



Boccia Australia

Return to Sport Framework

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Reviewed September 2021

Note: Attendance information is collected in accordance with the Boccia Australia Privacy Policy.

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The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) published its Framework for Rebooting Sports in a COVID-19 Environment on 1st May 2020, and **reviewed August 2021**, outlining the minimum baseline standards for how reintroduction of sport activity will occur. The principles outlined apply equally to high performance and community level sport. The decisions in regard to timing are at the directive of the State/Territory and local public health authorities. It is worth noting that different States/Territories may permit the resumption of sporting activities at different times.

A staged return has been recommended with the priority at all times being to preserve public health to minimise the risk of community transmission.

The specific advice for Boccia high performance athletes is below however applies to Boccia players at all levels:

Essential for all athletes to have clearance by their individual Specialist medical team prior to any return to training, acknowledging increased vulnerability in many athletes. Specific attention given to increased cleaning of equipment, social distancing (where possible) and the consideration of delay to return to sport.

The full document can be viewed on the AIS website https://ais.gov.au/health-wellbeing/covid-19#ais_framework_for_rebooting_sport

Boccia Australia will follow the Australian Government guidelines relating to COVID-19 with a focus on the specific recommendations suggested for Boccia and further those proposed for *vulnerable people*.

Taking on the key recommendations of delay, increased cleaning and maintaining social distance, the following stages have been developed for Boccia:

Stage	AIS	BA
A	Activity conducted by solo athlete within the home environment Online coaching and resources (videos, playbooks) No sharing of equipment or communal facilities	As AIS
B	As per level A plus: Indoor/outdoor activity that can be conducted in small groups (<10 total) with adequate spacing (4m ² per person) Some sharing of equipment. Communal facilities can be used after a sport-specific structured risk assessment and mitigation process is undertaken Get in, train and get out – be ready for training as soon as you arrive Minimise the use of communal facilities (eg. Gym, court, bathrooms) No socialising in groups or group meals	Maintain level A at a minimum of 4 weeks once level B starts (DELAY) Conduct education ready for resumption of training All athletes to seek advise from their local doctor/medical specialist prior to the resumption of training Conduct risk assessment of training venue and set protocols for the return to training including – hand and cough hygiene, process if someone becomes unwell and cleaning of equipment Recommend all athletes and staff to download the Governments electronic COVID Safe check-ins

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	<p>Have cleaning protocols in place for equipment and facilities</p> <p>Hand hygiene on entry and exit to venues as well as pre, post and during training</p> <p>Maintain 1.5m distance while training</p>	
C	<p>As per Level C plus:</p> <p>Full sporting activity that can be conducted in groups of any size.</p> <p>For larger team sports, consider maintaining some small group separation at training</p> <p>For some athletes, full training will be restricted by commercial operations of a facility and access to international travel Still aim for adequate spacing when training</p> <p>Continue hygiene and cleaning measures</p> <p>Limit unnecessary social gatherings</p>	<p>Wellness checks of all athletes/staff prior to the onset of each training session – complete respiratory symptoms checklist.</p> <p>Reduce duration of training to no more than three hours (reduces the need for an extended break for lunch and limits the use of communal facilities) get in, train and get out.</p> <p><i>Per court</i> - Only two athletes and their sport assistant/carers (to a max of 5 including coach) <i>Per venue</i> – a maximum of 10 at any one time (refer to State/Territory public health orders if < or >10)</p> <p>Hygiene practices on entry, exit and during training</p> <p>Clean Boccia balls and ramps with disinfectant regularly and limit who handles the balls</p> <p>Clean wheelchairs, especially high touch areas and controls regularly</p> <p>Adapt training to maintain social distancing of 1.5m - Pairs/teams training with only two athletes on court at any one time and athletes to play from alternate boxes in all games.</p>
D	NA	<p>Return to full training and domestic competition</p> <p>Consider maintaining small group separation at training if possible.</p> <p>Still aim for adequate spacing</p> <p>Continue to limit unnecessary social gatherings</p> <p>Continue hygiene and cleaning measures as per level C</p>

Four Elements of a Safe Return to Sport

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Plan

Implementing plans, processes, and systems to meet government and health requirements, and provide safe sport environments.

- Education and training
- Personal infection control
- Resources



Prepare

Ensuring safe facility and participant practices, like hygiene practices, attendance registers at training and limiting shared equipment as much as possible.

- Facilities
- Equipment
- Hygiene practice
- Attendance record



Respond

Being prepared for management of a COVID-19 outbreak, noting things can change quickly in your local area.

- Management of unwell participants
- Communication
- Social distancing



Recover

Consideration of protocols to optimise good public and participant health into the future.

- Cleaning
- Review

Mandatory Requirements for the Resumption of Playing

When public health officials determine that the outbreak has ended in the local community, Club officials should follow the relevant advice to identify criteria for scaling back its COVID-19

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prevention actions. The Clubs should also consider which protocols can remain to optimise good public and participant health.

An initial resumption of sporting activity and progression through the stages is largely dependent upon a sustained decrease in transmission rates. It needs to be acknowledged that this process is not linear in that localised outbreaks may require activities to be restricted. Each State/Territory authorities will dictate the timing of the stages.

- Athletes to complete a medical review with their GP/medical specialist to confirm good health and an absence of respiratory symptoms prior to the resumption of training
- All attending boccia, volunteers, athletes, support workers and staff must sign-in. Boccia Australia supports the Governments electronic COVID Safe check-ins. If electronic sign-ins are not used, then written registration forms must be completed on entry.
- Athletes and staff will be advised to seek immediate medical attention should they show COVID-19 symptoms with the potential to be tested. Training will cease until athlete/staff is advised of a negative outcome and all athletes/staff are to self-isolate until such time an outcome is known.
- Training will be limited to only two athletes and their sport assistant/carer per court (total of 5 per court including coach/referee). Social distancing of 1.5m needs to be maintained at all times where possible
- Adapt training to maintain social distancing. I.E athletes train/play within boxes two and five. At a community/club level, prioritise balls skills and the social aspects of the sport until all restrictions are lifted
- Training sessions will be limited to 3 hours in duration
- Cleaning of hands, sport equipment and wheelchairs will be required on entry and exit of the venue and during training
- Get in, train and get out – be ready to train on arrival, train and then go home. No social gatherings or group meals. Do not linger at the venue for small talk
- An attendance record is to be kept for all training sessions and sport activities.

Further Recommendations

- Complete the Australia Federal Governments COVID-19 awareness course <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training>
- Coughing or sneezing to be into a disposable tissue, or the crook of the elbow, with hands washed or sanitised immediately after
- Consider delaying your return to training until such time that you are comfortable and ready in consultation with your family and GP
- It is recommended that all athletes and staff have COVID vaccination, and their flu vaccination is up to date

Guidelines for Clubs

1. Venues may be open, but it is highly recommended that clubs hold off their return for three to four weeks post open to ensure no spikes in community transmission.

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2. All players and support workers should speak to their medical advisors before returning to boccia.
3. Should you display any of the following symptoms; fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, a loss of smell/altered sense of taste (if this is new to you), headache, nausea do not attend boccia and seek medical advice for potential COVID-19 testing.
4. All attending boccia should wear masks.
5. It is recommended all players and support workers have their COVID vaccination, and their flu vaccination is up to date.
6. Players should have their own support worker to care for them while at Boccia and limited to one per player. Only essential participants should attend to minimise numbers. Support workers may work within the 1.5m of their own player adhering to hygiene guidelines
7. Balls and ramps are only to be handled by the player and/or their support worker
8. Organisers to ensure that venues have adequate hand washing facilities available and suitable rubbish bins with regular waste disposal. Players and support workers to ensure they have their own supply of hand sanitiser
9. Cleaning of equipment is required before, during and after each session including frequent wiping of high touch surfaces including players wheelchairs
10. Organisers should determine their State/Territory Government public health orders to determine the number of people allowable within a venue but also consider social distancing requirements (4m² per person). IE, if you can have 20 people per venue, but you only have one court to play on, then this will not allow for adequate social distancing.
11. Should you have more players/support workers than allowable space or number restrictions, consider a rotation system with players coming fortnightly or alternatively, have a morning and afternoon session
12. The initial focus on sessions should be on ball skills and the social aspects of the sport. Games can be reintroduced once more restrictions have been lifted
13. Ideas for sessions include.
 1. Getting as many balls as possible on an A4 piece of paper
 2. Boccia Golf
 3. Being the first person to knock your jack past the 5 metre line
 4. Knocking down skittles
14. Should you wish to play a game, do so with two players but from boxes 2 and 5 only to ensure the social distancing of 1.5m
15. "Get in, play, get out". Be ready to play, reduce the need to use communal facilities and leave at the end of the session. Social distancing must always be adhered to
16. The priority always must be to preserve public health to minimise the risk of community transmission. Delay your return to Boccia where and if possible
17. All clubs to keep a record of attendance at ALL training and club activities. Template available from BA.
18. All fees should be paid by direct debit

Enquires please contact the BA COVID co-ordinator Lucy Bates at secretary@boccia.com.au or 0411961250

Physical Distancing During Matches

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Due to COVID 19 precautions, to ensure physical distancing can be observed in competitions, the following amendments to the BISFed rules 2021_2024_v1 should be introduced for BA competitions:

1. When not throwing, players must move 1.5m away from other players

To maintain the 1.5m distance between players during play, the side not throwing **MUST** be out of their boxes:

- Players are permitted to move outside the court, either behind the back line of the box (wheels over the line), or to an unoccupied side box, or if in Boxes 1 and 6 to outside the side lines, and stay there whilst the other side are throwing
- If they are told by the referee to move away further, or elsewhere, they must
- If a player on the throwing side wishes to throw from the back of his/her box then some non-throwing player(s) may need to move further away to maintain the correct physical distance from the throwing player
- When the order of throw changes, the side that had thrown will leave their boxes and the side to throw will move to their boxes

Players need to be careful when moving so as not to distract the throwing side. As they will be moving out of the box in the throwing side's time, they need to move quickly and carefully and not enter a box occupied by the throwing side

If, in the opinion of the referee, there is deliberate disruption from the non-throwing side when moving out of the box, Rule 15.7.1 shall apply

ALL THROWS MUST BE MADE FROM WITHIN THE PLAYER'S BOX [Rule 15.6.1]
BC3 Players must be in their box when lining up a shot [Rule 14.3]

The process:

In the example below the blue player threw the ball closer to the Jack, therefore they are in their box and red is waiting outside the court.

1. Referee will show the bat for red
2. Blue player will move out of blue box
3. Red player will move into red box
4. When the red player has 4 wheels in the red box (or both feet and their seat, if the player is not in a wheelchair) the Referee will show the bat to the timekeeper. The players time starts.

If the referee is of the opinion that players are taking longer than they need to get into position, Rule 15.9.4 shall apply

2. Players who use manual wheelchairs

BA recognises that players who use manual wheelchairs and are not eligible for an SA, or those who do have an SA but take longer with communication, or those who use a seat (not wheelchair) to play may still be at a disadvantage to those in powered wheelchairs.

The following amendments will be made to compensate for this:

For players with an SA:

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- When the referee indicates that the side not throwing is to throw, SAs can move their player in or out of the box WITHOUT an instruction from the player
- BC1 SAs can enter the box on seeing the referee signal for the other side to throw
- BC3 SAs can move the player when they see the other side preparing or if the referee tells them to

There will be no communication from the SA to the player [Rule 15.5.3] and if an SA is moving a player back into the box and, in the opinion of the referee, is positioning the wheelchair without any instruction from the player, Rule 15.5.5 will apply

3. All BC2,4, 5, EMU players MUST have a COVID Assistant to collect their balls.

The COVID Assistant, the CA can be a family member / friend / support worker / volunteer *but must be someone who has been in regular contact with the player.*

Those who use a manual wheelchair and have difficulty quickly moving out or into the box, or those who do not use a wheelchair when playing, can have their CA move their wheelchair / seat, or hand them mobility aids, if they wish:

- The player does not need to instruct the assistant to move him/her - when the referee indicates that the side to throw has changed, the CA can enter the box and assist the player
- If moving a player with a manual wheelchair into a box, the CA must leave the box once the player is within the box. The athlete cannot ask the assistant to move him / her to a particular place in the box. *If, in the opinion of the referee, the assistant is positioning the chair (either with or without instruction from the athlete) Rule 15.5.5 shall apply*
- A player who does not use a wheelchair can request the assistant put their seat in certain place in the box but once the chair is put down the assistant must leave the box and the seat can only be moved again by the player (the player cannot ask the assistant to move it to another place). Rule 15.5.5 shall apply
- The player to throw the Jack will have it in their box at the start of the end. The second jack will be placed by the CA or SA the designated area.

THERE IS TO BE NO COMMUNICATION FROM THE ASSISTANT TO THE PLAYER (Rule 15.5.3 shall apply) and CAs will collect their player's balls, including the Jack, between ends.

CAs must be registered with the player at the start of the competition

Boccia Australia Head Referee, August 2021

Equipment Maintenance: Cleaning Boccia Equipment

As clubs return to regular session of boccia to ensure the safety of play and prevent the spread of COVID 19, Boccia Australia recommends that boccia equipment be cleaned regularly with disinfectant wipes/solution. It is suggested that the following guidelines be used to clean effectively

- Disinfectant should only be applied to balls in low quantities.
- An antiseptic wipe could be used to gently rub the surface of boccia balls to aid decontamination.
- Equipment should be aired in an open space with ventilation, if possible, to for up to 48 hours.
- You should consider what surfaces your balls are going to come in contact with during session which may contaminate it. e.g., floor, ramps, and players hands. It may be possible to clean the floor prior to session.
- Regular good hand hygiene with sanitiser and hand washing.
- BC3 players should keep a dry cloth / sanitiser wipes in their ball holder to wipe their balls during matches.



Attendance Register for Club:

Register of attendee Activity:	Arrival time	Departure time	Full name	Phone	Email address	Role	In the previous 14 days, have you: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Had any COVID-19 symptoms?• Been in contact with any confirmed/suspected COVID-19 case?• Travelled internationally?	Downloaded and using Government COVID app?

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