

British Para Ice Hockey Association

Returning to play

Introduction

The BPIHA would like to acknowledge the manner in which our players, clubs and wider network continue to use creative ways to engage and stay active during this lock-down period. We have seen amongst other things: online training video's, colouring competitions, quizzes, team zoom meetings and of course the players stick tap for the NHS and Key Workers all of which continues to help to keep our sport in the public eye.

Now that the UK and Home Nation Governments are beginning to ease the lockdown that we have all been subject to since 23rd March, it is important that as an Association we start to make provision for the managed return to training and competition for Para Ice Hockey

However, there is still a great deal of uncertainty around the return of competitive and recreational sport and as you can appreciate, this will be a complex process and one where we must make sure that the welfare of our members, athletes and staff remains the upmost priority. It is therefore critical that we work together to make sure that when we return to the ice, we do so safely.

Behind the scenes the BPIHA have been reviewing and considering how our return to the ice might be managed in a way that is in-line with the government's guidelines and priorities. This managed approach therefore will be determined by government advice on the resumption of indoor physical activity from both the UK and the devolved administrations.

The intention of this guidance is to assist clubs in planning a managed return to competitive hockey and in doing this, we also need to adhere strongly to the guidance set out by the English Ice Hockey Association in their document 'Return to Play' issued on 2nd June 2020 and any future guidance issued by Ice Hockey UK, the British Paralympic Association and the Home Nation Sporting Administrations.

Current Position

There is currently no provision for any of our clubs undertake training on ice and any off-ice training must comply with government guidance around physical activity.

This is the guidance as it stands in England and in Wales.

England: Individuals in teams can travel to meet and train together to do things like conditioning or fitness sessions but they **must** be in wholly separate groups of **no more than 6** people and must always remain **2 metres apart**. While groups could practice ball skills like passing and kicking, equipment sharing should be kept to a minimum and strong hand hygiene practices should be in place before and after. Physical contact with anyone outside of your household is **not permitted**, therefore playing of any games (small sided or full) is also not permitted at this time.

Wales The Welsh Government regulations do not set out what type of exercise is allowed. However, you can only exercise outside, with members of your own household and you must remain in your locality which has been roughly defined as within a **5-mile radius of your own home**.

Returning to play

Subject to the further relaxation of government restrictions specific to indoor sports along with further guidance from EIHA, Ice Hockey UK, the British Paralympic Association, the Home Nation Sporting Administrations and our Insurance Providers the BPIHA is proposing the following managed return, first of all to training and then to competitive hockey.

PHASE 1

Max participants: 10

Social Distancing: 2m

Changing: At home

Small group training to take place **off ice**. Distance to be maintained between participants at a minimum of two metres. Static or dynamic training but with participants required to stay within a specific area and not mix with other training subgroups.

Training may include: • Strength & Conditioning • Cardio • Plyometrics • Stretching • Tactical work • Technical work • Individual skill development • Passing of puck at distances greater than two metres • Strictly no contact or drills within two metres of other participants • Try outs for new players not permitted.

PHASE 2

Max participants: 20

Social Distancing: 2m

Changing: At home

Large group training **on the ice** in 'subgroups' of no more than 5 players. Distance should be maintained between participants of each subgroup at a minimum of two metres for the duration of the session. Training drills would need to take place within each subgroup and players are not to mix with other training subgroups. The subgroups should remain the same until we progress to Phase 3.

Training may include: • Strength & Conditioning • Cardio • Plyometrics • Stretching • Tactical work • Technical work • Individual skill development • Passing of puck at distances greater than two metres • Strictly no contact or drills within two metres of other participants. • No drills that require players to que in line within 2m of other participants • Try outs for new players not permitted.

PHASE 3

Max participants: 20+

Social Distancing: N/A

Changing: At rink

Only when Government restrictions allow will whole team training **without restriction on player movement** be allowed. There will be no requirement to maintain minimum distance however contact drills need to be introduced over a 2 to 3-week period to allow for body conditioning with a minimum length of 3 weeks before progressing to Phase 4.

Training may include: • Strength & Conditioning • Cardio • Plyometrics • Stretching • Tactical work • Technical work • Individual skill development • Progressive sessions in relation to contact. • No other restrictions on sessions.

PHASE 4

Max participants: 20+

Social Distancing: N/A

Changing: At rink

Whole team training without restriction on player movement. Friendly matches to recommence.

PHASE 5

Regular Season Recommences

In order to facilitate this, the BPIHA need to ensure that we continue to maintain our values as a fully inclusive organisation and therefore we will not be returning to the ice until it is safe for all of our players to do so.

1. Shielded Players

In March, the NHS in England and NHS Wales contacted individual's they believed were clinically extremely vulnerable to provide advice as to how to manage their condition. Since then, the Governments of both England and Wales have relaxed the restrictions on these shielded individuals to allow them to participate in limited amounts of exercise and no doubt these restrictions will be relaxed even further. Therefore, it is extremely important that Coaches know if any of their players have been shielding and maintain an up to date understanding of the requirements of their shielded players as they remain vulnerable and may need to continue to take precautions.

2. Testing

There is no provision for the BPIHA to implement a bespoke testing policy for Para Ice Hockey in the UK. Therefore, everyone must comply with the Test and Trace Procedures where you live.

The procedures across the Home Nations are broadly similar and the medical advice is clear: If anyone has coronavirus symptoms, they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and anyone else in their household must self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptoms started

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a. high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)

- b. new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- c. loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you have noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Once an individual with symptoms has isolated, they must order a test immediately. If the test is positive, they will need to continue to isolate and will be contacted by the tracing agency in their area. The individual must comply with the instructions given by the agency and it is conceivable that coaches may be contacted to confirm the details of players that may have been in contact with each other in training.

If the test is negative, the individual and other household members no longer need to self-isolate

3. Prerequisites to commencing Phase 1

Each club will be expected to ensure that all participants adhere to the following requirements for the foreseeable future.

- a. All clubs should have at least one qualified first aider present.
- b. Players and coaches should wash or sanitise hands before and after each session.
- c. In support of the Test and Trace policies, Coaches/Administrators should keep a full register of participants for all training sessions including contact details for participants.
- d. Clubs should have in place a reporting structure for an individual to report symptoms and a communication structure using their registered data for communicating with participants.
- e. Participants with symptoms or signs of illness are strictly forbidden to enter any training facility and must seek medical advice.
- f. All coaches should be prepared to require that a player exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness will need to leave training.
- g. Players should only use their own personal equipment including water bottles and all ice hockey protective equipment. (NB – this will inevitably impact on the ability for clubs to facilitate ‘try-outs’ for new players which will not be permitted during phases 1 and 2)
- h. Water breaks to be taken within subgroups during Phase 1 and 2. Water bottles to be spaced no less than 2 metres apart.
- i. Players should disinfect all equipment after use.
- j. All clothing (jerseys, pant shells, socks, and gloves) should be washed with high temperature after each training session.

4. Additional requirements for on Ice Sessions Phase 2 onwards

- a. Clubs need to ensure that they have adequate alcohol-based hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to allow new players to use club equipment safely.
- b. Coaches need to plan for players to enter the ice, one-by-one using as many entry points as possible in order to give enough time for each player to get on the ice safely.
- c. All Players must adhere appropriately to physical distancing regulations in the locker room potentially using multiple locker rooms as required under a venue specific risk assessment.

- d. For vulnerable groups where players need assistance with equipment, clubs will need to limit the number of carers in the locker room at any one time as required under a venue specific risk assessment and in line with child/vulnerable adult protection guidance.
- e. When leaving the ice, coaches should excuse players one-by-one giving appropriate time for each player to get off the ice. Coaches need to plan to leave an appropriate amount of time at the end of their ice session to complete the dismissal process.

The Management Group

British Para Ice Hockey Association

10th June 2020