



# **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 competition.

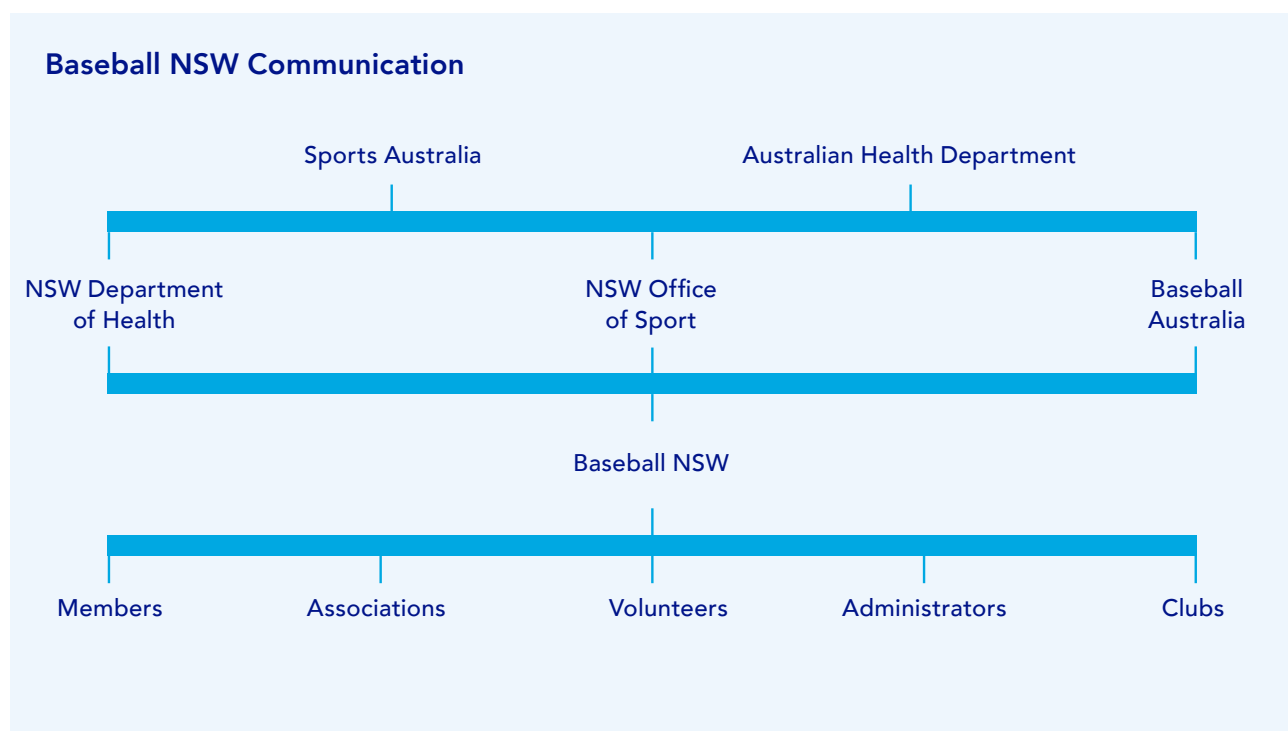
This document will provide the NSW Office of Sport, NSW Health and the Baseball NSW clubs and community with a comprehensive strategy on the planned roll out of Return to Activity and Return to Play from July 1st 2020. All information provided is sourced from relevant national and state government departments 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. 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.

Community sports competitions in NSW may restart for all ages from July 1st 2020. Baseball NSW and its members will continue to adhere to the Federal, State and Local government recommendations, restriction and guidelines in place at that time.

Key outcomes and objectives are to educate and prepare the baseball community in NSW for returning to all baseball activities. 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. [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.
- Participants are practicing social distancing, being 1.5m away from one another.
- A space of 4m<sup>2</sup> is available per participant.

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

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

- 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.

## 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.
- Remind participants that they should not train, and/or compete 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)
- Change rooms, toilets, and showers are available for use

## COVID officers

- Each Club and/or Venue is to appoint a designated COVID Officer who will be responsible for ensuring that the COVID-19 Safe Venue Plan is adhered to at all times whilst training or matches are ongoing at that venue.
- Baseball NSW are to be notified of said COVID Officer.

## Additional match & training hygiene

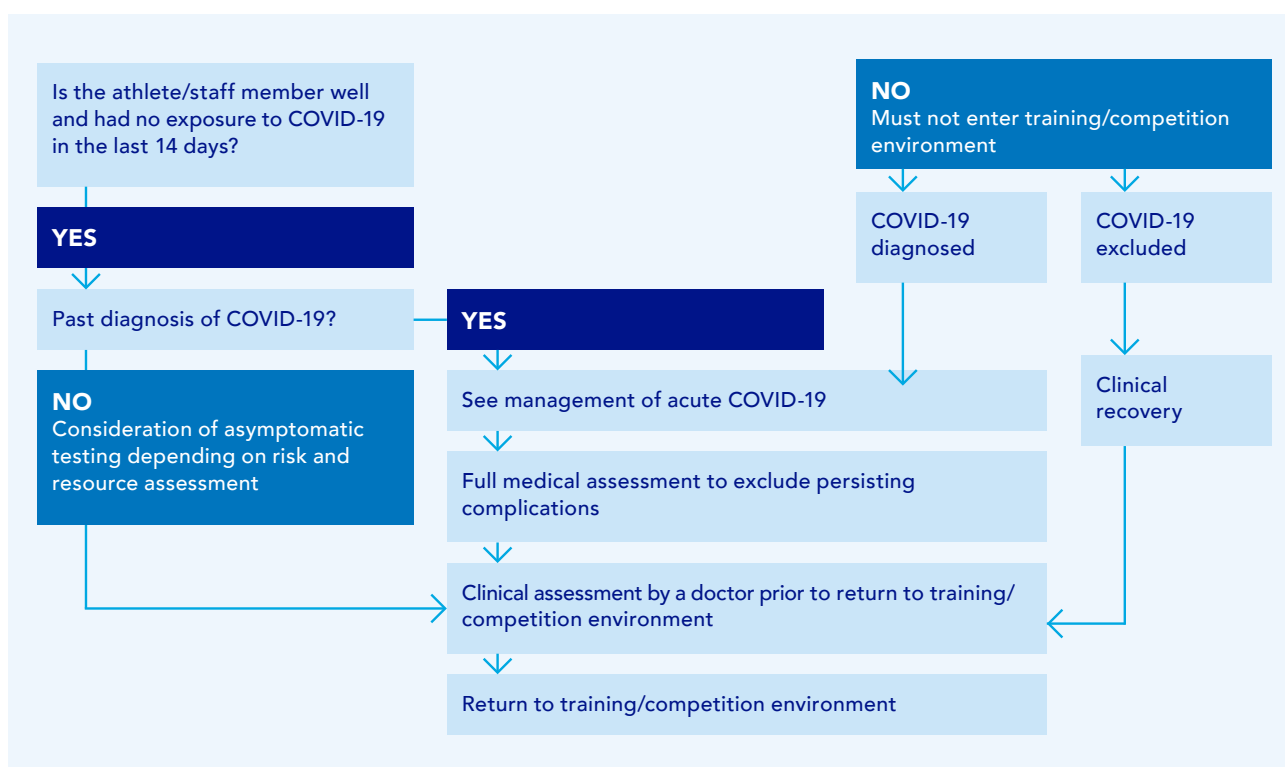
- Alcohol based hand sanitisers must be available in the dugout (once competition has resumed)
- Players must remain 1.5m apart always
- Spitting and clearing of nasal/respiratory secretions on diamonds or other sport settings is not permitted
- All equipment to be cleaned and disinfected prior, during and after training sessions and games. Balls to be cleaned after every innings during a game

## 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/competition assessment

- A player/official member must not join the training/competition 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.

## Overarching principles

### 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.

## Level C | Full sport activity – Training and competition (cont.)

### Restrictions:

- There will be no restricted Activity Zones
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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.

## Spectators

Baseball NSW will adhere to all announcements from national and state governments. 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

## Canteen protocols

- Canteen facilities are to clearly indicate a 1.5m distance between patrons and are to supply hand sanitizer and the counter
- All persons working in the canteen are to wear gloves at all times when handling food and beverage items
- All cutlery and condiments will be provided to the patron (communal use is strictly prohibited)

## Home team obligations

- The designated home club/team is to ensure that all requirements as outlined within this document are adhered to at all time
- Clubs/teams that fall short of their responsibilities may be subject to sanctions by Baseball NSW, the local council, and the NSW State Government

## Umpires

Umpires will follow the same match day protocols as players and official detailed in Level C 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 C 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.

### Direction with respect to gatherings

#### Prohibited gathering means:

- 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).
- Although there are no restrictions on how many people may gather, all gatherings that do not comply with the one person per four square metres rule is prohibited at any location, either indoors or outdoors in this state.
- 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.