

PHASE 3 - RESUMPTION OF PERFORMANCE (ELITE) SPORT GUIDANCE

Step 3 (return to domestic competition – no spectators)

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has presented a significant challenge to Scotland. Everyone's actions, including those of performance athletes and sporting bodies, have helped to reduce the transmission of coronavirus in our communities.

As Scotland moves to the next phase in our fight against coronavirus, the most important thing we can do is to follow the clear public health guidance from Public Health Scotland as well as the Scottish Government. Approval & Endorsement by Public Health Scotland, Health Protection Scotland (HPS) and Scottish Government are required.

However, for planning purposes we are assuming that these guidelines are technically sound and provide practical areas to be covered on Medical and Scientific basis. This is to minimise the risk to the performance sports community, fans, friends and family who support them, and have opportunities to re-assess safety and proportionality at every stage, and to minimise the pressure performance sport places on the wider community and healthcare workers during any resumption of training.

Five steps have been outlined for the performance sporting community to transition from the current restrictions through to full unrestricted performance sporting competition. This is Step 3 and supports the return to domestic competition. Steps 1 and 2a support the return to the training environment and have already been approved and released by Scottish Government.

Step 3 is a framework to progress from Step 2, to the Resumption of Domestic Competition – No Spectators (RTDC) for performance teams/athletes. The guidance for Steps 1 and 2 activity must remain in place to underpin the progression to Step 3.

The purpose of this Step 3 guidance is to define a set of minimum standards for RTDC for all parties. It is expected that the guidelines are considered by the Competition Delivery Partners and Sports Governing Bodies (SGBs) and applied to their individual Competitions.

All existing Scottish Government and Health Protection Scotland (HPS) guidance continues to apply unless otherwise specified. This guidance does not constitute legal advice or replace any Scottish Government or HPS advice; nor does it provide any commentary or advice on health-related issues. Competition Delivery Partners and other User Groups should seek independent advice prior to implementing any RTDC plan.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly developing situation and it is likely that this guidance and the reference sources it refers to will be regularly updated.

DEFINITIONS

Domestic Competition – No Spectators:

Domestic sporting competition exclusively involving performance athletes, hosted within the UK, where no cross-border travel (from outside the UK & Ireland) is required for the Competition to take place. Access to the Competition will be restricted to individuals with essential functional roles.

Performance (Elite) Athlete: An individual as defined as a Professional or Performance Athlete in the Step 1/ Step 2 guidance.

Competition Organiser: The Competition Organiser will organise the Competition and liaise with all User Groups essential to its delivery. Where they do not own the Competition Venue, they should contract with the Competition Venue Operator under a venue use agreement (or equivalent). They may also contract suppliers to support competition delivery.

Competition Venue Operator: The Competition Venue Operator owns or is licensed to operate the Competition Venue during the Competition Period and should (where it is not the Competition Organiser) enter into an agreement with the Competition Organiser for the use of the Competition Venue. They should be in control of the Competition Venue during the Competition Period. They may also contract suppliers to support competition delivery.

Competition Delivery Partners: The Competition Organiser and the Competition Venue Operator.

Performance (Elite) Sport Organisations and Individuals: The organisation and/or individual that is responsible for entering the team and/or athlete(s) into the Competition. These may include, but are not limited to, Sports Governing Bodies, professional leagues and clubs and individual performance (elite) athletes. Where an individual performance (elite) athlete is unable to fulfil the responsibilities of the Performance (Elite) Sport Organisation, they should consult with the Competition Organiser and/or their Performance Governing Body to agree how those responsibilities can be met.

User Groups: The essential groups in attendance during the Competition. These may include, but are not limited to, the Competition Delivery Partners, teams/athletes, team support staff, competition officials, volunteers and staff, contractors/suppliers, anti-doping officers, medical providers and media and broadcast.

Competition: The activity taking place at the Competition Venue(s) during the Competition Period, either at (a) a single venue on a single day; (b) at a single venue over multiple days, or: (c) at multiple venues over multiple days.

Competition Venue: The venue(s) permitted to host Competition safely and in accordance with this guidance.

Competition Period: The period taken to set up and prepare the Competition Venue, to host the Competition and reinstate the Competition Venue after the Competition.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. Minimum Standards

Competitions are typically delivered in partnership by multiple organisations and delivery models can be complex. There may be cross-over in responsibilities between the Competition Delivery Partners and the Performance (Elite) Sport Organisations. It is critical that all User Groups work collectively to ensure that the Competition can be staged safely.

The following minimum standards must be in place before progressing with RTDC plans:

- a) Agreement over the roles and responsibilities and command, control and coordination (C3) arrangements between the Competition Delivery Partners and the Performance (Elite) Sport Organisation(s).
- b) All standards defined in Steps 1 and 2 for Resumption of Performance Sport must continue to apply. Performance Sport Organisations must consider the presence of other User Groups (from Steps 1 and 2) and that, during the competition phase, movements on the field of play are less controllable. The latter should influence the delivery of Physical Distancing (PD) requirements.
- c) An appropriate Competition Venue which can comply with these guidelines and reasonably accommodate modifications required to implement PD protocols. The Competition should not in any way limit the use of the Competition Venue to support the NHS or key workers requirements.
- d) That any concessions required to comply with Scottish Government/HPS guidelines (relating to sport-specific rules, technical requirements or equipment) are obtained from the national/international governing body
- e) A satisfactory assessment that there will be no detrimental impact of hosting the Competition on the wider community and healthcare systems.
- f) Ensuring that the required PPE for practitioners or staff can be procured without taking away supply intended for key workers.
- g) A decision-making structure and agreed procedure in place to modify, restrict, postpone or cancel the competition.
- h) All User Groups must be appraised of risk and mitigation plans and given the opportunity to actively 'opt in' to RTDC by way of written consent. If any of the

Competition Delivery Partners or key User Groups choose not to 'opt in', consideration must be given to the integrity of the Competition, the ability to implement this guidance and whether the Competition can safely proceed.

2. General Guidance

- a) Physical distancing (PD) will be maintained wherever possible during the Competition Period. Furthermore, a key principle of the Step 3 guidance is that maintaining PD between the competing athletes, their support staff and personnel from all other User Groups in the Competition Venue will be a priority. Where PD is not possible, including on the field of play and in team areas, a full risk and mitigation strategy must be put in place.
- b) Appropriate risk mitigation through screening of individuals prior to entry into the Competition Venue must be implemented and this may include, but not be limited to, COVID-19 symptom questionnaires and where symptomatic, appropriate COVID-19 testing. Where PD cannot always be maintained during the Competition, higher levels of surveillance may be implemented for a) current and; b) past COVID-19 infection than at Step 2. This will evolve in line with Scottish Government and HPS guidelines and subject to ongoing audit and review.
- c) All individuals must agree to abide by Scottish Government and Health Protection Scotland guidelines whilst away from the Competition Venue.
- d) Any personnel with known or suspected COVID-19 are not permitted at the Competition Venue and should be placed or remain in isolation and follow the latest Scottish Government and HPS guidelines. Personnel should follow the protocols put in place by the Competition Organiser and/or Performance (Elite) Sport Organisation.

3. Competition Delivery Partners and Performance (Elite) Sports Organisations should:

- a) Appoint a named COVID-19 Officer (CO) for each party. The CO appointed by the Competition Organiser should be responsible for oversight of the risk and mitigation planning, communicating information to all User Groups and ensuring that the necessary standards are met. This individual does not necessarily have to be medically trained.
- b) Appoint a named Competition COVID-19 Medical Officer (physician) familiar with the emerging evidence related to post-COVID-19 pathology, to have oversight of individuals with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 and ensure any suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases are managed in line with COVID-19 case management protocols and latest Scottish Government guidance. Sports which do not have a Medical Officer to cover these

responsibilities should secure medical cover to oversee these processes prior to resuming Competition.

- c) The Competition Delivery Partners, in collaboration with the Performance (Elite) Sports Organisation(s), should develop a COVID-19 competition venue operations plan, and a COVID-19 risk assessment and mitigation plan. These should include the following considerations as a minimum:
- I. A code of behaviour which provides guidelines for all User Groups and the details of sanctions in place for breaches of protocol.
 - II. Details of all User Groups that will attend the Competition.
 - III. An appropriate education programme for all User Groups with an emphasis on the maintenance of strict and frequent personal hygiene measures, particularly handwashing.
 - IV. Processes and activities where PD cannot be easily maintained should be risk assessed and mitigated.
 - V. Limiting all non-essential activities, including catering, where possible.
 - VI. Agreeing measures with the emergency services to minimise and manage informal gathering of the public outside of the Competition Venue.
 - VII. A map of the Competition Venue defining all areas/zones, routes and access/egress points.
 - VIII. The maximum capacity and layout for each room/area/zone within the Competition Venue to allow PD to be maintained.
 - IX. Information on the management, movement and scheduling of User Groups and vehicles to allow PD to be maintained, wherever possible. A one-way system for people and vehicles should be established, where possible, and measures implemented to reduce crossover of different User Groups.
 - X. Broadcast and media management plan to ensure that PD and hygiene requirements are met and minimise crossover with other User Groups.
 - XI. A security plan, screening process (as referenced in 2b above) and accreditation system that defines the access control system for the Competition Venue and the zones that are implemented to limit crossover between User Groups. As recommended in the Step 1 and Step 2 guidance (for performance (elite) training centres), the Competition Venue should be divided into at least two zones by an outer

and inner cordon. The outer cordon will usually be the site perimeter and should be a physically secure barrier monitored by security staff. The inner cordon should be secure and monitored and will generally include the Competition Venue buildings and field of play. The area inside the inner cordon is designated the 'green zone'. The area between the outer and inner cordon is designated the 'amber zone'. Areas outside the outer cordon are designated the 'red zone'. This can be adapted to best suit the requirements of the Competition – and where there is capacity to implement further zoning. However, the outcome should always be to maximise the opportunity to comply with PD requirements.

- XII. Measures to ensure that plans do not conflict with the Competition Venues' existing security and emergency action plans, and fire regulations.
- XIII. A transport plan addressing travel to and from the Competition Venue for User Groups to minimise the usage of shared or public transport. Car parking should be within the Competition Venue zone.
- XIV. A signage plan to support the implementation of the guidelines
- XV. The stages required for all User Groups before entering and leaving the field of play.
- XVI. Agree PD measures and protocols for staff, officials and players on the bench and/or field of play.
- XVII. The arrangements for team and tactical meetings at the Competition Venue.
- XVIII. Measures to ensure that the Competition, preparation or recovery sessions should take place outdoors to optimise ventilation, where possible.
- XIX. The amount of time spent in dressing room areas by athletes/teams/staff should be minimised (noting that showers, steam rooms and saunas may not be available at the Competition Venue).
- XX. Planning for recovery modalities (noting that cryotherapy chambers, cold-water immersion facilities and saunas may not be available at the Competition Venue).
- XXI. A review of close and face to face contacts for players and support staff during the Competition Period, following the protocols defined in Resumption of Performance Sport guidelines. This should include

consideration and modification of tactics to assist in epidemiological monitoring studies.

- XXII. The Competition schedule should consider any existing data that identifies that certain characteristics of the athlete or Competition is associated with higher rates of injury.
- XXIII. A medical plan that ensures that an appropriate level of medical staffing is in place within the Competition Venue to manage any injuries or illness and the demands of any COVID-19 symptom screening process. At least one first responder should be wearing appropriate PPE beside the field of play. A 'clear surfaces' policy to facilitate cleaning should be followed in treatment areas.
- XXIV. Measures to ensure any required practitioners or staff who have been assessed as requiring PPE will have access to it and are appropriately trained in their usage and disposal, as per the latest HPS guidance,
- XXV. Plans for physiotherapy and soft tissue therapist treatments. This should be limited to an essential need only and the need for routine or maintenance therapy should be risk assessed on a case-by-case basis. Team/athlete medical staff must take precautions in keeping with the latest Public Health Scotland advice such as the use of health care setting and athlete infection risk appropriate PPE that is also influenced by the procedure or treatment being conducted at that time.
- XXVI. Arrangements for an isolation room and protocols to manage any person who becomes symptomatic at the Competition Venue, as per government guidelines for employers and businesses.
- XXVII. Arrangements to ensure that there is always an uninterrupted supply of personal and hand hygiene equipment and consumables at the Competition Venue.
- XXVIII. Measures to ensure that all areas of the Competition Venue are cleaned at the standard defined in the government guidance for post-COVID-19 case non-hospital facilities cleaning (prior to the Competition Period) and government guidance for non-hospital facilities cleaning (before and after the Competition). For all clinical areas, the relevant PHS standard will apply. High contact surfaces such as door handles, and light switches should be considered a priority for disinfection on a frequent basis.
- XXIX. Measures to ensure that a risk assessment and mitigation (including hygiene protocol) are undertaken on all sport-specific equipment items

provided by the Competition Delivery Partners or Performance Sport Organisation(s).

4. Competition Delivery Partners and Performance (Elite) Sports Organisations should also:

- a) Ensure that consideration is given to relevant insurance cover being in place.
- b) Implement an anti-doping testing programme and liaise with the anti-doping authorities to ensure that; (i) it complies with all relevant hygiene measures and HPS guidance and; (ii) the necessary permissions for anti-doping officials to enter the Competition Venue are obtained.
- c) Ensure compliance with statutory requirements, where relevant, including the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, any local authority-enforced health and safety requirements.
- d) In the case of Competition Venues which are issued General Safety Certificates, consult their certifying authority at the earliest opportunity to determine what amendments should be required to the General Safety Certificate in order to comply with any local authority stipulated changes resulting from this guidance.
- e) Periodically review their risk assessment and mitigation plans to assess their effectiveness, updating them for each Competition.

Resources

1. [Scottish Government COVID-19](#)
2. [NHS Inform COVID-19](#)
3. [Scottish Government: Staying Safe and Protecting Others](#)
4. [Scottish Government Business and Physical Distancing Guidance](#)
5. [Health Protection Scotland guidance for non-healthcare settings](#)