

A Staged Return to Swimming Competition

- Racing Considerations for Build Phase

Introduction

The Scottish Swimming “Staged Return to Swimming Competition” [Scottish Swimming Back to the water – Return to Competition Overview](#), identifies four progressive stages aimed at guiding the sport back to a form of competition normality. The sport currently sits within the “Build” phase of the return.

All competition in the “Build” phase must comply with current conditions of Scottish Government protection levels and is subject to the current Scottish Swimming Club Training Guidance.

Club committees and coaches can now work together to deliver suitable opportunities for intra club competition and virtual meets for the swimmers in their club that involve the following:

- Building engagement as a member of the club/team
- Focusing on internal club competition and introduction of virtual meets during training sessions

Tighinn Còmhla 2020 supports the “Build” phase with timing over short distances when there are no officials and minimal application of technical rules.

This first positive step towards inter club competition may also be introduced now, but to comply with conditions, is restricted to where clubs **are already training in the same pool** and clubs should be using their own regular club training pool time where possible. No licence is required for this type of competition to occur.

The Racing Considerations below, which include both COVID-19 and practical considerations, have been prepared to support safe racing for clubs wishing to take this first step.

All racing activity held in training sessions must take in to account the risk assessment and operational procedures agreed with the pool provider. Where this is new activity, liaising with the pool operator will be key to ensuring the correct arrangements and a safe environment are in place. Effective communication and sharing of appropriate information within and between clubs and with the facility in the planning, delivery and review stages of the event is essential.

This document should be read alongside [Scottish Swimming Back to the water – Return to Competition Overview](#), the [Scottish Swimming Club Training Back to the Water COVID-19 Guidance](#) the [Scottish Swimming Technical Official Back to the Water Guidance](#) and [Scottish Swimming Virtual Meets Support Document](#)

COVID-19 Considerations

- A COVID-19 Liaison Officer (CLO) is required to be at each session to ensure compliance with the necessary COVID-19 protocols and procedures. Where more than one club/team is involved, each group should have a designated CLO provided by their club.
- COVID-19 Liaison Officers shall be responsible for ensuring attendance for each session is taken and recorded including for all athletes, volunteers and team staff. They shall also be responsible for ensuring that all necessary protocols are in place to support Test and Protect if required.
- All new team staff/volunteers, and those who are returning to club activities after a break must have completed and submitted to their club a self-declaration and health screening form before undertaking duties.
- It is important to have in place a familiarisation video/information/pool diagram available for all athletes, team staff and volunteers to view/read prior to accessing the venue, including details of athlete flow, seating areas and other useful considerations.

- Face coverings must be worn by all team staff and volunteers while within the facility including the pool hall. Exemption applies only for those who have relevant medical conditions and disabilities or other considerations that have been included in the risk assessment.
- All athletes must wear face coverings when seated, speaking to others and moving around the facility. While moving around on deck and during the activity, athletes should follow the information on face coverings detailed in the procedures & risk assessments for the club/facility.
- Athletes and team staff/volunteers aged 18 and over require to physically distance at all times while in the facility. Under 18s no longer have to physically distance during sporting activity (when in the pool or immediately waiting to enter the pool) but require to physically distance at all other times. Where under 18s and 18+ athletes are mixing in a session, all athletes are considered as 18+ and non-contact protocols apply, thus physical distancing in the activity must be incorporated.
- In order to protect the athletes and reduce the risk of transmission further, sporting bubbles should be used. Each squad within a club or each club present should form a bubble, or bubbles for the purposes of the competition.
- Each bubble should be seated on different sides/areas of the pool hall with chairs spaced at 2m to comply with physical distancing.
- Warm up, swim down and training elements should be appropriately organised to prevent mixing of bubbles at lane ends and within lanes. Where possible, in preference to seeding by entry time, lanes should be allocated to a bubble of athletes for exclusive use during any racing.
- An athlete flow around the field of play should be in place to prevent athletes from different bubbles interacting as far as possible. This will be different for each venue, but focus should be on reducing the distance athletes have to move around the deck from seating area to lanes.

Reminder for all participants

Do not go to a venue if you currently have any illness symptoms or have been in contact with a known COVID-19 case in the last 14 days.

For reference the main symptoms for COVID-19 are currently:

A new continuous cough, A high temperature or fever, Loss of taste or smell

For a full list of symptoms and for more information: [NHS Inform website](#)

Practical Considerations

PRIOR TO THE EVENT

- The club risk assessment in place for the facility may need updating to allow for additional team staff/supporting volunteers to be within the building and on poolside to manage any racing and to facilitate the taking and recording of times if required.
- Entry and exit procedures may need to be amended due to the possible increase in numbers of people or different groups of people accessing the facility. Clubs should liaise with the facility staff to identify any required changes.
- Session times for the event must be created, communicated in advance and adhered to. This will enable arrivals and departures to take place effectively without overloading the capacity of the facility/pool.

- The order of the races should be planned and agreed in advance with the athletes knowing what they are swimming and when prior to the session. Any additional rules or technical rules that are being enforced should be communicated to athletes and team staff/volunteers prior to arriving.
- Athlete and volunteer/team staff briefings should be kept to a minimum to avoid congestion at the venue and where possible information should be available before arriving at the venue. Where in person briefings are required then physical distancing and the use of face coverings must be followed.
- Clubs should liaise with the facility staff to ensure the necessary hygiene protocols, procedures and schedules are in place for cleaning any fixed and removable equipment as required.
- Clubs should liaise with the facility staff to confirm arrangements for first aid and safe supervision of the session as well as the procedure for anyone who takes ill during the session. Risk assessments and club procedures should be updated accordingly.
- Starting blocks can be used by agreement with facility staff. It may be necessary to update risk assessments with protocol for setup, take down and cleaning.
- Backstroke ledges should not be used. The use of electronic timing equipment may be used. Liaise with facility staff to agree setup, operation, take down and cleaning requirements. The club risk assessment may need to be updated.

DURING THE EVENT

- The use of changing rooms should comply with facility protocols and procedures. Athletes should arrive at the facility ready to race and team staff should arrive ready to carry out their duties, as far as practically possible.
- Team staff and volunteers should bring only necessary equipment with them to the session. Personal equipment should be cleaned with anti-viral wipes or solution before and after use. Sharing of equipment is not permitted and equipment should not be left at the facility.
- Facility/club owned competition/event equipment such as stopwatches, back-up buttons and lap cards, that is issued to team staff/volunteers should be operated by 1 person only in each lane per session and be sanitised before and after each session.
- Electronic start equipment such as microphones/handsets should only be used by one individual per session and should be cleaned with anti-viral wipes or solution before and after use. The individual should wear a face covering at all times except when starting a race. The use of whistles and shouting across the pool should be kept to a minimum where at all possible.
- Where paper is used for start lists/recording times/information this should be kept to a minimum. Electronic options should be considered where at all possible.
- Team staff/volunteers should limit their movement round the pool. Areas where coaches would normally stand during training sessions may not be suitable to ensure physical distancing as athletes move around the deck.
- Where applicable, individuals who are taking times on the deck should all stand to the same side of the starting blocks to ensure physical distancing is adhered to and should not interact with athletes unless necessary.
- Marshalling/call room areas should not be used. Athletes should remain where they are seated arriving behind the blocks just in time for their race, following the appropriate athlete flow
- No over the top or side by side starts should be used. In addition, give suitable time for athletes to get their breath back before exiting water to put face coverings back on.
- Athletes should ensure their belongings are not left lying around at their seating area. Belongings should be stored in their bags. Athletes should not bring or leave kit behind the blocks when swimming.

- No spectating or front of house activities (fundraising) are currently allowed in order to limit the number of people within the facility. In addition, no formal presentation or awards ceremonies are currently allowed in order to limit the number of people congregating within the facility.
- Catering is unlikely to be available at the venue. Ensure that athletes/team staff bring sufficient fluids for the session in their own clearly marked bottles and any necessary food in clearly marked containers so as not to require vending machines or water fountains. Do not share food and drink.
- Streaming/recording a session to allow parents and other people that are not present to view racing is possible, using an IPAD/tablet for example and should not increase the number of people within the venue. Wellbeing and protection protocols such as video/photographic permissions must be adhered to.

AFTER THE EVENT

- Collate, process and distribute the results within the club and between clubs as appropriate.
- In conjunction with facility staff, review the procedures and protocols that were in place for the event. Record any changes that require to be implemented/considered for the next event. Communicate any changes appropriately.
- Store attendance information securely in the event of a positive case to support the Test and Protect procedures.
- Plan for the next event!