

RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOLS

7/6/21

Based on Welsh Government Coronavirus Control Plan first issued 14 December 2020 and last updated March 2021 (available [here](#)) and Sport, Recreation and Leisure: guidance for a safe return issued 10 May 2021 (available [here](#))



SUMMARY

- Increase in the number of people permitted to attend outdoor regulated events from Monday 7th June
- Spectators will now be able to watch junior and youth (U18s) training and matches outdoors
- The return of spectators for adult matches outdoors will be phased following the completion of some test events
- Tournaments and festivals will be able to take place outdoors in Wales – further guidance will be released to support clubs in hosting these events
- Organisations will now be able to participate in outdoor tournaments and festivals outside of Wales providing it has been approved by the FAW or Area Association



TRAINING

- Clubs and leagues will need to be led by the facility provider on the number of people permitted to train at an indoor or outdoor venue
- Based on WG guidance, we would deem the following training numbers appropriate

Age categories	Indoor sports hall	Half-pitch (min. 45 x 45m)	Full-size pitch (min.90x45m)
Under 18 (Year 13 and under)	1 group of 20	1 group of 35	2 groups of 35
Over 18	1 group of 20	1 group of 25	2 groups of 25

- All persons involved must complete a self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms check prior to every training session.
- This number will need to include players and coaches. First aiders and COVID Officers are exempt.
- 1:16 (qualified coach:player) ratio must be adhered to at all times for U18s
- All training equipment – including goalposts – must be sanitised before and after every training session or fixture
- Clubs should follow guidelines on cleaning in a non-healthcare setting [here](#)



MATCHES (U18)

Under 6 – 12

Matches should follow Small-sided football regulations

Under 13 – 18

Max. 20 players per squad

Volunteer participants

- Up to 3 coaches/first aiders per team
- 1 COVID-19 Officer / Operational Lead per team
- 1 Referee
- League officials

If hiring facilities, clubs and leagues will need to be led by the facility provider on the exact number of people permitted to be involved in a match

MATCHES (OVER 18)

Based on the 50-person limit for organised outdoor activity issued by Welsh Government, the number of people permitted to be involved in a match-day are

- Up to 20 players per home team squad
- Up to 20 players per away team squad
- 4 coaches per team = 8 in total
- 1 Referee*

First aiders, COVID-19 Officers, club secretaries and league officials are exempt.

**To accommodate assistant referees, if required, the away team squad will need to be capped at 19 players*



MATCHES, FESTIVALS & TOURNAMENTS

- Organisations who wish to play any matches, festivals or tournaments in Wales or outside of Wales must contact the FAW or Area Association, dependent on who the club is affiliated to, in order to gain formal approval
- Failure to do so will result in the organisation participating in an unsanctioned match or event, which would automatically invalidate their FAW insurance policy for this match/event and trigger disciplinary procedures against the organisation in question
- An organisation may only participate in a tournament or festival hosted outside of Wales if that event has also received approval from the host country's governing body e.g. The FA
- Organisations should be aware that certain areas of the UK have travel restrictions in place and as a result should avoid travel to these areas. In particular, travel to eight areas of England should be minimised due to the spread of the Delta variant. Further information is available [here](#)
- Further guidance to support clubs to run their own tournaments or festivals in Wales will be released in due course



MATCH-DAY PROTOCOLS

1. We would advise all persons involved should be temperature tested prior to being allowed entry into the playing area.
2. The host club must ensure, upon arrival, that all persons involved have completed a [self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms check](#). Entry should be refused to anyone who is unable to provide assurance that they have done so and that to the best of their knowledge it is safe for them to take part. Anyone refused entry on this basis must be instructed to immediately self-isolate.
3. All participants must remain socially distanced during breaks in play with spaced areas for equipment and refreshment storage for each individual including officials and substitutes.
4. Clubs should strictly limit the time spent congregating at a venue before activity begins. [Social and physical distancing measures](#) must be applied at such times. Meet-up times should reflect this.
5. **No changing rooms should be used** – players should arrive in training or playing kit. Exceptions may be made where safety and safeguarding measures require their use.
6. Only people from one other extended household can travel together in a vehicle.
7. No-one should leave home to participate in the match if they, or someone they live with, is [symptomatic](#) - or have been informed to self-isolate.
8. 2 designated areas should be marked pitch-side – these should be used to house home and away team players and coaches during match-play
9. Water bottles or other refreshment containers, should in no circumstances be shared. Participants will need to bring their own, in a named container.
10. The coach/COVID officer is responsible for disinfecting each ball when it goes out of play. We would encourage ‘pass-ins’ to replace ‘throw-ins’ where possible.
11. Toilets should be opened for pre-match, match and for 30 minutes following. Toilets should be cleaned regularly in line with Welsh Government guidance for [sports, clubs and facilities](#). Toilets capacity should be managed via entry and exit and to allow for the 2m physical distancing to be maintained.
12. All equipment – including goalposts – must be sanitised before and after every fixture. Clubs should follow guidelines on [cleaning in a non-healthcare setting here](#)
13. Ground staff are permitted on the pitch before the warm-up and 15 minutes after the conclusion of the match



SPECTATORS

Following the Welsh Government announcement regarding 'regulated gatherings', spectators are able to return to watch training sessions and matches outdoors from Monday 7th June

Spectators must maintain 2m social distancing from each other and be at least 2m away from the field of play.

To ensure the safe return of spectators to training sessions and matches:

- A maximum of 100 adults (aged 18 and over) and an unlimited number of children (academic year 13 and below) will be permitted to spectate a junior and youth (academic year 13 and below) match or training sessions outdoors from 7th June.
- A series of test events will be run over the 2 weeks prior to the return of spectators for all adult matches.
- Spectators are not permitted at training sessions and matches held indoors.

Clubs are reminded of the legal duty to ensure that any person(s) present on premises occupied by the Club are reasonably safe by communicating this guidance clearly



SPECTATORS

Playing or training on an enclosed ground or pitch:

If playing or training on an enclosed ground, clubs will need to follow the FAWs Return to Spectating Regulations available [here](#)

Playing or training on a non-closed ground or pitch e.g. public park:

- Clubs should consult with their facility provider to determine if the number of spectators permitted at the venue is less than the number permitted by the FAW
- Clubs should consult with their facility provider to determine what level of responsibility the club has in managing spectators at a non-enclosed ground or pitch and this should be agreed by both parties prior to the return of spectators.

Once this has been determined, clubs must

- Complete an updated risk assessment and share this with the facility provider.
- Put measures in place to ensure spectators maintain 2m social distancing from each other and be at least 2m away from the field of play.
- Ensure that any person(s) present on premises occupied by the Club are reasonably safe by communicating this guidance clearly.



TRACK, TRACE AND PROTECT SERVICE

- All clubs are required to support NHS Track, Trace and Protect service by registering the name and contact telephone number of all individuals involved and spectating training sessions and matches
- NHS Track, Trace and Protect service will determine if an individual is required to self-isolate if there has been a positive case amongst a team member, opposition player, coach, official or spectator
- Clubs and individuals should contact Public Health Wales on 119 if they are unsure if they need to self-isolate



CLUB NEXT STEPS

- Club management committees should meet to review the latest Return to Play protocols and supporting guidance related to the return of spectators
- A NEW COVID-19 risk assessment must be completed by all clubs ahead of spectators returning to training sessions and matches
- If clubs are accessing private facilities, they should consult the facility provider to discuss the return of spectators and share their risk assessment which will be considered alongside providers own risk assessment
- A risk assessment must be completed by the club at each training and fixture venue used by the club
- The risk assessment must be reviewed regularly and kept up to date at all time
- The FAW has developed a risk assessment guide and template for clubs and is available [here](#)

A club risk assessment does not need to be shared with, or approved by FAW

