Level 3 or 4 area to take part in American football activity is not permitted.	Over 18s who live in Level 0-2 areas can travel to and from other Level 0-2 areas for practice and play. Travel into a Level 3 or 4 area to take part in American football activity is not permitted.	Over 18s who live in a Level 3 area may take part in physically distanced individual practice activity only. Travel into a Level 3 or 4 area to take part in American football activity is not permitted.	Travel into or out of a Level 4 area to take part in American football activity is not permitted.
<b>TRAVEL - UNDER 18s</b>	Under 18s may travel to practice or play for their team if it is located in a higher or lower Level 0-3 area. Travel into or out of a Level 4 area for American football activity is permitted if that is where it usually takes place.	Under 18s may travel to practice or play for their team if it is located in a higher or lower Level 0-3 area. Travel into or out of a Level 4 area for American football activity is permitted if that is where it usually takes place.	Under 18s may travel to practice or play for their team if it is located in a higher or lower Level 0-3 area. Travel into or out of a Level 4 area for American football activity is permitted if that is where it usually takes place.	Under 18s may travel to practice or play for their team if it is located in a higher or lower Level 0-3 area. Travel into or out of a Level 4 area for American football activity is permitted if that is where it usually takes place.	Travel into or out of a Level 4 area for American football activity is permitted if that is where it usually takes place.
<b>TRAVEL - COACHES AND STAFF</b>	Coaches and other club staff are permitted to travel in and out of Level 0-4 areas to undertake American Football coaching and volunteering activity only	Coaches and other club staff are permitted to travel in and out of Level 0-4 areas to undertake American Football coaching and volunteering activity only	Coaches and other club staff are permitted to travel in and out of Level 0-4 areas to undertake American Football coaching and volunteering activity only	Coaches and other club staff are permitted to travel in and out of Level 0-4 areas to undertake American Football coaching and volunteering activity only	Coaches and other club staff are permitted to travel in and out of Level 0-4 areas to undertake American Football coaching and volunteering activity only
<b>TRANSPORT</b>	Avoid car sharing with people outside extended household where possible	Avoid car sharing with people outside extended household where possible	Avoid car sharing with people outside extended household where possible	You should not share a car with anyone from another household, unless you absolutely have to. Avoid non-essential use of public transport.	You should not share a car with anyone from another household, unless you absolutely have to. Avoid non-essential use of public transport.

## DEFINITIONS – FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS GUIDANCE

- Contact sport or activity is defined as “a sport or activity in which the participants necessarily come into bodily contact with one another” such as Judo, Netball and Basketball.
- Non-contact sport or activity is defined as “a sport or activity in which the participants are physically separated by playing rules such as to make it difficult for them to make physical contact during an activity. Examples include Tennis, Cricket, Boccia and Curling.
- For the purposes of this guidance ‘organised sporting or physical activity’ refers to activities which are undertaken in a structured and managed way following specific rules and guidance of relevant SGBs/NGBs, local authorities or businesses who in turn have fully applied related Scottish Government and **sportscotland** guidance. All organised activity should be overseen by a Covid-19 Officer with documented risk assessments undertaken and mitigating actions put in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of participants, coaches and officials.

## GENERAL GUIDANCE

1. Clubs are only allowed to return to the activity detailed in each stage of our route map when advised they may do so by BAFA.
2. Club management and the appointed Club Covid-19 officer 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.
3. It is expected that clubs will draw up their own detailed practice protocols, however the Covid-19 adapted behaviours outlined in this document should be common to all clubs.
4. It is the responsibility of club management to undertake a documented risk assessment of their facilities, operating procedures and planned activities prior to that activity taking place. They should have appropriate measures in place to provide a safe environment for players, volunteers and other relevant individuals. These measures should be aligned with BAFA and government guidance. The aim is to introduce suitable control measures focusing on minimising the risk of infection/transmission. A BAFA risk assessment template is

available [here](#) and example **sportscotland** risk assessment template is also available [here](#).

Club Covid-19 officers should upload a copy of their club's Return to Play Risk Assessment in BAFA's GoMembership! system, where it will be reviewed. Where clubs have teams returning to play in different facilities, a separate Return to Play Risk Assessment should be uploaded for each team.

5. Clubs must also make sure they have an Emergency Action Plan for reacting to incidents. An example template is available [here](#).
6. Only participants aged 17 and under in Level 0-3 areas and adult participants aged 18 and over in Level 0 areas may participate in indoor American football activity at this time. Activity for all other age groups and protection levels must take place outdoors only.
7. Clubs should strictly limit the time spent congregating at a venue before activity begins. Meet- up times should reflect this – arrival no more than five minutes before the start time of a session is recommended. This includes arriving changed and ready to begin the warmup, if possible, to minimise time spent waiting or in holding areas.
8. No spectating should take place other than where a parent / guardian is supervising a child or vulnerable adult. Physical distancing guidance should always be followed between spectators. In all cases physical distancing guidelines should always be followed and those individuals must spectate from outside the designated playing and side-line areas.
9. Use of changing rooms and showering facilities should be avoided where possible. Players should arrive changed and shower at home afterwards. Changing rooms may be made available (other than in Level 4 areas where indoor facilities should remain closed) for participants with disabilities or special needs. Detailed facility guidance including a checklist that covers use of changing rooms, showers and toilets can be found in the Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on the opening of indoor and outdoor sport and leisure facilities](#).
10. BAFA clubs should adhere to the Scottish Government's physical distancing guidelines at all times. Once an individual has completed their practice or play activity, they should immediately vacate the 'field of play' and are then subject to normal distancing rules.

11. Where a disabled participant requires functional support to help them participate coaches or carers can provide this without maintaining physical distancing. In such circumstance the responsible Club Covid-19 Officer should consider appropriate mitigating actions as part of the risk assessment. For instance, providing appropriate PPE, limiting the number of participants an individual provides functional support to, limiting the duration spent in close proximity, or a combination of actions.
12. [Travel guidance and restrictions](#) outlined by the Scottish Government should always be adhered to. Particular attention must be paid to what this may mean for club members who live outside of the local authority region in which the club operates, and who may be in a higher or lower protection level. Please see the table below for an overview of travel restrictions.

Age Group	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
U18s	✓	✓	✓	✓	Local Travel Only
18+ (Adults)	✓	✓	✓	Local Travel Only	

13. 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](#)
14. Participants should be discouraged from socialising after practice or games and reminded that they must adhere to current government guidance on social mixing.
15. If a club member has a continuous cough, high temperature, or loss or change in taste or smell, they should self-isolate and request a coronavirus test right away. Further information is available at [www.NHSinform.scot/test-and-protect](http://www.NHSinform.scot/test-and-protect) or by calling 0800 028 2816 if they cannot get online.

## FACILITY GUIDANCE

16. 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](#).

## CLUB COVID-19 OFFICER / COVID-19 TEAM LEADS

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. Club management shall ensure that the appointed persons will receive all necessary support to undertake their roles.

20. 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 Test and Protect protocols are followed

A [Covid-19 Officer](#) role summary is also available from **sportscotland** to help you return to sport safely. A [Covid-19 COVID 19 Officer e-learning module](#) is also available to help Club Covid-19 Officers with key information and guidance to help them prepare for the new role and should be completed. This has been developed by **sportscotland** in partnership with Scottish Rugby.

All Club Covid-19 Officers should also complete BAFA's [ReActivate Covid-19 Awareness Award](#). This training is mandatory for all designated BAFA Club Covid-19 Officers and recommended for all Covid-19 Team Leads and any coaches leading activity, and supersedes any other equivalent training completed. Completion of this training will be tracked by BAFA and certificates should be loaded up within the GoMembership! system as an individual qualification for approval. The name of your Club COVID-19 officer must also be entered in the club

details section of the GoMembership! system.

## TEST AND PROTECT

21. [Test and Protect](#), is Scotland's way of putting into practice NHS Scotland's test, trace, isolate and support strategy.

- The gathering of contact information from anyone attending American football activity in a secure and safe manner, will assist NHS Scotland's Test and Protect service to identify any clusters of cases, contact those who may have been exposed to the virus, and request them to take appropriate steps to prevent potential onward spread.
- In order to support Test and Protect, Club Covid-19 officers for BAFA affiliated clubs are required to keep a record of the name, contact number, date of activity session and timings for all those attending organised American football activities within the club. (Covid-19 Team Leads should share this with the Club Covid-19 Officer on a weekly basis for their team).
- This information should be stored for 21 days and shared with public health officers when requested.
- A leaflet providing information on the Test and Protect service from NHS Scotland is also available [here](#).

22. Only individuals registered in the BAFA GoMembership! System are eligible to participate in sanctioned National Leagues American football activity. The only exception to this is new club members – who may undertake three trial sessions as long as their details are captured as per BAFA's existing three trial session process. New members MUST be registered after their third trial session. University football participants should be registered with their institution and follow their guidance.

23. 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.

24. Through these measures, an accurate and effective database will be available if required for Test and Protect purposes.

## PROTECT SCOTLAND APP

25. NHS Scotland has launched a free mobile app designed to help with contact tracing efforts and slow the spread of COVID-19. The app will alert users if they have been in close contact with another app user who tests positive for coronavirus.
26. Supported by a dedicated Protect Scotland website, the app is an extra tool complementing existing person-to-person contact tracing which remains the main component of NHS Scotland's Test and Protect system.
27. Further information on the Protect Scotland app is available at [www.protect.scot](http://www.protect.scot).

## PRE-SCREENING

28. 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](#).
29. 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.
30. If a person has a continuous cough, high temperature, or loss or change in taste or smell, they should self-isolate and request a coronavirus test right away. Further information is available at [www.NHSinform.scot/test-and-protect](http://www.NHSinform.scot/test-and-protect) or by calling 0800 028 2816 if they cannot get online.

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING

31. 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.

32. For all other participants a 'field of play bubble' can be created during organised sports activity in Levels 0-3 where permitted that allows contact whilst the activity is taking place, in effect suspending physical distancing guidelines for the duration of the activity. This can consist of no more than 30 people, including coaches, officials and other support staff at any one time. Normal physical distancing and household number guidelines will however apply before and after the activity takes place - players aged 12 years and over MUST physically distance before and after the activity or when taking breaks.
33. Total numbers taking part in training, competition or small-scale sporting events if all guidance is followed should not exceed 200 people in any one day, including organisers, officials and participants.
34. Coaches and others supporting organised activity should attempt to keep physically distant where possible, but it is recognised that this will not always be possible. In such circumstances the responsible Club Covid-19 Officer should consider appropriate mitigating actions as part of their risk assessment, for example, recommending the wearing of a face covering.
35. There are no restrictions on the number of households (or extended households) that a coach can instruct per day.
36. 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.
37. Coaches, officials, parents and guardians should continue to observe physical distancing when involved in children's activity as a coach, official or spectator. Groups of individuals from different households should not congregate before, during or after the activity – for example, in a car park or outside the entrance or exit of a venue.
38. 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.
39. Further information on physical distancing guidance is available at [Staying Safe and Protecting Others](#) .

## FIRST AID, HEALTH AND HYGIENE

40. Ensure that access to first aid equipment is maintained, and has been updated appropriately for the Covid-19 pandemic and first aiders have appropriate training
41. 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.
42. 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 Test and Protect purposes.
43. Participants should wear face coverings, if indoors, before and after activity or when in non-playing areas of a facility – e.g. reception, locker rooms and storage areas. This is a mandatory requirement. This is a **mandatory** requirement except where an exemption applies, or where there is a 'reasonable excuse' not to wear a face covering. For example, if you have a health condition or you are disabled, including hidden disabilities such as autism, dementia or a learning disability. Face coverings do not need to be worn when undertaking physical activity, exercise or showering / changing.
44. Coaches should wear face coverings indoors at all times, except where exemptions apply.

45. Be aware that face coverings discriminate against some deaf people who need to look at lips to help communicate. Staff in facilities should be made aware that it is okay to remove their face coverings to communicate with someone who relies on lip reading and facial expressions.
46. If you are not wearing face coverings and 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.
47. Avoid touching your face and ensure to clean your hands with at least 60% alcohol gel when you finish participating.
48. Further guidance is available at:
  - [Health Protection Scotland: Hand hygiene techniques](#)
  - [St. John's Ambulance: Covid-19 advice for first aiders](#)
  - [HSE: First Aid during the coronavirus](#)

## SAFEGUARDING

49. Ongoing restrictions in place during the pandemic 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 our safeguarding team at [safeguarding@britishamericanfootball.org](mailto:safeguarding@britishamericanfootball.org)
50. 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 teams.
51. Coaches and those working with children should familiarise themselves with the additional considerations developed by **Children 1<sup>st</sup>**: [Child Wellbeing and Protection Considerations](#).

## EQUIPMENT

52. Clubs should carry out the following to make sure all equipment is regularly sanitised:

- Balls should be sanitised at the start of activity, during natural stoppages and at the conclusion activity as a minimum. If there is no natural stoppage this should be done after every 15 minutes.
- Each player should have their own set of flags which they will keep for the duration of the practice or game. Flags and belts should be sanitised at regular intervals during activity, 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. During games, players should sub-out if equipment sanitisation is required.
- 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.

53. Cones should be put out and collected by the same person on each pitch - preferably by a coach.

54. Participants should be encouraged to bring their own hand sanitiser to practices and games and use it at regular intervals in activity.

55. Participants should bring their own clearly labelled water bottles to practice and not share it under any circumstances. No communal water buckets or bottles are to be used.

56. 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.

57. 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 ACTIVITY GUIDANCE

58. Participants are permitted to undertake American Football activity in line with BAFA rules and regulations as follows:

- Levels 0-2 – non-contact practice, intra-club non-contact games and inter-club non-contact games only. A maximum of 30 people is allowed per group, including coaches
- Level 3 – over 18s – 2m physically distanced group activity or exercise only. Under 18s non-contact practice, non-contact intra-club and non-contact inter-club games only. A maximum of 30 people is allowed per group, including coaches. Ball transfer (eg, passing activities), is permitted with regular cleaning protocols in place.
- Level 4:
  - Over 18s – 2m physically distanced group activity or exercise only. A maximum of 15 people allowed per group, including coaches.
  - 12-17 year olds - non-contact practice or exercise only. A maximum of 15 people is allowed per group, including coaches.
  - Under 12s - non-contact practice or exercise only. A maximum of 30 people allowed per group, including coaches.

59. No traditional American Football contact activities (e.g. tackle or blocking practices, including the use of tackle bags or blocking shields that have to be held) are permitted at this time. The only exception to this is drills which use free-standing training aids – such as free-standing tackle dummies – which may be used in conjunction with strict equipment sanitising protocols.

60. Inter-club locally organised non-contact friendly games are permitted as long as the following guidance is strictly adhered to:

- Games may only take place in Level 0-2 areas for adults, and Level 0-3 areas for under 18s.
- Games must only be organised between teams in Level 0-2 areas for adults, and between teams in Level 0-3 areas for children. Adult teams and individual players should not travel from a Level 3 or 4 area to take place in a game in a Level 0-2 area. Children's teams and individual players aged under 18 should not travel from a level 4 area to take part in a game in a Level 0-3 area.
- Teams and individual players must not travel outside of Scotland to participate in a game at this time.
- A separate risk assessment must be completed for each planned game.
- When planning games, clubs must take particular notice of any travel restrictions in place and what this may mean for members who live outside of the local authority region in which the club operates or the game may take place and who may be in a higher or lower



protection level. Clubs should also be aware that the guidance in place may change, and restrictions may be reintroduced at short notice.

- Participant numbers for friendly games should be kept to a minimum at all times. The total number of participants from across both teams taking part in a game and present on the playing and side-line areas should not exceed 30 – this includes coaches and those acting as game officials.
- When not in active game play, participants must socially distance along the side-line area. Side-line areas may extend the full length of the pitch to enable this.
- The host club should clearly communicate any Covid-19 related venue requirements – for example, one-way systems, designated entry points, availability of toilet facilities onsite – to the visiting team ahead of the game taking place.
- Staggered arrival and departure times and designated pitch entry points for each team are highly recommended to minimise any risks.
- Before the start of any game, the Club Covid-19 officer should hold a short, socially distanced, briefing with the head coaches for each team, and any individuals acting as game officials, reminding them of their responsibilities aligned to BAFA’s return to play guidance.
- Individuals acting as game officials should observe BAFA’s return to play guidance in the same way as participants are required to. Game officials must remain socially distanced from players wherever possible. Masks should be considered as an additional mitigation.
- Inter-club locally organised non-contact friendly game activity between two teams does not require BAFA sanction – however any plans for game activity involving multiple ‘field of play bubbles’ of teams and games on the same day, such as a tournament, must be sanctioned by BAFA before taking place. To request sanction, please contact [covid-19@britishamericanfootball.org](mailto:covid-19@britishamericanfootball.org) detailing your plans, venue, the teams involved and attaching a copy of your risk assessment for the event. Please give at least 14 days’ notice for approval. Organisers should also be aware that in Scotland sports competition events that include multiple activity bubbles of up to the allowed maximum of 200 people per day, including organisers, officials and participants, should, as part of their risk assessment, consult with the relevant local authorities, environmental health, the police or other body responsible for the safety of the public. Agreement must be reached with these bodies before the event takes place.

61. Maximum non-contact practice or play groups of 15 individuals can take place per 1/4 pitch or 30 individuals per 1/2 pitch – this is based on either a full-sized rugby pitch or 11s soccer pitch. The maximum number includes coaches and any individuals acting in the capacity of game officials.

- Two groups of maximum 30 participants may practice or play on one full sized pitch. However, they must remain wholly separate throughout the activity and must be separated by a 2m 'safe zone'. Staggered start and finish times and designated pitch entry points for each group are highly recommended to minimise any risks.
- Should other spaces be used for practice – for example – a 7-side soccer pitch or other area that is a third of a larger pitch or similar, coaches and the Club Covid-19 Officer should use the above numbers as a guide and exercise their judgement while being very careful to not exceed the maximum numbers detailed. This should also be recorded and detailed in the club risk assessment by the Club Covid-19 Officer.
- Total numbers taking part practice should not exceed 200 people in any one day, including organisers, officials and participants.

62. In addition to non-contact flag football, players are also permitted to undertake non-contact skill development (ie, ball handling, route running) or fitness activities.

63. During practice or play activity in Levels 0-3, players are not required to physically distance from one another when in the 'field of play bubble'. However, players aged 12 years and over MUST physically distance before and after the activity or when taking breaks.

64. Coaches should risk assess and plan appropriately for each session in advance, be aware of responsibilities and be clear on expectations with participants. Practice planning should reflect the requirement for regular scheduled breaks for hand and equipment hygiene – before, during and at least every 15 minutes during sessions.

65. Only individuals registered in the BAFA GoMembership! System are eligible to participate in sanctioned National Leagues American football activity. The only exception to this is new club members – who may undertake three trial sessions as long as their details are captured as per BAFA's existing three trial session process. New members MUST be registered after their third trial session. University football participants should be registered with their institution and follow their guidance.

66. To support maintaining records for Test and Protect, participants should only take part in activity sessions with their registered BAFA club team and age group.

67. Players, coaches and support staff registered for any BAFA football format may participate in non-contact flag American football activities with their registered BAFA club team and age group.

68. As per [BAFA Competition rules and regulations](#) item 3.8, 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.
69. 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.
70. Team scoring celebrations involving person-to-person contact are not permitted.
71. Shouting - There is an additional risk of infection in close proximity situations where people are shouting or conversing loudly. This particularly applies when face to face. If possible, players should therefore avoid shouting or raising their voices when facing each other during, before and after games.
72. No pre or post-game handshakes, or alternatives of any sort e.g. elbow bump or foot taps are permitted.
73. No formal presentation ceremonies, or similar, such as group photographs should take place during or after a sporting activity or competition as the focus should be on reducing the numbers in attendance at any one time and exiting the facility immediately after activity.
74. No spitting or mouth rinsing is permitted during practice or play.

## **EQUALITY AND INCLUSION**

75. Covid-19 is affecting everyone. But the impact of the pandemic is not being felt equally. Before the pandemic certain groups were less likely to participate in sport and physical activity. These groups are also the most at risk of worsening inequalities due to Covid-19:
- Older people
  - Disabled people
  - Ethnic minorities
  - Women

- People from deprived communities

76. It is more important than ever to consider inclusive guidance for people who need extra support to be active and sports facility operators should consider this as part of their work to encourage people to return.

77. The evidence emerging has clear implications for how we design and deliver sport and physical activity. Some key areas for consideration include;

**Communication** – Digital exclusion is a key issue. With so many services and so much information moving online it risks worsening the health impacts of the pandemic. We have to think innovatively about the range of ways we can provide information to people about sport and physical activity.

**Accessibility** – Accessibility of our environments is another key issue emerging from the pandemic. As clubs and leisure centres re-open it's important to build understanding of people's specific accessibility needs around things like hygiene, physical distancing and face coverings so we can provide the best possible support to people to take part in sport and physical activity.

**Anxiety, mental health and wellbeing** – The pandemic is leading to an increased risk of anxiety and mental ill-health for people who share all characteristics. We know that sport and physical activity can have significant benefits for people's mental health so it's vital that we continue to promote those benefits, so people are encouraged to get involved.

**Confidence** - Confidence to return to sport is a big issue across all groups. We know that some groups are at higher risk from Covid-19 than others (including some ethnic minorities, disabled people and households experiencing poverty). These groups may be even more nervous about returning to sport or starting to participate. They are also less likely to participate in sport in the first place, so we'll need to give extra attention to their needs to help build their confidence.

## GUIDANCE TO SUPPORT COACHES

78. Guidance for coaches is available from **sportscotland** at [Getting your coaches ready for sport](#) and from the return to play section of the [British American Football Coaches Association](#) website.

## COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

79. Clubs should communicate clearly and regularly with members setting out what they are doing to manage risk, and what advice they are giving to individuals before, during and after visits to the venue/activity.
80. Make members aware in advance of measures that are in place at your venue, and guidelines they are asked to follow.
81. When communicating with members and participants, consider how you will reach people who do not have access to the internet. When publishing information on websites, consider how to make it accessible when accessed via a mobile phone or tablet rather than a PC or a laptop.
82. Special attention should also be given to how you communicate physical distancing rules to young people.

## 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](#)

# Get the app. Stop the spread.

To help stop coronavirus spreading, it is vital that we all download the free Protect Scotland app. The app works by:

- Quickly alerting you if you have been in close contact with an app user who tests positive
- Anonymously alerting people who have been in close contact with you, if you test positive
- Utilising Bluetooth technology, so it does not know your location or identity
- Using minimal data

By downloading the app today, we can all help protect ourselves, our families and Scotland against coronavirus.

To find out more about the app visit [protect.scot](https://protect.scot)



Download the free  
Protect Scotland app today



#WeAreScotland

## 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](https://nhsinform.scot/coronavirus)  
#WeAreScotland

