

## **COVID REGULATIONS GUIDANCE – SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

### **Summary Position for sport and physical activity from 11 December 2020**

- Elite training and competition can continue, both indoors and outdoors. The definition of an elite athlete is set out in the regulations. ([external link opens in a new window / tab](#))
- Outdoor exercise permitted in groups of up to a maximum of 15.
- Outdoor sports events and gatherings, permitted subject to a risk assessment if more than 15 attending and measures in place to limit risk of virus transmission, with an upper limit of 500 on participants. An upper limit of 500 spectators is permitted regardless of venue capacity.
- The risk assessment in respect of a venue at which a sporting event occurs must include a consideration of risks relating to those outside the venue who are entering or leaving the venue.
- As Covid is spread by respiratory droplets, group indoor sports/exercise activities that have high levels of exertion (i.e. that cause participants to get out of breath) are not permitted at this time.
- Gyms, swimming and diving pools can open for individual training, training with a personal trainer/coach and classes of up to 15 that do not cause an individual to get out of breath. Contact details must be taken.

- Indoor competitive and recreational sport is limited to elite, individual (including with a coach/trainer, or carer), and non-contact exercise classes/activities of up to 15 people that do not cause an individual to get out of breath.
- Physical education delivered by or for schools, pre-schools and other education providers is permitted to continue.
- Inter-school competitive sporting events are not permitted.

### **Questions and Answers**

The restrictions in place from 11 December make it possible for a number of sporting and physical activities to return. It is important that clubs are led by their Governing Bodies in terms of protocols to ensure that the response is uniform across any sport. It is key to revisit existing protocols to ensure that they remain valid, given current health advice, and if necessary upgrade these to ensure a safe environment for all participants.

There will be a need to complete new risk assessments for specific events and this is a key first step to ensure that adequate protocols are in place and that these are up to date with current health advice regarding aspects such as social distancing, use of facemasks, control of gatherings, travel arrangements, contact tracing etc. Once protocols are in place it is also vital to communicate these to participants in advance of any return so that they know what to expect and how to behave.

There are a number of short videos available at [Fight Back 5 | Sport NI](#). Please watch these for important messages on areas for clubs and Governing Bodies to focus on in the weeks ahead. By following the advice in these videos, sports people can play an important role in the fightback against Covid-19, keep sport moving forward and contribute to the physical and mental well-being of all involved.

Query	Response
<b>Spectators at sporting events</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sports events risk assessed if more than 15 people attending but a new upper limit of 500 spectators in total. The risk assessment may result in a lower number.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm this is an absolute limit i.e. no exceptions for larger stadia.</li> </ul>	The maximum limit for spectators is 500 regardless of venue capacity.
<b>Outdoor sport</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor exercise permitted in groups of up to a maximum of 15.</li> <li>Outdoor sports events and gatherings, permitted subject to a risk assessment if more than 15 attending and measures in place to limit risk of virus transmission, with an upper limit of 500 on participants. An upper limit of 500 spectators is permitted regardless of venue capacity.</li> <li>Inter-school competitive sporting events are not permitted.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previous regulations had an exemption to permit numbers in excess of 15 for sport, assuming a risk assessment has taken place. Will this be the case from 11 December?</li> </ul>	Yes. Outdoor exercise in groups is limited to 15 people. More people can attend where a gathering has been organised or operated for recreational and sporting purposes subject to a risk assessment and measures being in place to limit the risk of virus transmission.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can large events such as parkruns, fun runs, swims, cycles etc. take place following a risk assessment?</li> </ul>	Yes. Large outdoor sporting and exercise events, like park runs, are permitted subject to a risk assessment if more than 15 people attending and measures in place to limit risk of virus transmission with an upper limit of 500 on participants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is contact training and use of equipment such as footballs allowed? At all levels?</li> </ul>	Yes, outdoors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are outdoor sporting competitions below elite allowed e.g. can football leagues take place?</li> </ul>	Outdoor sports events can take place, subject to a risk assessment if more than 15 people attending with measures in place to limit risk of virus transmission. An upper limit of 500 spectators is permitted. Inter-school competitive sporting events are not permitted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor events and gatherings risk assessed if more than 15 attending but a new upper limit of ??? What is the limit on number of participants?</li> </ul>	An upper limit of 500 participants is place for outdoor events and gatherings. Events are subject to a risk assessment if more than 15 people attending with measures in place to limit risk of virus transmission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motorsports that involve two occupants in a vehicle – is that permitted?</li> </ul>	Motorsports involving two occupants in a vehicle are permitted, with measures put in place to limit the risk of virus transmission.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No inter-school competitive sport. Can underage competitive sport take place outside of schools?</li> </ul>	Club youth and children’s sport can resume.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can organized outdoor recreation re-commence?</li> </ul>	Outdoor gatherings organised or operated for recreational and sporting purposes can take place, subject to a risk assessment if more than

Query	Response
	15 people are attending and measures being in place to limit the risk of virus transmission. An upper limit of 500 participants is in place.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can fishing competitions take place?</li> </ul>	Outdoor Sports events, are subject to a risk assessment if more than 15 people attending with measures in place to limit risk of virus transmission. An upper limit of 500 participants is permitted.
<p><b>Indoor Sport</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gyms, swimming and diving pools can open for individual training, training with a personal trainer/coach and classes of up to 15 that do not cause an individual to get out of breath.</li> <li>• Contact details must be taken.</li> <li>• Indoor competitive and recreational sport is limited to elite, individual (including with a coach/trainer, or carer), and non-contact exercise classes/activities of up to 15 people that do not cause an individual to get out of breath.</li> <li>• Inter-school competitive sporting events are not permitted.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What about activities like indoor exercise classes for older people/people with disabilities in community centres etc?</li> </ul>	<p>Indoor and outdoor recreational and leisure facilities can reopen. 15 people maximum for non-contact exercise classes/activities that do not cause an individual to get out of breath.</p> <p>Organisers are responsible for selection of permissible activities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming pools open?</li> </ul>	Indoor and outdoor recreational and exercise facilities, including swimming and diving pools can reopen for individual exercise.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can swimming clubs operate? Can swimming clubs resume lessons / coaching in groups? Is there a maximum number of participants?</li> </ul>	<p>15 people maximum for non-contact exercise classes/activities that do not cause an individual to get out of breath.</p> <p>Organisers are responsible for selection of permissible activities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can leisure centres reopen their indoor courts, studios, halls for group activities?</li> </ul>	<p>Indoor and outdoor recreational and leisure facilities can reopen.</p> <p>15 people maximum for non-contact exercise classes/activities that do not cause an individual to get out of breath.</p> <p>Organisers are responsible for selection of permissible activities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can indoor sport take place e.g. snooker, bowls, badminton, netball? Can snooker competitions take place with spectators?</li> </ul>	<p>Indoor competitive and recreational sport is limited to elite, individual (including with a coach/trainer, or carer), and non-contact exercise classes/activities of up to 15 people that do not cause an individual to get out of breath.</p> <p>As Covid is spread by respiratory droplets, indoor sports / exercise activities that have high levels of exertion (i.e. cause participants to get out of</p>

Query	Response
	breath) are not permitted at this time. Organisers are responsible for selection of permissible activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can indoor competitions take place?</li> </ul>	Indoor competitive and recreational sport is limited to elite, individual (including with a coach/trainer, or carer), and non-contact exercise classes/activities of up to 15 people that do not cause an individual to get out of breath.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can indoor team training take place? All levels?</li> </ul>	Indoor sport is limited to elite; individual (including with a coach/trainer, or carer), and non-contact exercise classes/activities of up to 15 people that do not cause an individual to get out of breath. Organisers are responsible for selection of permissible activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can gymnastic clubs/classes resume?</li> </ul>	<p>Indoor competitive and recreational sport is limited to elite, individual (including with a coach/trainer, or carer), and non-contact exercise classes/activities of up to 15 people that do not cause an individual to get out of breath.</p> <p>As Covid is spread by respiratory droplets, indoor sports / exercise activities that have high levels of exertion (i.e. cause participants to get out of breath) are not permitted at this time. Organisers are responsible for selection of permissible activities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can spin classes take place in large halls as individual training?</li> </ul>	No – only individual exercise and non-contact exercise classes/activities of up to 15 people that do not cause an individual to get out of breath.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can indoor contact sports take place (training/competitions) with mitigations ie combat sports, MMA, Boxing</li> </ul>	<p>No – Indoor competitive and recreational sport is limited to elite, individual (including with a coach/trainer, or carer), and non-contact exercise classes/activities of up to 15 people that do not cause an individual to get out of breath.</p> <p>Organisers are responsible for selection of permissible activities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can climbing venues open for activities? Outdoor recreation centre – course/training?</li> </ul>	<p>Indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities can reopen.</p> <p>Indoor competitive and recreational sport is limited to elite, individual (including with a coach/trainer, or carer), and non-contact exercise classes/activities of up to 15 people that do not cause an individual to get out of breath. Organisers are responsible for selection of permissible activities.</p> <p>Outdoor gatherings organised or operated for recreational and sporting purposes can take place, subject to a risk assessment if more than 15 people are attending and measures being in</p>

Query	Response
	place to limit the risk of virus transmission. An upper limit of 500 participants is in place.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can equestrian sport recommence both indoors and outdoors – training/competitions?</li> </ul>	<p>Indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities can reopen.</p> <p>Indoor competitive and recreational sport is limited to elite, individual (including with a coach/trainer, or carer), and non-contact exercise classes/activities of up to 15 people that do not cause an individual to get out of breath. Premises must comply with PHA and social distancing guidance. Organisers are responsible for selection of permissible activities.</p> <p>Outdoor gatherings organised or operated for recreational and sporting purposes can take place, subject to a risk assessment if more than 15 people are attending and measures being in place to limit the risk of virus transmission. An upper limit of 500 participants is in place.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can Zumba, Irish Dancing, Disco, Jive etc take place – dance or exercise??</li> </ul>	<p>Dance is still classified with sport for the purposes of the regulations. Indoor competitive and recreational sport is limited to elite, individual (including with a coach/trainer, or carer), and non-contact exercise classes/activities of up to 15 people that do not cause an individual to get out of breath.</p> <p>Organisers are responsible for selection of permissible activities.</p>

**Restrictions in place from 00:01 am on 27 November 2020 until 23:59 on 10 December.**

- Indoor and outdoor sport is not permitted, other than at elite level.
- Elite training and competition can continue, both indoors and outdoors. Elite sporting events must be held behind closed doors without spectators.  
The definition of an elite athlete is set out [in the regulations.\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)
- All sports facilities such as leisure centres, gyms, health clubs, swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses, fitness and dance studios must close. Other exercise facilities including activity centres, equestrian centres (access for the purpose of animal welfare is permitted), marinas, and venues relating to motor sport and water sport must also remain closed.
- Only individual or household outdoor exercise is permitted. Physical activity such as walking, running, cycling, horse riding, or just walking the dog, bring many health benefits. You cannot participate in personal one-to-one training sessions or group activities such as running or cycling.
- Physical education delivered by or for schools, pre-schools and other education providers is permitted to continue.