

RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES

Bay of Plenty Community Sport 2020



18th May 2020



Sport Bay of Plenty
more people, more active, more often

Background

Community sport has always been engrained within New Zealand culture: it is where we have experienced our greatest achievements and learnt lessons from some of our greatest defeats; it is where we have connected with whānau from all areas of life and shared the common passion of grassroots sport. Covid-19 has placed many pressures on our nation. During a typical year summer code finals would have been completed and celebrated, winter sports would have begun and the oranges would be rolled out at halftimes all across the country. Very early on in the Covid-19 situation it was identified that unprecedented times were going to need an unprecedented response.

The region's sporting organisations and local district councils (Tauranga City, Western BOP, Whakatāne, Kawerau, Ōpōtiki and Rotorua) have come together with Sport Bay of Plenty to acknowledge that as a sports community we are all in this together. The desire and openness to work together to develop solutions for the resumption of sport has been strong throughout the process, and we are all very excited about a safe return to our sports facilities that will enable our communities to reconnect and strengthen their love of sport.

Purpose and Objectives

Covid-19 has been challenging for our communities across the Bay of Plenty, but the enthusiasm for everyone to get back to community sport has remained. The region's sporting organisations have come together and worked collaboratively to put in place return to play guidelines which recognise the challenges we face before sport can be played. The purpose of these guidelines is to address identified challenges, provide framework and give all sporting codes equal opportunities to start again when safe. Participants are at the centre of all guidelines developed within this document. Wellbeing and safety is the primary focus for all involved in the resumption of sport – an approach that is in line with the Balance is Better principles developed by Sport New Zealand.

The organisations who have agreed to this approach recognise we are not health experts, and that the guidance from the New Zealand Government, Ministry of Health and National Sporting Organisations supersede this information. Where there are guidelines around gathering numbers and social distancing requirements in place those must be adhered to at all times.

Our Collective Agreement

These guidelines have been developed collaboratively across the entire Bay of Plenty sport sector. Acknowledgement needs to be given to all parties who have been involved in developing the Bay of Plenty Community Sport Return to Play Guidelines. Whilst winter sporting codes are immediately affected, summer codes have been very forthcoming in supporting the overall objective, and in supporting a winter season window which gives each sport a good opportunity to deliver some form of competition when and if the alert level requirements allow. Everyone noted below has taken the bold statement to stand as one sector and follow the guidelines for our region to ensure we have communities back in the game and, more importantly, back together.

Supporters of the approach



Guidelines for Resumption of Sport

Health and safety

Health and safety is the number one priority needed before any trainings and/or games can begin. Robust health and safety plans which reflect the specific sporting activity must be developed. For many volunteer managed clubs this is a difficult task, and the protocols which need to be in place can be overwhelming. Regional Sporting Organisations (RSOs) will do their best to support their clubs and provide them with these templates/plans in a format which makes the implementation as easy as possible.

The first important step is for the RSOs to develop a regional health and safety plan for their clubs to operate under. A copy of this regional plan must be sent to Sport Bay of Plenty, who will then advise the six local district councils in our region that the relevant code is ready to play and they can begin to accept bookings for trainings and competitions. Bookings will not be considered until plans are developed.

Where a facility is managed/owned by another stakeholder outside of councils, the user (RSO or Club) will need to follow the facility's individual requirements of health and safety protocols. Where a code operates within a leased area, they should still confirm with the local authority they have the appropriate health and safety plans in place. But ultimately a code is responsible for managing their sport within their area.

The Covid-19 alert level detail in place at any time during 2020 will be followed and adhered to and plans should reflect these government guidelines. If a sporting activity can be carried out within the parameters set out in that detail that is good news. However, if it cannot, we then acknowledge that we will wait for change before moving forward.

Winter and Summer Season Windows (Dates)

The following dates for 2020 have been agreed to by all parties for the competition window to open and close.

	Facility, Health and Safety preparation window	Winter Sport Season Window	Season crossover maintenance/ prep period	Summer Sport Season Period
Timeline	Current – 5th June.	6th June – 4th Oct *All school sport should aim to finish at the end of term 3.	4th Oct – 23rd Oct	24th Oct – onwards as per usual

Training bookings at reserves/facilities prior to June 6th

It is acknowledged that if health and safety plans have been developed and produced, councils/facility managers may accept training bookings prior to the June 6th start date. This means training can begin as soon as possible as long as gathering numbers are strictly adhered to. However, with regards to fields/reserves, each council will need to assess the readiness of their surfaces for use. If a surface is not ready for use, acceptance of that needs to be adhered to by clubs. Openness to travel to other facilities/reserves may be needed to acknowledge not all facilities will be ready at the same time.

Competition Structure and Delivery

Competition structuring and delivery is the responsibility of the individual sporting code. Season length and travel requirements need to consider the challenges the sector is experiencing, and focus should be to offer localised opportunities for all to participate.

The dates agreed to by all are merely a high-level window of opportunity to run a competition. Sporting codes will set their own season start and end dates within the above window-frame.

Preseason periods are encouraged to ensure all participants can have the opportunity to safely return to sport and prepare their body in the best way possible. Delivery and scheduling of game days may look very different. Sports will identify ways to adapt and adhere to the government directives for gathering numbers in a certain location, and consider the ability for contact tracing to be carried out or any other control measures that are put in place at each Covid-19 alert level.

Facilities, Spaces and Places

Every space and place that sport is played within or on requires ongoing management to ensure the environment is safe for the range of activities to take place.

Facility owners and managers have been very supportive of the preparation windows provided in the timeline that sporting organisations have developed. Where possible facility managers will do their best to have spaces and places ready to the same level of service delivered in the past. However, given the end of the summer maintenance period coinciding with the alert level 4 lockdown period, these renovations or major maintenance could not take place. The sporting community accepts facility owners are doing their best where possible to return to that same level of service.

National Sport Organisation and Sport NZ Direction

These guidelines have been developed at a regional level, and acknowledgement needs to be given that when there is a national directive provided by a National Sport Organisation or Sport New Zealand then those directives should be followed first and foremost. Then, where possible, the guidelines set out in the Bay of Plenty Community Sport Return to Play guidelines should be implemented to support the region's objective to have all of our communities reengaged with community sport in a safe and timely manner. Further Covid-19 national direction and play it safe guidelines can be found at: www.sportnz.org.nz/covid-19

For sport code specific queries please contact your Regional Sport Organisation or Zane Jensen at Sport Bay of Plenty for general queries: zanej@sportbop.co.nz