



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

**STAGE 5 – MODIFIED CONTACT FOOTBALL
COMMUNITY CLUB GUIDANCE FOR ENGLAND**

AMENDMENTS

The table below lists amendments to this guidance since the last version issued on 29 March 2021.

Reference	Summary of change
Introduction	Amended wording to clarify position on spectators
Introduction	Remove reference to travel in and out of Wales being prohibited
25	Text added to refer to new appendix on safe equipment fitting
31	Amended wording to clarify position on spectators
33	Addition of wording permitting participants who normally reside in Wales but are currently registered with a club in England to travel to take part in activity
44	Addition of text expanding on original definition of 'someone you live with' to include household and support bubbles
45	Addition of text to include anyone who has been asked to quarantine following overseas travel
68	New addition to clarify that equipment should not be shared between players and must be cleaned after use
80	New addition to clarify that personal playing equipment should not be shared between players
81	New addition to reference equipment fitting and direct to new appendix on safe equipment fitting
Appendix 1	New addition of safe equipment fitting guidance

STAGE 5 - MODIFIED CONTACT FOOTBALL - COMMUNITY CLUB GUIDANCE FOR ENGLAND

Updated: 12 April 2021

BAFA Stage 5 Return to Play allows for the gradual phased return of contact American football activity, over four steps of gradually increasing modified contact activity and duration, on top of unlimited non-contact practice activity.

The reintroduction of modified contact activity is hugely important to ensure players in all our contact formats of American football can start to practice core skills and are able to progress back towards regular contact practice and games.

Our guidance details what level and duration of activity is permitted at each step of Stage 5 but is also designed to allow coaching staff some flexibility to use their own judgement at the speed at which their teams move through the process. Our guidance recommends a two-week period for each step of Stage 5, but as a minimum we expect teams to hold at least two practice sessions at each stage before moving to the next.

Please note that completing Stage 5d requirements does not mean teams are then permitted to return to full contact practice. This will not be permitted by BAFA until Stage 6 which is currently planned from 24 May onwards. Teams should continue to work to Stage 5d guidelines until then.

These guidelines have been produced in line with the most recent version of the UK Government's [return to recreational team sport framework](#) and the [COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021](#) document which details the roadmap out of the current lockdown for England and explains how restrictions will be eased over time. Our guidance takes account of changes in the law that take effect on **12 April** and will be updated to take into account any relevant changes.

The wellbeing of participants is vital, so we must continue to be cautious in our approach to ensure the safety of our members. **Make sure you read this guidance carefully and fully understand the requirements before undertaking any activity.** Please also be aware that guidance can change, and restrictions may be reintroduced at short notice. Please take particular notice of the following key points:

- Only organised American football activity following BAFA Return to Play guidance is permitted at this time. Informal sport and physical activity (for example, a gathering of friends for a throw-about in the park or an unsanctioned game or tournament) is not covered by any exemption and will have to follow the legal gathering limits for outdoors: the 'rule of six' or two households.
- Spectators are not currently allowed at any American football activity sessions or games. **This includes injured players intending to observe only or**

parents / guardians who may normally observe their children practicing or playing. Only those people actively participating in a practice session should attend. This does not apply to carers for disabled people or adults needed to supervise under-18s in a safeguarding role. Where it is necessary for them to be present, supervising adults must adhere to the legal gathering limits.

- Travel is allowed in order to participate in organised sporting activity and exercise but should still be minimised wherever possible. Cross-border travel into or out of Scotland to participate in American football activity is not currently permitted.

Please also view our [Return to Play Roadmap](#).

If you have any questions relating to this document, or the guidance contained within, please contact covid-19@britishamericanfootball.org in the first instance.

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL CLUBS

University clubs must ensure they work with the Sports or Athletic Union at their institution to meet their own specific return to play and risk assessment requirements. There is no requirement for risk assessment documentation or Club Covid-19 Officer details to be entered in BAFA's GoMembership system. Institution specific guidance for managing positive cases of Covid-19 and recording attendance should also be followed.

In addition, university clubs must also ensure that institution-specific regulations are followed in respect to registering playing membership ahead of facilitating physical activity. Please note, the £20 player affiliation fee has been waived for the 2020-21 academic year, but coaches must be registered on BAFA's GoMembership system as usual ahead of activity resuming.

As with National Leagues clubs, no inter-club games are permitted during BAFA Return to Play Stage 5. University clubs who plan to hold inter-university or varsity games as part of Stage 6 will need to provide advance notification and a risk assessment to BUCS Competition Commission Lead Marcus Boswell at bucs@britishamericanfootball.org in order to confirm plans have been overseen and approved by their Sports or Athletic union or other appropriate departments. BAFA will then sanction as appropriate and confirm to BAFRA that officials can be provided if requested.

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OFF-FIELD ACTIVITY

CLUB PREPARATION

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 should ensure all appropriate management processes are in place so that they can effectively oversee and maintain the implementation of the 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. All clubs need to conduct a risk assessment of their facilities, operating procedures and planned activities prior to returning to American football activity. 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 to reduce the risk of contracting the virus to as low a level as is 'reasonably practicable'. A BAFA risk assessment template is available [here](#).
5. Clubs should upload a copy of their Return to Play Risk Assessment in BAFA's GoMembership system, where it will be reviewed. Where clubs have multiple teams returning to play in different facilities, a separate Return to Play Risk Assessment should be uploaded for each team. Clubs should make sure their risk assessments are updated to reflect any additional risks and mitigations for modified contact activity, including the provision of adequate first aid supplies and cover as normal.
6. Clubs must also make sure they have an Emergency Action Plan for reacting to incidents. An example template is available [here](#).
7. Participants must be made aware that relevant COVID-19 mitigations are in place and complying with these measures as a condition of participation.

CLUB COVID-19 OFFICER / COVID-19 TEAM LEADS

8. Each club should appoint a Club Covid-19 Officer to help assist in ensuring that the club has taken and maintains the appropriate measures to resume activity safely.

9. The name of your Club COVID-19 officer must also be entered in the club details section of the GoMembership system.
10. All Club Covid-19 Officers should 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.
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 volunteer 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 must make sure that the appointed persons will receive all necessary support to undertake their roles.
13. The club must ensure that all members are notified of who their Club Covid-19 Officer is, should they have to pass on their details to a member of the NHS Test and Trace team
14. 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 roles include but are not limited to:
 - Completing documented risk assessments and ensuring all appropriate mitigations are put in place by the club before any activity is undertaken.
 - Being aware of and understanding government and BAFA guidelines, communicating these with relevant club volunteers and monitoring that these are strictly adhered to especially in terms of the social distancing rules and the practice activity undertaken by the club.
 - Ensuring there is awareness of your club's Covid-19 protocols across club volunteers and participants, and that processes are in place to ensure participants and parents / guardians for those under 18 take individual responsibility to self-assess for symptoms of Covid-19 prior to attending sessions.
 - Making sure a record of attendees practicing or attending games or tournaments is kept within the club. This may be delegated across the club, for example to Covid-19 Team Leads or coaching staff, but must be accessible by the Club Covid-19 Officer at all times.
 - Ensuring all records must be kept for 21 days and used in accordance with GDPR legislation. More information is available from the NHS on '[how test and trace works](#)' and '[maintaining records](#)'. Clubs should decide how these records will be kept and stored, for example on paper or using an online format e.g. Google Docs or a shared drive.
 - Providing safety information and protocols to all players, coaching personnel and parent/guardians prior to the resumption of club activities.

- 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).
- The Club Covid-19 Officer should Inform club management if they become aware of a confirmed case of Covid-19 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)
- Ensuring track and trace protocols are followed should the club be contacted

DEALING WITH A POSTIVE CASE OF COVID-19

15. If an individual receives a positive test result following testing for Covid-19, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and asked to share information about their activities and close contacts just before and/or after developing symptoms or testing positive. Participants who have taken part in club activities during this period should be encouraged to identify this activity on their Test and Trace record to support the contact tracing process. Further information is available on the [NHS Test and Trace webpage](#).
16. Should the confirmed case be unable to identify all those they may have had contact with during practice or play at the club, they should advise NHS Test and Trace during their interview and this will be escalated through the NHS Test and Trace system who may make contact with the club directly to see if contacts may be identified. Evidence of risk assessments, practice plans, record keeping, and other relevant documentation may be requested as part of this review and should be readily available to share if requested.
17. Please note, it is not the responsibility of the club to inform members if someone at the club has tested positive for Covid-19. This will be done by the NHS Test and Trace team if deemed appropriate, who will advise anyone identified as a close contact to self-isolate or seek testing if required. An individual's right to privacy must be observed.
18. Should the club have any concerns following a confirmed case that they become aware of, they should contact their local [PHE Health Protection Team](#) for advice and support.
19. In the event that a club becomes aware of a confirmed positive case of Covid-19, either by being notified by the individual or by Test and Trace, BAFA should be notified by emailing [Covid- 19@britishamericanfootball.org](mailto:Covid-19@britishamericanfootball.org) This information is requested to allow BAFA to monitor the number of confirmed positive Covid-19 cases occurring in clubs, and to make sure clubs have the appropriate support.

VENUE AND FACILITIES

20. All activities must take place outdoors.
21. Indoor facilities including changing rooms should not be used except by people with disabilities or in emergency situations, although toilet facilities can be accessed. Players should arrive changed and shower at home afterwards.
22. 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 of the key principles of facility usage can be found [here](#).

23. If not already in place, clubs are also encouraged to request their facility provider create and display a [QR code for their venue](#). This will enable visitors to scan the QR code when they arrive, using the NHS Covid-19 app, and help trace and stop the spread of the virus.

TEAM EQUIPMENT

24. Before returning to activity, contact teams should make sure all kit that may have been in storage, including any helmets, shoulder pads or other equipment that will be used by participants has been thoroughly inspected and to ensure it meets required safety standards.
25. Players who have their own personal playing equipment, or who hold team playing equipment on loan, should be asked to thoroughly inspect it to ensure it meets required safety standards before returning to practice activity. Parents / guardians should be engaged in this process for younger players. **Please refer to Appendix 1 on safe equipment fitting.**

REGISTERING WITH THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

26. BAFA clubs in England who have created their own coronavirus QR code for their venue for people to scan and check-in on arrival with the NHS Covid-

19 app should be aware that this may mean they have to register with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and pay a data protection fee. This may also apply to any other form of QR code or online check-in used to capture information for a venue by a BAFA club.

27. You may need register because you are using an electronic system to gather and store data and most organisations that process personal information are required by law to do so and pay the fee which for small organisations, is between £40-60 per year. If you're subject to the requirement, it's important that you register and pay the fee as otherwise the ICO can impose financial penalties.
28. You do not need to register if you are only using the QR code to capture information to keep an attendance record for your own members. This is because data processing which is only for the purposes of establishing or maintaining membership is exempt. Your organisation must also have already been exempt from the requirement to register with the ICO.
29. You also don't need to do this if your venue has a QR code members scan on arrival, but this was not created and is not administered by your club. For example, the people who hire your pitch from require all your members to do this as a condition of use. You also do not need to do this if you are simply recording attendance using pen and paper. Records should be kept no longer than 21 days, in line with data protection regulations.
30. If you are unsure whether or not you need to register, please contact the ICO via their helpline on 0303 123 1113, or visit <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

SPECTATORS

31. Spectators are not currently allowed at any American football activity sessions or games. This includes injured players intending to observe only or parents / guardians who may normally observe their children practicing or playing. Only those people actively participating in a practice session should attend. This does not apply to carers for disabled people or adults needed to supervise under-18s in a safeguarding role. Where it is necessary for them to be present, supervising adults must adhere to the legal gathering limits.

TRAVEL

32. Participants are encouraged to follow best practice for travel including minimising use of public transport. Car sharing is not permitted with someone from outside your household or your support bubble unless your journey is undertaken for an [exempt reason](#). Walk or cycle if you can. See the government's [safer travel guidance](#) for passengers for further information.
33. Participants whose normally reside in Wales, but who are currently registered with a club in England may now travel cross-border from Wales to participate in activity within England. Participants aged under 18 who normally reside in England who are currently registered with a club in Wales

may also now travel cross-border to participate in activity within Wales. Cross-border travel from England into Wales for to participate in adult sporting activity is not yet permitted, as adult sport is currently restricted within Wales until at least 26 April 2021.

BAFA MEMBERSHIP

34. 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.
35. Accurate player, coach and support staff data including full name, email address and phone number is collected upon registration and is available to designated club administrators to help enable detailed Test and Trace record keeping.
36. To support maintaining records for Test and Trace, participants should only take part in activity sessions with their registered BAFA club team and age group.
37. 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.
38. University clubs must ensure that institution-specific regulations are followed in respect to registering playing membership ahead of facilitating physical activity, but coaches must be registered on BAFA’s GoMembership system as usual ahead of activity resuming.

TEST AND TRACE

39. [Test and Trace](#) is England’s way to ensure that anyone who develops symptoms of Covid-19 can quickly be tested to find out if they have the virus, and also includes targeted asymptomatic testing of NHS and social care staff and care home residents. It helps trace close recent contacts of anyone who tests positive for coronavirus and, if necessary, notifies them that they must self-isolate at home to help stop the spread of the virus.
40. The gathering of contact information from anyone attending American football activity in a secure and safe manner, will assist the Test and Trace 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.
41. In order to support Test and Trace, 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. This may be delegated across the club, for example to Covid-19 Team Leads or coaching staff, but must be accessible by the Club Covid-19 officer at all times.

42. Ensure all records must be kept for 21 days and used in accordance with GDPR legislation. More information is available from the NHS on [‘how test and trace works’](#) and [‘maintaining records’](#). Clubs should decide how these records will be kept and stored, for example paper or using online format e.g. Google Docs.
43. Clubs may be spot-checked by BAFA to make sure this information is accurately captured and there may be sanctions failing to produce records or ensure members are registered.

PARTICIPANT SELF-ASSESSMENT

44. Prior to attending practice or games, all participants in American football activity must self-assess themselves for symptoms of Covid-19. No one should leave home to participate in activity if they, **or someone in their household (including support bubbles if they have been in recent contact),** have symptoms of Covid-19 currently recognised as any of the following:
 - A high temperature
 - A new, continuous cough
 - A loss, or change, to their sense of smell or taste.

Any individual who displays such symptoms must follow NHS and PHE guidance on self-isolation.

45. **In addition, any participants who are undertaking quarantine due to recent overseas travel** or any participants who have been asked to isolate by NHS Test and Trace because they are a contact of a known Covid-19 case, must not participate in activity.
46. Clubs should ensure that as a minimum a regular reminder process is in place to make sure participants take individual responsibility to complete a symptom self-assessment before attending practice or games. Other assessment processes including paper or online forms or apps may be used by clubs to manage self-assessment.
47. Participants resuming activity should be asked to confirm that they have read and understood the risks associated with playing American football and the transmission of Covid-19 and are happy to comply with the safety measures in place. This should be completed by a parent or guardian for members under 18. A [template form](#) is available here.
48. Ahead of their return, players should be encouraged to thoroughly inspect any contact kit that they own or they hold on loan from their club has not

been used in some time, such as helmets and shoulder pads, to ensure it meets required safety standards. For younger players, coaches and club staff should ensure parents / guardians are engaged in this process ahead of any return to practice.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING – BEFORE AND AFTER PRACTICE OR GAMES

49. BAFA clubs should adhere to the government managed social distancing guidelines in force at the time, before and after any activity, and during breaks.
50. 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.
51. No formal presentation ceremonies or other activities that encourage gathering such as group photographs should take place during or after an activity and the focus should be on reducing numbers in attendance at any one time.
52. Participants should be discouraged from socialising after practice or games and reminded that they must adhere to current government guidance on legal gathering limits.
53. Participants should be strongly advised to comply with public health restrictions and avoid high risk behaviour outside of your club setting to reduce the risk to their fellow club members when they do attend.

SAFEGUARDING

54. 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 our safeguarding team at safeguarding@britishamericanfootball.org
55. There will be no alteration to the standards we had in place pre-Covid 19, therefore DBS checks 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.
56. Coaches and those working with children should familiarise themselves with the Covid- 19 resources for supporting young people developed by the [NSPCC](#).

ON-FIELD ACTIVITY – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

PERMITTED AMERICAN FOOTBALL ACTIVITY AND PRACTICE PLANNING

57. During BAFA Stage 5 participants are permitted to undertake modified contact American Football activity as detailed within this guidance, plus non-contact flag and touch American football activity in line with BAFA rules and regulations. This includes non-contact skill development (ie, ball handling, route running) or fitness activities.
58. Modified Contact is defined as non-game contact. Drills should have an emphasis on reduced numbers, for example five groups of six players rotating through drill stations working on 1v1 or 2v1 exercises within their own group. Coaches are encouraged to work to BAFA activity levels 0-1 (on-air and bags) as much as possible.
59. Coaches should risk assess and plan appropriately for each session in advance, be aware of their 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 after sessions.
60. Head coaches and team management should ensure all session activities are clearly communicated in advance to coaching staff and players to set expectations. Holding coach and team meetings using virtual conferencing tools such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams prior to your first session is highly recommended where possible in order to brief participants and answer any questions.
61. To help with preparation and pre-planning for modified contact groups, we recommend teams ask players to confirm their attendance in advance.
62. When developing practice plans initially it is important to remember that players have had no contact exposure since March 2020 or even longer, so need to be reintroduced at an appropriate pace suited to the individual to reduce risk of injury.
63. 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.
64. Under no circumstances should kitted contact players – those wearing helmets and / or shoulder pads - be mixed with un-kitted players during practice activity, even during non-contact drills.
65. Coaches must work to BAFA recommended coach to player ratios for non-contact practice activities and during Stage 5d and beyond. These are:

- For 13 to 18 years – one adult to every 10 children (1:10)
- For 18+ years – one supervising adult to every 10 participants (1:10)

TEAM EQUIPMENT

66. All team equipment such as tackle bags, blocking shields and other hand-held training aids are now permitted with appropriate hygiene protocols and any other necessary mitigations in place, such as the use of face coverings when holding hand-held tackle bags and blocking shields in place.
67. Clubs should carry out the following to make sure all equipment is regularly sanitised:
- Balls should be regularly sanitised throughout, including at the start and at the conclusion of activity.
 - If flag football is included as part of any practice activity, 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 cones) is sanitised.
68. Playing Equipment must not be shared between individuals in the same session, and all equipment used by participants and collected back by the team afterwards must also be thoroughly sanitised after use.
69. Cones should be put out and collected by the same person on each pitch - preferably by a coach.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING DURING PRACTICE

70. Close contact face-to-face exposure between participants must be limited to fleeting duration only throughout activities – a max of no more than 3 seconds during drills is recommended.
71. Normal physical distancing and legal gathering limits apply before (including warmups) and after any activity takes place or when taking breaks.
72. Particular attention must be paid to ensure participants who are not currently active don't congregate in groups and breach social distancing rules

– avoid queues to participate in drills, ensure practice plans are designed to avoid this and keep people moving, set clear expectations before practice and consider additional mitigations such as encouraging participants to wearing a face covering when not active.

73. Coaches and others supporting organised activity should attempt to keep physically distant at all times when giving players instruction, observing and giving feedback, 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.
74. 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.
75. Team scoring celebrations involving person-to-person contact are not permitted.
76. No pre or post-game handshakes, or alternatives of any sort e.g. elbowbump or foot taps are permitted.

PARTICIPANT EQUIPMENT AND ETIQUETTE

77. Participants should be encouraged to bring their own hand sanitiser to practices and games and use it at regular intervals in activity.
78. Participants should bring their own clearly labelled or otherwise highly distinguishable water bottle to practice and not share it under any circumstances. No communal water buckets or bottles are to be used.
79. 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.
80. Personal equipment should not be shared between individuals in the same session – for example, helmets and shoulder pads.
81. Should personal playing equipment such as helmet and shoulder pads needs to be fitted by a coach, please refer to Appendix 1 on safe equipment fitting.
82. 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.

83. 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. Coaches and participants who are not currently active should refrain from shouting, and players active on the pitch should avoid shouting or raising their voices where possible, and especially facing each other during.

84. No spitting or mouth rinsing is permitted.

FIRST AID, HEALTH AND HYGIENE

85. Injuries during practice and play should still be treated as participant wellbeing is utmost. Physios and other medical personnel should take care to protect themselves and others through rigorous cleaning and personal hygiene, including increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting equipment and surfaces. Wearing face coverings is recommended for both medics and patients, where this is possible and practical.

86. After contact with an injured participant, physios and other medical personnel should clean their 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. They should also avoid touching their mouth, eyes and nose.

87. Physios or other medical personnel, should keep a record of each participant they have come into contact with for test and trace purposes.

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

89. 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.

ON-FIELD ACTIVITY – STAGE 5 OVERVIEW

	Stage 5a	Stage 5b	Stage5c	Stage 5d
How long for?	Two weeks or a minimum of two practice sessions	Two weeks or a minimum of two practice sessions	Two weeks or a minimum of two practice sessions	Two weeks or a minimum of two practice sessions. Once reached, teams must remain at Stage 5d until Stage 6 is permitted.
Permitted numbers	30 max per wholly separate practice and play area for non-contact practice. Split into groups of 6 players + 1 coach max for modified contact activities.	30 max per wholly separate practice and play area for non-contact practice. Split into groups of 6 players + 1 coach max for modified contact activities.	30 max per wholly separate practice and play area for non-contact practice. Split into groups of 6 players + 1 coach max for modified contact activities. Two groups of 6 players + 1 coach may now also practice opposed.	Full roster - BAFCA coach to player ratio guidance must be followed.
Player equipment	Full contact kit permitted - no sharing of personal equipment during sessions	Full contact kit permitted - no sharing of personal equipment during sessions	Full contact kit permitted - no sharing of personal equipment during sessions	Full contact kit permitted - no sharing of personal equipment during sessions
Team equipment	All equipment may be used and shared with appropriate hygiene protocols and mitigations such as face coverings when hand-held tackle bags and blocking shields in place.	All equipment may be used and shared with appropriate hygiene protocols and mitigations such as face coverings when hand-held tackle bags and blocking shields in place.	All equipment may be used and shared with appropriate hygiene protocols and mitigations such as face coverings when hand-held tackle bags and blocking shields in place.	All equipment may be used and shared with appropriate hygiene protocols and mitigations such as face coverings when hand-held tackle bags and blocking shields in place.
Contact level	Non-contact and modified contact only	Non-contact and modified contact only	Non-contact and modified contact only	Non-contact and modified contact only
Total duration of contact per session	20 mins (Unlimited non-contact / distanced activity)	30mins (Unlimited non-contact / distanced activity)	30 mins (Unlimited non-contact / distanced activity)	30 mins (Unlimited non-contact / distanced activity)
Contact activity permitted	Modified contact only On air unopposed activities 1v1 blocking and tackling 2v1 blocking and tackling within groups	Plus 2v2 blocking and tackling within groups	Plus groups of 6 players +1 coach may now practice opposed with distancing between groups and no press coverage	Plus team activity – offense v defense, special teams vs scout
Contact activity not permitted	No full contact scrimmaging No mixing of modified contact groups No inter-club contact activity No competitive contact games	No full contact scrimmaging No mixing of modified contact groups No inter-club contact activity No competitive contact games	No full contact scrimmaging No inter-club contact activity or competitive contact games	No inter-club contact activity or competitive contact games

ON-FIELD ACTIVITY – STAGE 5A

90. Our guidance recommends a two-week period for Stage 5a for contact teams, but as a minimum we expect teams to hold at least two practice sessions at this step before moving to the next.

PERMITTED CONTACT AMERICAN FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

91. The following activities are permitted in Stage 5a:

- On air unopposed activities
- 1v1 blocking and tackling within groups of 6 players + 1 coach
- 2v1 blocking and tackling within groups of 6 players + 1 coach

PERMITTED DURATION OF CONTACT AMERICAN FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

92. In Stage 5a the permitted duration of contact American football activities is 20 minutes total. Unlimited non-contact / distanced activity is permitted.

NOT PERMITTED AT THIS TIME

93. The following are not permitted in Stage 5a:

- Mixing of modified contact groups
- Full contact scrimmaging
- Inter-club contact activity – for example, a joint practice session, scrimmage or game

PERMITTED NUMBERS OF PARTICIPANTS AND PITCH

94. Maximum non-contact practice groups of 30 individuals overall per 1/2 pitch are permitted – this is based on either a full-sized rugby pitch or 11s soccer pitch. The maximum number includes coaches.

- Two groups of maximum 30 participants may practice or play on one full sized pitch. However, these groups must remain wholly separate throughout the activity and must be separated by a minimum 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-aside 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.

95. During the modified contact element of BAFA Stage 5a practice participants should be split into groups of max 6 players + 1 coach for each drill station.

Groups should remain wholly separate throughout the activity and must be separated by a minimum 2m 'safe zone'. Care should be taken to not exceed the overall number of participants permitted per 1/2 pitch.

96. Where possible groups should be position specific to ensure continuity of group and appropriateness of drills, but the priority is not to exceed a maximum of six players per group.
97. Groups in BAFA Stage 5a may not mix or swap participants during the modified contact element of practice in BAFA Stage 5a. However, those holding the roles of Head Coach, Coordinator or Club COVID -19 Officer or Team Lead may move between groups to observe and give feedback as long as social distancing is maintained at all times.
98. If a coach is unavailable at short notice to lead a group, or there are not enough coaches available to split into a 1:6 ratio for groups, head coaches and coordinators may delegate leading drill activities to experienced players, while ensuring regular, distanced, supervision across multiple groups.

BAFA Stage 5a practice plan example – 20 minutes modified contact (featuring 1v1, 2v1 activity within groups)

Session Activity	Session Guidance	Time
Pre-Practice	Registration, contact details, equipment allocation, distribution of hand sanitisers.	N/A
Warm - Up	Team based warm-up activities modified to maintain social distancing (e.g. use of cones or yard line markers)	10
Individual	Players distributed to position groups. No more than 6 players per group. (i.e. if 7 O-Linemen in group create 2 groups of OL) Activities can include install, use of training aids such as blocking shields and tackle bags. If coach holding bags, then use of facemask advised. To include focus on technique versus bags.	30
Teach Contact (abiding by the current stage)	Introduction to contact activity opposed Start with 5-minute introduction and demonstration 1 v 1 Tackle. Tackling 5 Fights: Track; Prepare; Connect; Accelerate; Finish (can be taught without contact) Blocking v opposed. Heads Up. Coil, Uncoil, Fit, Finish	15 (10 contact)
Groups	Competition within group - no mixing of groups. Start with a 5 minute teach and prepare before	15 (10 contact)
Special Teams	Unopposed on- air. Install or review of units. Kicking/returners/Gunners Maintaining social distancing	10
On Air	Offense & defense installing/reviewing plays unopposed Coaches to spot ball	10
Team	Offense v Defense. No contact - 2 touch. Early whistle	20
Cool Down	Team based cool down activities modified to maintain social distancing (eg use of cones or yard line markers)	10

ON-FIELD ACTIVITY – STAGE 5b

99. Our guidance recommends a two-week period for Stage 5b for contact teams, but as a minimum we expect teams to hold at least two practice sessions at this step before moving to the next.

PERMITTED CONTACT AMERICAN FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

100. The following activities are permitted in Stage 5b:

- On air unopposed activities
- 1v1 blocking and tackling within groups of 6 players + 1 coach
- 2v1 blocking and tackling within groups of 6 players + 1 coach
- 2v2 blocking and tackling within groups of 6 players + 1 coach

PERMITTED DURATION OF CONTACT AMERICAN FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

101. In Stage 5b the permitted duration of contact American football activities is 30 minutes total. Unlimited non-contact / distanced activity is permitted.

NOT PERMITTED AT THIS TIME

102. The following are not permitted in Stage 5b:

- Mixing of modified contact groups
- Full contact scrimmaging
- Inter-club contact activity – for example, a joint practice session, scrimmage or game

PERMITTED NUMBERS OF PARTICIPANTS AND PITCH

103. Maximum non-contact practice groups of 30 individuals overall per 1/2 pitch are permitted – this is based on either a full-sized rugby pitch or 11s soccer pitch. The maximum number includes coaches.

- Two groups of maximum 30 participants may practice on one full sized pitch. However, they must remain wholly separate throughout the activity and must be separated by a minimum 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.

104. During the modified contact element of BAFA Stage 5b practice participants should be split into groups of max 6 players + 1 coach for each drill station. Groups should remain wholly separate throughout the activity and must be separated by a minimum 2m 'safe zone'. Care should be taken to not exceed the overall number of participants permitted per 1/2 pitch.
105. Where possible groups should be position specific to ensure continuity of group and appropriateness of drills, but the priority is not to exceed a maximum of six players per group.
106. Groups in BAFA Stage 5b may not mix or swap participants during the modified contact element of practice in BAFA Stage 5b. However, those holding the roles of Head Coach, Coordinator or Club COVID -19 Officer or Team Lead may move between groups to observe and give feedback as long as social distancing is maintained at all times.
107. If a coach is unavailable at short notice to lead a group, or there are not enough coaches available to split into a 1:6 ratio for groups, head coaches and coordinators may delegate leading drill activities to experienced players, while ensuring regular, distanced, supervision across multiple groups.

BAFA Stage 5b practice plan example – 30 minutes modified contact (featuring 1v1, 2v1, 2v2 activity within groups)

Session Activity	Session Guidance	Time
Pre-Practice	Registration, contact details, equipment allocation, distribution of hand sanitisers.	N/A
Warm - Up	Team based warm-up activities modified to maintain social distancing (eg use of cones or yard line markers)	10
Individual	Players distributed to position groups. No more than 6 players per group. Use of training aids such as blocking shields and tackle bags allowed. Focus on technique versus bags If coach holding bags then use of facemask advised. To progress to contact within group 1 v 1 Tackle and/or Blocking (10 minutes only)	30 (10 contact)
Install	Offense - Defense installs Social distancing required	10
Groups	Competition within group - no mixing of groups. 2 v 1, 2 v 2 blocking and tackling within same groups	20 (20 contact)
Special Teams	Unopposed on-air. Install or review of units. Kicking/Returners/Gunners Maintaining social distancing	10
On Air	Offense & defense installing/reviewing plays unopposed Coaches to spot ball	10
Team	Offense v Defense. No contact - 2 touch. Early whistle	20
Cool Down	Team based cool down activities modified to maintain social distancing (eg use of cones or yard line markers)	10

ON-FIELD ACTIVITY – STAGE 5c

108. Our guidance recommends a two-week period for Stage 5c for contact teams, but as a minimum we expect teams to hold at least two practice sessions at this step before moving to the next.

PERMITTED CONTACT AMERICAN FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

109. The following activities are permitted in Stage 5c:

- On air unopposed activities
- 1v1 blocking and tackling within groups of 6 players + 1 coach
- 2v1 blocking and tackling within groups of 6 players + 1 coach
- 2v2 blocking and tackling within groups of 6 players + 1 coach
- Groups of 6 players + 1 coach may now practice opposed with distancing between groups and no press coverage - WR & RB/TE's v LB & DB's and/or OL & RB's v DL & LB's

PERMITTED DURATION OF CONTACT AMERICAN FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

110. In Stage 5c the permitted duration of contact American football activities is 30 minutes total. Unlimited non-contact / distanced activity is permitted.

NOT PERMITTED AT THIS TIME

111. The following are not permitted in Stage 5c:

- Full contact scrimmaging
- Inter-club contact activity – for example, a joint practice session, scrimmage or game

PERMITTED NUMBERS OF PARTICIPANTS AND PITCH

112. Maximum non-contact practice groups of 30 individuals overall per 1/2 pitch are permitted – this is based on either a full-sized rugby pitch or 11s soccer pitch. The maximum number includes coaches.

- Two groups of maximum 30 participants may practice on one full sized pitch. However, they must remain wholly separate throughout the activity and must be separated by a minimum 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-aside 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.

113. During the modified contact element of BAFA Stage 5c practice participants should be split into groups of max 6 players + 1 coach for each drill station. When two groups are taking part in opposed activities in Stage 5c they are allowed to be close but must stay 2m away from other groups working opposed.
114. Where possible groups should be position specific to ensure continuity of group and appropriateness of drills, but the priority is not to exceed a maximum of six players per group.
115. Groups in BAFA Stage 5c may not mix or swap participants during the modified contact element of practice in BAFA Stage 5c. However, those holding the roles of Head Coach, Coordinator or Club COVID -19 Officer or Team Lead may move between groups to observe and give feedback as long as social distancing is maintained at all times.
116. If a coach is unavailable at short notice to lead a group, or there are not enough coaches available to split into a 1:6 ratio for groups, head coaches and coordinators may delegate leading drill activities to experienced players, while ensuring regular, distanced, supervision across multiple groups.

BAFA Stage 5c practice plan example – 30 minutes modified contact (featuring 1v1, 2v1, 2v2 within groups and mixed group activity)

Session Activity	Session Guidance	Time
Pre-Practice	Registration, contact details, equipment allocation, distribution of hand sanitisers.	N/A
Warm - Up	Team based warm-up activities modified to maintain social distancing (eg use of cones or yard line markers)	10
Individual	Players distributed to position groups. No more than 6 players per group. Use of training aids such as blocking shields and tackle bags allowed. Focus on technique versus bags If coach holding bags, then use of facemask advised. To progress to contact within group 1 v 1 Tackle and/or Blocking (10 minutes only)	30 (10 contact)
Install	Offense - Defense installs Social distancing required	10
Groups	Two groups of 6 players may now also practice opposed 2 v 1, 2 v 2 blocking and tackling between two groups	20 (20 contact)
Special Teams	Unopposed on-air. Install or review of units. Kicking/Returners/Gunners Maintaining social distancing	10
On Air	Offense & defense installing/reviewing plays unopposed Coaches to spot ball	10
Team	Offense v Defense. No contact - 2 touch. Early whistle	20
Cool Down	Team based cool down activities modified to maintain social distancing (eg use of cones or yard line markers)	10

ON-FIELD ACTIVITY – STAGE 5d

117. Our guidance recommends a two-week period for Stage 5d for contact teams, but as a minimum we expect teams to hold at least two practice sessions at this step before moving to the next.

118. Please note that completing Stage 5d requirements does not mean teams are then permitted to return to full contact practice. This will not be permitted by BAFA until Stage 6 which is currently planned from 24 May onwards. Teams should continue to work to Stage 5d guidelines until then.

PERMITTED CONTACT AMERICAN FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

119. The following activities are permitted in Stage 5d:

- On air unopposed activities
- 1v1 blocking and tackling within groups of 6 players + 1 coach
- 2v1 blocking and tackling within groups of 6 players + 1 coach
- 2v2 blocking and tackling within groups of 6 players + 1 coach
- Groups of 6 players + 1 coach may now practice opposed with distancing between groups and no press coverage - WR & RB/TE's v LB & DB's and/or OL & RB's v DL & LB's
- Team activity – offense v defense, special teams vs scout

PERMITTED DURATION OF CONTACT AMERICAN FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

120. In Stage 5d the permitted duration of contact American football activities is 30 minutes total. Unlimited non-contact / distanced activity is permitted.

NOT PERMITTED AT THIS TIME

121. The following are not permitted in Stage 5d:

- Inter-club contact activity – for example, a joint practice session, scrimmage or game

PERMITTED NUMBERS OF PARTICIPANTS AND PITCH

122. Restrictions on participant numbers per pitch area or per group no longer apply. All other guidance relating to physical distancing during practice remains in force.

123. BAFA coach to player ratios should be applied at all times.

124. Positional groups should be separated by a minimum 2m 'safe zone' during drills.

125. Staggered start and finish times and designated pitch entry points for each group are highly recommended to minimise any risks.

BAFA Stage 5d practice plan example – 30 minutes modified contact (featuring 1v1, 2v1, 2v2 activity within groups – can feature team activity: offense vs defense, special teams vs scout)

Session Activity	Session Guidance	Time
Pre-Practice	Registration, contact details, equipment allocation, distribution of hand sanitisers.	N/A
Warm - Up	Team based warm-up activities	10
Individual	Players distributed to position groups. No restrictions on group size. Use of training aids such as blocking shields and tackle bags allowed. Focus on technique versus bags If coach holding bags then use of facemask still advised. To progress to contact within group Tackle and/or Blocking (10 minutes only). No restriction on drill number of participants	30 (10 contact)
Install	Offense - Defense installs	10
Groups	No restrictions on groups who can practice opposed 2 v 1, 2 v 2 blocking and tackling between two groups	20 (10 contact)
Special Teams	Unopposed on-air. Install or review of units. Kicking/Returners/Gunners	10
On Air	Offense & defense installing/reviewing plays unopposed Coaches to spot ball	10 (10 contact)
Team	Offense v Defense. No contact - 2 touch. Early whistle	20
Cool Down	Team based cool down activities	10

MORE INFORMATION

For additional information, please visit www.britishamericanfootball.org/Covid-19

If you have any questions, please contact:

covid-19@britishamericanfootball.org - for Covid-19 safety and other off-field activity related questions

info@bafca.co.uk - for coaching specific queries

warren.smart@britishamericanfootball.org - for queries relating to adult contact football

arran.harrison@britishamericanfootball.org – for queries relating to women’s adult contact football

stuart.potts-perkins@britishamericanfootball.org – for questions relating to U16/19 contact football

bucs@britishamericanfootball.org – for questions relating to university football

registrations@britishamericanfootball.org – for questions relating to BAFA team or individual membership

APPENDIX 1 – SAFE EQUIPMENT FITTING

Where a coach is required to fit a player for personal playing equipment, such as helmet or shoulder pads, please always follow the guidance below to ensure this is carried out safely.


- Equipment must be fitted outdoors.
- Strong hand hygiene should be used prior to equipment fitting and post equipment fitting. Disposable gloves can be worn but if so must be changed between each individual.
- Both the participant and fitter must wear a face covering.
- Time spent in close contact fitting equipment must be minimised where possible, and the majority of fitting actions should be completed by the wearer under distanced, verbal direction. Share the approved fitting videos and resources with participants beforehand to set expectations and minimise time spent.
- Where equipment of different sizes is tried on by an individual, all equipment tried on but not used by them must be thoroughly sanitised with appropriate disinfectant wipes or spray before being tried on by another participant or returned to storage.
- Equipment must not be shared between individuals in the same session, and all equipment used by participants and collected back by the clubs afterwards must also be thoroughly sanitised after use.
- Game pants, practice jerseys and bibs etc should not be shared. Any team issued practice or playing uniform must be thoroughly washed before being reissued.

Helmet fitting video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zi0smzNUk1M>

Shoulder pad fitting video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLZ1vPBJrwQ>



1. Measure chest and record measurements
2. Measure shoulders and record measurements
3. Select pads
4. Put on pads
5. Secure straps and laces
6. Check for proper fit
7. Ensure coverage in front
8. Ensure coverage in back
9. Confirm proper fit



1. Check head size and record measurement
2. Put on helmet
3. Adjust helmet height
4. Adjust helmet front to back and side to side
5. Adjust face pads
6. Check for proper fit
7. Adjust chin strap
8. Take off helmet

