



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

**BAFA FLAG FOOTBALL
COMMUNITY CLUB GUIDANCE FOR SCOTLAND**

FLAG 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, which sees the return of flag league competition. 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.

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 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.

AMENDMENTS

The table below lists amendments to this guidance since the last version effective on 16 May 2021.

Reference	Summary of change
Introduction	Amended wording to amend effectiveness date of guidance and key changes to note
30-31	Updated guidance on spectators
35	Updated wording on car sharing.
66	Guidance on the needs of participants who have returned after Covid-19
99	Updated wording on when a coach should wear a face covering indoors
103	Updated wording to reflect return to competition, managing spectators and capturing participant information

The table below lists amendments to this guidance since the last version effective on 16 May 2021.

Reference	Summary of change
Introduction	Amended wording to amend effectiveness date of guidance and key changes to note
64	Updated wording outlining participation caps for different protection levels
78	To advise that if government guidance in your location requires you to remain socially distant, then when taking part in games and tournament participants in the team area other than squad members ready to take to the field must wear a face covering unless exempt.
100	Updated guidance for managing league tournaments and games in addition to friendly fixtures

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
30	To include information on Protection Level restrictions
32	To reflect that overnight stays are now permitted for the purposes of American football activity

55	Updated wording to reflect socialising is now permitted, but must be within legal gathering limits
64	Updated to reflect that participation caps for different protection levels
79	To advise that if government guidance in your location requires you to remain socially distant, then when taking part in games and tournament participants in the team area other than squad members ready to take to the field must wear a face covering unless exempt.
104	Updated guidance for managing friendly fixtures

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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](#).

REGISTERING WITH THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

24. 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.
25. 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.

26. 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.
27. 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.
28. 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

29. 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.
30. 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](#).
31. 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

32. 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.
33. [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

34. 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.
35. 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.](#)

BAFA MEMBERSHIP

36. 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.
37. 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.
38. To support maintaining records for Test and Protect, participants should only take part in activity sessions with their registered BAFA club team and age group.
39. 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.
40. 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

41. [Test and Protect](#), is Scotland's way of putting into practice NHS Scotland's test, trace, isolate and support strategy.
42. 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.
43. 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.
44. 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.
45. 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

46. 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.
47. 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.
48. Further information on the Protect Scotland app is available at www.protect.scot.

PARTICIPANT SELF-ASSESSMENT

49. 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.

50. 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.

51. 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.

52. 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.

53. 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

54. BAFA clubs should always adhere to current Scottish Government social distancing guidelines before and after any activity, and during breaks.

55. 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.

56. 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.

57. Participants socialising after practice or games and reminded that they must adhere to current government guidance on legal gathering limits should they do so.
58. 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

59. 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
60. 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.
61. 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

62. 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
63. 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.

64. 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

65. 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.

66. 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

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

- Level 0 – flag practice, intra-club and inter-club friendly flag 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 – flag practice, intra-club and inter-club friendly flag 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 – flag practice, intra-club and inter-club friendly flag 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 – 2m 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. Under 12s - non-contact practice or exercise only. A maximum of 30 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.
68. 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.
69. 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.
70. 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.
71. Coaches must work to BAFA recommended coach to player ratios, which are:
- For 4 to 8 years – one adult to every 6 children (1:6)
 - For 9 to 12 years - one adult to every 8 children (1:8)
 - 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

72. 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.
 - Each player should have their own set of flags which they will keep for the duration of the practice or game. Flags and belts should be sanitised at regular intervals during activity, and at the conclusion of practices or games by either the individual, coach, team manager or Club Covid-19 Officer or Covid-19 Team Lead. During games, players should sub-out if equipment sanitisation is required.
 - Each pitch area should have antibacterial wet wipes or spray available to enable this. At the end of each practice or game, the Covid-19 Officer or Covid-19 Team Lead should ensure any other equipment which has been handled (such as cones) is sanitised.

73. Playing Equipment such as flag belts and flags 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.
74. Cones should be put out and collected by the same person on each pitch - preferably by a coach.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING DURING PRACTICE AND GAMES

75. 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.
76. Normal physical distancing and legal gathering limits apply before (including warmups) and after any activity takes place or when taking breaks.
77. 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.
78. 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.
79. 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.
80. 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.
81. **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, 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.**

82. There are no restrictions on the number of households (or extended households) that a coach can instruct per day.
83. 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.
84. Coaches, officials, parents and guardians should continue to observe physical distancing when involved in children's activity as a coach, official or spectator.
85. 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.
86. 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.
87. Team scoring celebrations involving person-to-person contact are not permitted.
88. No pre or post-game handshakes, or alternatives of any sort e.g. elbowbump or foot taps are permitted.

PARTICIPANT EQUIPMENT AND ETIQUETTE

89. Participants should be encouraged to bring their own hand sanitiser to practices and games and use it at regular intervals in activity.
90. 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.
91. 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.
92. 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.

93. 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.

94. No spitting or mouth rinsing is permitted.

FIRST AID, HEALTH AND HYGIENE

95. 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

96. In the event of first aid treatment being required it is recognised that a suitably qualified person, coach or supervising adult may require to attend to the injured participant. The Club Covid-19 Officer should consider processes for managing this as part of the risk assessment. This could include but not be limited to:

- Provision of suitable PPE
- Training of coaches/supervising adults

97. 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.

98. 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.

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

100. 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.

101. 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.
102. Avoid touching your face and ensure to clean your hands with at least 60% alcohol gel when you finish participating.

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](#)

ORGANISING AND PARTICIPATING IN LEAGUE AND FRIENDLY FLAG GAMES AND TOURNAMENTS

103. League and friendly games are now permitted for all age groups in Protection Levels 0-2 and for under 18s only in Protection Level 3, as long as the following guidance is strictly adhered to. Please refer to the additional BAFA rules adjustments for Covid-19, covering both flag and contact football as well as guidance for officiating - <http://rules.bafra.info/covid-19/> and Scottish Government guidance on the [sportscotland](#) website: [Return to Competition & Events: sport events.](#)

An outdoor sporting 'field of play bubble' can be used for games and tournaments up to the limits noted below. Coaches, officials, and other volunteers are not included in Level 0 to Level 2 bubble/participation numbers but are at Level 3. Support staff numbers should be limited to those that are required to ensure a safe, well run activity:

Level 3 – Bubbles of up to 30

Level 2 – Bubbles of up to 50

Level 1 – Bubbles of up to 100

Level 0 – Bubbles of up to 500

You should follow any competition management guidelines, and in addition you must also adhere to the following requirements:

- Where games do take place between teams in differing home nations (ie between teams in England and Scotland), the guidance that should be followed is that of the home nation where the game is taking place.
- When planning games, 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 should be updated to reflect preparations for organising and participating in games and tournaments and 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 all preparation and planning for the tournament / game.
- 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 organisers 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.
- 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 and during league fixtures the team area is limited to squad members and a maximum of five other individuals involved in the game.
- When not in active game play, participants must socially distance in the team area. Team should be extended to the full length of the playing area to enable this.
- **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.**
- The host club should clearly communicate any Covid-19 related venue requirements – for example, one-way systems, designated entry points, availability of toilet facilities onsite – to the visiting team ahead of the game taking place.
- The host club should ensure sanitising materials are available for any equipment including 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.
- Staggered arrival and departure times and designated pitch entry points for each team are highly recommended to minimise any risks.
- Before the start of any game, the Club Covid-19 officer 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.
- Any roster checks should follow competition management guidelines and ensure that social distancing is considered
- BAFRA officials should follow [Covid-19 officiating guidance and recommendations](#)
- All other individuals acting in the capacity of game officials should observe the appropriate sections of BAFA's [Covid-19 officiating guidance and recommendations](#)
- Inter-club locally organised non-contact friendly game activity between two teams does not require BAFA sanction – however **any plans for friendly game activity involving multiple teams and games on the same day, such as a tournament, must be sanctioned by BAFA before taking place.** To request sanction, please contact covid-19@britishamericanfootball.org 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.

MORE INFORMATION

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

If you have any questions, please contact:

[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](#)

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