

BOWLS ACT FRAMEWORK FOR RETURN TO PLAY IN A COVID-SAFE ENVIRONMENT: PHASE 2.1

Date: 29 May 2020



Introduction

The ACT Government began the first phase of gradual easing of restrictions on sport and recreation when it allowed informal outdoor, non-contact sport to reopen from 16 May. As from midnight tonight (Friday 29 May), the Government is moving to the partial implementation of the second phase of easing restrictions.

The **key change** for Bowls is that, instead of a maximum of 10 people being allowed to train as permitted in the first phase, a maximum of 20 participants and a coach can now train in an outdoor area. The general approach of "get in, train, get out" continues to apply. Physical distancing and hygiene requirements remain in place.

Bowls ACT notes that restrictions are also being eased on cafes, bars, restaurants and clubs, which will be able to cater for up to 20 people in each enclosed space. If relevant, bowls clubs will need to assess the interaction of these changes with practice sessions, for example, in relation to maintaining physical distancing for persons entering and exiting club premises. It may also be the case that bowlers completing a practice session will want to take advantage of club facilities. They will need to be taken into account in the 20 people allowed in an enclosed space in a club.

Bowls ACT recalls the ACT Government expects sports to have a clear "Return to Play in a COVID-safe Environment" framework that details how, in a sport-specific setting, activity will be delivered under each phase. This requirement applies to both sporting organisations, such as Bowls ACT, and the clubs which are members of those organisations. Organisations and clubs must be able to produce a copy of their completed framework for compliance purposes if asked.

This document is the framework prepared by Bowls ACT for phase 2.1. Clubs in the ACT should continue to draw on the Bowls ACT Framework in relation to their own documents. Clubs which are located in New South Wales should follow the requirements laid down by the State Government.

At this stage, Government officials advise that a general return to competition for sports will not occur until phase 3, which is anticipated to commence in mid-July if the situation with COVID-19 permits.

Frameworks are to be consistent with the ACT Public Health Directions, ACT Government guidelines and take account of the AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport in a COVID-19 Environment. The Public Health Directions are made under the Public Health Act. Failure to comply with the Directions may be penalised by a significant fine.

FRAMEWORK

The highest priority of Bowls ACT remains the full resumption of bowls under arrangements which protect the health of our bowling community. This can only be done within the framework of ACT Government restrictions to combat COVID-19.

Bowls ACT recognises that there are members of the bowling community who are at greater risk in relation to COVID-19 because of age or underlying medical conditions. Those most at risk are:

- people aged 70 years and over;
- people aged 65 years and over with chronic medical conditions;
- people with compromised immune systems; and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50 with one or more chronic medical conditions.

If you are at greater risk, please consider carefully whether you should be bowling at this time.

Practice only

- Greens may only be used for practice (no return to regular social bowls – eg. Friday afternoon pairs or Wednesday morning triples; no championships; and no barefoot bowls). Bowlers having a roll-up can train by playing a modified match (either time limited or reduced number of ends).

"Get in, train, get out"

- Be prepared for practice before arriving at the club. A practice session may run for 1 - 2 hours. When their session on the green is completed and after cleaning equipment, bowlers should leave the club. However, if the club's bar and other facilities are open, bowlers may want to use those facilities. If so, they must be taken into account in the 20 people allowed in an enclosed space in a club.

Number of bowlers per green

- During phase 1 a maximum of 10 bowlers could practice per green at any one time. Under the partial implementation of phase 2, a maximum of 20 participants (plus a coach) can train in an outdoor area. This number cannot be adopted for a bowls green because, in keeping with guidelines from Bowls Australia, there is to be an empty rink between rinks in use. This reduces the risk of breaching the 1.5m distance requirement

in relation to bowlers on neighbouring rinks. The guidelines from Bowls Australia also state that, subject to state-specific social gathering and distancing restrictions, up to 4 people should be allowed to play per rink.

- As such, the maximum number of bowlers per green will depend on the number of rinks that can be used. If 4 rinks on a green are in use with the appropriate separation, and allowing for the maximum number of 4 bowlers per rink, the maximum number of bowlers on the green would be 16. If only 3 rinks are in use, the maximum number of bowlers on the green would be 12. In either case, a coach could be present on the green without being counted in the maximum number of bowlers.
- If coaching takes place, the coach and participants should practice physical distancing of 1.5m during the session.
- No spectators should be allowed at practice sessions. However, a bowler may be accompanied by a parent or carer.

Keep your distance

- A distance of at least 1.5m is to be maintained between persons on a green, in the area around that green and elsewhere on club grounds and premises (including carparks).
- A parent or carer accompanying a bowler should remain away from the green if at all possible.

Pay close attention to hygiene

- Do not practice if you are unwell and leave the club if you begin to feel unwell.
- Hand hygiene is very important, including washing hands before and after bowling. Clubs must have hand sanitisers available to be used by bowlers on entry to, and exit from, the club, as well as pre, post and during practice.
- Avoid physical contact.
- Bowls equipment cannot be shared between bowlers. Club bowls should not be used.
- Bowlers are to use separate mats and jacks (or ensure that the same bowler on each rink places the mat or places/rolls the jack). Mats and jacks are to be cleaned after use. Clubs should provide disinfectant spray and disposable wipes for cleaning, which should be done, if possible, by the bowlers who have used the mats and jacks.
- Water bubblers are not to be used.

- Do not share personal equipment such as cleaning cloths, towels and drink bottles. Please do not pick up any bowls but your own.
- Communal facilities such as changerooms are not to be used. Toilets can be used subject to appropriate cleaning protocols being in place. Clubs which are attached to sporting clubs or community clubs may not have access to toilets.

Managing numbers and keeping records

- In order to implement these measures effectively, clubs should put in place arrangements for bowlers to book practice times in advance so that they only come to a club when certain that a rink will be available. The booking sheet should record details of all persons practicing on a rink, and arrival and departure times of each person, to assist with contact tracing in the event of a COVID-19 positive result within a club. Bowlers should sign the booking sheet (using their own pen) to indicate that they understand the club requirements to practice. A copy of the requirements should be kept with the booking sheets.
- A separate sheet is to be kept for parents and carers entering a club, recording their details, arrival and departure times and who they are accompanying. They should also sign the sheet to indicate that they understand the club requirements.
- It is recommended that clubs allow 15-20 mins between timeslots to ensure that bowlers have time to leave the venue prior to bowlers for the next timeslot arriving. This will also allow time to clean equipment in between uses.
- If a club is prepared to allow bowlers from other clubs to practice on its greens, those bowlers are to comply with the same requirements as the club's own bowlers.
- According to their circumstances, clubs will need to arrange for staff or volunteers to supervise practice sessions. Clubs should take appropriate action if a member fails to meet the requirements for participating in a practice session.

Communication

- Clubs should ensure that their frameworks are circulated to all members and displayed prominently at club premises. Frameworks should also be available on club websites. This Framework will be available on the Bowls ACT website.

Review

- Bowls ACT will keep its Framework under review to ensure that it complies with the current requirements laid down by the ACT Government. Clubs should keep their frameworks under review.