



COVID-19 – Risk Assessment Considerations for Grassroots Outdoor Sports Clubs

The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted sport activity at all levels, and whilst there still remains significant uncertainty, it can be challenging to plan ahead with purpose. However, with restrictions gradually being eased across areas of the country, and outdoor sport activity seeing some small signs of resuming, now could be an opportune time for sports clubs to consider reviewing their risk assessments.

What is a Risk Assessment?

Risk management relates to the process of making decisions that will help to avoid and reduce the impact of unexpected/undesired outcomes. People need to be fully aware of what can go wrong and be there to implement strategies to prevent them or at least manage them. To keep things running effectively, these decisions need to become recognised rules for running of the club for everyone involved.

Risk assessments can apply from the state of the clubs equipment, to planning a large event. Clubs should be able to demonstrate that they have undertaken a risk assessment in relation to all factors that could present a hazard to health and potentially cause injury or death.



Five steps to risk management



1. Identify potential hazards.
2. Establish who might be harmed and how.
3. Assess the risks, decide whether existing precautions are adequate or whether more steps are required.
4. Record your findings.
5. Regularly review your assessment and revise if necessary.




The HSE website is a natural source of information for clubs looking to develop a risk assessment for the first time <https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/leisure/amateur-sports-club.htm>




COVID-19 Grassroots Sport Return Considerations

To assist clubs in preparing a return to some outdoor activity during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have outlined some areas to consider when reviewing a risk assessment document. As with any risk assessment it will need to be tailored to a clubs individual needs, so the following is for guidance only.

	Areas to consider	Suggested action
Pre planning	 Risk assessment	Each club should undertake its own COVID-19 risk assessment, and devise its own COVID-19 operational standards that takes into account the facility and its activities.
	Numbers of players and staff	<p>The club must ensure that social distancing guidelines can be maintained at the facility. This should include assessing the maximum numbers of players and staff that can safely operate in each training space/area.</p> <p>There should be a sufficient number of staff to help ensure and maintain social distancing during sessions.</p> <p>Depending on player and/or staff numbers eligible to attend a session, staggered arrival/exit time slots for groups may need to be considered to minimise player and staff interaction.</p>
	Training sessions	<p>The type, duration, layout, and location of the training activity should be considered.</p> <p>Sessions should be designed and pre-planned in advance to ensure that social distancing can be maintained and structured to enable adherence to the risk assessment at all times.</p>
	High risk players and staff	Limit staff and players with underlying conditions from attending or working the session.
Communication	 Communicate information to all staff, volunteers, players, and parents	<p>Information should be given regarding;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COVID-19 risk and symptoms, and the practices that should be undertaken to mitigate risks. • Awareness that although COVID-19 infection risks can be minimised through adherence to the club's policies and procedures, they cannot be eliminated and risks remain for at-risk populations, their families, and the potential for unintended transmission. • The club's approach, standards, and policies to mitigate the risks. <p>Before leaving home to attend a session, players (or parents/guardians on behalf of) and staff members should assess whether they have any symptoms of COVID-19, for example, a high temperature or fever, a new continuous cough, new unexplained shortness of breath, loss of taste, or smell etc.</p> <p>Players and staff should be instructed in communications to stay home and not attend any sessions when they are showing symptoms of COVID-19, or have had close contact with a person with COVID-19.</p> <p>Information should be communicated by way of email, social media, coach talks, and public announcements where applicable and practicable.</p>
	Parental consent	Send out parent consent forms for players to attend sessions.

	Areas to consider	Suggested action
Use and availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - sanitiser/masks/ gloves etc.	 Player hand sanitiser and wipes	Either the club or parents should provide all players with hand sanitiser for use between play periods, as well as antibacterial wipes for disinfecting player provided equipment.
	Staff hand sanitiser and wipes	Either the club or staff members should provide their own hand sanitiser for frequent use and antibacterial wipes for disinfecting hard surfaces and shared equipment.
	Masks/gloves for staff	These should be provided by the club or by staff where the risk assessment deems these items necessary, e.g. bagging up of rubbish, whilst cleaning surfaces, etc.
Symptom Checking	 Conduct pre-event observation and/or questioning of all players and staff about; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The existence of any COVID-19 symptoms in the last 7 days, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New cough. • Fever/temperature. • Unusually short of breath during exercise or at rest. • Loss of smell. • Red eyes or sticky eyes. • New abdominal pain or diarrhoea. • New blocked/runny nose. • New unusual fatigue with muscle and joint pains. • Headache. • Feeling generally unwell in any other way. 2) That they have not been in contact with a COVID-19 confirmed or suspected case in the 14 days, and that no one in the same household is unwell. 	Could be by way of a health declaration form signed by player/parent or staff member.
Food and Drink	 Water bottles	Players and staff should bring their own personalised water bottles to all team activities to help reduce the transmission risk. Individuals should take their own water bottles home for cleaning and sanitisation.
	Food	Consider storage/holding area for any bags maintaining adequate spacing. Ideally, food should not be consumed on site.
Arrival	 Hygiene	When arriving at team seating or side line areas, team staff should disinfect all hard surfaces, such as benches, railings, and equipment racks. Train all players and staff on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette. Staff and players should ensure that hand hygiene/sanitisation is being undertaken upon arrival, during and leaving the facility.

	Areas to consider	Suggested action
Arrival (cont)	Parking arrangements	Awareness and prevention must be considered from arrival. Where possible arrange social distancing in relation to car park spaces.
	Pre training groups	Players and team staff should not congregate and should ideally stay in cars until just before the start of the session.
	Car Pools	Discourage the use of car pools to transport participants who do not live in the same household.
Equipment	 Limit team shared equipment and sanitise regularly	Only equipment deemed as essential should be used during training. Any equipment used by a player should be thoroughly cleaned/sanitised before it can be used again.
		The use of team shared equipment, (e.g. protective gear, balls, cones, etc.) should be limited whenever possible to one group of players at a time and sanitised between uses.
		Clothes should be taken home by players and staff and laundered after all workouts.
Player conduct	 Players and staff must refrain from spitting and the use of chewing gum	Ensure instruction is clearly delivered to players and staff.
		No Handshakes/Celebrations
Reopening closed premises for access to and use of toilets	 Hygiene	Consider how the building will need to be sanitised including within the toilets, (e.g. taps, basins, surfaces, door handles etc.)
		Paper towels and soap provision.
		Hand sanitiser at building entry.
	Legionella	<p>When reopening a building that has stood empty, a robust recommissioning process to use the water system safely may need to be implemented.</p> <p>In addition to the legionella risk, drinking water within buildings may no longer be potable following a period of prolonged stagnation.</p> <p>Buildings that have remained empty with static water systems, or those that have been subject to limited or no flushing, may require recommissioning. Advice should be sought from your local water authority.</p>
	Toilet distancing	<p>Consider social distancing within toilets.</p> <p>The numbers of people using the toilets may need to be controlled and consideration will need to be given to access and egress arrangements to support social distancing measures and to minimise the risk of transmission.</p>

	Areas to consider	Suggested action
First aid provision	 First aider PPE	<p>Consider the first aid provision and arrangements for first aiders.</p> <p>Formulate a plan of the steps to be taken in the event that a player is injured, and, or requires first aid treatment/attention.</p>
Post-Event	 Cleaning	<p>Team staff should clean and dispose of all rubbish from player seating or side line areas when departing sessions using dedicated PPE and refuse sacks.</p>
	No Congregation	<p>Players and team staff should quickly exit the session location after the event and go directly to their cars without congregating with other players .</p>
Spectators	 Discourage	<p>Maintain social distancing away from the session.</p>



For further information, please contact your usual Bluefin Sport representative or visit our website www.bluefinsport.co.uk

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