



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

**CONTACT FOOTBALL
COMMUNITY CLUB GUIDANCE FOR SCOTLAND**

CONTACT FOOTBALL - COMMUNITY CLUB GUIDANCE FOR SCOTLAND

With effect from 7 July 2021

These guidelines apply to Scotland and have been produced in line with sportscotland's latest [sport and physical activity guidance](#). These guidelines have also been created to reflect the most recent version of Scotland's [coronavirus strategic framework](#) shared by the Scottish Government.

We have now reached the final step of BAFA's Return to Play roadmap for non-contact American Football in Scotland, ahead of league competition returning. This sees the removal of on-field activity and time restrictions. Please note, extreme care must be taken to ensure all activity remains within the maximum permitted 'activity bubble' participant limit for the protection level where the activity is taking place.

We ask teams who are still working through our four steps of modified contact to continue and complete this before moving back to full contact practice. This can now be found as Appendix 2 at the end of this document.

League games are now permitted and new guidance for organising and participating in games / tournaments has been included as Appendix 3. This includes guidance on pre- game planning, officiating guidelines and rules adjustments.

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

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.

Whilst there is expected to be no immediate change to local protection levels, indicative dates have been provided including all of Scotland moving to Level 0 on 19 July 2021 and out of protection levels ('Beyond Level 0') from 9 August 2021.

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 the BAFA website 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 local 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](#).

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.

The wellbeing of participants is vital, so we must continue to be cautious in our approach to ensure the safety of our members. Please also be aware that guidance can change, and restrictions may be reintroduced at short notice.

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.

University clubs who plan to hold inter-university or varsity games 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.

AMENDMENTS

The table below lists amendments to this guidance since the last version effective on 17 May 2021.

Reference	Summary of change
Introduction	Amended wording to amend effectiveness date of guidance and key changes to note
32-33	Updated guidance on spectators
37	Updated guidance on car sharing
68	Guidance on the needs of participants who have returned after Covid-19
85	Addition of guidance on face coverings in the team area
105	Updated wording on when a coach should wear a face covering indoors
Appendix 2	Stage 5 modified contact guidance moved to sit as an appendix
Appendix 3	Addition of guidance for clubs on organising and participating in contact games and tournaments.

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

Reference	Summary of change
Introduction	Amended wording to amend effectiveness date of guidance and key changes to note
4	To reflect that consideration of creating a safe environment for participation includes officials
20, 21	To reflect that activity can now take place indoors, subject to facility guidance and capacity limits
32	To include information on Protection Level restrictions
34	To reflect that overnight stays are now permitted for the purposes of American football activity
57	Updated wording to reflect socialising is now permitted, but must be within legal gathering limits
66	Updated to reflect participation caps for different protection levels
141	Updated to reflect participation caps for different protection levels

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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 Return to Play process 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 including officials. 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](#) and an example **sportscotland** risk assessment template is also 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 regularly 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. In addition, we recommend the **sportscotland** [Covid-19 COVID 19 Officer e-learning module](#) developed in partnership with Scottish Rugby is also completed by Club Covid-19 officers, team leads and, where appropriate, coaches and club volunteers. The certification of completion should also be loaded up within the GoMembership system as an individual qualification for approval.
12. 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.
13. Club management must make sure that the appointed persons will receive all necessary support to undertake their roles.
14. 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 Scotland Test and Protect team
15. 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 2m 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. 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 Test and Protect protocols are followed should the club be contacted

A [Covid-19 Officer](#) role summary is also available from [sportscotland](#) to help you return to sport safely.

DEALING WITH A POSTIVE CASE OF COVID-19

16. If an individual receives a positive test result following testing for Covid-19, they will be contacted by NHS Scotland's Test and Protect team 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 Protect record to support the contact tracing process. Further information is available on the [NHS Scotland Test and Protect](#).
17. 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 Scotland's Test and Protect during their interview who may contact 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.
18. 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 Scotland Test and Protect 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.
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 NHS Scotland's Test and Protect team, 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 adult American football activity must take place outdoors, with the exception of adult activity in Level 0 areas where this may also take place indoors providing clubs adhere to the capacity limits advised by their facility providers.
21. American football activity for participants under 18 may take place indoors in Level 0 – 3 areas, providing clubs adhere to the capacity limits advised by their facility providers.
22. Use of changing rooms and showering facilities should be avoided where possible, although they may be made available (other than in Level 4 areas where indoor facilities should remain closed) for participants who require additional support such as disabled people or those with special needs. It is recommended that players should arrive changed and shower at home afterwards.
23. 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](#).

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 Scotland who use any form of QR code or online check-in to capture information for a venue should be aware that this may mean they have to register with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and pay a data protection fee.
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. 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-18. Where it is necessary for them to be present, supervising adults must adhere to the legal gathering limits.
32. Spectators are permitted at games and tournaments where supervising a child or vulnerable person or where an event is organised and takes place at premises whose entrances and exits are controlled (indoors and outdoors) for the purpose of crowd and capacity management in line with Scottish [\(COVID-19\): events sector guidance](#) and [\(COVID-19\): calculating physical distancing capacity in public settings](#).
33. It is recognised that it may not always be possible to prevent people from spectating at a game or tournament in a public space such as a park. In such circumstances, the organisers are required to consider mitigating measures as part of their risk assessment/management plan with an emphasis on discouraging, where possible, informal spectating. Any such measures should be clearly communicated by the organiser prior to the competition or event which may include, amongst other things, the displaying of notices around the venue to remind the public to follow Scottish Government guidance. (For clarity, where informal spectating does take place organisers are not expected to enforce government guidance on

members of the public in places not under their control.)

TRAVEL AND OVERNIGHT STAYS

34. Cross-border travel between England and Wales is permitted, and between England and Wales and Scotland - with the **exception** of travel to or from any areas of Scotland in Protection Level 3 or Level 4. Please check what local restrictions on organised outdoor activity are in place before visiting another UK nation to participate in sport. Should you travel to a different nation to take part in American football activity, you must always strictly adhere to local regulations.
35. [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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18+ (Adults)	✓	✓	✓	Local Travel Only	Local Travel Only

36. Overnight stays to take part in American football activity are permitted as long as they are in line with social contact rules for the nation you are in and take any local restrictions into account.
37. You should avoid car sharing with anyone from another household unless you deem it to be necessary. If individuals or groups do car share then they should follow [Transport Scotland: advice on how to travel safely and put in place appropriate risk assessment and mitigations](#).
38. Participants should, where possible, avoid any unnecessary travel out of area and keep journeys within area to an absolute minimum.

BAFA MEMBERSHIP

39. 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.

40. 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 Protect record keeping.
41. 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.
42. 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.
43. 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 PROTECT

44. [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.
45. 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. 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.
46. This information should be stored for 21 days and shared with public health officers when requested. Clubs should decide how these records will be kept and stored, for example paper or using online format e.g. Google Docs.
47. 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.

PROTECT SCOTLAND APP

48. 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.
49. 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.
50. Further information on the Protect Scotland app is available at www.protect.scot.

PARTICIPANT SELF-ASSESSMENT

51. 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 they live with, 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 Scotland and Test and Protect guidance on self-isolation.

52. In addition, any participants who are quarantining following overseas travel or have been asked to isolate by NHS Scotland's Test and Protect because they are a contact of a known Covid-19 case, must not participate in activity.
53. 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.
54. 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.
55. 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

56. BAFA clubs should always adhere to current Scottish Government social distancing guidelines before and after any activity, and during breaks.
57. 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.
58. 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.
59. Participants socialising after practice or games and reminded that they must adhere to current government guidance on legal gathering limits should they do so.
60. 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

61. 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
62. 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.
63. Coaches and those working with children should familiarise themselves with the additional considerations developed by **Children 1st**: [Child Wellbeing and Protection Considerations](#).

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

64. 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

65. 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.

66. 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

67. 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.
68. At all times coaches should consider the needs of participants returning after recovering from COVID-19. Participants should be able to confidentially disclose this, in a similar way to any other personal matter relevant to coached activity, so the coach can make suitable adjustments and allowances to the planned activity for the individual and check that input from a medical professional has been sought where appropriate.

ON-FIELD ACTIVITY – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

PERMITTED AMERICAN FOOTBALL ACTIVITY AND PRACTICE PLANNING

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

- Level 0 – contact practice, intra-club and inter-club friendly games and league competition. Up to a maximum of 500 participants per practice session or tournament / game. Coaches, officials, and other volunteers are not included in these numbers.
- Level 1 contact practice, intra-club and inter-club friendly games and league competition. Up to a maximum of 100 participants per practice session group or tournament / game. Coaches, officials, and other volunteers are not included in these numbers.
- Level 2 – contact practice, intra-club and inter-club friendly games and league competition. Up to a maximum of 50 participants per practice session group or tournament / game. Coaches, officials, and other volunteers are not included in these numbers.
 - For practice sessions, up to two groups of maximum 50 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.
- Level 3 – over 18s – physically distanced group activity or exercise only. Under 18s flag practice, intra-club flag games and inter-club flag friendly games only. A maximum of 30 people is allowed per group, including coaches, officials and other volunteers. Ball transfer (eg, passing activities), is permitted with regular cleaning protocols in place.
 - For practice sessions, up to 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.
- Level 4 - over 12s – physically distanced group activity or exercise only. A maximum of 15 people is allowed per group, including coaches and other volunteers
 - For practice sessions, up to four groups of maximum 15 participants for over 12s may practice on one full sized pitch, and two groups of maximum 30 participants for under 12s 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.
- Please note, should other spaces be used for practice in Levels 2-4 – 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.

70. 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.
71. 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 **or game** is highly recommended where possible in order to brief participants and answer any questions.
72. To help with preparation and pre-planning for modified contact groups, we recommend teams ask players to confirm their attendance in advance.
73. 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.
74. 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.
75. Coaches must work to BAFCA 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

76. 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.
77. 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.

78. 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.

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

PHYSICAL DISTANCING DURING PRACTICE AND GAMES

80. 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.

81. Normal physical distancing and legal gathering limits apply before (including warmups) and after any activity takes place or when taking breaks.

82. 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.

83. For all other participants a 'field of play bubble' can be created during organised sports activity in Levels 0-3 for participants aged under 18 and in Levels 0-2 for participants aged over 18 where permitted that allows contact whilst the activity is taking place, in effect suspending physical distancing guidelines for the duration of the activity. 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.

84. 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.

85. When participating in games and tournaments, if government guidance in your location requires you to remain social distanced from anyone who is not in your household or support bubble, then it is recommended that everyone in the team area should wear a face covering except for squad members preparing to enter the field or those who are exempt for age, health or disability reasons. This is because participants may

find it difficult to distance in a crowded area like a sideline or forget themselves during the flow of the game.

86. There are no restrictions on the number of households (or extended households) that a coach can instruct per day.
87. 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.
88. Coaches, officials, parents and guardians should continue to observe physical distancing when involved in children's activity as a coach, official or spectator.
89. 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.
90. 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.
91. Team scoring celebrations involving person-to-person contact are not permitted.
92. No pre or post-game handshakes, or alternatives of any sort e.g. elbowbump or foot taps are permitted.

PARTICIPANT EQUIPMENT AND ETIQUETTE

93. Participants should be encouraged to bring their own hand sanitiser to practices and games and use it at regular intervals in activity.
94. 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.
95. 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.
96. Personal equipment should not be shared between individuals in the same session – for example, helmets and shoulder pads.

97. Should personal playing equipment such as helmet and shoulder pads need to be fitted by a coach, please refer to Appendix 1 on safe equipment fitting.
98. 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.
99. 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.
100. No spitting or mouth rinsing is permitted.

FIRST AID, HEALTH AND HYGIENE

101. 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.
102. In the event of first aid treatment being required it is recognized 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 is not limited to:
- Provision of suitable PPE
 - Training of coaches / supervising adults
103. 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.

104. 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.

105. Where a local area is operating within a protection level, face coverings must be worn by coaches when indoors, except where an exemption applies.

106. 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.

107. 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.

108. Avoid touching your face and ensure to clean your hands with at least 60% alcohol gel when you finish participating.

109. 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](#)

MORE INFORMATION

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

[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](#)

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>



A thumbnail for a video showing a coach fitting shoulder pads on a player. The coach is adjusting the pads on the player's shoulders. The player is wearing a dark jersey.

BAFCA
ENGAGE | EDUCATE | EMPOWER

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



A thumbnail for a video showing a player putting on a helmet. The player is wearing a red jersey and is adjusting the helmet on their head. A person's hands are visible adjusting the helmet.

BAFCA
ENGAGE | EDUCATE | EMPOWER

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

APPENDIX 2 – STAGE 5 – MODIFIED CONTACT

1. 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.
2. 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.

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 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.	Protection Level 2 - 50 max per wholly separate practice and play area Protection Level 2 -100 max per wholly separate practice and play area Protection Level 0 – 500 full per wholly separate practice and play area
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

110. 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

111. 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

112. 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

113. 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

114. 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.

115. 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.

116. 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.
117. 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.
118. 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

119. 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

120. 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

121. 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

122. 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

123. 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.

124. 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.
125. 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.
126. 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.
127. 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

128. 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

129. 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

130. 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

131. 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

132. 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.

133. 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.
134. 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.
135. 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.
136. 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

137. 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.

138. 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

139. 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

140. 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

141. 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

142. Permitted numbers for Stage 5D are determined by the area's current Protection Level as follows:

- Protection Level 2, maximum practice groups of 50 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. This participant cap remains in force for Stage 5d in Scotland unless otherwise advised by the Scottish government.
 - Two groups of maximum 50 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-a-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.
- Protection Level 0 and Protection Level 1 – restrictions on participant numbers per pitch area or per group no longer apply up to a maximum of 100 participants per session for Level 1 and 500 participants per session for Level 0.
 - All other guidance relating to physical distancing during practice remains in force.
 - BAFCA coach to player ratios should be applied at all times.
 - Positional groups should be separated by a minimum 2m 'safe zone' during drills.
 - Staggered start and finish times and designated pitch entry points for each group are highly recommended to minimise any risks

APPENDIX 3

ORGANISING AND PARTICIPATING IN CONTACT GAMES AND TOURNAMENTS

League and friendly contact games are now permitted, as long as our Return to Play guidance is strictly adhered to.

The emphasis for organising and participating in contact games and tournaments should be on careful and cautious planning and taking a common-sense approach to minimise risk. The following is not an exhaustive list of potential precautions or mitigations, as we appreciate clubs may face many different scenarios and challenges. However, clubs are encouraged to use this checklist to review and inform their own plans.

Pre-game / tournament planning – things to think about

- Where games take place between teams in differing home nations (ie between teams in England and Wales or Scotland and England), the guidance that should be followed is that of the home nation where the game is taking place.
- When planning games and tournaments, clubs must keep themselves up to date on any enhanced local restrictions that may impact on the host team or travelling team, particularly related to travel, and be aware that the guidance in place may change at short notice.
- Club risk assessments must be updated to reflect preparations for organising and participating in games and tournaments with named owners for all actions. Risk assessments should be regularly reviewed, and updated risk assessments should be uploaded on the BAFA GoMembership system.
- Club management should read the appropriate sections of BAFA's [Covid-19 officiating guidance and recommendations](#) to ensure that the needs of the game officials are included in the preparation and planning for all tournaments / games. Plan to set aside an area of the playing enclosure to be used by officials, and, if needed, indoor facilities that are big enough for the officials to maintain social distancing from each other.
- Club management should also make sure their coaches, players and other relevant staff are aware of the additional BAFA rules adjustments for Covid-19 here - <http://rules.bafra.info/covid-19/>
- Contingency planning - should either the host or a visiting team need to cancel the game or tournament at short notice due to Covid-19, make sure you have a list of everyone you need to tell at hand.
- Team travel - if you're planning to use a bus to travel to an away fixture, have you risk assessed this and worked with your travel supplier to put adequate precautions in place to ensure safe travel? For example, lateral flow testing before travelling, requesting face coverings be worn, social distancing requirements, reduced capacity.
- Do you have enough volunteers to support your game / tournament? Do you need to recruit more?

- Consider how best to manage hydration during the game. While shared water bottles are not permitted, water dispensers / butts can be provided on your side-line for players to fill disposable cups or top up their own bottles. You must provide access to fresh drinking water for visiting opposition and officials – for example, by directing them to a tap in your venue to fill their own water bottles / dispensers.
- Do you have a lightning safety plan in place? This should reflect the need for social distancing, should the game or tournament need to be suspended due to lightning. Review the game management guidance for managing lightning [here](#). Should personnel need to shelter indoors, whether in a building or a vehicle, where groups of people may need to gather together face coverings are recommended.

Spectator management

- Spectators are permitted at games and tournaments where supervising a child or vulnerable person or where an event is organised and takes place at premises whose entrances and exits are controlled (indoors and outdoors) for the purpose of crowd and capacity management in line with Scottish [\(COVID-19\): events sector guidance](#) and [\(COVID-19\): calculating physical distancing capacity in public settings](#). In particular, note the following key points:
 - Organisers must ensure attendees will be dispersed across a sufficiently large geographic area or will be sufficiently distributed throughout the day, so as to mitigate the risk of crowding at the venue (including entry and exit points; toilet facilities; and food and drink facilities) and on public transport
 - Organisers and attendees must maintain group sizes permitted by gathering restrictions and have processes in place to help prevent mixing between groups
 - The event should be ticketed, where possible, to monitor capacity
 - Where possible you should collect the name, contact number, date of visit, time of arrival, and the departure time of all those attending tournaments or games as spectators. Where attending as a small household group, the contact details for one member – a ‘lead member’ – will be sufficient.
- We advise clubs to take a cautious approach. if you are not confident of your club’s ability to adequately manage spectators, we recommend you consider discouraging them from attending games.
- It is recognised that it may not always be possible to prevent people from spectating at a game or tournament in a public space such as a park. In such circumstances, the organisers are required to consider mitigating measures as part of their risk assessment/management plan with an emphasis on discouraging, where possible, informal spectating. Any such measures should be clearly communicated by the organiser prior to the competition or event which may include, amongst other things, the displaying of notices around the venue to remind the public to follow Scottish Government guidance. (For clarity, where informal spectating does take place organisers are not expected to enforce government guidance on members of the public in places not under their control.)
- No spectators are permitted within the team area.
- Please work closely with your venue to understand their capacity and any additional restrictions they may have in place, agree how many spectators may safely attend your event and develop a plan to manage spectators at your games and tournaments.
- For example, for adult games consider limiting the number of spectators permitted at your tournament or game. If you have an enclosed playing ground,

consider having volunteer marshals managing entrances and exits. Consider pre-sale tickets only. If you play in an unenclosed public area, consider using cones, nets, or other forms of portable barriers to clearly separate spectating areas from playing areas.

- For children's formats, we know many parents / guardians and family members will be looking forward to attending and supporting their players. We recognise they form an integral part of their child's football experience and support structure. Although clubs should still exercise caution with regards to spectators for children's football, particularly for large tournaments, we recommend engaging closely with your community of parents / guardians to gain their support and understanding that they must remain separate from the team area when spectating. Consider asking parents / guardians to pre-register their attendance using an online form or similar.
- Where a game or tournament is held on private land, where possible clubs should where possible collect the name, contact number, date of visit, of all those attending as spectators.
- Engage with your club members and supporters in advance of your game or tournament to clearly explain any restrictions on spectating or other guidelines and encourage sensible behaviours.
- Spectators should also be advised to minimise shouting or raising their voices. There is an additional risk of infection where people are shouting or singing in close proximity.

Face coverings

- If government guidance in your location requires you to remain social distanced from anyone who is not in your household or support bubble, it is recommended that personnel in the team area wear a face covering except for squad members preparing to enter the field or those who are exempt for age, health or disability reasons. This is because participants may find it difficult to distance in a crowded area like a sideline or forget themselves during the flow of the game. Note – this is a recommendation and is an issue for teams to manage, not for officials to penalise.
- Teams are asked to take a common-sense approach to face coverings and the emphasis should be on social distancing at all times when not active on the field.
- Face coverings are also recommended for officials' assistants – those acting as chain crew and ball persons.

On the days leading up to the game /tournament

- The host club should clearly communicate any Covid-19 related venue requirements to the visiting opposition on the run up to the game or tournament - for example one-way systems, designated entry points, availability of toilet and changing facilities.
- Make sure your own members know what to expect on the day. This includes club parents / guardians of children participating in games and tournaments. Information should be shared prior to game day, including reminders on social distancing, symptom self-assessment and any other precautions you have in place such as lateral flow testing.
- Don't forget to organise officials' assistants - chain crew and ball persons - for adult and U19 D1 contact games. You need a minimum of five volunteers

who must make themselves available at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the game. The minimum age for officials' assistant is 14. Officials' assistants under the age of 18 remain the responsibility of game management at all times and must be supervised by a responsible person appointed by game management. Ball persons will be responsible for regularly sanitising game balls. This must be done at the end of each period as a minimum. Plan to provide them with sanitising materials and towels. (a supply of soapy water and cleaning cloths is adequate for balls).

- The host club should capture contact details from all participants aged over 16 attending their tournament / game for Test and Protect purposes. This includes visiting teams, officials and those providing gameday medical cover. Contact details should comprise a name, contact telephone number and an email address (if available). This information should be held by the Club Covid-19 officer of the host club for no more than 21 days. Visiting teams are requested to prepare this information to pass over to their hosts in a timely way. As a minimum a point of contact who holds this information from the visiting team(s) must be supplied. This may be sent electronically.
- Rosters - check your roster and make sure everyone is correctly registered with BAFA and has a clear head and shoulders passport style photo. Your roster is available to download until 7pm on the Friday prior to your fixture. You should take two printed copies of your photo roster to the game. These should be updated with the shirt numbers and game day status of all personal. You should also have a list of player names and shirt numbers for game officials.
- Photographers are welcome to attend games as usual, should clubs wish. It is recommended that attendance should be prearranged, and normal good practice for photographing American football should be followed. The details of all photographers attending should be captured by the host club for track and trace purposes, and only photographers registered with a team on BAFA's GoMembership system and who appear on their roster are permitted in the team area.

On the day – pre-game / tournament

- Where appropriate ensure entrances and exits to the venue are monitored to avoid congestion or other issues that may be caused by people congregating.
- Make sure sanitising materials are available for the officials, chain crew and ball persons.
- Remember that everyone involved in the game or tournament needs to be checked in / recorded to aid the contact tracing process.
- Ensure the chain equipment and balls are thoroughly sanitised before the game.
- If a radio microphone is being provided for referee announcements, make sure it's sanitised before use.
- Before the start of any game or tournament, the Club Covid-19 officer or Covid-19 Team Lead should hold a short, socially distanced, briefing with the head coaches for each team reminding them of their responsibilities aligned to BAFA's Return to Play guidance.
- Roster checks should take place as usual, ensuring that social distancing is considered. You should provide a copy of your photo roster to the representative from your opposition carrying out the check with you. This is to enable them to remain distanced while the check is carried out, rather than sharing at the host team's copy. You can request this is returned after the check is completed. Players should remain distanced during the roster check and should step forward or otherwise identify themselves when called, and then either leave the area of the roster check (for example, returning to the warmup area) or move to form a second, distanced, line up of checked players. Players should not form undistanced 'tunnels' or other close contact groups during roster checks. For large squads, consider breaking roster checks down into smaller groups to enable distancing. For example, by position or offense then defense.

On the day – during the game /tournament

- Clubs should strictly limit the time spent congregating at a venue before the game begins. Participants should arrive changed and ready to begin the warmup, if possible, to minimise time spent waiting or in holding areas.
- Coaches and others supporting organised activity should attempt to keep physically distant at all times when giving players instruction, observing and giving feedback.
- All individuals acting in the capacity of game officials should observe the appropriate sections of BAFA's [Covid-19 officiating guidance and recommendations](#).
- Game balls must be sanitised at the end of each period during the game as a minimum.
- If off-field team 'huddles' are required to give instructions to a team or specific positional group, ensure social distancing guidelines are followed, and take other common-sense measures such as ensuring personnel all face in the same direction.
- Injuries during play should still be treated as participant wellbeing is utmost. Face Coverings and disposable gloves should be worn by the person administering first aid.
- Team scoring celebrations involving person-to-person contact are not permitted – for example hugging, chest bumps, high-fives, or fist bumps.
- Players, coaches and other personnel should remain socially distanced during half-time or any other breaks in play. Teams should remain outdoors during half-time wherever possible and should avoid mingling with spectators.
- Food and other refreshments should not be shared at half-time.

On the day – post-game

- No post-game handshakes, or alternatives of any sort e.g. elbowbump or foot taps are currently permitted.
- Participants should be encouraged to take any team uniform home to wash it themselves, rather than have one person handling a large quantity of soiled materials. Where uniform is kept together, other precautions must be put in place. For example, those persons handling soiled uniform must wash or sanitise their hands immediately afterwards.
- While social distancing restrictions remain in force, no formal presentation ceremonies or other activities that encourage close contact such as undistanced group photographs should take place.
- Participants socialising after games and reminded that they must adhere to current government guidance on social distancing and legal gathering limits should they do so.

Organising friendly games / scrimmages and tournaments

Any plans for friendly games or scrimmage activity involving contact teams must be sanctioned by BAFA before taking place. To request sanction,

please contact covid-19@britishamericanfootball.org detailing your plans, venue, the teams involved, estimated numbers attending and attaching a copy of your risk assessment for the event. Please give at least 14 days' notice for approval.

If you need help or support, please contact covid-19@britishamericanfootball.org for guidance.