



COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR CLUBS

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Updated: 7 April 2022

Our guidance has now been updated to reflect the removal of many remaining Covid-19 restrictions across the UK. Make sure you read this guidance carefully and fully understand the requirements before undertaking any activity. Please also be aware that guidance can change, and restrictions may be reintroduced at short notice and that these may vary across England, Scotland and Wales.

These guidelines have been produced in line with the most recent version of the UK Government's [return to recreational team sport framework](#) and the [latest UK Covid-19 guidance](#).

Please remember...

Covid-19 is still a risk and we must continue to do what we can to reduce the risk of catching and spreading it. Precautions remain particularly important to those who are at a higher risk if they catch Covid-19. It is also important to consider that others may wish to take a more cautious approach. We should all be considerate of this.

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 Covid-19 protocols risk assessment requirements.

CLUB PREPARATION

1. Club management should ensure appropriate management processes are in place to effectively oversee and maintain measures to prevent Covid-19 in their club, as outlined in this document.
2. It is suggested that clubs should draw up their own detailed practice protocols, however the recommended Covid-19 behaviours outlined in this document should be common to all clubs.
3. All clubs are advised to conduct a risk assessment of their facilities, operating procedures and planned activities each playing season and ensure its updated regularly. They should have appropriate measures in place to provide a safe environment for players, volunteers and other relevant individuals such as officials, including control measures to reduce the risks of Covid-19 which should be aligned with current BAFA and Government guidance. A BAFA risk assessment template is available [here](#). An Emergency Action Plan template is available [here](#).
4. Participants should be made aware that any Covid-19 mitigations you choose to put in place are for their protection and complying with them is highly encouraged.

CLUB COVID-19 OFFICER / TEAM LEADS

5. It's recommended that each club should still retain a designated Club Covid-19 Officer to help make sure appropriate control measures in place to reduce the spread of Covid-19.
6. 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 suggest that each team within the club retains a designated Covid-19 Team Lead, reporting to an overall Club Covid-19 Officer.
7. Club management must make sure that the appointed persons will receive all necessary support to undertake their roles.
8. The club must ensure that all members are notified of who their Club Covid-19 Officer is, should they have any

questions or concerns relating to Covid-19

9. The Club Covid-19 Officer and any Covid-19 Team Leads should not put themselves at risk whilst carrying out the role. Suggested duties for these roles include but are not limited to:

- Completing or inputting into risk assessments and ensuring all appropriate mitigations are put in place by the club before activity is undertaken.
- Being aware of and understanding current government and BAFA guidelines and communicating these with relevant club volunteers
- 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 regularly self-assess for symptoms of Covid-19 prior to attending sessions
- Providing Covid-19 safety information and protocols to all players, coaching personnel and parent/guardians
- 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 concerns 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).

SYMPTOMS, POSITIVE TESTS AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

10. Before attending any face-to-face American football activity, it's recommended that all participants, officials, volunteers and spectators self-assess for Covid-19 symptoms. It's recommended that clubs have a regular reminder process in place to make sure participants take individual responsibility to do this.
11. If an individual has symptoms that may be Covid-19, or knowingly has Covid-19, they are strongly encouraged to stay away from face-to-face activity and follow any guidance currently in place for their home nation around isolation and testing.
12. Clubs should advise participants to consider their own health and circumstances (for example, if they are not yet fully vaccinated or they live with somebody vulnerable), so they can make an informed choice about whether they wish to participate. You should set out the safety measures you have put in place, and how you will mitigate any specific risks.

13. Please note, it is not the responsibility of the club to inform members that a specific individual at the club has tested positive for Covid-19 as an individual's right to privacy must be observed.

VENUE AND FACILITIES

14. Participants are still encouraged to avoid or minimise the use of crowded changing rooms where possible. Although no longer a legal requirement in England and Wales, face coverings are still strongly recommended in crowded indoor settings. Face coverings are still required in indoor communal areas in Scotland such as changing rooms until at least 18 April.
15. As part of your risk assessment, you may wish to identify any potential areas of crowding and consider what steps can be taken to avoid congestion, if they present a higher risk of COVID-19 transmission. For example, you could limit the number of people using changing facilities, at the same time. You could also use timetabling to prevent crowding, ensure windows or doors are opened to increase ventilation, or encourage participants to wear a face covering.
16. We know that our member clubs are reliant on third party owned or managed facilities. Clubs should request information from their facility about any specific Covid-19 safety measures they are keeping in place.

TRAVEL

17. BAFA recommends participants to continue to wear a face covering on shared team transport. While there is no longer a legal requirement to wear a face covering on public transport England and Wales, the UK government suggests you continue to wear one in crowded and enclosed spaces. Transport operators are also free to set their own requirements for face coverings. Please note - Face coverings are still required in indoor communal areas and on public transport in Scotland until at least 18 April – this includes shared team bus travel.
18. On your journey, open windows to let fresh air in where possible.
19. Please check if different restrictions 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.

ONFIELD ACTIVITY AND PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOUR

20. Where it is possible and practical, organise your activity to avoid people sharing equipment, particularly helmets. If equipment needs to be shared, it should be cleaned between users where possible.
21. You should continue to follow good hygiene practices to reduce the risk of Covid-19. For example, you should ask participants not to spit or rinse their mouths out on or around the playing area, follow good mouthguard etiquette and continue strong hand hygiene.
22. Think about any changes you could make to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission. For example, you could ask teams not to shake hands after the game.
23. Water bottles or other refreshment containers should not be shared. You should advise participants to bring their own labelled reusable water bottle. If you are providing water or other beverages, ensure that these are provided to individuals and are not expected to be shared. Communal water buckets are only recommended to refill individual bottles.

FIRST AID, HEALTH AND HYGIENE

24. Physios and other medical personnel should ensure that equipment and surfaces are frequently cleaned and disinfected, and maintain hygiene standards when treating participants.
25. Where close face-to-face contact is required, medical personnel may decide that they and patients should wear a face covering. This is particularly important when they are conducting treatments which require them to be in close proximity to a person's face, mouth and nose.
26. After contact with an injured participant, physios and other medical personnel should clean their hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity.

ADVICE FOR GAMES AND TOURNAMENTS

27. The emphasis for organising and participating in games and tournaments is on taking a common-sense approach to minimise risk.
28. If you're expecting a significant number of spectators, you should review the UK Government's [guidance for events and attractions](#) and follow any relevant measures to reduce the risk of transmission at your event. This includes further advice about the types of measures you can put in place (such as crowd movement strategies and stewarding) to manage risks in these types of events, along with a risk management template to help you plan your event.
29. 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.
30. 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.
31. Do you have a lightning safety plan in place? This should take Covid-19 risks into account, 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 in a crowded space face coverings are recommended.