



Return to Baseball

Road Map to Return to Activity and Play

Purpose

Baseball NSW, its members, clubs and the wider community have all been adversely affected by COVID-19. The health, wellbeing and safety of all involved in our sport is paramount, as such Baseball NSW will continue to work closely with the relevant health authorities, both at a national and state level to ensure we successfully navigate our way through what to date has been the biggest challenge our sport has seen.

COVID-19 has certainly changed the world we live in and we all need to adapt to this new way of life. Baseball NSW understands the importance that sport plays in the lives of Australians, in particular baseball. We have been working with clubs and members regularly communicating the status of baseball, providing innovative new on-line opportunities for development and growth during COVID-19 and now we see ourselves mapping out the road back to activity, play and competition.

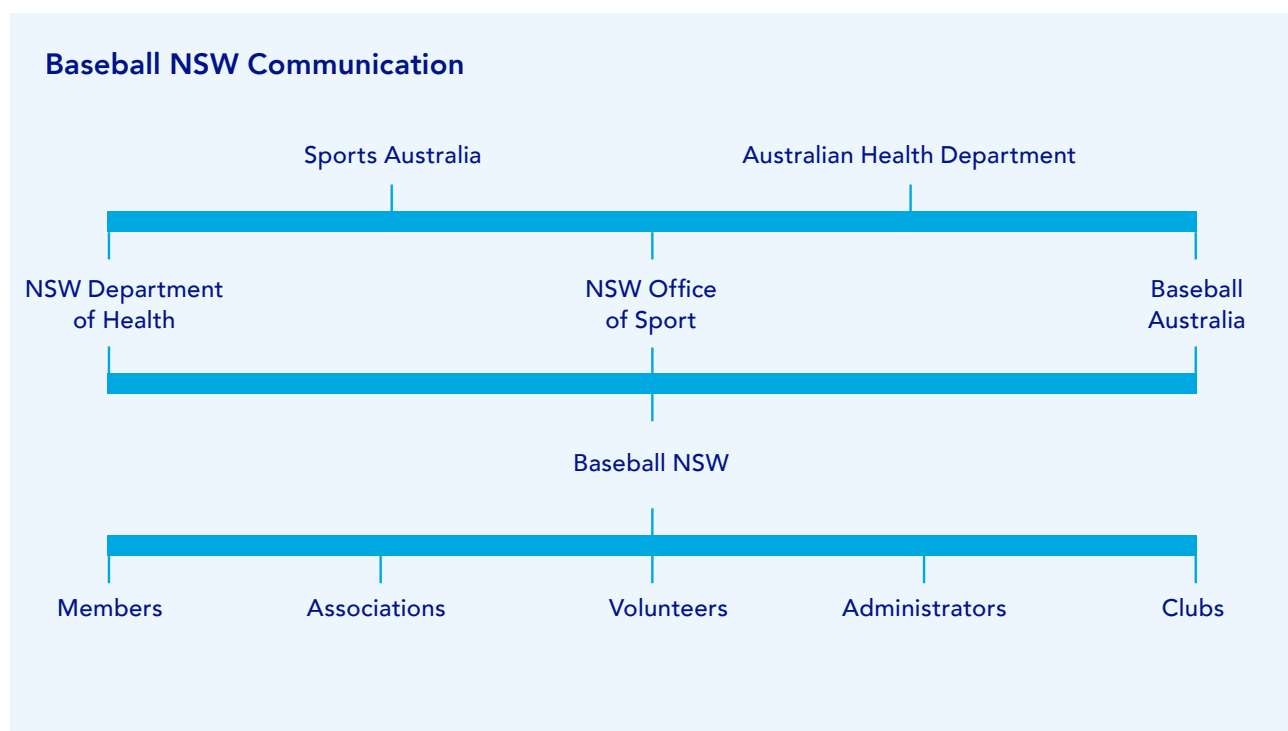
This document will provide the NSW Office of Sport, NSW Health and the Baseball NSW clubs and community with a comprehensive strategy on the planned roll out of Return to Activity and Return to Play. All information provided is sourced from relevant national and state government departments and strictly follows the guidelines as prepared by Sport Australia in the AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport document and the NSW Public Health Order. In an ever-changing landscape with COVID-19, the recommendations and guidelines detailed in this document will be updated regularly in line with national and state announcements.

The ultimate goal as a result of successful implementation and delivery of this strategy is to see baseball, and all sport for that matter, resume trainings and games as soon as it is safe to do so. Baseball NSW is dedicated to educating and resourcing our clubs and communities to ensure we remain Coronavirus free and that improved practices with hygiene and behaviours remain in place as long as necessary.

For all the latest Baseball NSW update on COVID-19 please [click here](#)

Overall principles

1. Baseball NSW will follow any direction from State Government as well as the NSW Public Health Order.
2. Baseball NSW will review activities as directed by State Government if there is an increase in NSW cases.
3. Any COVID-19 confirmed cases in the player and official cohort will result in an immediate review of training/competition with NSW Health.
4. Resumption of Baseball NSW activities should not compromise the health of individuals or the community.
5. The resumption of Baseball NSW activities will contribute to the health, economic, social and cultural benefits of the NSW community for both the participants and the wider community.



Return to activity and play

The Baseball NSW Return to Activity strategy will strictly follow the guidelines and recommendations in line with National and State Government departments.

Baseball training in NSW will recommence on **23 May 2020** and will adhere to the “Get In. Train. Get Out” philosophy.

Baseball NSW will look to recommence competition as soon as practical subject to government recommendations and will continue to adhere to the Federal, State and Local government recommendations, restrictions and guidelines in place at that time.

Key outcomes and objectives are to educate and prepare the baseball community in NSW for returning to some type of baseball activity/training. Baseball NSW will support and guide the clubs and associations in implementing risk mitigation strategies.

Baseball NSW will ensure:

- ALL officials responsible for training or any other baseball activity are educated with the current restrictions.
- ALL officials responsible for training or any other baseball activity must maintain a register of those who attended the training and any carer that may have stayed at the training/activity. [See the 'BNSW Back to Training Checklist' here.](#)
- Australian Government Health Department resources will be prominently displayed in the facilities and at the entry points, including handwashing and cough advice.
- All Baseball NSW members encouraged to [download the COVIDSafe App](#) to increase governments tracing and tracking capabilities.
- All clubs, coaches, officials, parents, and players have been provided with a fact sheet on what can and cannot be done.
- There are no more than 10 people in a training squad at any time, including the coach or other official.
- Groups of 10 will be allowed in each of the training zones on any given baseball field. Refer to Figure 1 on page 11 in this document.

- Participants are practicing social distancing, being 1.5m away from one another and there is no contact or tagging.
- Mitigation strategies are in place to limit pre and post training routines, ie. no boots on benches etc.
- There are no spectators and only 1 parent or caregiver present at the training/activity.
- A space of 4m² is available per participant.

Participant (players, coaches, volunteers, parents, etc)

Prior to the recommencement of training, clubs should provide a briefing to all participants, coaches, volunteers, parents that includes:

- Intended training dates, times and procedures established to limit team cross-over at facility.
- Hygiene practices that have been implemented by the club, including hygiene procedures around the venue and equipment.
- Hygiene expectations of all participants.
- What to do if you are feeling unwell, or have been into contact with people who are sick.
- Opt-out options for individuals who may not yet feel comfortable returning to training, and alternative training options available.
- Measures that the coaches are taking to limit physical contact of players (i.e. social distancing guidelines, limited physical contact drills at training, etc).
- Restrictions on support staff.
- Restrictions that are in place on club rooms, changerooms, club gyms, etc.
- Restrictions on people attending the training venue – i.e. no spectators, 1 parent etc.

Coaches

Clubs should also brief all coaches on the required expectations as leaders within the club environment, including:

- Importance of the required hygiene protocols and practices.
- Limiting crossover of teams.
- Limited use of changerooms, club rooms and club gym facilities.
- Limiting training drills to be non-contact where applicable.
- Remind participants that they should not train if they are unwell and to advise them.

Hygiene

The following general hygiene practices for players and officials always apply, in line with Government advice:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Wash or sanitise your hands before eating (all players and official should have personalised hand sanitiser)
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Cover your mouth to cough or sneeze (using your elbow)
- No sharing of towels/water bottles/food, including lolly or fruit bowls
- Any areas (meeting rooms, treatment rooms, change rooms etc) accessed by players and officials to be comprehensively cleaned and sanitised after each use
- Clubs to take steps to adequately clean and disinfect player facilities (once available) before and after use
- Clubs must do all they can to reinforce the above precautions, including making available appropriate hand washing facilities, as well as the provision of alcohol-based hand sanitiser and tissues
- Medical officials must follow protocols as outlined in infection control training (ie: disposal of gloves in between treatments, wearing of face masks)

Additional match & training hygiene

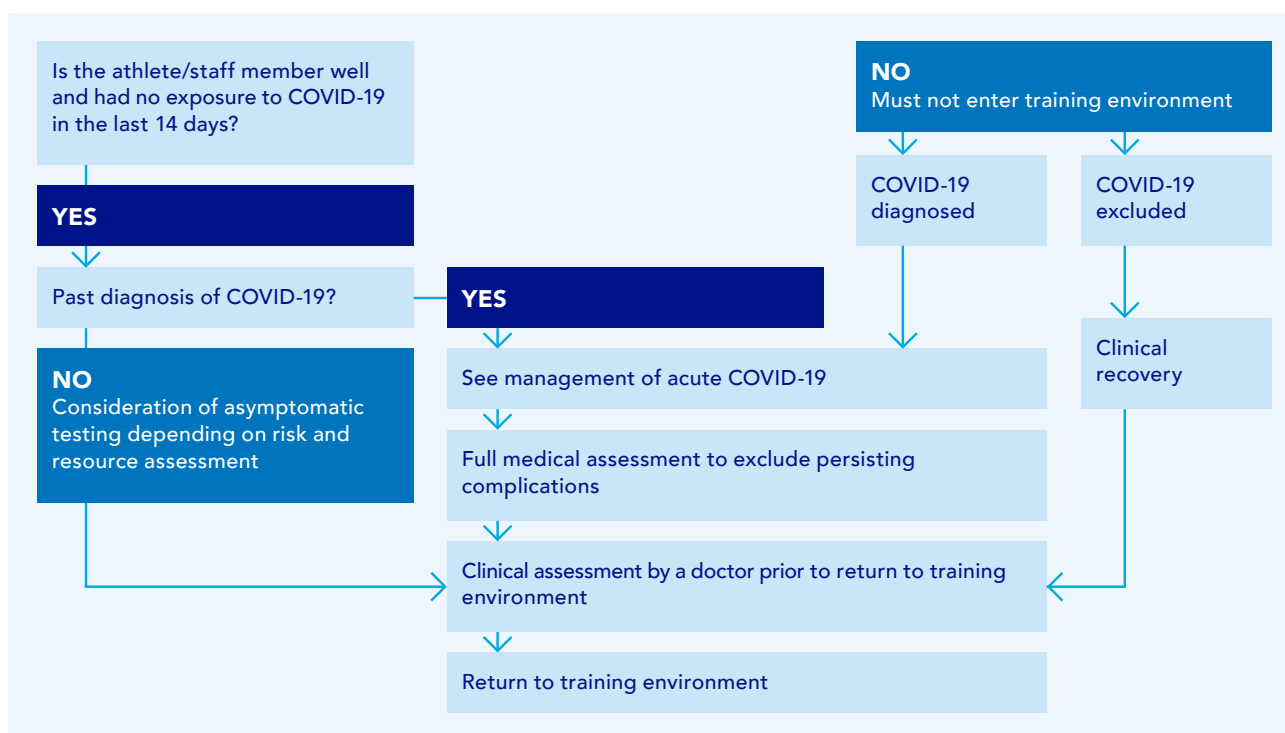
- Alcohol based hand sanitisers must be available in the dugout (once competition has resumed)
- Players must remain 1.5m apart always
- Spitting and clearing of nasal/respiratory secretions on diamonds or other sport settings is not permitted
- No sharing of headsets or computer screens/lpads
- All equipment to be cleaned and disinfected prior, during and after training sessions and games (once resumed). Balls to be cleaned after every innings during a game
- No high fives, handshakes or other physical contact

Testing

- Any advice on testing for COVID-19 will be guided by the State Government and Health officials
- Should any member become symptomatic they must undergo relevant testing and follow isolation procedures until the results of the test are available
- Any other relevant testing will be implemented at the request of health professionals

Return to training assessment

- A player/official member must not join the training environment if in the last 14 days they have been unwell or had contact with a known or suspected case of COVID-19.

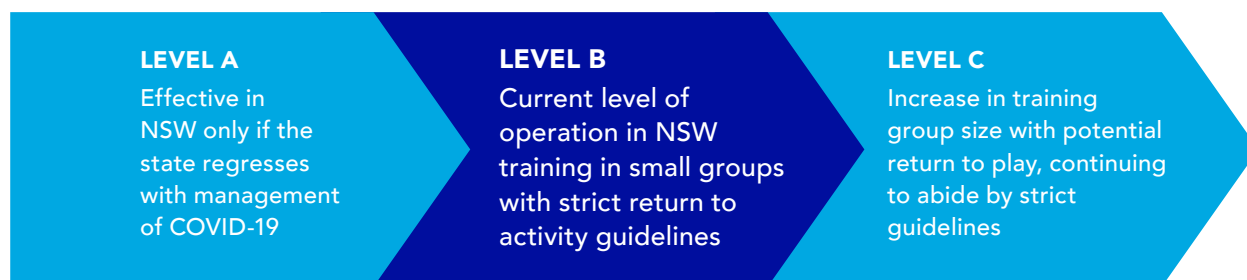


- Any player/official member that has underlying health conditions or is considered a vulnerable person should consult with a healthcare professional prior to returning to the training or match day environment. Refer to Vulnerable Section of this document.

Body readiness program

With the safety, health and wellbeing at the forefront of the minds of all coaches, parents and players it is critical now more than ever to ensure athletes are undertaking a full pre-season training regime in order to prevent injury. A return to throwing and training program should be undertaken in the build up to a full training regime. Coaches should consider pitching restrictions during bullpens and those pitching during hitting drills.

Overarching principles



'Get in. Train. Get Out'

Level A | Training – Individual or pairs

Level A can be conducted only by a solo athlete or in pairs, always maintaining social distancing of 1.5m. No contact between athletes and/or other personnel.

General fitness aerobic and anaerobic (e.g. running, cycling sprints, hills). Strength and sport-specific training permitted if no equipment required, or have access to own equipment (e.g. ergometer, weights). Online coaching and resources (e.g. videos, play books).

Hygiene, social distancing, monitoring and testing protocols described previously still apply.

Refer to the AIS Framework for rebooting sport as prepared by Sport Australia.

Restrictions:

- Solo or in pairs training only.
- No access to changerooms, gym, wet or inside areas.
- Players arrive dressed and ready to train.
- Training activities must be non-contact.
- Players manage own injuries if required.
- Official and players maintain 1.5m distance between each other at all times.
- Use of equipment to be limited, and any equipment utilised will be wiped down and sanitised before, during and after each session.
- Any necessary meetings to occur remotely using video technology.

Level B | Training – Small groups (up to 10 persons)

Level B can be increased from 2 people training to 10 people, but no more than 10 including the coach. Cannot be conducted indoors, only outdoor training. Athletes can share some equipment at a minimum.

Hygiene, social distancing, monitoring and testing protocols described previously still apply.

Refer to the AIS Framework for rebooting sport as prepared by Sport Australia.

Restrictions:

- Staggered training schedule (start times, different days, potential for different locations).
- Training groups of no larger than ten (10), including players and officials.
- Entry into venue and exit out of venue to be clearly identified if possible, with arrows on the ground.
- No access to changerooms, gym, wet or inside areas.
- Players arrive dressed and ready to train.
- Training activities will be non-contact.
- Players manage own injuries if required.
- Official and players maintain 1.5m distance between each other at all times.
- Use of equipment to be limited, and any equipment utilised will be wiped down and sanitised before, during and after each session, and between each user if possible.
- If pair/group work is required, pairs will be consistent across each training session.
- Any necessary meetings to occur remotely using video technology.
- No spectators, only one parent or caregiver and must remain socially distant to the athletes and others.

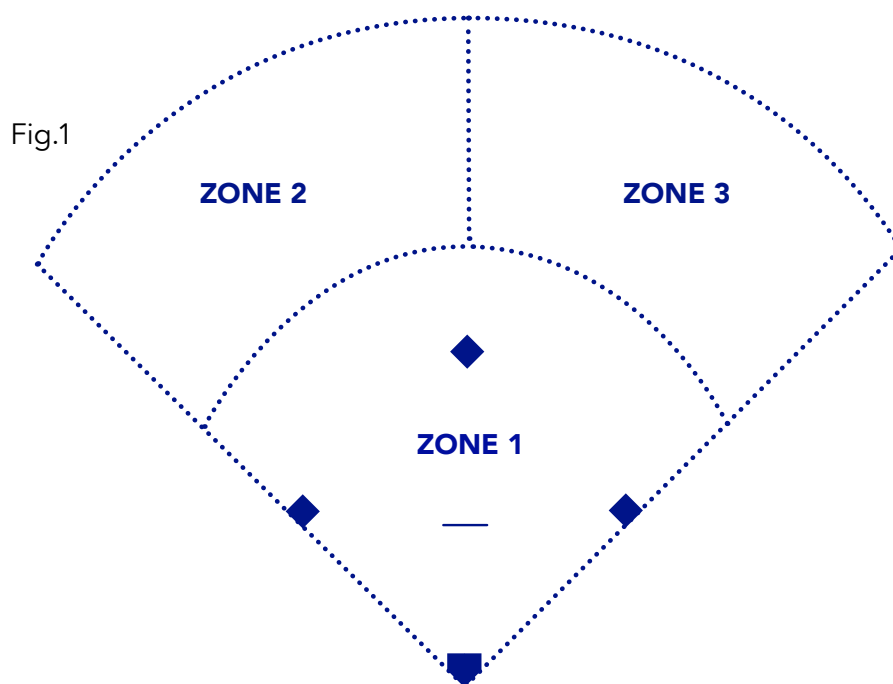
Baseball NSW have provided a three-zone option for trainings. The baseball diamond can be split up into three zones:

1. Zone 1 – Infield

2. Zone 2 – Left Field

3. Zones 3 – Right Field

Each zone will be over 1000m² allowing plenty of room for movement safely around the diamond and avoiding other training groups. Each zone will be allowed up to 10 participants including a coach.



Level C | Full sport activity – Training and competition

Level C allows full sporting activity that can be conducted in groups of any size including full contact competition, tournaments, matches. Contact with other players is permitted.

Hygiene, social distancing, monitoring and testing protocols described previously still apply.

Refer to the AIS Framework for rebooting sport as prepared by Sport Australia.

Restrictions:

- Full training activities, including contact activities
- Stagger arrival and departure times of teams
- Official and players to maintain 1.5m distance between each other at all times, unless during game play. Scorers desk to be cleaned during the game
- Entry into venue and exit out of venue to be clearly identified if possible, with arrows on the ground
- Designated area for incoming teams to gather for both home and away
- Designated area for both home and away teams to warm up at the venue

- Limit the coming together in tight huddles during training games
- Access to support and treatment official for strapping, massage etc (physios, sports trainers)
- Limited unnecessary social gatherings
- Limited access to change room for players to seek treatment/strapping (no wet areas or gym)
- Treatment official to wear required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in line with NSW Health recommendations
- No bat boys or bat girls
- No shared water coolers, no shared water cups, personal drink bottles only
- Umpire may reposition themselves behind the pitcher for better social distancing
- Provide external benches/chairs at the facility to maintain physical distancing on the bench
- Treatment equipment to be wiped down and sanitised before and after each use
- If pair work is required, pairs will be consistent across each training session
- Any necessary meetings to occur remotely using video technology, or in venues where the minimum person per square metre ruling can be followed
- Access to change rooms for match day preparation (pre and post-match), including getting changed, however no wet areas to be accessed
- Venues to be secure with a single access point for players, official and other personnel required at venue (such as umpires, security, media etc).
- Records of attendees to be maintained for each match
- Venues and accessed areas to be cleaned and sanitised before, during and after each use
- Minimum contact of non-essential surfaces to occur and hands on treatment should be kept to essential only

Match fixtures and schedules will need to reflect any time between venues to meet cleaning requirements as detailed in the venue's, COVID-19 Safe Plan, as well as limiting the crossover of large groups.

Timeline of events*



*Subject to local restrictions

Authorisation to make change

Baseball NSW have the authorisation to change fixtures and matches in order to ensure adequate time is given to the host venue to maintain adequate cleaning and hygiene practices. This is imperative to the successful roll out of the competition.

- Ability to alter rules and regulations
- A staggered commencement of competitions etc.

Recommended modifications

(if necessary, for game resumption)

- No tagging during the game, all plays are treated as forced play
- A fielder can not hold a runner on base due to 1.5m social distancing
- A runner cannot steal a base, as players are required to keep social distancing rule
- The catcher must be 1.5m from the batter
- All batters to wear two batting gloves
- Coaches are not allowed on the diamond, can coach from out the diamond area

Spectators

Baseball NSW will adhere to all announcements from national and state governments. All trainings and games should be free of spectators except for minors who are entitled to have one parent present at the training/activity or game. Spectators are expected to have minimum contact with non-essential surfaces and should always maintain adequate social distancing of 1.5m.

Unnecessary gatherings should be kept to a minimum.

Other considerations

Venue safety plans (COVID-19 safe venue plans)

- Each Club and/or Venue hosting training or matches will be required to prepare a COVID-19 Safe Venue Plan.
- Clubs must lodge their a COVID-19 Safe Venue Plan with Baseball NSW.

Key considerations must include:

- Arrival/Egress of Players, Staff and Spectators
- Hygiene and Cleaning
- Management of Change Rooms, Toilets and other Inside Areas
- Management of Social Distancing of Spectators
- Food and Beverage Considerations
- Any other matter directed by State Government

Umpires

Umpires will follow the same match day protocols as players and official detailed in Level C when the competition resumes. Baseball NSW will be working with the NSW Baseball Umpires Association to deliver online umpire training and development programs to strengthen our umpiring cohort and prepare for the season ahead.

Vulnerable cohorts

Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. While under Level B requirements any person that is over 65 years of age or with underlying medical conditions would be required to continue to follow current social distancing requirements.

Sanctions

Clubs which are either warned or fined by Police for breaking an enforceable direction as set by the Police Commissioner, Grant Stevens, will be sanctioned by Baseball NSW by way of a fine or suspension. Non-compliance is considered a breach of the Baseball NSW Code of Conduct and as such penalties will apply. Extreme cases may be referred to the tribunal.

Current direction with respect to gatherings

Prohibited gathering means:

- a gathering of more than 10 persons
- a gathering of 10 or less persons that does not comply with the density requirement, which is a requirement that the total number of persons present in a gathering must not exceed one person per 4 square metres.

The direction stipulates that a person who owns, controls or operates a place in the State of NSW must not allow a prohibited gathering to occur at the place.

A person must not organise a prohibited gathering at a place in the State of NSW.

A person who is present at a gathering (whether or not a prohibited gathering) must use their best endeavours to comply with the social distancing principles (having regard to the all the circumstances).

It is important to note that a gathering of more than 10 people or a gathering of 10 people or less that does not comply with the one person per four square metres rule is prohibited at any location, either indoors or outdoors in this state. However, those who ordinarily reside in premises with 10 or more people are able to continue residing together in those premises.

The principles of social distancing remain unchanged and everyone must make every effort to keep 1.5 metres away from each other and not exceed the density requirement of one person per four square metres.

It is an offence to breach this direction.