

## British Canoeing - Return to Team Activities – Canoe Polo

### Canoe Polo

*Canoe polo is played by two teams of five players on a rectangular playing pitch that can be in open water or in a swimming pool. Matches are played over two halves of 10 minutes with the aim to score into a goal which is suspended above the water at each end of the pitch. The ball in canoe polo is the same that is used in water polo, and can be controlled by hand or by paddle.*

*More detail on the rules of canoe polo can be found [here](#).*

A return to team sport can provide many individuals with both physical and mental relief as well as the social benefits of playing. British Canoeing (BC) are providing guidance for this to be done in a suitable manner as safely as possible within the current Government guidelines. In preparing to return Clubs and Regions should not rush to restart, doing so could give the impression of a return to normality which is not the case. Risk in sport cannot be eradicated however through care and caution it can be reduced.

Whilst for many a return to team sport will be welcome, it is important to note that some individuals, groups and communities are still deemed vulnerable in respect of Covid-19. We remind you to follow the Governments guidance in these situations only returning when it is right for you to do so. **There is no pressure to return**, other individuals may also feel they are not ready to return in these cases we ask you to respect the persons decision. Everyone's health, wellbeing and safety are the priorities.

The purpose of this document is to provide the necessary mitigations to enable the return of competitive and recreational Canoe Polo as part of the easing of social restrictions. These mitigations will allow for Canoe Polo to take place whilst maintaining appropriate compliance with social distancing and permitted group sizes.

The framework below is designed to minimise the COVID-19 transmission risk and enable participants to make an informed decision on their choice to take part. Canoe Polo will only be permitted to resume activity once this plan has been submitted for approval and signed off by The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

It should be used in conjunction with venue specific risk assessments. For example the risk factor increases for indoor venues. For Canoe Polo to commence in indoor pools clubs/ teams would need to comply with both these guidelines and venue guidelines and principles. The risk factor increases for indoor venues and this greater risk should be discussed with venue operators.



We have outlined measures that should be taken by players (junior and senior), clubs, officials, volunteers, coaches, and spectators before, during and after all canoe polo activity. They should be read in conjunction with the latest [UK Government guidance](#) and [British Canoeing's guidance](#) for Paddlesport Clubs, Centres and Hire Providers and Returning to Events.

**This document refers to current UK Government guidance for England only** and is subject to change in response to the current COVID-19 Alert Level, community prevalence of COVID-19 and/or to reflect additional or updated UK Government guidance.

In competitive training and matches, physical contact is allowed, but for all other activity (e.g. warm-ups/cool-downs) the relevant UK Government social distancing guidance **should be adhered to at all times**.

When your club decides to return, you must carry out a risk assessment and record the procedures and checks put in place. It is essential everyone is clear about the restrictions and works together to manage social distancing, strict hand hygiene and the other protocols set out in this document.

### **Clubhouses and hospitality**

We understand that not all clubs within England have their own facilities, often Canoe polo activity takes place at leisure centres and outdoor service provider facilities. In these cases you must follow any guidance provided by them.

Where a club is using its own facilities, they need to comply with the guidance set out on the British Canoeing website [here](#). The club will also need to ensure the following:

- Groups within clubhouses and hospitality facilities must be restricted to six person gathering limits and spread out, in line with wider government guidance.
- High ventilation in indoor facilities is paramount to reducing transmission of COVID-19; keep the facilities well ventilated, for example by fixing doors open and opening windows where appropriate.
- If facilities remain closed, exceptions must be made for essential activity such as provision of first-aid or access to essential equipment for the match.



### Prior to any canoe polo activity

- All participants (players, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators) should check for [symptoms of COVID-19](#). In line with current UK Government Guidance, if an individual is symptomatic and/or living in a household with a possible COVID-19 infection they should remain at home and follow UK Government guidance.
- All participants (players, coaches and officials) should share their contact details with the event organiser/ club prior to training/ matches to allow NHS Test and Trace to contact all participants if an individual becomes ill with COVID-19.
- Any participants who have been asked to isolate by NHS Test and Trace because they are a contact of a known COVID-19 case, must not exercise outside their home or garden and must not exercise with others.
- Personal hygiene measures should be carried out at home before and after activity.
- Participants should bring their own hand sanitiser and maintain strict and frequent hand hygiene measures whenever possible.
- Participants should follow UK Government guidance on best practice for travel, including minimising the use of public transport and limiting car sharing.
- Team representatives should make all participants aware of expected social distancing and hygiene measures during play and whilst on site.
- Teams should strictly limit the time spent congregating at a venue before activity begins. Meet-up times should reflect this. Participants should arrive changed and ready to play if possible.
- Clubs/teams should ensure they have a current affiliation with British Canoeing.
- All clubs must identify a Covid-19 officer who will be responsible for developing a Covid-19 plan and risk assessment prior to the restart of any activity. The Covid-19 officer should continually monitor how compliance is being observed within the club. [Guidance here](#).
- Any payment of match fees should be made in advance by bank transfer.
- Face coverings have not been considered as a standard control measure as there may be situations where there is an abundance of water over the deck and where face masks may be ineffective and restrictive. We do believe there are situations where face coverings could provide valuable mitigation<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> "People should not wear cloth face coverings while engaged in activities that may cause the cloth face covering to become wet, like when swimming at the beach or pool. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe." (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2020)



### During all canoe polo activity

- **Competitive training can take place for all participants, provided this takes place in groups of no more than 30 (including coaches).**
- Participants should enter the site and prepare their personal equipment whilst maintaining social distancing. Teams will be segregated into separate areas with appropriate space.
- Where possible players should limit sharing of equipment. If they do share equipment, they must practise strict hand hygiene before and after use.
- Any shared equipment must be cleaned before use by another person.
- All participants should sanitise their hands prior to the start of the activity.
- Hand sanitiser should be used at all breaks in activity and prior to consuming any food or drinks.
- Players should refrain from spitting or rinsing out their mouths.
- Individuals should bring their own food and drink. Water bottles or other refreshment containers should in no circumstances be shared.
- Player's water bottles should be individually labelled to avoid cross contamination.
- Players and coaches should refrain from shouting instructions to members of their team.
- Any spectators (including parents and carers) must be restricted to discrete six-person gathering limits and spread out, in line with wider government guidance, ensuring space for officials, coaches and substitutes.
- Pre/post-match exchange of gifts or handshake should not happen.
- Set plays - referee's and coaches should encourage players to get on with the game and not prolong setup play.
- Goal celebrations should be avoided.

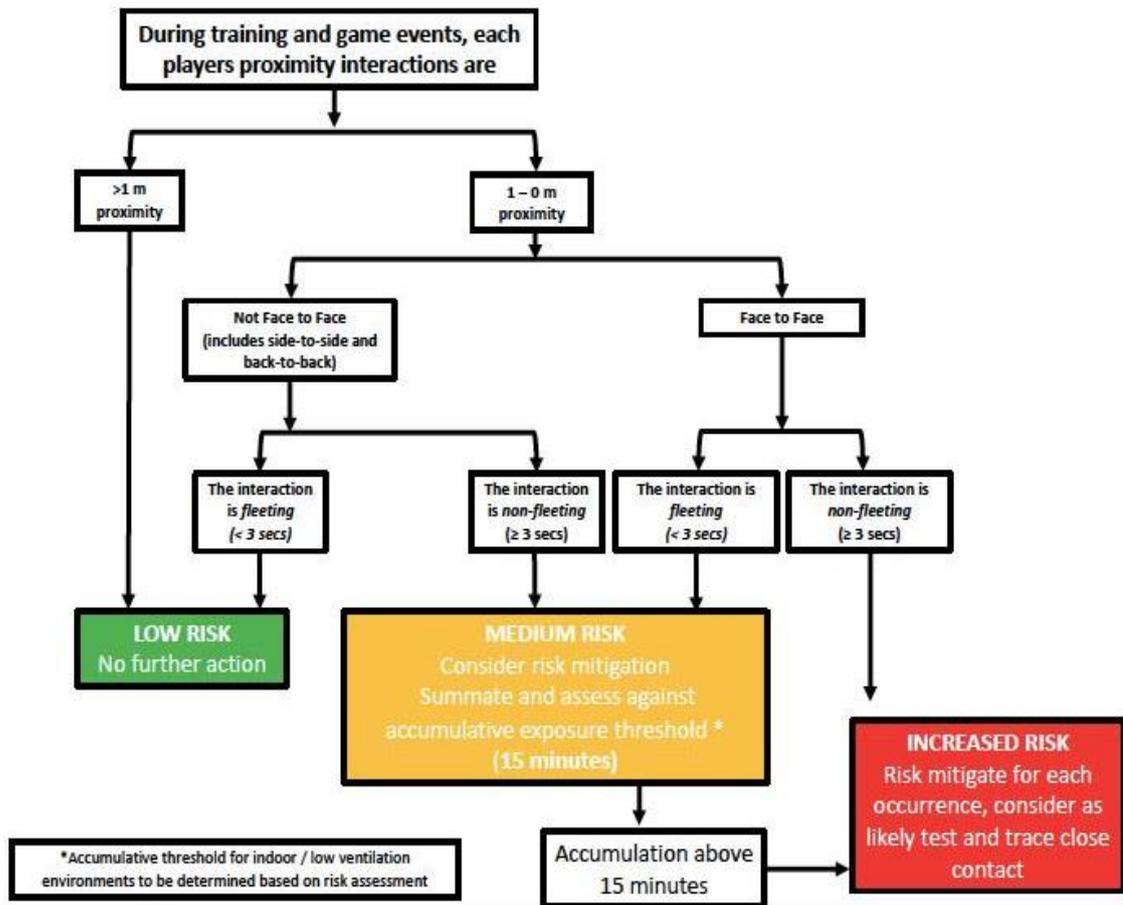
### After all activity

- All participants should sanitise their hands after the completion of activity.
- Participants should exit the playing area whilst maintaining social distancing.
- One team representative/volunteer should be responsible for collecting and disinfecting any shared equipment.
- Regular cleaning of equipment should take place, particularly between one group finishing, and the next group starting.
- Clubs should encourage all participants to report any infection of their household to the [NHS Test and Trace](#) system following use of the facility to limit the spread of the virus.
- Players should take their own equipment home and wash it themselves.



The risk of transmission of COVID-19 during Canoe Polo has been assessed based on three key variables.

1. Droplet transmission
2. Fomite transmission
3. Population



## Droplet Transmission

Contact point	Type	Proximity	Risk	Interaction time	Cumulative Risk	Adaptions/Mitigation	Reasoning	Overall Risk
Charge Start	Face to face	1-0m	Medium	Fleeting <3 sec	Medium	Temporarily suspend the charge start, The team on the right of the lead referee will start with the ball.	Reduce risk of injury that needs medical attention, Temporary removal will have little effect on game.	Low
Open Play	Not face to face	>1m	Low	Fleeting <3 sec	Low	Ensure maximum of 10min halves, enforce the minimum break of 3 mins. During this time players must sanitise hands. Remind players and coaches not to shout during games.	Avoid 'Increased Risk' and keep to 'Medium Risk' Activity.	Low
Zone Play	Face to face	1-0m	Medium	>3 sec	Medium	3min half time break must be enforced, this will keep accumulated time less than 15mins. Possible addition of flexible plastic on face guard (see Appendix 2)	Avoid 'Increased Risk' and keep to 'Medium Risk' Activity.	Medium
Hand Tackle	Face to face	1-0m	Low	Fleeting <3 sec	Medium	3min half time break must be enforced, this will keep accumulated time less than 15mins. Any player who hand tackled an opponent will be reminded at half time and end of game to sanitise hands due to contact.	Risk is low if hand cleaning measures adhered to. Also facemasks stop people touching face.	Low

## Fomite Transmission

Contact point	Type	Occurrence	Risk	Length of time	Cumulative Risk	Adaptions/Mitigation	Reasoning	Overall Risk
Ball contact	Hand	Frequent	High	<5s per contact	High	Sanitation of both hands and ball before and after the game and during half time. When ball goes out of play it should not be retrieved by non-participants. <a href="#">Guidance on equipment sanitation here.</a>		Medium
Paddle contact	Hand/body	Rare	Low	<5s per contact	Low	Already illegal within the rules of play.		Low
Boat Contact	Hand/body	Occasional	Low	<5s per contact	Low	Boat surfaces sanitised post/pre session and wiped down with antimicrobial cloth between games.		Low
Hand Tackle	Hand/body	On average 6 per game.	Low	<5s per contact	Medium	Sanitation of hands before and at end of game, also during half time. Consider temporary suspension depending on level of game.	Risk is low if hand cleaning measures adhered to. Also facemasks stop people touching face.	Low
Pool side/pitch equipment.	Hand/body	Occasional	Low	Varies	Medium	Access/Egress points should be separate to play area where possible, Teams should leave field of play at separate ends of pitch. Contact with pitch equipment is not allowed within general rules of play. Where separate Access/Egress is not possible teams should remain at their respective ends and follow guidance from referee's.		Low

## Fomite Transmission cont.

Contact point	Type	Occurrence	Risk	Length of time	Cumulative Risk	Adaptions/Mitigation	Reasoning	Overall Risk
Referee whistle	Mouth	Frequent	High	>1min	High	Personal equipment only. Under no circumstances allow sharing of referee whistle or cards.		Low
shared equipment	Hand/Body		Medium	>10min	Medium	Club equipment can only be used once it has been properly cleaned and sanitised, this must be done before another player uses in.	Use of club equipment can be restricted at this stage of the Covid-19 outbreak. We will have to allow each individual club to create their own policy around shared equipment.	Low (If shared use suspended)

## General guidance

Item	Type	Occurrence	Risk	Length of time	Cumulative Risk	Adaptions/Mitigation	Reasoning	Overall Risk
Competitors not involved in game	N/A	Frequent	Low	N/A	N/A	Should conform to Government social distancing. Regular sanitation of hands. Restricted to marked team area.		Low
Changing Ends	N/A	1 per game	Low	<1m	Low	Recommended to not change ends at indoor venues. Outdoor venues only where infrastructure allows it.	Avoids having to sanitise the coaches area before half time, also avoids face to face contact as players exchange places on the pitch.	Low
Match officials	N/A	N/A	Low	N/A	Medium	Shouting should not be used to communicate with teams. Coaches may be permitted to move up the pitch side to avoid shouting at the official, they must remain more than 2m away.		Low
Coaches	N/A	Frequent	Low	N/A	Low	Coaches will be allowed to move up the sides of the pitch as far as the half way line to communicate with their team. One this is done they must return immediately to their zone. They must at all times remain 2m away from any match officials	So the coach does not have to shout, increasing the risk of transmission.	Low

## General guidance cont.

Item	Type	Occurrence	Risk	Length of time	Cumulative Risk	Adaptions/Mitigation	Reasoning	Overall Risk
Substitutes	Face to Face	Frequent	Medium	>5mins	Medium	Under the rules of play teams are allowed to have 3 substitutes who wait in 2 areas behind the goal line. Teams will be restricted to 2 substitutes one in each area.	Reduce numbers on the pitch, Avoid prolonged contact within 2m.	Low
Injury treatment	Face to Face	infrequent	Medium	dependant on injury	Medium	Injuries during play should still be treated as participant wellbeing is utmost. The best way to protect yourself and others is through rigorous cleaning. Face coverings are advisable when undertaking treatment. Physios/coaches or their equivalent, should keep a record of each participant they have come into contact with for track and trace purposes. After contact with an injured participant, clean your hands thoroughly at the earliest opportunity. Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose.		Medium
Officials table	Face to Face	Frequent	Medium	>2m	Medium	Event organisers should identify a timekeeper and scorekeeper for the duration of the match/tournament. All pens/stopwatches and other timing equipment must be wiped down with an antimicrobial cloth before and after use.	Recommended that teams do not 'take turns' to run the table.	Low

## General guidance cont.

Item	Type	Occurrence	Risk	Length of time	Cumulative Risk	Adaptions/Mitigation	Reasoning	Overall Risk
Toilets	N/A	N/A	Medium	N/A	Medium	Toilets should be open before the first match and remain open until 30mins after the last match has ended. A regular cleaning schedule must be followed.		Medium
Movement around Venue	N/A	Frequent	Medium	N/A	Medium	Where possible a marked one way system for entry and exit to the playing area should be provided. Event organisers should also provide a socially distanced area for each team at a competition/Training session.		Medium
Supporters/parents/other spectators	N/A	Frequent	Low	N/A	Low	All team supporters and spectators should remain socially distanced from teams. Six person gathering limits are still in force.		Low
Handshake or exchange of gifts	Face to Face	infrequent	High	N/A	High	For the time being exchanging of gifts and captains handshakes before or after the match are suspended.	Has no impact on game and can be stopped to avoid contact risk.	Low

## General guidance cont.

Item	Type	Occurrence	Risk	Length of time	Cumulative Risk	Adaptions/Mitigation	Reasoning	Overall Risk
Open Water	N/A	N/A	Low	>20mins	Low	<a href="#">Studies into the survival of Covid-19 in open water are ongoing.</a>		Low
Salt Water	N/A	N/A	Low	>20mins	Low	Certain academic studies believe that salt water can suppress the Covid-19 virus and stimulate anti-viral defences.		
Pool Water	N/A	N/A	Low	>20mins	Low	Swimming pool water is generally filtered and chlorinated, <a href="#">The treatment of this water inactivates Covid-19.</a>	The available evidence shows that the physical effect of the pool water and an appropriate relationship between free chlorine and pH value should inactivate the virus within 15-30 seconds	Low

### Adherence to measures:

- British Canoeing and its Canoe Polo Committee and has the right to stop, remove suspend and cancel further events or participation by and teams or individuals that breach these guidelines.
- An anonymous online reporting system will be available for incidents to be reported in confidence to the Canoe Polo Committee.

## Population

*“The number of participants likely to take part in the proposed activity plus known risk factors of participants with underlying health conditions or high risk groups, who wish to participate.”*

Canoe Polo has a wide range of competitors young and old. There are currently in the region of 120 teams playing in the following National Leagues:

- Open Division 1
- Open Division 2 North, South
- Open Division 3 North, Central, South
- Open Division 4 North West, North East, South East, South West
- Women Division 1
- Women Division 2
- Youth Division 1

In addition to the above there are local leagues running in all regions. There is also a student league organised by student representatives. With the main student competition attracting around 800 competitors in one weekend.

Generally at a National competition 6 teams will be present with a total event population of around 80 people. There will usually be a number of competitions running across multiple venues in one weekend.



### Summary of Mitigation Measures

Based on the above risk assessments the following mitigation measures have been identified as being necessary to allow competitive Canoe Polo to be undertaken.

No.	Mitigation	Applies To	Conducted By
1	Pre-attendance Symptom Check.	All participants	All participants
2	Maintain record of participant contact details for 21 days.	All participants	Event organiser
3	Normal social distancing protocols to be followed off the water	All participants	All participants
4	Follow guidelines above regarding temporary rule suspensions	Competitors	Event organiser/officials
5	Hand sanitise before, during half time and at end of each match.	All participants	All participants
6	At end of day or before use by another person clean down equipment with water & mild detergent	Competitors	Competitors



# Appendix 1

## CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Covid-19 is a highly infectious and dangerous disease. A resumption of contact play is only achievable if those involved create and maintain a controlled environment that minimises the threat of infection. Risk in sport cannot be completely eradicated but with caution and care these risks can be reduced. Each player will need to decide when to return, based on their own circumstances and the arrangements that have been put in place for a safe return. This is particularly the case for players from BAME communities or those with underlying health conditions.

All those returning to competitive Canoe Polo must adopt the following code of behaviour:

**Be aware of your own personal health.** If you show any of the Covid-19 symptoms you must stay at home, inform NHS Test and Trace and seek medical advice.

**Be responsible.** Read the guidance provided by The Canoe Polo Committee and by your club so that you are aware of the changes to the game and what is expected of you. This will include things like washing your kit, bringing your own labelled water bottle and being aware of changes to meet-up times.

**Practise good hygiene.** Wash your hands regularly and before, during and after a game.

**Where possible maintain social distancing.** This won't always be possible in a competitive match environment (for example when tackling an opponent) and that is acceptable. However, before, and after a game you should maintain social distancing.

**Support NHS Test and Trace.** You're likely to be asked to provide your details so that in the event of a Covid-19 outbreak those potentially infected can be traced. This is to everyone's benefit so please cooperate.

**Do not spit.** Spitting and the rinsing out of mouths is now a recognised risk to health and must not be done.

**Avoid shouting** or raising your voice if face to face with other players.

**After the game.** Be aware that other users may be waiting to use the facilities. Changing rooms and showers are likely to be closed and any socialising must follow the **Government's guidance** on social distancing.



## Appendix 2

Suggested modification to faceguards to limit droplet transmission:

