



# RETURN TO COMMUNITY FOOTBALL FAQs

Current at 15 May 2020

## General

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### **What do the various Government Stages 1, 2, and 3, and the AIS Levels A, B and C mean for returning to Community football?**

Each State and Territory Government has declared a roadmap to lift restrictions. Levels 1, 2 and 3 outline the various restrictions that apply at different stages. The AFL has been working with each State Government to determine the return to play timeline for AFL at a community football level. Please refer to the latest information from your State/Territory affiliate that outlines where AFL is at on this timeline. We are not authorised to move to the next stage without endorsement from the Government.

Levels A, B, C refer to the [AIS Framework](#) which is a detailed framework that spells out protocols for sports to reboot safely. We are utilising this framework to develop our health, safety and training protocols for each Stage.

### **Why are our restrictions on playing / training different to other States?**

The level of restrictions is in each region strictly determined by each State / Territory Government and is dependent on a range of factors in each region. Also, how restrictions are applied to Community sport may be different in each State / Territory. We are not in control of the decision-making process that sees restrictions relaxed at different times and in different ways.

### **I haven't gone back to work yet but you are saying it's OK to start playing footy? Why is that?**

The Australian Government released a recommendation through the AIS Sports Framework that stepped out a clearly phased approach to returning to play community sport. Both Federal and State Governments have indicated that sport plays a vital role in the community and as such it has been a focus to return to play in a controlled and safe manner.

### **When do you think we will be playing and training with all players and staff in attendance?**

The AFL is not the decision maker when it comes to whether and when our sport can return in full. The decision to move to the level which permits training and competition is one that is made by each State or Territory Government. Whilst some States / Territories have revealed a roadmap to return to community sport, the timing of a return depends on the status of the COVID-19 virus and other considerations in each region. Further detail around the status and timing of a return to training and playing is outlined on our dedicated AFLQ [Return to Play](#) webpage.

### **Why have other sports teams gone back, but we aren't playing footy?**

Each State or Territory Government is responsible for determining when each sport can return and some sports will return sooner than others. Understandably, there are different considerations for each sport including contact v non-contact, indoor v outdoor sports, numbers in teams etc. We are

bound by the State or Territory Governments on when they decide Sports including AFL can move from stage 1 to 2 and 3.

### **Why do other sports have different safety and hygiene protocols to AFL?**

The AFL is following the protocols set out by the Federal Government's AIS Framework. Each sport may take a different approach to how they adopt the protocols set out by the Federal Government's AIS framework.

### **Do we have to download the COVID-SAFE app to participate?**

It is the AFL's strong recommendation that all volunteers, umpires and participants involved in Auskick and community football install the COVIDSafe app to ensure that we are able to track and trace any active cases if they come to light. This is part of our commitment to Government as a sport in our return to play strategy.

### **Will there be someone in my Club who is responsible for making sure our training and grounds adopt safety protocols?**

Yes, the AFL is requesting that all Clubs nominate a representative (E.G. a COVID-SAFE Officer) that can be responsible for ensuring all appropriate protocols are adopted and implemented by each Club/Team at all times. It is essential we have someone in every Club that can ensure we are adhering to the AIS Framework at all times. We will work with each Club to ensure this nominated individual has access to the appropriate checklists, training and education resources and expect Clubs to also provide their nominated individuals with support in performing this important role. Whilst acting in this role the individual will be covered under the Community Football Public Liability insurance policy.

But it is also the responsibility of everyone involved in football to follow all health protocols and guidelines to ensure our game can return safely.

### **Will the AFL be providing education for Club staff or volunteers?**

Yes, the AFL requires individuals responsible for coordinating protocol checks to undertake the COVID-19 infection control training which can be completed [online here](#). We will also be providing education on the protocols specific for Australian Football shortly.

### **How do we keep track of our club officials who have completed the online education ?**

We have created templates for you to record who in your Club has completed the COVID-19 infection control training and the online training on the protocols specific for Australian Football. This template is available [here](#).

### **How do we record who attends organised football training at our Club?**

We have created a template for you to record who attends each training session and when, so you have a record if required by your State Health department. This template is available [here](#).

### **Where can we get posters or signs for our Club to make sure people know the rules?**

Posters for Clubs are available [here](#) to display at all training and playing venues.

### **There are lots of rules around sanitisation and cleaning. How do we afford to pay for all the extra cleaning equipment required?**

You may wish to follow up with your league or your local council to see if they have any suggestions to keep these additional cleaning requirements as affordable as possible for Clubs. However, in most cases your Club will assume responsibility for ensuring the additional cleaning and sanitation requirements are met.

### **My team has started training again, but I'm not feeling 100% or a family member has had/recovered from coronavirus.**

It is absolutely essential that no one ever attends training or spectates if they are feeling unwell or they have been around someone who has been unwell. You must ensure you notify your Club official (E.G. COVID-SAFE Officer) if you have attended training and been unwell or have concerns about a family member or close contact.

### **What do we do if we are feeling unwell?**

Anyone who has a fever or respiratory symptoms consistent with coronavirus, no matter how mild, is strongly recommended to attend a COVID-19 clinic, or their GP, for assessment and testing.

Monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath. Other early symptoms to watch for are chills and body aches or muscle pain, a sore throat, headaches, runny nose, diarrhoea or unexplained loss of taste or smell.

If it is determined you are to undertake a test, following the test you must self-isolate by immediately going home and resting while you wait for your test result (which you should usually get within 2 days). Whilst you are waiting you must stay at home (i.e. do not attend work, school/university or training), wash your hands often with soap and water, cough and sneeze into a clean tissue or your elbow and avoid close contact with others, including members of your household.

You must also notify your club's nominated representative (E.G. COVID-SAFE Officer) that you have undertaken a COVID-19 test and they must then notify their relevant League official who will advise on next steps.

### **What to do if we have a positive test?**

If you receive a positive test result, you must strictly follow all instructions to self-quarantine.

You will also be contacted by relevant authorities to help contact trace your close contacts.

Your league and club must also follow the advice of authorities with regard to any suspension of training / games.

## **Schools and NAB AFL Auskick**

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### **My kids do AFL at School. Will this be starting up again at my school?**

The decision for AFL programs to recommence in schools will be subject to individual schools following directions from the relevant State health departments. Whilst some schools have returned, others are still closed and some are only returning in a phased approach. We suggest connecting with your school to understand their position on third party sport coaching in Terms 2, 3 and 4.

### **My Junior football club has started training. Why isn't Auskick back?**

As Auskick does not require training and most centres have a large number of participants, Auskick will not return back at stage 1. We remain hopeful that Auskick will be able to return in future stages, later this year.

### **How can I keep my child engaged in AFL while Auskick isn't running?**

Please make sure you check out NAB AFL Auskick at Home [here](#) and once you have practiced all these activities, we also have Footy at Home [here](#).

### **Who determines the level and therefore when Auskick will return?**

The level is strictly determined by each State/Territory Government and is dependent on a range of factors and on differing sports in each State/Territory. We are not in control of the decision-making process that sees us move from one stage to the next. As soon as it is safe to participate in Auskick within your State/Territory we will contact you with more information.

### **Once we return, do we have to download the COVID-SAFE app to participate in Auskick?**

It is the AFL's strong recommendation that all participants involved in Auskick install the COVID-19 SAFE app to ensure that we are able to track and trace any active cases if they come to light. This is part of our commitment to Government as a sport in our return to play strategy.

## **Training**

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### **What does Small Group Training mean? How many people can we have at training?**

Please refer to your State based protocols for further information on returning to training to understand what this means. Each State and Territory has different restrictions in place. For your region's protocols, please refer to the links to each State website on [Toyota AFL Club Help](#).

Please ensure you refer to the Roadmap and Protocols for your State or Territory at each stage, as there are specific protocols around what training can and can't consist of in terms of contact and general hygiene and other considerations.

### **My team has more players than allowed, can we just have a few more attend? Or how do we decide who misses out?**

Please refer to your State or Territory training protocols as per the links to each State website on [Toyota AFL Club Help](#). We must strictly comply with the guidelines in place at all times, and we are not able to stretch the limits on attendance, under any circumstances.

### **Can we use our local clubhouse and gym?**

It is recommended that access to clubhouse facilities and gyms is restricted as per your State / Territory Government guidelines. Gyms are not to be accessed until the Government formally announces gyms can re-open. Weights and other training equipment may be used for oval training, only. Please note strict hygiene and cleaning protocols apply at all times if you are sharing strength and conditioning equipment.

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

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

## **Facilities and Functions**

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### **My local oval still has signs up that it is closed and we can't access?**

If your training venue remains closed, you will need to liaise with your local government authority to understand if or when that venue will open. If the venue remains closed, you need to find an alternative training location.

### **Our oval can accommodate large groups for training, how many people can train there at one time?**

Please refer to your State or Territory restrictions that will specify how many people or groups can train on an oval at any one time.

### **I want to set up the Club BBQ to raise funds for my Club again? Can I do this?**

Whether a Club can operate their canteen/kiosk is subject to the specific restrictions in each State/Territory at the time of return to competition. You cannot commence food and beverage sales before you have formal approval from a State or Territory/Local Government to operate F&B outlets.

### **But how do we make money for our Club if we can't sell food or alcohol?**

We understand that the canteen is a key source of revenue for most clubs and by potentially not having this open has a direct financial impact on Clubs. If we are unable to operate F&B outlets, we must respect this decision and assess the financial impacts.

### **Can we access our change room and facilities for training?**

The AIS Framework recommends that use of change rooms facilities be limited to toilet use only.

Change rooms should remain closed for training except to access toilets if there are no alternative toilet facilities available. Senior teams may also access their medical facilities on a strictly limited basis. Strict social distancing measures must be applied with access to toilets or medical facilities.

The AIS Framework recommends that those attending training should have a thorough full body shower with soap before and after training at home. You should arrive dressed and ready to train/play.

### **Our team sometime catches up for drinks after the Match/Training. Can we still do this?**

Training must be "get in and get out". There is to be NO social mingling or activities at any time before or after training or matches.

## **Crowds/Spectators**

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### **My family wants to come and watch us play? Can they come along?**

Restrictions specify that strict social distancing still apply for crowds. Club officials and Police will be monitoring and policing crowd social distancing, so we ask that this is strictly complied with at all times.

### **My child is playing, can the whole family come along to training/watch?**

It is recommended in the AIS Framework that juniors are only accompanied by one parent/carer to minimise the risk of crowds and transmission spread. It is also recommended that you consider vulnerable members of your family (e.g. people over 70 years of age) and that they do not attend to minimise their risk of infection.

## **Competitions**

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### **My State Government has still banned travel interstate? What does this mean if we are meant to play a team across the border?**

The ability to play an interstate team is subject to the restrictions imposed by your State/Territory Government. If border restrictions are still in place, then travel over the border cannot occur. Your League will be working with your Club/Team to recommend alternative competition schedules and models to cater for these restrictions.

### **Are we allowed to have crowds at our games?**

We are still working with State/Territory Governments to understand the policy around crowds and crowd control and we will not be in a position to formally understand this until we transition to Stage 3. Each State and Territory will have different restrictions in place so it is essential you remain up to date with the latest protocols in your location. We will provide more information on this when a decision on competition crowds becomes available.

### **How do we stop people coming to watch if our ground doesn't have gates/security?**

We are still working with the Government to understand crowd control and restrictions, and we hope to be able to provide more information on this before moving to Stage 3.

### **Given our season has been delayed are we going to extend into October for competitions?**

Season start and end dates for your competition will be determined by your League and is dependent on each State or Territory Government making the decision to move to the level which permits competition.

Cricket Australia and the AFL are also recommending that all Football and Cricket State bodies and local Leagues and Associations, work towards Australian Football being played two weeks longer than the traditional home and away season end, with football finals to then be scheduled for up until another two weeks.

**Is the NEAFL going ahead, if not, what happens to those NEAFL players?**

This is currently being worked through and a statement on the NEAFL competition will be made in due course, inclusive of what happens to NEAFL players in 2020 if their club isn't competing in a competition.

**If NEAFL players come back to community clubs, will we get more points so we can fit them in?**

This is being assessed and clubs will be notified in due course.

**What happens if we only have enough players for a senior team but not a reserves team – can we still play?**

This will be dealt with on a case by case basis, as all competitions are structured differently. If you are already aware of this, please email [AFLQLD.SeniorCommunityFootball@afl.com.au](mailto:AFLQLD.SeniorCommunityFootball@afl.com.au) ASAP

**If I'm under contract but my club elects not to participate, can they stop me from transferring to another club that is participating?**

If you are only contracted for season 2020 your club will be required to allow you to fully transfer. In the event you have a contract for season 2021 or beyond, your club may seek permission from AFL Qld for you to transfer for the remainder of season 2020 via a Type 2 permit.

**Seniors - Are game lengths being shortened due to the limited preparation time?**

Yes

**Juniors - Are game lengths being shortened due to the limited preparation time?**

Our game lengths in Juniors/Youth will be the same as planned.

**Because the season finishes later than usual, what happens if our field isn't available in finals and we earn the right to host a final?**

Your Competition Manager will work with the club to find an equitable solution.

**If the QLD/NSW border isn't open when play returns, will AFLQ create a localised NSW competition?**

In the senior space yes, however it would be subject to all four teams agreeing to participate.

**What about Junior Competitions?**

AFL Queensland has made the decision to revert to a more localised competition format for our SEQ Junior competitions for 2020. Therefore, the newly formed Conference/Community Youth competition structure will not occur in 2020. Competitions will be based on regional competition boundaries but AFLQ will be flexible, dependent on team nominations and endeavour to work with clubs to ensure a positive outcome for all teams. Therefore, clubs in Northern Rivers in NSW will play within their regional boundaries.

## **Player Transfers**

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**The transfer system was closed when the season was postponed, but what about players that need to transfer clubs now? Will the transfer system be re-opened?**

The AFL will re-open transfers on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May. As per the [National Player Registration and Transfer Regulations](#) transfers will remain open until the 30<sup>th</sup> June. Whether the transfer window will be extended beyond June 30 will be considered over coming weeks with any further decisions to be communicated in mid-June.

## **Staff and Volunteers**

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**Our Coach/Trainer/Assistant is aged over 70, what does this mean?**

We strongly recommend that elderly and vulnerable individuals reconsider their need to attend training or competition environments. Whilst we cannot stop these individuals attending, we strongly advise that strict social distancing measures should apply. Where possible we recommend they do not act in a service capacity interacting with crowds (i.e. serving, trainers, officials etc).

**I'm a coach/trainer – do we need to wear Gloves or PPE Equipment?**

It is not a mandatory requirement that team coaches or staff wear protective equipment. If you have a personal preference to do so, you are welcome to.

**How often do we have to clean our equipment?**

We understand the challenges around maintaining strict levels of hygiene amongst a football group. However, it is essential we implement the highest quality of hygiene at all times for the safety and comfort of our participants and their families. The AIS Framework specifies that we ensure “hospital grade disinfectant is used”. We ask that before and after training or equipment use that balls, mats, cones etc. are all thoroughly disinfected with hospital grade cleaning products and stored safely until next use.

## **Fees and Finances**

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**Do I still have to pay full fees given the season has been delayed?**

At this stage, given the length and timing of the season remains uncertain, it is still premature for Clubs to widely issue refunds (noting that if you are experiencing financial hardship you should contact your Club directly to discuss fee reductions and refunds).

However, when the situation becomes clearer and assuming there will be a material reduction in the goods and/or services that will be delivered to you by your Club as compared to what you paid for, you will be entitled to receive a reduction or refund of the fees paid by you to the Club proportionate to the goods and/or services that will not be supplied. For example, if player registration fees have been paid, participants are technically entitled to a refund for the proportion of a season not played, less the cost of goods or services supplied (including insurance, apparel, registration processing fees etc).

However, given the adverse financial impact COVID-19 has had on Community sporting organisations (and noting that such organisations face difficulties in reducing some of their costs without the same revenue streams as would usually exist), you may wish to pay full fees regardless as a gesture of goodwill to and support for your Club.

**Our Club has said it doesn't want to proceed for the Season, when will I get my money back?**

You should contact your Club to discuss the timing of refunds for fees paid in circumstances where your season does not proceed.

**Does COVID-19 have any impact on our Insurance? Are we still covered?**

Yes. Clubs & Associations will be covered as usual under the AFL's Community Football Public Liability and Club Management Liability policies. Participants will also be covered as usual and at their Club/Team elected level under the Personal Accident policy for physical injuries sustained in footballing activities, however cover does not extend to a sickness or illness. Cover under these policies is always subject to their terms, conditions and exclusions. Further information is available from the Marsh website by [clicking here](#).

**Are we liable for a claim if there is a positive test case in our Club/Team?**

A Club can limit the risk of being found liable for a claim in connection with there being a positive test by a player or other participant at the Club, by taking all reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the Club and the wider community, including but not limited to, following the advice and recommendations of Federal & State Governments. A Club's potential liability will need to consider the circumstances of the particular case.