

# RETURN TO TRAINING & PLAY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

AS AT 11TH MAY 2020



## GENERAL

### Are we allowed to Return to Training?

Yes, as of 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020, small group training of **no more than 20 participants** (including coaches, volunteers, trainers and parent/spectators) is currently allowed in Western Australia. This will be continually reviewed in line with State Government restrictions and the WAFC will advise all clubs and participants if this limit increases. Please do not make the decision to increase training numbers as a league or club, unless authorised by the WAFC as State Government approval is required.

### Is there anything that we need to do prior to commencing training?

Yes, there is. There are a number of things that clubs and coaches must do prior to commencing training, these include:

- Read and understand the resources provided by the WAFC, including:
  - Guidelines for a Return to Training in Western Australia,
  - Return to Training Protocols,
  - Return to Training Checklist,
  - Frequently Asked Questions.
- Ensure that the club and team have the required hygiene protocols in place,
- Coaches, and club officials, to undertake the online COVID-19 training, which is available online **HERE** and should take you no longer than 10-15 minutes to complete.
- Split the club's teams to ensure that you meet the mandatory maximum of 20 participants in each training group (including coaches & support staff),
- Brief all participants, coaches, volunteers and parents on the requirements around Returning to Training. An overview of what the briefing should include is outlined in the Guidelines for a Return to Training in Western Australia.
- Ensure that a log, or register of all participants is taken at every training session.

### When will we be able to Return to Play?

The WAFC will continue to work with the WA State Government to determine when football returns to competition, as per the COVID-19 WA Roadmap. This will be in line with the relaxation of State Government restrictions, when WA moves into Phase 3, and aligned with the phased approach of the 'AIS Framework for Rebooting Community Sport'. The WAFC will provide advice to all Football Clubs once a Return to Play date is approved. It is important to note that although Return to Training in small groups is now permitted, it will still be some time before football Returns to Play with a number of Government restrictions required to be lifted before this occurs.

### What does small group training mean?

Small group training means that teams will be required to break into groups no more than 20, and that comply with the State Government restrictions on the sizes of gatherings. Training groups must remain consistent with no player, coach or support staff movement between groups. This will assist in limiting any spread of COVID-19 should an outbreak occur.

### Are we allowed to have spectators at venues?

Under the current restrictions, clubs are asked to limit the number of spectators that attend training. We are encouraging parents to drop Junior players off, or only 1 parent attend the training session with their child if necessary, and stay away from training groups. Spectators are also reminded that social distancing measures still apply of 1.5m, and no more than 1 person per 4m<sup>2</sup>. Spectators or parents are to be included in the maximum number of people allowed to be present.

The WAFC also recommends that vulnerable groups (people aged over 70, those that are immunocompromised) strongly consider whether they should attend training or games.

### Do we have to download the COVIDSafe App?

It is a strong recommendation that all participants involved in community footy install the COVIDSAFE app to ensure that we are able to track and trace any active cases if they come to light. This is part of our commitment to Government as a sport in our return to play strategy.



### **Are we still insured to train/play?**

Yes. Clubs & Associations will be covered as usual under the AFL's Community Football Public Liability and Club Management Liability policies. Participants will also be covered as usual and at their Club/Team elected level under the Personal Accident policy for physical injuries sustained in footballing activities, however cover does not extend to a sickness or illness. Cover under these policies is always subject to their terms, conditions and exclusions. Further information is available from Marsh Insurance by clicking [HERE](#).

### **What happens if a club/team breaches either the State Government restrictions or the requirements of the Return to Training/Play as outlined by the WAFC?**

We would respectfully request that all clubs and players do the right thing and strictly adhere to the guidelines as advised. Sanctions can apply to clubs, teams and individuals that breach either State Government or WAFC restrictions.

Breach of State Government restrictions, which form a key part of Football's Return to Training and Play protocols, include:

- Individuals can be imprisoned for up to 12 months, or fined up to \$50,000,
- Football clubs can be fined up to \$250,000 for breaching an enforceable direction as set by the Commissioner of Police.

Clubs found to be in breach of the Return to Training protocols may also be sanctioned by the League and /or the WAFC by way of fine, suspension or other measures deemed appropriate.

### **My team has more players, can we just have a few more attend?**

No – the restrictions that are in place are set by the WA State Government clearly outline the maximum number of participants, including coaches and support staff, and the above sanctions are enforceable if a team or club is found to be in breach of this restriction. Clubs should look to separate their groups to ensure that they are under the maximum number of participants allowable.

### **What happens if there is a positive test in our team?**

If there is a positive case within the team environment then all participants, coaches and volunteers who have been in contact will need to self-isolate for 14 days. If you are feeling unwell then you should seek medical advice immediately by calling your GP. If you feel unwell at all, then please do not attend training at your Football Club.

### **Are we liable if there is a positive test in our Club / Team?**

Not necessarily. A Club's potential liability will need to consider the circumstances of the particular case. A Club can limit the risk of being found liable for a positive test case by taking reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the Club and the wider community, including but not limited to, strictly following the advice and recommendations of the WAFC, the WA State Government, and the Australian Government.

### **Why do we need to keep a log, or register of participants and what groups they are in?**

This assists with the tracing and tracking of the COVID-19 virus should an outbreak occur. This is a requirement of Football Clubs in Western Australia Returning to Training, and at the appropriate time after State Government approval for Returning to Play.

### **What happens if the cases of COVID-19 begin to increase again in the community?**

The WAFC will continue to take advice and follow direction from the State Government, however this may mean that Western Australia may have to tighten its COVID-19 restrictions. This may mean football is postponed.

### **Will the WAFC provide training or education for Clubs, Coaches or volunteers?**

Yes. There is training available for clubs. The COVID-19 infection control training can be completed online [HERE](#). The WAFC recommends that all clubs (and in particular coaches) complete the online training, in order to ensure the appropriate checks are completed to ensure the health and safety of all participants and volunteers.

The AFL will also be running a national Webinar with the AFL's Chief Medical Officer, Dr Peter Harcourt which will outline the AFL's protocols in more detail. More information will be provided on this shortly.

Printable PDF posters, flyers and checklists will also be made available from the WAFC and are available for download on the WAFC website. These can be displayed at club facilities and also circulated to all participants.

## HYGIENE

### **Why can't we share team water bottles?**

The sharing of water bottles can increase the risk of transmitting viruses. Participants are to bring their own water bottle and not share this with anyone else. We would also recommend that personal water bottles are thoroughly washed and disinfected after every training session.

### **Our team usually brings fruit or snacks to training and or games – can we still do that?**

No. At no time can players share any food, drinks, snacks, fruit or lollies for example, as this increases the risks of transmitting viruses.

### **Can I get strapping or a massage at training?**

No. Players are responsible for their own strapping, and there are to be no player massages at the current level of restrictions that are in place.

### **What are the other hygiene protocols that we must follow?**

There are a number of key hygiene protocols that must be followed including:

- Alcohol based hand sanitisers must be available for all teams training sessions, with players encouraged to use prior, during and following training.
- No sharing of towels.
- Disinfect mouth guards after each session.
- Players and coaches should avoid spitting or clearing nasal passages at training.
- Avoid high fives, handshakes or other physical contact.
- Footballs to be wiped with antibacterial wipes or alcohol-based sanitiser prior to and after training sessions.
- If you, or people you have been in contact with are sick, please DO NOT attend training and advise the football coach.

### **There are lots of rules around hygiene and cleaning. How do we afford to pay for all the extra cleaning that is required?**

In most cases the Club will assume responsibility for ensuring the additional cleaning and hygiene requirements are met. The WAFC will work with leagues and clubs on this to ensure that all appropriate requirements are undertaken. The club may also wish to follow up your local council to see if they have any suggestions to keep these additional cleaning requirements as affordable as possible for Clubs.

## FACILITIES

### **Do we need permission to use an oval to train?**

Yes – all clubs / teams must receive approval from the respective Local Governments to utilise their facilities. Please ensure that you do the right thing and get appropriate approvals for oval access.

### **Can we use the changerooms, club rooms or the gym?**

No. Under the current restrictions from the WA State Government, and in line with the AIS Framework for Community Sport, there is currently no access to changeroom facilities, club rooms or gyms permissible under the restrictions that are in place. The WAFC will advise if these restrictions change.

### **If changerooms are closed then where do we get changed for training?**

The AIS Framework recommends that change rooms facilities are strictly limited, and only used for emergency toilet use. For Football teams we recommend that change rooms are closed at all times during training. Players, coaches and support staff are to arrive dressed and ready to train. Showers must be conducted at home after training.

### **Can we open Canteen's and Bar facilities?**

No, not at this stage. They are to remain closed. The WAFC will work with the WA State Government on the opening of Football Clubs canteen and bar facilities, and will advise clubs accordingly. Please do not make the decision to open these facilities, unless authorised by the WAFC as State Government approval is required, and Government sanctions would apply.

## RETURN TO TRAINING

### **Can we move between our smaller Training Groups?**

No. Once the groups are established then there is to be no movement between training groups, until full group training is approved by the WA State Government. This includes the coaches, volunteers and support staff. The reason for this is it helps to control any spread of COVID-19 should an outbreak occur.

### **Can the coach move between Training Groups?**

No. As per above once a training group has been established then there is no movement between groups. Skype or Zoom calls can be a great way for the coach to interact with the entire group if required.

### **When will we be able to train as a full group?**

The WAFC will work closely with the WA State Government on when full group training can commence, which is in line COVID-19 WA Roadmap. Please do not make the decision to increase training numbers to full squad as a league or club, unless authorised by the WAFC as State Government approval is required.

### **Can we use Footballs?**

Yes. Footballs are allowed to be used in small group training sessions. Please ensure where possible that footballs stay within that small training group, and aren't used across groups. If clubs are unable to achieve this due to lack of footballs, then all footballs must be thoroughly disinfected after each training session using anti-bacterial wipes.

### **What other equipment can we use?**

Markers/cones can be used in training, however under the current restrictions, no other equipment can be used. This includes no use of bump bags, marking bags, tackle bags, weights, gym equipment, etc.

### **Can we use and share gym equipment at home?**

No. The advice of the WA Government is that sharing of equipment, such as gym equipment increases the risk of transmission of COVID-19. The WAFC will advise when home gym equipment can be shared, and when gym equipment at football clubs can be utilised, in line with the easing of Government restrictions. If you are utilising your own equipment at home then it is important that it is cleaned and disinfected thoroughly after every use.

### **Are we allowed to have contact at training?**

No. There is to be strictly no contact at training including no tackling, no bumping, no marking contests, and no small sided games or match simulation where incidental contact can occur. The WAFC will advise as to when contact is allowed at training.

### **How many groups can train on an oval at any one time?**

For Australian Rules Football the WA State Government has approved a maximum of 3 groups of 20 participants that can train on one oval at any one time. A maximum total of 60 participants, including players, coaches, support staff, parents and spectators. Please note that parents and spectators are included in this maximum of 60 participants. The small training groups are to be separated to include one at each end of the oval, and the other in the middle. No full ground exercises are to be conducted where the three groups cross over or come in contact with each other. The groups must maintain separation, and footballs must not be shared or transitioned between the groups.

### **What strategies can club's use to schedule training sessions on the oval?**

Clubs should consider introducing a staggered training schedule for the groups of 20 that may include different start times, different days and/or different locations. It is also advisable that where possible clubs ensure that there is a gap between training times to limit the potential for a crossover of training groups at the same venue. Training times may need to be shorter to accommodate this requirement.

### **Does the maximum number of participants include Coaches?**

Yes, the maximum number of participants in a group includes coaches, volunteers, support staff and Parents / spectators. For instance, you can have 19 players, and 1 coach, or you could have 18 players, 1 coach and 1 parent watching. The numbers must not exceed the maximum amount possible as directed by the WAFC in line with WA State Government restrictions.

### **How often should equipment be cleaned?**

We understand the challenges around maintaining strict levels of hygiene amongst a football group. However, it is essential we implement the highest quality of hygiene at all times for the safety and comfort of our participants and their families. Footballs, and any other equipment like cones or markers must be thoroughly cleaned with anti-bacterial wipes following each training session.

## WAFL FOOTBALL

### When will the WAFL start?

The WAFC is working closely with all WAFL Clubs to be in a position that when the State Government eases its restrictions about sporting competitions, then a decision about the season can be made that is in the best interests of the WAFL competition and the WAFL Clubs.

The Return to Training at the current time should primarily focus on reconnecting with fellow players, via physical activity, to benefit Health & Well-being. From May 18th, this shouldn't be a training program primarily focus on preparing players to lead into the start of the season, as this date is still to be determined. Moving into Phase 3 of the WA State Government restrictions is when full contact training can recommence, and is when the government has indicated a potential return to community competitions. This phase is when we would expect clubs to commence a formalised and structured training program leading into the start of a potential WAFL season.

### Will crowds be allowed to attend?

Crowds at WAFL games will be dependent on the WA State Government restrictions on gatherings that are in place at that time.

## TALENT PROGRAMS

### Will the WAFC's talent program be commencing training?

Yes, the WAFL colts programs will be re-commencing training shortly. For more specific information please speak to your club's Talent Manager.

### When will the WAFL Colts season start?

The WAFC will be in a position to announce further details about the WAFL colts season when the State Government further eases its restrictions about sporting competitions in approximately four weeks' time.

### What about the WAFL Futures season which had already started?

The WAFC is still working through the implications of the significant delay to the football season on the WAFL Futures competition. Further information will be announced in the coming weeks.

### What about the State Academy programs?

The WAFC is awaiting confirmation from the AFL that the National Championships for males and females will take place later in 2020. Once this is confirmed a revised schedule for the State Academy programs will be communicated to players in those programs.

### Is the AFL Draft still going ahead?

Yes. The AFL Draft is scheduled to occur before the 2021 AFL season. The AFL will provide more detail and information on timing at the appropriate time.

## COMMUNITY FOOTBALL

### How come other team sports have resumed playing, but we haven't started yet?

The WA State Government is responsible for determining when each sport can return. Understandably, there are different considerations for each sport, things like contact v non-contact, indoor v outdoor sports, numbers in teams, facility access, etc. We are bound by the State Government on when they decide we can resume.

### Can Auskick participants resume?

Auskick sessions at clubs will plan to recommence once the State Government restrictions ease to Phase 3, and community sport competitions can resume. Again, strict social distancing (1.5m, and 1 person per 4m<sup>2</sup>) will be in place, with a limit on the number of parents able to attend. More information will be provided on this at the appropriate time.

### Our team has social functions after training – can this still occur?

No. The principle of a Return to Training is '*Get in, Train, Get out*'. There is to be NO social mingling or activities either before or after training.

### Will I still need to pay fees?

Once competitions recommence then it is likely that Football Clubs will charge fees for participation. Please liaise directly with your respective Football Club on this matter.

## COUNTRY FOOTBALL

### How will regional border closures impact Country Football?

If regional travel border closures are in place, then travel over that boundary for football training or games cannot occur. Your League will work with your WAFC staff in your region, and the WACFL on strategies that address this factor as appropriate.

### Can spectators watch Football from their cars at some venues?

Yes. However, social distancing rules of 1.5m, 1 person per 4m<sup>2</sup> and mass gathering restrictions at venues still apply as per State Government requirements.