



FOOTBALL
TASMANIA

RESUMPTION OF FOOTBALL COMPETITION (Due to COVID-19)

As of 2 July 2020



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal and State Governments have stated that sport will play a vital role in rebooting the community following the lifting of restrictions associated with COVID-19. This paper highlights the mechanisms that Football Tasmania will implement to resume competitions in a safe and pragmatic manner.

Across Tasmania there are 130 community football clubs, committed to providing their local community with participation opportunities. Football Tasmania supporting clubs to return to football in accordance with the Tasmanian Government's staged approach, culminating with the return to competition.

To reboot the sporting landscape, community clubs require the opportunity to return to competitions with practical measures in place to manage day to day operations while adhering to directions Tasmanian State Government.

A return to competition is a vital part of the road to recovery for clubs and its community. The role that sport plays in the community cannot be underestimated, providing an active lifestyle, well-being and belonging. Isolation and loneliness are ever increasing in society and community clubs provide tens of thousands of people with a link to their local community as players, volunteers and spectators.

Returning the sport to competition level that includes spectators is essential for the well-being of the community and to clubs ongoing financial viability. With football played in large open spaced venues and the number of spectators attending these games (i.e. average attendance of 200 people) social distancing and density requirements can be achieved and even surpassed.

As we resume, our goals are the physical and mental health of the football community, together with the economic health and continued viability of our community clubs.

Without a return to competition, many clubs will be forced to significantly scale-down their activities or even close their doors, resulting in a loss of community service and engagement.

A practical plan is detailed within this paper that will see the safe return of competitions, while at the same time ensuring the financial viability of the football community post COVID-19.



1. PRIOR TO PARTICIPATING IN FOOTBALL

Before participating in any football activities participants are not to attend training and/or games if in the past 14 days they have:

- been unwell or had any flu-like symptoms;
- been in contact with a known or suspected case of COVID-19;
- any respiratory symptoms (even if mild); or
- are at a high risk from a health perspective, including the elderly and those with pre-existing medical health conditions. Participants should seek medical advice prior to returning to sport.

2. RETURN TO TRAINING AND COMPETITION – TIMELINES

From 18 May 2020, football clubs have been re-commencing training in line with the Australian Sports Institute (AIS) Framework for Rebooting Sport Level B and the Tasmanian Government Roadmap to Recovery from COVID-19 Stage 1 Requirements. As part of this approach, each of our clubs have been required to submit a COVID Safe Response Management Plan prior to starting football activity.

Timelines have been developed to return the sport in a staged approach.

- Stage 1 – No contact training – implemented 11 May 2020
- Stage 2 – Groups of 20 able to train – to be implemented from 7 June 2020
- Stage 3 – Return to Competition – to be implemented after 11 July

As sports navigate the complexities associated with all of the administrative and legal requirements for a safe and compliant return to engagement in competitions following the disruption that has been a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the participants themselves, those who actively engage in the activities as players or coaches, are looking to optimise their preparation for competition. The health and safety of every participant is important and, as such, there is a need to follow the guidance provided by the health experts and to sensibly and appropriately apply such guidance to specific situations.

Football Tasmania has developed a comprehensive set of requirements and resources that supports the return of sport. As each stage is introduced, information and education are being provided to clubs to ensure a safe and practical return to football.

3. RETURN TO COMPETITION – MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The next step in the road to recovery for sport is the resumption of competitions. Outlined below are the minimum requirements needed to accommodate a safe and sustainable return to competition.

A. CLUB REQUIREMENTS

- All participants, players, team officials and match officials, will be required to answer the questions in section 1. If they answer “yes” to any question they will be sent home.
- A maximum of 16 players and three team officials per team will be permitted in the field of play area.

- 11 players per team on the field
 - 5 players per team on the substitutes bench
 - 2 Team Officials per team
 - 1 Medical Trainer per team
- All players, team officials, and medical trainers on or near the substitute bench will social distance.
- Changing rooms will be available for a specific period for each team and match officials.
 - Maximum time limit 45 minutes – 15 minutes prior to the start of warm up and 15 minutes prior to the start of the game. At the conclusion of game players and team officials should retrieve their gear and immediately leave the change room.
 - Maximum number of people in the team changing room at any time is limited to 19 people.
 - Maximum number of people in the Match Officials Room at any time is limited to 3 people.
 - Hand sanitiser stations to be set up in each changing room.
 - Prior to a team coming into the changing room, team manager is to wipe down contact services with anti-bacterial/disinfectant cloth/wipes.
- Medical equipment such as massage tables, must be cleaned with anti- bacterial/disinfectant after each individual use.
- Toilets are to be open for use.
 - Toilets must be kept clean.
 - Soap and sanitiser to be available in the toilets at all times.
 - Number of people limited to the toilet based on 1 person per 2m² and social distancing of 1.5 metres. Signage and markings must be placed in the toilets.
- Canteen facilities may be open to provide food and beverages. Social distancing must be implemented with signage and markings provided. Food and beverage must be consumed away from the canteen area.
- Clubrooms may be open with a maximum of 20 people permitted in the venue subject to 1 person per 2m² and social distancing of 1.5 metres.
- Sanitiser must be made available at key locations around the venue – admission area/s, canteen and clubrooms.
- No shaking of hands or group huddles to occur.
- Half-time interaction is to be kept in line with social distancing.
- Social activities following the game is to be kept to a minimum. Participants, spectators and parents are encouraged to leave the venue once their game has concluded.

B. ATTENDANCE AT NPL, WSL and CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

Social distancing has been essential in curbing the spread of COVID-19 and any resumption of sport must continue to implement these requirements for the health and safety of its community. Football is played outdoors in large open venues, which is conducive to people attending games in line with the social distancing and density requirements specified by Tasmanian Department of Health

On average, the number of people that attend games is 200 people. At maximum, this number may occasionally increase to 500. The return to competition would permit people to attend games with the following requirements being in place:

- a. Number of people to attend must not exceed 500.
- b. Clubs must identify clear separate entry and exit areas.
- c. Club officials must have people in the entry and exit areas with counters to monitor the number of people at the venue at any one time.
- d. Clubs must have signage displayed at the venue regarding social distancing.
- e. Football Tasmania will provide each club with a Spectator Management template. The template will outline the minimum requirements to be implemented and examples of how they may be implemented.

C. PARTICIPANT / PARENT REQUIREMENTS

When participating the following minimum requirements will need to be implemented by Participants and Parents.

- Junior participants are encouraged to come prepared to play – limit access to changing rooms.
- Senior Participants will have limited access to changing rooms – maximum 30 minutes.
- Only one Parent/caregiver is to take their child to a game. The parent/caregiver is then required to observe social distancing.
- No hand shaking.
- No spitting – It is common for goalkeepers to spit into their gloves or for players to spit on the ground while playing. This is not to occur.
- Participants are to refrain from any group huddles including when celebrating a goal.
- Participants are to bring their own drink bottles and they are to be clearly labelled. No sharing of drink bottles.
- Participants are to bring their own hand sanitiser and should apply it when not participating – half-time and when waiting to come on to the field of play.
- Any warm downs must observe social distancing requirements.
- Participants and parents are encouraged to leave the venue as soon as their game concludes.

4. GENERAL SAFEGUARDS

In addition to the conditions outlined above, Football Tasmania will promote that everyone involved in football continue to practice good hygiene by implementing the following measures:

Hygiene -Clubs

- Ensure spaces at each facility, surfaces and objects are regularly cleaned with anti- bacterial/ disinfectant.
- Provide hand washing guidance to all participants and volunteers_
(http://www.who.int/gpsc/clean_hands_protection/en/).
- Promote regular and thorough hand washing by volunteers and participants.
- Provide sanitising hand rub dispensers in prominent places around the venue.
- Ensure sanitising hand rub dispensers are regularly refilled.
- Ensure soap dispensers in toilets are regularly refilled.
- Ensure bins are provided around the venue.
- Ensure all bibs and match kits are properly washed between sessions.

Hygiene -Individuals

- Players, officials, volunteers, and/or their parents/carers should carry hand sanitiser on their person in order to enable good personal hygiene.
- If using tissues, place them directly in the bins provided.
- Seek to avoid the use of public toilets, however if necessary, ensure hands are washed thoroughly.
- Each participant is to provide their own drink bottle that is clearly labeled and is only used by that individual. No sharing of drink bottles.
- No sharing of pens or clip boards, each volunteer must bring their own to venues.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet.

Behaviour

- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash hands with soap and water often.
- Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- No spitting at anytime.
- Wipe down all surfaces and objects with appropriate anti-bacterial / disinfectant wipes or soap, particularly those frequently touched. This



includes door handles, light switches, kitchen surfaces, bathroom surface, phones, remote controls, and any other high touch areas.

- Do not share drink bottles.
- Continue to practice social distancing.

5. EDUCATION

Football Tasmania will undertake the following to assist with the education of football stakeholders on the requirements of returning to competition:

- Zoom meetings will be conducted with stakeholders to outline the conditions and requirements of returning to competition.
- Football Tasmania will utilise social media to provide education to players.
- Football Tasmania will utilise social media and its website to promote the conditions associated with returning to competition.
- Football Tasmania will continue to promote the uptake of the COVIDSafe App.

6. SUMMARY

The number one goal of Football Tasmania is to ensure that community clubs, first and foremost, survive the potentially crippling impact of COVID-19 and continue to service and engage with their local community. It has continually been reported the importance of sport in Australian society, the return of sport to a competition level is paramount to the ongoing viability of clubs and to strengthen the well-being and community spirit of people.