



RETURN TO PLAY FRAMEWORK

RETURN TO CONTACT TRAINING & COMPETITION FAQS

CURRENT AT 15 JULY 2020

These FAQ's will be regularly reviewed and updated in line with Government advice

COVID SAFETY OFFICER

Does the COVID Safety Officer need to attend all training sessions / competition matches?

If the COVID Safety Officer cannot attend a training session / competition match, they should appoint and brief a replacement to ensure compliance of the protocols, including completion of the required register which should be forwarded to the COVID Safety Officer once training / matches have been completed. Where possible, we encourage clubs to have multiple people take ownership of this role and share the responsibility.

Can a COVID SAFETY OFFICER perform the role for both sports in a Football/Netball club?

Yes. The COVID Safety Officer needs to be aware that each sport is likely to have different protocols and must ensure that each group complies with the relevant protocols for their sport. Where possible, we encourage clubs to have multiple people take ownership of this role and share the responsibility.

PARTICIPANTS, SPECTATORS AND REGISTERS

Will the register need to be continued for game days also?

Yes, a register needs to be maintained for all participants, officials, umpires, and volunteers at every training session, match (including practice matches), and Auskick session. The register will be used to contact trace people if there is a positive test for COVID-19 so we need to have complete records of every activity conducted under a club's banner.

For information on the TeamApp Attendance Tracker please click [here](#).

Do we still need to record which part of the ground people train on?

No, as teams can now train as a whole group. However, clubs will need to be aware of situations where multiple teams train on the same oval at the same time so that this can be factored in if contact tracing needs to take place.

Can team sheets form the required register with volunteers/team managers added to the team sheets?

Yes, team sheets can form part of the required register providing team sheets are available for every team competing and that they capture every coach, manager, trainer, physio, runner, and water carrier that were involved with the team on that day. Should there be a positive test and contact tracing be required, the club will need to provide Health authorities with these names together with their phone number and email address.

AFL NSW/ACT recommends that, on match days, each team takes responsibility for maintaining the register for their own club members. This may require COVID Safety Officers to upskill one person per team as it is highly unlikely that a single COVID SAFETY OFFICER will be in the same location as every team on match day.



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How do umpires register their attendance at matches?

Umpires attendance must be recorded by the home club. When any umpire arrives at the venue, they must immediately notify the Ground Manager of their arrival who will keep a record of all umpires on the day.

Online Umpire Match Reports should also record the names of every umpire who officiates in the match (including club appointed field, boundary or goal umpires).

Does a register of parents and spectators need to be kept?

The NSW Government has advised that a register of spectators is only required to be kept “where practicable”, which is not the case for the vast majority of NSW Community Football venues which have multiple venue entry points.

If however an event / match is ticketed, or an entry fee is collected on arrival, then a spectator register would be required with full names and contact details required.

Is there a maximum number of participants (includes players, officials and spectators) that can be at a venue at any one time?

Yes, the maximum number of participants (defined as players, officials and spectators) allowed at any venue at a single time is 500 persons. The Home Club is to monitor this and ensure this number is not exceeded.

Are there limits on how many parents / spectators can attend matches as a spectator?

For junior sport, the NSW Office of Sport encourage only one parent / carer accompanies their child to sporting activities for the purposes of supervision.

CONTACT TRAINING & MATCHES

We have council approval for training, do we now need to get approval for contact training and matches?

AFL NSW/ACT has communicated with Councils to advise the protocols associated with contact training and competition. We recommend that clubs follow up with their Council as part of the regular ongoing communication process.

Is contact training still limited to groups of 20?

In NSW the limit of 20 players per group at training was removed on 1 July. From this point on the key factor for space allocation is 1 person per 4m² with no more than 500 participants at a venue at any single time.

Can we have physios at training and matches from 1 July?

Yes, physios can be used however the recommendation is that participants follow the philosophy of “Get In, Train / Play, Get Out” where possible with the recommendation that strapping / massages occur prior to arrival at the venue. Clubs are also encouraged to consider whether this is a cost that can be borne in these financially challenging times.

Can we use extra equipment from 1 July such as tackle bags and bibs?

Yes, clubs can use whatever equipment is required to facilitate contact training. Tackle bags, bump pads, etc are to be cleaned with antibacterial wipes or alcohol-based sanitiser prior to and after each training session or competition match. Bibs need to be laundered after every use.



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Can we play practice matches from 1 July?

Yes, clubs in NSW can play both intra-club and inter-club practice matches from 1 July, which brings NSW into line with ACT. As has always been the case, inter-club practice matches need to be approved by the League beforehand to avoid possible issues with insurance so approval should be sought via the appropriate form ASAP.

VENUE REQUIREMENTS

Do we need to provide Conditions of Venue Entry at our Home Ground?

Yes, conditions of Venue Entry must be displayed at each venue's main entry points, along with major congregating areas i.e. canteen / bars. Template Conditions of Venue Entry which identify the key COVID requirements can be downloaded and printed from the [AFL NSW/ACT website](#).

Do we need to mark spots for spectators to maintain physical distancing?

No, it is far too big a task to expect a club to mark spots around the entire ground. However, clubs should consider placing signage/markers in places where queueing and grouping are likely to occur, e.g. canteen/bar, seats in grandstand.

AFL NSW/ACT has a suite of online template signage and resources for these areas which can be [found here](#).

The ACT Government has recommended that grandstand seating (where applicable) should be limited by placing a sticker on every second seat, alternating the unavailable seats between rows so that they are on a 45 degree angle for rows in front and behind. This practice also works effectively in NSW.

What if our club wants to enact even more stringent protocols?

The COVID-19 Safety Protocols for the return to competition play can be found at this [link](#). All clubs need to ensure that their club is implementing all of these protocols as stated.

AFL NSW/ACT doesn't recommend clubs implement their own higher level protocols, however we do strongly encourage clubs to consider implementing practices that make match day co-ordination easier for both participating clubs such as:

- i. Designated assembly points for both home and away teams – facilities with change rooms, canteens, public toilets, grandstand/club rooms will be a common congregation point and will provide the maximum challenge around ensuring 4m² per person. Having teams assemble away from this area will assist to manage this risk.
- ii. Developing venue maps clearly documenting change rooms with participant size details, parking spaces, ingress / egress routes, etc.

Home clubs should communicate the above information to away clubs by Wednesday of the week leading into the match. This allows the away club to understand match day operations, to make appropriate plans, and to communicate this to their teams and supporters.



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Will there be restrictions on anyone entering the ground during half time, quarter time, etc?

Access to the playing surface is to be limited to players and officials only. This should be regularly promoted by the club prior to the return to competition, identified at the required ground entry signage, promoted through ground announcements (where possible), and reinforced by the Ground Manager.

Will there be standard signage produced?

AFL NSW/ACT has developed a series of hygiene and social distancing signs that clubs can download from the Resources and Templates section of the Return to Play area of the website ([here](#)). These signs include reminders to “Keep your distance” and “Change rooms limited use”.

AFL NSW/ACT has also developed template signage for areas such as changerooms and club rooms that allows clubs to identify the maximum number of people in that area, it can be found at this link [here](#).

Can change rooms be used?

Yes, change rooms can be used however it is important to note that many changerooms are too small to fit a full team and support staff when working to the 1 person per 4m² rule. Signage should be located at the entry of any change room clearly identifying how many people can be in the change room at one time. Whenever the weather allows, teams are encouraged to hold team talks, etc on the ground whilst being mindful of social distancing.

HEALTH OF PLAYERS

Who determines if a player is too unwell to play?

The vast majority of team officials (coaches, managers, etc) aren't qualified to make a diagnosis so responsibility has to live with the individual (and their family in the case of Juniors). Clubs need to constantly educate players that training and playing whilst unwell increases the risk of infection. If a player, or people they have been in contact with, are sick they must not attend training or games otherwise they increase the risk that a team and/or competition could be suspended.

What if I've recently been in Victoria or another hotspot?

If you have recently travelled to Victoria you need to abide by the NSW Government regulations with regard to 14 days of 'immediate self-isolation' on return to NSW. For more information on the restrictions, please use the [link](#).

If you have been to another hotspot (e.g. Crossroads Hotel or Picton Hotel on the days of concern) NSW Government advice is that you should self-isolate for 14 days and get a COVID-19 test.

COMPETITION RULES

Is the Umpires' escort still required?

Yes, we need to continue to support Umpires on match day. This will apply to all Senior Competitions and also to many Junior Competitions. Any Umpire Escort must be recorded on the Home club's register of players, officials and volunteers.



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Have player numbers been reduced on field for this year?

Each individual League has considered their own local circumstances and some have amended on field numbers. Each League will issue updated By-laws before the season starts and any changes to on field numbers will be identified within that document.

What are the rules during game play in relation to the bench – 1.5m or next to each other?

Players on the bench, and match officials, must adhere to the social distancing rule of 1.5m of separation. Home clubs need to consider providing extra benches / seats to facilitate this.

In Juniors we have to even up and there are some clubs that give their jumpers to loaned players, and swap when they change players each quarter. Is there any ruling around it?

Where a player is playing for the opposing team under the even-up rules, they must not be required to use a “shared” jersey (i.e. a jersey that has been worn by one or more other players that day). In the first instance, they should turn their own club jersey inside out to distinguish themselves from their usual team, or where that might still clash with their usual teams jersey, they are to be provided with a clean vest / bib to wear over the top of their jersey.

Who can fill the role of Goal Umpire?

Anyone can fill the role of Goal Umpire on the day. These people must be included on the match day register, together with their contact details, in case contact tracing needs to occur. Flags must be wiped with antibacterial wipes or alcohol-based sanitiser after the match.

WATER BOTTLES, WATER CARRIERS, & SNACKS

Considering we can't share water bottles, are Water Carriers allowed?

Each player should bring their own water bottle to training and matches. If these bottles are clearly marked with the player's name it would still be possible to run these bottles out to players during a match. If clubs do choose to operate in this way it is imperative that players understand not to share their bottle with teammates.

Could there be a 2020 rule put in place to allow more Water Carriers on the field?

There have been no changes made to the number of Trainers, Other Medical Staff, and Water Carriers within the 2020 By-laws.

It is recommended that:

- Clubs educate players on hydration before the game and during breaks so less water is required on field during playing time.
- Water Carriers to sanitise hands regularly and/or wear gloves.
- Label every players' drink bottle with their Jersey number as well as their name, volunteers on game day may not know all the players' names (label with marker and tape).
- Drink bottles should be easy open so the players can manage this themselves. The Water Carrier should have limited handling with the bottle, especially the tops.
- Divide the number of players into groups so the Water Carriers have a smaller number of players to run drinks to.
- Be mindful of the number of volunteers in the interchange area to enable social distancing.

The normal on field rules for water carriers still apply: no loitering, no instructions, and taking the field at the appropriate times.



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Will players only be allowed to drink water from their own personal bottle at breaks?

Yes. If a club is concerned that players will forget to bring a drink bottle it could provide a water dispenser and disposable cups. These disposable cups should be thrown out after each use.

Our team normally shares the load with fruit and snacks? Can we still do this?

No. At no time can players share any drinks or food, including snacks, fruit or lollies. Similarly, there is strictly no sharing of water bottles.

HYGIENE

Can players shower at the ground after training and matches?

The general advice is to encourage players to shower at home, however this may not always be practical. Players can shower at the ground however changerooms are limited to 4m² per person so access may have to be limited and players may have to wait for their turn.

Are we clear about removing mouthguards during play?

Players should be encouraged to maintain high levels of hygiene when using a mouthguard, i.e. limit touching / removing mouthguards during training and play, clean / sanitise regularly.

How do we manage players spitting?

Clubs need to constantly educate players that spitting and clearing nasal passages increases the risk of infection. It is the personal responsibility of every player to refrain from activities such as spitting and clearing nasal passages that could result in infection and potentially see a team and/or competition suspended.

Are high fives and other forms of celebratory contact OK during a game?

High fives, handshakes, and all other forms of non-essential contact should be discouraged at training, matches, and Auskick. Clubs need to constantly educate players that this type of physical contact increases the risk of infection and should be avoided.

HAND SANITISER

Are there specific requirements for hand sanitiser?

Yes, clubs must provide alcohol based hand sanitiser as outlined in the Return To Contact Training, Competition and NAB AFL Auskick Protocols.

Where must we provide hand sanitiser?

Hand sanitiser must be provided at the entry point to grounds where the venue is gated. All facilities must provide hand sanitiser at central locations such as the canteen, bar, change rooms, and public toilets.

Should players, coaches, and support staff use hand sanitiser between quarters?

Yes, all participants are encouraged to use hand sanitiser prior, during and following activity. The break between quarters is a good opportunity to put this into practice.



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RESPONDING TO A POTENTIAL POSITIVE TEST

What will happen if one or more players contact the virus or test positive?

As soon as the club is made aware of a positive test the President or Club COVID Safety Officer is to contact AFL NSW/ACT. We will advise the Health authorities and will be guided by them in relation to isolation of player(s), further testing, suspension of training and/or matches. The Health authorities' advice will be based upon a risk analysis of each individual situation, so there is no 'one size fits all' response.

What is the procedure if one or more players test positive?

Players need to be aware that they must notify the club as soon as they aware they have tested positive. The club President is to notify their AFL NSW/ACT staff contact, and we will then notify the Health authorities. Once this has occurred the health authorities are in control of the situation and we will adhere to their requests/instruction. Health authorities will request access to COVID registers so clubs must ensure that these are complete and up to date.

Will the season of the respective league be cancelled if any player tests positive?

There is no blanket approach to this as we will be guided by the expertise of the Health authorities.

Will the AFL NSW/ACT look at having a floating fixture in case of another outbreak?

Unlike the elite competition, all community Leagues have a relatively fixed end of season date, and have limited capacity to play mid week matches. Fixtures will be prepared for the full season and, in the event of an outbreak, the League will revise the fixture to align with the advice provided by Health authorities.

CANTEENS & FUNCTIONS

Are we allowed to open canteens with the return of games?

Yes, canteen and bar facilities are able to operate from 1 July. Before committing to opening these areas clubs must consider:

- Implementing queuing requirements to maintain physical distancing;
- Ensure appropriate food/beverage and cash handling arrangements;
- Implement low(er) risk menu options such as those requiring less direct food handling/ contact);
- Implement hygiene measures including hand sanitiser at point of sale, gloves for bar/ canteen volunteers and consider the use of protective physical barriers/shields;
- Ensure volunteers understand the protocol of regularly changing gloves between customers.
- More information from the NSW Government [here](#)
- A COVID-19 Awareness for Food Handling Course is provided online by the NSW Government [here](#).

If we have an outdoor undercover area do we have to still abide by the 4m² rule when running a bbq or canteen?

Yes, the rule of one person per 4m² applies to all areas of the facility including the field of play.

Are we allowed to use clubrooms for functions?

Yes, as long as the club strictly adheres to the restriction of 4m² per person and has appropriate food and beverage service practices in place.



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Is there likely to be guidance on responsibility for washing jumpers?

Clubs need to ensure processes are in place to launder shared uniform items such as jumpers. A club official taking responsibility for washing the complete set ensures that all jumpers are washed, whereas the likelihood of a jumper not being washed increases slightly if each player/ family is responsible.

NAB AFL AUSKICK

Do Auskick have to wait for return to competition or can they train?

Auskick Centres can't resume before 17 July. For more information on the Return to AFL NAB Auskick click [here](#).