

Phase 2a Return to social sport and recreation

Information for clubs, organisations and participants. **26 May 2020**

What changes are being made to sport and recreation?

From midnight 29 May 2020 the ACT will commence Phase 2 resumption of community sport and recreation, following on from the first phase from 16 May 2020.

Phase 2 supports the continuation of activities in small groups however the definition of a small group is extended to 20 participants/players *plus* a coach. With Phase 2 also allowing for the reactivation of indoor sporting venues, including gyms, this expanded small group definition will apply to indoor and to outdoor community sporting activities, while also being the maximum threshold of people in any enclosed indoor sporting venue or pool.

This second phase continues focus on “Get in, Train, Get Out”, supporting social participation, training, activities within small groups and with continuing emphasis on physical distancing, personal and respiratory hygiene. Under this second phase, any physical contact, sharing of equipment and use of communal facilities continues to be discouraged. If equipment needs to be shared, it will require proper cleaning and disinfecting during and between sessions.

General hygiene and physical distancing principles will continue to apply.

What is defined as “community sport”?

The term “community sport” or “social sport” includes any organised sporting activity, be it through community clubs, commercial providers, individual activities or high performance training programs.

What is meant by a “small group”?

The second phase of resumption allows for outdoor activities to recommence in small groups of no more than 20 people *plus* a coach. This aligns with the permissible small groups for bootcamps under Phase 2. Numbers remain restricted to ensure the risk of transmission of COVID-19 is minimised, and contact tracing will be more effective if there is an outbreak.

Can a coach or instructor work with multiple small groups on the same or subsequent days?

Yes, in line with a risk assessment conducted by the club or coach. If the coach or instructor is subsequently diagnosed with COVID-19 then all groups will be impacted. It is essential that the coach or instructor does not work/train/coach if at all unwell.

What are the requirements for outdoor sports from 30 May?

Phase 2 extends the definition of a small group for outdoor community sporting activities, allowing 20 people in any group plus a coach.

Sports that can deliver outdoor activities, or are able to modify their activities, to comply with the parameters of this phase are able to recommence. These parameters require that small groups are maintained at all times, with no intentional physical contact (e.g. wrestling, tackling) and there is promotion of general hygiene and physical distancing at all times.

The structure of activities and protocols for hygiene and physical distancing will be sports specific.

All sports are recommended to have a clear “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” plan that details how, in a sport-specific setting, activity will be delivered under this first phase, and any subsequent phases. This framework should provide clear and consistent guidelines for participants, coaches and volunteers, while also providing confidence to participants that their activity is being conducted safely and in accordance with requirements. For Information regarding development of a plan see <https://www.sport.act.gov.au/about-us/covid19-news>

What are the requirements for indoor sports from 30 May?

Phase 2 allows for the recommencement of indoor sporting activities in small groups (no more than 20 participants/players plus a coach). While indoor venues can be reactivated, no more than twenty people, not including spectators, are permitted within an enclosed space.

While this will allow indoor sports like basketball, netball and volleyball to recommence training in small groups, restrictions that apply to the number of people in any enclosed space will take precedent in guiding permissible participation numbers under Phase 2.

Sports that can deliver indoor activities, or are able to modify their activities, to comply with the parameters of phase 2 are able to recommence. These parameters require that small groups are maintained at all times, with no intentional physical contact (e.g. wrestling, tackling) and there is promotion of general hygiene and physical distancing at all times.

The structure of activities and protocols for hygiene and physical distancing will be sports specific.

All indoor sports are recommended to have a clear “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” plan that details how, in a sport-specific setting, activity will be delivered under this phase, and any subsequent phases. The plan will need to comply with any venue capacity limitation. This “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” plan should provide clear and consistent guidelines for participants, coaches and volunteers, while also providing confidence to participants that their activity is being conducted safely and in accordance with requirements. For Information regarding development of a plan see <https://www.sport.act.gov.au/about-us/covid19-news>

How does this impact community martial arts and dance?

Many local martial arts and dance providers have embraced online learning and activity delivery through this COVID-19 pandemic and for some, outdoor activities under the first phase of recommencement.

Phase 2 now permits these activities to resume indoors in small groups (up to 20 participants) *plus* an instructor/coach. Community halls and school facilities are now able to reactivate bookings for external user groups, catering for up to 20 people in an enclosed space.

What are the changes for pools from 30 May?

Pools were able to re-open for training and public use under Phase 1, however limits applied – no more than one swimmer was permitted per lane, with no more than 10 people in the facility at any one time.

Phase 2 increases this threshold to 20 people per venue (enclosed space) and no more than two swimmers per lane. Where there are multiple pools within the same enclosed space, the limit of 20 people applies.

Can indoor gyms and fitness centres open under Phase 2?

Refer to gyms FAQ.

What is an “enclosed space”?

Under the Phase 2 recommencement of community sport indoor sport activities and indoor sporting venues are able to re-activate in small groups. However, the number of people in any facility/venue under Phase 2 is ultimately determined by its “enclosed space” status – Phase 2 allows for no more than 20 participants in an single enclosed space.

Recognising that parents/guardians may be required it remains a recommendation that no more than one parent/guardian is attending per child – these are in addition to the 20 participants (plus coach). However the number of spectators allowed is informed by the area of the *total* enclosed space – 4 square metres per person and ability to maintain 1.5m physical distancing. Some smaller indoor venues/community halls may therefore be unable to support a small group *and* spectators.

An enclosed space is one that is covered and more than 75% enclosed, where walls prevent lateral airflow.

It is recognised that there are indoor sporting facilities that have vastly differing floor areas – enclosed rooms, large seating dividers or split-level facilities as examples. Determination of how many enclosed spaces you have within the facility is critical to determining your capacity under Phase 2 and determining the scope of your activities and those of any hirers.

Will school sports resume now that students are returning to the classroom?

As school returns there will be no formal school sport competitions and no interschool events. Health and PE will continue to be delivered at the discretion of each school in a safe way to meet curriculum needs.

Does my sport need clearance from the ACT Government before restarting training?

No, however we recommend each sport or activity provider develop a “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” framework that is consistent with ACT Government guidelines, Public Health Directions and considers the recommendations outlined in the [AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport in a COVID-19 Environment](#).

How many small groups can use a single space or venue?

A number of small groups (of 20 people) are allowed to train within an outdoor area, such as a football field or court, if they are clearly separated at all times and following the one person per 4 square metre rule. For indoor activities, the number of small groups will be further informed by the allowance for no more than 20 participants within an enclosed space.

This allows sports to make use of single spaces for more than one small group where appropriate spacing (physical distancing) and hygiene principles can be applied.

A sport or activity provider’s “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” framework should establish how available spaces will be used. For example, this may include a cap on the number of small groups within a field or the clear demarcation of the field/activity space for use by individual small groups.

My playing field is much bigger than some other sports. Can I have additional small groups on my playing field to reflect this?

Sports organisations can determine how they will use their field or area in line with physical distancing measures.

Larger sporting areas such as football or AFL fields may be able to handle multiple small groups, whereas a much smaller netball or tennis courts might cater for only one small group per court or per multiple courts. For indoor activities recommencing under Phase 2, the number of small groups will be further informed by the allowance for no more than 20 participants within an enclosed space.

A sport or activity provider’s “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” plan should establish how available spaces will be used.

Can our group share equipment?

While sharing of equipment such as balls and weights is allowed it is discouraged and should be kept to a minimum.

If equipment is shared it will require proper cleaning and disinfecting during and between sessions.

Participants should practice good hand hygiene before and after training sessions.

Can I use ACT Government sportsgrounds?

ACT Government sportsgrounds recommenced bookings from 16 May 2020, supporting activities consistent with the Phase 1 resumption of social sport, including small groups and adherence to general hygiene and physical distancing principles.

Bookings are required to make formal use of sportsgrounds for training.

Where the phased re-introduction of social sport limits the capacity for sports to move toward competition, ACT Government sportsgrounds will continue to be made available for weekend training alongside weekday availability.

Community recreation will be allowed on the sportsgrounds during daylight hours within small groups. Any formal booking of the sportsground takes precedence over informal community uses.

Is Stromlo Forest Park open?

Stromlo Forest Park is open for community access and recreation. Any formal groups on the trails are limited to no more than 20 people, with continued adherence to physical distancing and hygiene requirements as relevant.

Under Phase 1 recommencement, bookings for both the criterium circuit and cross-country running track resumed. Like ACT Government sportsgrounds, use is restricted to small groups, with continuing adherence to physical distancing and hygiene requirements. Use of these facilities by organisations/club for training purposes should be supported by a "Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment" plan.

The ACT Government has waived sportsground hire fees for six months from 1 April 2020. Do I still need a booking?

The ACT Government has waived all sportsground hire fees for six months from 1 April 2020. However, bookings are required to ensure that fields can be protected from unauthorised use and that toilet facilities and lighting (as required) can be made available.

Historical sportsground allocations for the winter season are still in place for the 2020 winter season unless changes have been mutually agreed between all parties.

Commercial operators, including boot camps, are required to place bookings for use of ACT Government sportsgrounds also. Their activities should also comply with Phase 2 requirements, including outdoor gatherings requirements.

While there is no hire fee at this time, sportsground users are encouraged to limit bookings to what is reasonably required. Some bookings may not be approved by Sport and Recreation Facilities if it considers that the bookings are excessive or not warranted.

Informal (unirrigated) ovals remain available for recreational use with no bookings within the small group context. These facilities are not fit for formal sporting use, including trainings.

Are there any restrictions on the use of ACT Government sportsgrounds that we have booked?

Users will need to comply with Phase 2 restrictions such as small groups, physical distancing and good hand and general hygiene, while also ensuring they are complying with their “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” plan.

Under Phase 2, the focus is on the continued provision of ACT Government sportsgrounds for training use. The Sportsground Charter, including prioritising junior trainings from 4pm and seniors from 7pm, will continue to apply.

Enclosed ACT Government sportsgrounds remain unavailable for training purposes, however where the phased resumption of social sport limits the capacity for sports to move toward competition, all other ACT Government sportsgrounds will be made available for weekend trainings.

Does my (free) booking of ACT Government sportsgrounds override the facility’s use by community members wanting to use the field at the same time for general/informal recreation?

As part of our urban open space network, sportsgrounds have been invaluable in providing our community spaces and places for informal physical activity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While community recreation is allowed on the sportsgrounds during daylight hours in small groups, as we move to the phased resumption of social sport any formal booking of the sportsground will take precedence over informal community uses. Cricket nets are available for use (in small groups) provided there are no bookings on the sportsground.

What about access to other outdoor sports facilities not owned or managed by government?

Under Phase 1, outdoor training was able to resume subject to restrictions on small groups and adherence to general hygiene and physical distancing principle. This allowed outdoor facilities owned or managed by non-government entities to re-open, however some ancillary facilities such as changeroom, clubrooms or cafes may continue to be subject to advice or restrictions. The decision to re-open for social sport activity rests with the asset owner/manager.

It is recommended that any venue owner/manager, independently of a “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” framework that might be put in place by individual sports/hirers, considers its own framework as to how venue-specific physical distancing and general hygiene principles might apply both within the phased resumption of social sport and even beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

Will sporting changerooms be available for use?

The [AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport in a COVID-19 Environment](#) recommends caution around the use of communal facilities – this includes changerooms, clubhouses and kitchen facilities.

Changerooms at ACT Government sportsgrounds will continue to NOT be available under the Phase 2 resumption of social sport, supporting the “get in, train and get out” principle outlined in the AIS Framework. Participants/activity providers are encouraged to limit any social engagement beyond their small group activity/training.

Decisions regarding communal spaces such as changerooms in non-government facilities is at the discretion of the owner/manager. Where these facilities are made available, it is recommended that venue-specific physical distancing and general hygiene principles are applied.

When can I start matches or competitions?

From 16 May 2020 the phased resumption of social sport focused on training within the small group context. Phase 2 now extend this to indoor community sport, while also increasing the allowable small group top 20 participants *plus* a coach.

However, some outdoor sports like tennis, archery or bowls, might be able to restart some form of matches or competitions, even if it is only in a social setting.

Any decision to allow matches or competitions must adhere to restrictions to ensure appropriate physical distancing and hygiene and will be at the discretion of the activity provider or sport.

It is recommended that reintroduction of training or competition is supported by a “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” plan. This plan should detail how, in a sport-specific setting, activity will be delivered under this phase, and any subsequent phases. This plan will provide clear and consistent guidelines for participants, coaches and volunteers on the ground, while also providing confidence to participants that their activity is being conducted safely and in accord with requirements.

Can spectators attend?

The emphasis at this time is to maintain, where practical, small groups and physical distancing. Spectators are not recommended.

It is recognised however that junior training in particular may require the attendance of a parent or guardian. One adult per minor participant is allowed. Any spectators should be separated from participants (within their small group) and maintain physical distancing from other spectators of at least 1.5m.

The number of spectators allowed for indoor community sport is informed by the area of the *total* enclosed space – 4 square metres per person and ability to maintain 1.5m physical distancing. Some smaller indoor venues/community halls may therefore be unable to support a small group *and* spectators.

Measures for control of spectators should be considered within any “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” plan for sports and/or venues.

How are we expected to maintain physical distancing at training and in matches?

Phase 2 continues to focus on the recommencement of training in small groups up to a maximum of 20 people *plus* coach (while adhering to physical distancing and good hand and general hygiene).

The [AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport in a COVID-19 Environment](#) (Level B) provides details as to social sport consideration in these areas, while also including some sport-specific guidance. This sport specific guidance includes the delivery of training activities, venue considerations and use (or non-use) of equipment.

As we move to subsequent phases, requirements or recommendations will continue to evolve – clearly some sports cannot maintain their structures or integrity with preservation of physical distancing.

While subsequent stages may provide for on-field or on-court activities to return to “normal”, the activities and engagement of participants and spectators may be changed to reflect of hygiene and physical distancing for some time to come.

Beyond what is established in each phase and recommended in the AIS framework, the application of physical distancing to trainings, games, spectators and venues will be a consideration for sports/providers and should be captured in any “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” plan.

Can we fire up the BBQ, start canteen operations or catch up socially after training?

The [AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport in a COVID-19 Environment](#) (Level B) places some caution around the use of communal facilities – this includes changerooms, clubhouses and kitchen facilities. This is to limit unnecessary interaction beyond the “small group” setting.

The Phase 2 for the re-introduction of social sport continues to support the “get in, train and get out” principle outlined in the AIS Framework. Participants/activity providers are encouraged to limit any social engagement beyond their small group activity/training – this might include cessation of face-to-face group meetings and social events.

Like changerooms, canteens at ACT Government sportsgrounds will continue to not be available for access under Phase 2.

Access to communal facilities and the use (or requirement) of amenities like canteens or BBQs may be a consideration in subsequent phases. The use of the facilities, including any general hygiene or physical distancing, should be considered with any “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” plan.

Are there additional government requirements for us in respect of participant health and hygiene?

There are no additional ACT Government requirements beyond what is required for each Phase within the re-introduction process for social sport. But you must ensure you are practising good hand and general hygiene.

More information about how to protect yourself and others.

The general principles for hygiene and physical distancing within the AIS Framework also provide a sensible guide as to precautions that activity providers should follow and participants should reasonably expect.

How will we be supported to implement any additional hygiene requirements at government-owned venues?

Sport and Recreation Facilities have installed additional soap dispensers in toilet facilities at sportsgrounds.

All ACT Government sportsground facilities will be cleaned weekly by a professional cleaning company.

We encourage all sportsground users to take responsibility for their own hygiene procedures and requirements, including provision of sanitising products and wipes as required.

Am I required to promote all of these changes or additional “operational” requirements to my participants?

The delivery of social sport training and competition has changed for the foreseeable future, including expectations from participants as to health and hygiene standards.

Sport or activity providers should develop a “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” plan that is consistent with ACT Government guidelines, Public Health Directions and considers the recommendations outlined in the [AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport in a COVID-19 Environment](#).

This plan will guide the “operational” delivery of social sport and how participants, staff, volunteers and spectators all engage within this.

Sport and activity providers are encouraged to ensure that their individual members/communities are well aware of the changing environment, through progressive phases and in a post-COVID context. This promotes compliance and safety, while also providing assurance to people that it is “safe” to return to sport.

Will the traditional winter season be extended to reflect/compensate for the part of the season we have lost?

As we commence Phase 2 for the resumption of community sport, with a continuing emphasis on training, there has been no determination at this time as to the extension of the winter season. Any decisions will be made in consultation with the peak bodies for summer and winter sports.

What if the small group limits make it unfeasible to recommence activities or for venues to reopen?

We recognise that not all sport or activity providers will determine it is viable to re-commence activity at this time. These decisions remain at the discretion of individual entities, and we will be happy to work with you on a return to play framework.

We have NSW teams in our sport and often travel across the border to play. Can this recommence?

Phase 2 is focused on the recommencement of training in small groups up to a maximum of 20 people *plus* coach, while adhering to physical distancing and good hand and general hygiene. As such, teams should not be travelling over the border to play matches.

The ACT and NSW Government will continue to work together as we ease restrictions.

Why have some professional teams already been able to resume both indoor and outdoor training in advance of community sport?

Professional sporting teams have been able to recommence training activities over recent weeks, acknowledging that for these athletes their sport is their profession and their training facilities their workplace.

Professional sporting teams have recommenced formal training considerate of a range of strict physical distancing and health/hygiene protocols as articulated in detailed “Return to Play” frameworks developed within their sport.

My state/national body seems to have put in place some extra thresholds or requirements for training and competitions. Am I obliged to follow?

Peak sporting bodies have an important role to play in supporting the development and consistency of sport specific “Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment” plans. These plans may include additional measures that they deem appropriate.

Clubs and organisations are allowed to recommence activity in line with ACT Government restrictions at a minimum. However, we encourage clubs to work with their governing bodies to ensure a safe return to play.

My organisation has paid staff. Is it safe for them to return to the office?

All employers are also encouraged to consider alternative ways of delivering their business practices and services.

If it is not possible to work from home or redesign practices, it is vital that no worker comes to work if they have any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, and shortness of breath. If unwell, workers should contact their primary health care provider, who can liaise with the local public health authority to determine when it is safe for them to return to work.

How will physical distancing and hygiene be enforced? Who will enforce it?

While the COVID-19 situation is regularly changing, Canberrans know what they should be doing and they should be taking actions with the safety of themselves and the entire community at front of mind.

Where required, ACT Policing will encourage compliance before considering the enforcement of ACT COVID-19 directions.

ACT Policing members always assess each situation on its merits and decide on the best course of action when applying their powers under a health direction.

Remember, while restrictions have eased your personal responsibility hasn't.

What happens if there is a positive COVID-19 case within our sporting club or facility?

Restrictions are being eased gradually to ensure as there are any new cases of COVID-19 in our community, we can address them quickly and effectively.

If someone tests positive for COVID-19 the health authorities will perform contact tracing to determine where they have been and who they have been in contact with.

If your club or organisation is impacted, health authorities will contact you and advise you what to do next.

To help contact tracing it is recommended people download the [COVIDSafe app](#).