

# Government gives green light to resumption of competitive sport behind closed doors

- Guidance permits return to domestic competition from 1 June 2020
- First major sporting event expected to be 2000 Guineas Stakes at Newmarket Racecourse on 6 June
- Follows guidance supporting the return to training for elite and professional sport

The Culture Secretary has outlined the strict conditions for elite athletes and professional sportsmen and women to resume competitive sport safely behind closed doors in England from 1 June 2020, paving the way for the first domestic live action in almost three months.

The [‘stage three’ guidance](#), published today (30 May) by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), has been developed in close consultation with the Deputy Chief Medical Officers of England, Public Health England and medical representatives across Olympic, Paralympic and professional sports governing bodies.

The guidance, designed for competition delivery partners and elite sport organisations, outlines the facilities and processes that will need to be in place, including that there will be no spectators at events.

Providing its conditions are met, one of the first major sporting events is expected to be the 2000 Guineas Stakes race meeting, which would take place at Newmarket Racecourse on 6 June and be broadcast on free to air television.

Following detailed discussions with DCMS, the Deputy Chief Medical Officers and Public Health England, preparations are also being finalised for the Premier League and EFL football to resume later in June. This will be subject to a successful vote from their clubs and approval by safety advisory groups including police.

Further announcements are expected to be made by other sporting governing bodies in due course.

In light of the Government making clear that the Premier League should widen access for fans to view live coverage during the remainder of the season in light of ongoing social distancing measures, the Premier League has this week reached an agreement with its broadcast partners to televise a significant proportion of its remaining matches on free-to-air platforms, including Sky’s ‘Pick’ TV, that is available on Freeview, and for the first time in Premier League history, the BBC.

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden, said:

The wait is over. Live British sport will shortly be back on in safe and carefully controlled environments.

This guidance provides the safe framework for sports to resume competitions behind closed doors. It is now up to individual sports to confirm they can meet these protocols and decide when it's right for them to restart.

This is a significant moment for British sport. By working with clinicians every step of the way, we are creating the safest possible environments for everyone involved.

The stage three guidance makes clear that the following conditions should be met for the staging of competitive sporting events until further notice:

- All competition delivery partners and user groups involved, from the teams and athletes, to the support staff, officials and media, must travel individually and by private transport where possible;
- Prior to entering the competition venue, they are expected to carry out a screening process for coronavirus symptoms. Anyone with known or suspected Covid-19 will not be permitted to enter and should be placed, or remain, in isolation and follow the latest Government guidelines;
- A one-way system for the movement of people and vehicles should be established around the competition venue;
- Social distancing should be maintained by all groups where possible. This includes the competing athletes and support staff on the bench and field of play, such as during any disputes between players and referees, or scoring celebrations;
- Where social distancing cannot be maintained, sports governing bodies, clubs and teams should implement a rigorous regime to monitor for symptoms;
- Dressing room usage should be minimised, however showers can be used in line with Government guidelines;
- All non-essential activities, such as catering, should be limited;
- Team / athlete medical staff must ensure they adhere to the latest Public Health England advice, such as through the use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment. Physiotherapy treatment should be limited to an essential need only;
- Competition delivery partners and elite sports organisations should appoint a named COVID-19 Officer to be responsible for oversight of all planning and communications, and a named COVID-19 Medical Officer to have oversight of and manage any individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases, to ensure necessary standards are met;
- Other restrictions applying to the general population must be adhered to outside of competition venues and official elite training venues.

It is expected that the guidelines will be considered by competition delivery partners (such as the organiser and venue operator) and elite sport organisations (such as the national governing bodies, professional leagues and clubs), and applied to their individual competitions. They will have the responsibility to decide when it is safe and appropriate to move to stage

three and resume competition when they have their own protocols in place.

They must also ensure all competition delivery partners and user groups involved in staging a competitive sporting event, from the teams and athletes, to the support staff, officials and media, are fully briefed to ensure they have understood the specific risks and mitigations, and be clear that they must actively 'opt in'.

It follows ['stage two' guidance published on 25 May](#) making clear that elite athletes could resume competitive, close contact training at official elite training venues, so that players can get match fit under carefully controlled medical conditions. However it made clear that time spent within a two metre distance should be kept to a minimum, equipment sharing should be avoided, and communal areas, such as changing rooms, cafes, team rooms and recovery spaces, should remain closed where possible.

['Stage one' guidance](#) was published earlier this month, outlining conditions for a return to individual performance training at official elite training venues while maintaining social distancing from teammates and other people outside their households. This included safeguards such as the deep cleaning of facilities and the screening of athletes and staff for coronavirus symptoms before they can enter the training venue by an appropriately trained healthcare professional.

All relevant standards defined in stages one and two for a return to training must continue to apply, and must be satisfied before a sport or sporting event can progress to stage three.

The elite sport return to training guidance intends to minimise the risk to the elite sports community, while also minimising any pressure elite sport places on healthcare workers and the wider community. Like all changes to current measures it will be kept under review in accordance with the Government's Covid alert system.

- [Read and watch Oliver Dowden's statement](#)
- The guidance follows the Government's publication of its [COVID-19 recovery strategy](#), as it takes forward the next phase of its response to the virus. This outlined that a return of elite sport would not happen before 1 June and would be dependent on whether the risk assessment posed by coronavirus allows the country to move onto the second step of the Government's recovery strategy.
- In addition to guidance for elite athletes, DCMS has published [guidance for the general public](#) on the phased return of outdoor sport and recreation.

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# [Oliver Dowden's statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 30 May 2020](#)

[Watch Oliver Dowden's statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 30 May 2020](#)

Let me begin with the latest figures:

- 4,171,408 tests for coronavirus have now been carried out in the UK, including 127,722 tests carried out yesterday;
- 272,826 people have tested positive, that's an increase of 2,445 cases since yesterday;
- And sadly, of those tested positive for coronavirus, across all settings, 38,376 have now died. That's an increase of 215 fatalities since yesterday. This new figure includes deaths in all settings not just in hospitals.

Of course, every one of those deaths is a tragedy, for the family involved and our thoughts are with all of them.

As the Chancellor outlined yesterday, those numbers show we are now past the peak and as we continue to flatten the curve, we are able to start reopening parts of the economy. We are also looking at how to begin relaxing other measures so that we can reestablish some normality in other parts of our lives.

Which brings me to something which many people have been eagerly awaiting news about – that's the return of live sport.

More than two months after sport stopped, and after weeks of round-the-clock discussions with medical experts and professional sports bodies, I'm delighted to announce today that the government has published guidance which allows competitive sport to resume behind closed doors from Monday at the earliest, and crucially, only when it is safe to do so.

It's up to each individual sport to decide exactly when to resume competition. They know their sports best.

But football, tennis, horse racing, Formula One, cricket, golf, rugby, snooker and others – all are set to return to our screens shortly, with horse racing first out of the gate in the North East next week.

It's been a huge challenge to get to this point. We've taken a forensic, clinician-led approach, working with Public Health England and the Department of Health every step along the way.

We've had dozens of meetings, and published pages of detailed guidance outlining first how to get elite athletes back into socially-distanced

training, and then back into close-contact training.

Throughout all of this, we've put the safety of the athletes, coaches and support staff first and foremost. And by working so closely with the sports themselves, we have made sure this has been a collaborative, consensual effort to create the safest possible environments for everyone involved.

The guidance outlines various measures that need to be in place for an event to go ahead, and to keep everyone involved safe. That includes a screening process for coronavirus symptoms at the venue, a one-way system for people and vehicles, minimising the use of dressing rooms, and of course, maintaining social distancing wherever that is possible.

And as all sports fully recognise, ensuring the mental health of their athletes and staff is as important as their physical health, particularly in these very difficult times. Our guidance today reinforces that.

It's taken a lot of hard work to get us here today, so thank you to everyone those involved. It will be welcome news for many.

Much of the media attention has focused on football, because it has a special place in our national life. Recognising its significance, I set two challenges for football's return: first that a reasonable number of remaining Premier League games would be broadcast free-to-air, and second that the financial benefits of returning would be shared throughout the entire football family.

I'm glad to confirm today that a third of the matches to finish the season will now be free to view, including the Liverpool v Everton derby. Live Premier League football will be on the BBC for the first time in its history. This is an open invitation to all fans to be part of this significant moment in our sporting history. It also of course has the really serious public health benefit of encouraging people to watch at home, which will be essential.

Getting the top leagues back up and running will also release much needed funding to support clubs lower down, many of whom are cornerstones of their local communities.

With both of these benefits, I can now make it official: Football is coming back.

Of course, these headline sporting events are only one part of the story.

I'm keenly aware that even as we reopen some domestic competitive fixtures, not all events will be back on.

And given the deserved momentum that had built up behind women's sport after the football, cricket and netball world cups, I will be working hard with the Sports Minister to make sure we don't lose any of that progress. Visibility matters. Our daughters deserve to see female athletes on the main stage.

Now our focus is also on how we can get grassroots sport back up and running

safely, so that people can reunite with their local teammates.

While those teams can't compete together yet, today I'm glad to confirm that we are also relaxing the rules on exercise further, so that from Monday people will be able to exercise with up to five others from different households, crucially so long as they remain 2 metres apart.

That means people who play team sports can train together and do things like conditioning and fitness sessions that don't involve physical contact.

It's another vital and important step in the right direction.

We've all become a nation of early morning walkers, Wicks workout-ers and evening park runners. Many of us have discovered how valuable and therapeutic physical activity can be and, I hope, we will continue to make more time for it even as life gradually returns to normal.

We still have a way to go. But for a sport-loving nation, today really is a significant milestone. We won't be sitting in the stands for a while, and things will be very different to what we're used to. But live sport will be back on our screens next week. The British sports recovery has begun.

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## [JCPoA: France, Germany, UK and EU](#) [Joint Statement](#)

News story

JCPOA: Joint statement by spokespersons of the High Representative of the European Union and the Foreign Ministries of France, Germany and the United Kingdom.



Joint statement by spokespersons of the High Representative of the European Union and the Foreign Ministries of France, Germany and the United Kingdom:

We deeply regret the US decision to end the three waivers covering key JCPOA nuclear projects in Iran, including the Arak Modernisation Project.

These projects, endorsed by UN Security Council resolution 2231, serve the non-proliferation interests of all and provide the international community with assurances of the exclusively peaceful and safe nature of Iranian nuclear activities.

We are consulting with our partners to assess the consequences of this decision by the United States.

The JCPOA is a key achievement of the global non-proliferation architecture and currently the best and only way to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. That is why we have worked continuously with the aim of ensuring the full and effective implementation of commitments under the JCPOA, in particular the return of Iran to full compliance with its nuclear commitments without delay.

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# **[PM call with President Erdoğan of Turkey: 29 May 2020](#)**

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey today.



The Prime Minister spoke to Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan this evening.

The two leaders agreed on the importance of working together internationally to deal with and defeat the coronavirus pandemic.

They discussed the importance of the UK and Turkey's economic and trade relationship, and their shared goal to build on it in the future.

They also agreed to keep working together on important regional and geopolitical issues, including the crises in Libya and Syria.

The Prime Minister extended an invitation to President Erdoğan to attend the UK-hosted Global Vaccine Summit on 4 June, which aims to raise vital funds to save the lives of millions of children around the world.

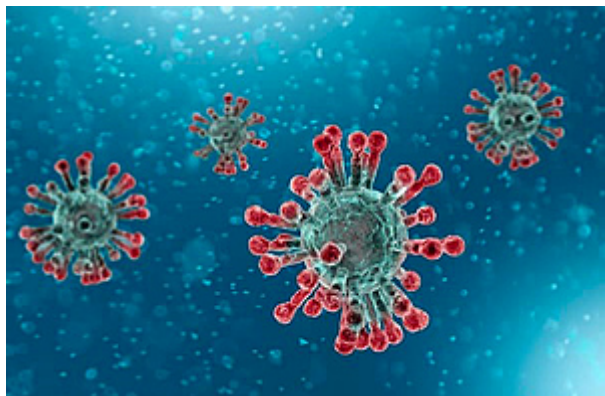
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## [Government publishes SAGE minutes](#)

News story

The Government Office for Science has today (Friday 29 May) published the minutes from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) meetings 1 to 34, up until the beginning of May.



SAGE minutes outline the scientific and health issues discussed and actions and advice agreed during each meeting of the group during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been meeting regularly since 22 January when it convened for the first time and typically meets twice a week.

SAGE is responsible for providing Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR) meetings with coherent, coordinated advice and to interpret complex or uncertain scientific evidence in non-technical language. The Government Chief Scientific Adviser (GCSA) and Chief Medical Officer (CMO) represent SAGE at COBR, and SAGE usually convenes in advance of COBR. Ministers receive advice from SAGE in the form of these minutes, as well as verbal contributions from the GCSA and CMO in COBR and other ministerial meetings.

Minutes for SAGE meetings, along with the evidence used to inform SAGE advice, has always been published at the end of any event or emergency that it has been convened for, like the near collapse of Toddbrook Reservoir in 2019 or the Zika outbreak in 2016.

Given the exceptional nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government, SAGE and its participants want to ensure there is as much available evidence and material as possible to the general public so there is full transparency on how science advice is being formulated.

The minutes published today cover those from its first meeting to the meetings that took place at the beginning of May. The minutes for meetings that have taken place after 7 May still contain sensitive information, with policy advice still under live consideration. These will be published in the coming weeks.

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