

Swimming Return to Competition Guidance

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Introduction



BRITISH SWIMMING SELECTION TRIALS 2021

LONDON AQUATICS CENTRE, LONDON

14-18 APRIL



Swimming return to competition

Guidance

Introduction

- No major Open Meet Competition since March 2020
- Return to Pool Guidance covering training issued July 2020
- Level X Racing introduced October 2020 – Series Two April 2021
- 5 stage Roadmap was produced by the Swimming Leadership Group
- Return to competition starts at Stage 4
- Level 4 Licensed Meets from May 17th (stc) applications from 26th April
- Remaining Licenced Meets from June 21st (stc) applications from 1st June



The campaign urges the public to stick to these rules and remember the key behaviours of washing hands, wearing face coverings, making space and meeting in the fresh air to help stop the spread of Covid-19.

Introduction

- The guidelines that follow are intended to mitigate the transmission risk of Covid-19 and safeguard swimmers, coaches, officials, spectators and volunteers as we safely return to competition.
- This document refers to current Government guidance for England only and is subject to change in response to the current Covid-19 Alert Level, community prevalence of Covid-19 and/or to reflect additional or updated Government guidance.

Key requirements for a Covid-secure activity

- Appoint a Covid-19 Lead and have Covid liaisons for each area of the competition (swim down, warm up, results area, Marshalling etc.). This person should not hold any other position at the event.
- Read and understand this guidance in full and agree to operate in line with it.
- Risk assess the activity in conjunction with the facility operator's own Risk Assessment and operating procedures.
- Requirement for the facility management to agree with the event Covid-19 action/operation plan.
- Develop and activate a risk mitigation activity plan.

Key requirements for a Covid-secure activity

- All activity must comply with the Government guidance around social distancing, including pre, during or post activity.
- Facility operators (via [NHS QR Code 'check in' system](#)) must record all participants' contact details for the NHS Test and Trace programme. Meet promoters/Event organisers should liaise with their facility operator to ensure this process is in place.
- Avoid large areas of congregation – arrive, warm up, race, depart.

Summary of guiding principles for swimming and para-swimming competitions

- Event organisers need to adapt their plans for hosting competitive activity, with the guiding principle being to ensure that current Government guidance, relating to social distancing, in place at the time of the meet remains adhered to.
- Event organisers with limited poolside space need to consider innovative ways of scheduling their competitions, to reduce the number of competitors per session. Organisers could consider organising single age group or single gender sessions, for example, with competitors swimming all of their events in a reduced time frame.

Summary of guiding principles for swimming and para-swimming competitions

- Prior to commencing any detailed planning, the event organiser should discuss and agree with the facility at the earliest opportunity the proposed event and explain the type of planned activity and the likely movement of different groups. This will enable the venue provider to determine the maximum number of people that can be in the building for the purposes of the swimming competitive activity at any one time. This will enable the event organisers to make decisions about how to organise race schedules, whether spectators are allowed, and how many swimmers can attend.

Action Plan

- Appoint Covid-19 Lead
- Covid Lead develops Covid-19 plan
- Monitors Compliance
- Develop a thorough Risk Assessment in conjunction with the facility operator's own Risk Assessment and in adherence with the current Government guidelines and PHE advice. The assessment should detail specific mitigating actions to reduce transmission risk via droplet, fomite and population transmissions. Risk assessment should determine the safe size, capacity and participant flows of the event.

Action Plan

- It may also be possible for event organisers to house swimmers in adjoining sports halls or gymnasiums, or in outdoor space or marquees. If this is the case, the designated area for each team should be pre-planned so that the space available enables swimmers and team staff to remain appropriately socially distanced
- For a small gala in a large pool, or where the number of competitors per session permits it, swimmers may be accommodated on the poolside. In this instance, consideration must be given to those participating or officiating in the gala being able to do so in a socially distanced manner, despite the presence of teams of swimmers on the pool deck.

Action Plan

- Event conditions should be developed in addition to the Risk Assessment, which account for social distancing requirements and Government guidance. Conditions should be submitted to the appropriate Swim England Regional Licensing Officer with the licensing application.
- The event schedule for the competition should consider: staggered arrivals/departures, phased starts, time trials, breaks, longer gaps between heats, to avoid the likelihood of congestion within all areas of the venue.

Action Plan

- Event organisers should frequently communicate with all participants ahead of the competition with specific competition plans, outlining health and safety procedures, and exact protocol for pre-, during- and post- activity to familiarise all with the procedures in advance and avoid face-to- face briefings/congregations on venue. The plans should refer to, but not be limited to, arrival process reminding event attendees to follow venue's NHS Test and Trace procedures, infection control, Covid secure competition format, floor plans and participant flows, infection control, departure protocols.

Action Plan

- Event organisers must review entries capacity against the Risk Assessments and the total maximum capacity permissible on venue to ensure social distancing measures can be safely maintained.
- A Return to Competition Health Declaration Form should also be sent to all participants for them to comply with before they attend the event. This must be returned to the Covid-19 Lead, via the promoting club, no more than 1 week before the competition start date.

Action Plan

- Event organisers should review the core number of officials and volunteers required to deliver the competition and identify any areas where new roles are required to ensure social distancing measures are upheld.
- Only recruit the number of officials that are actually needed and are compliant to licensing guidelines.
- Ensure officials and volunteers are fully briefed ahead of the competition on their roles, new safety measures and ensure their health and welfare is maintained.

Action Plan

- The Covid-19 Lead must ensure a safety briefing is provided before the commencement of any competitive activity. This briefing will remind swimmers, officials and volunteers about their responsibilities
- Entries must only be accepted from those swimmers eligible to compete under the current Government guidelines.

Social Distancing

- Social distancing is an important measure to help minimise the transmission risk of coronavirus. 2m or 1m with risk mitigation (where 2m is not viable) are acceptable.



Day of Competition

- A Covid-19 liaison officer needs to be present.
- Facility operators must display the official NHS QR code posters so that all participants, aged 16 or over, can 'check-in' upon arrival at the premises. Event organisers should signpost event attendees to follow venue's NHS Test and Trace procedures upon arrival.
- The Organiser must keep accurate records of those under 16 who attend the gala including contact details in case of an infection.
- It must be impressed on clubs that only those actually entered in the Gala should attend.
- Frequent Sanitising points are essential.

Day of Competition

- Clear signage (e.g. for one-way systems, hygiene, social distancing markers) should be visible to manage entry, parking arrangements, traffic flow and general movement around the venue which ensure social distancing is maintained.
- No cash is to be handled and paper processes should be limited to a minimum.
- Wherever possible withdrawals should be done electronically to prevent congregating near the recording team and reduce the use of paper which is then handled by more than one person.

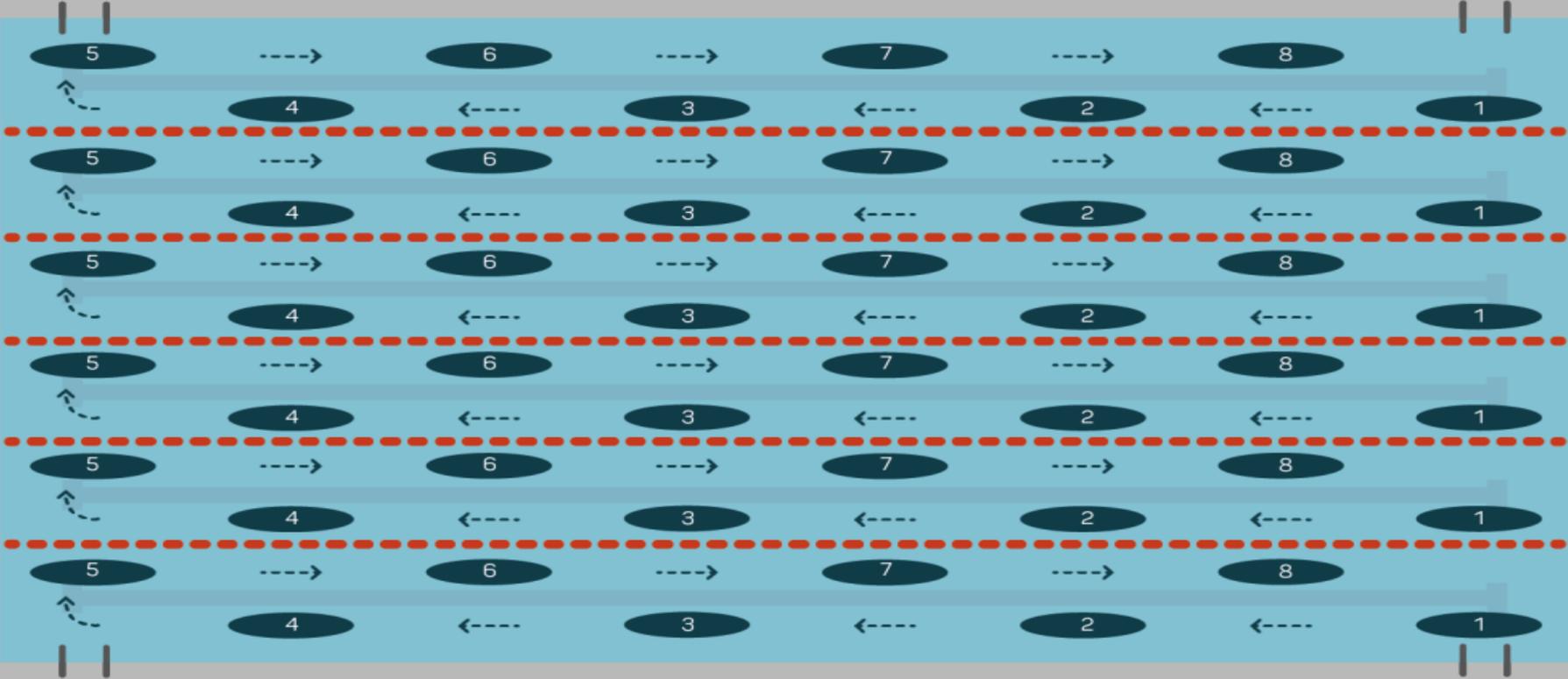
Day of Competition

- Swimmers should be encouraged to arrive in their swimsuits and with non-slip footwear.
- Subject to risk assessments and agreement with the facility provider, changing facilities may be provided for swimmers and operated in line with the operator's safety procedures, allowing for social distancing, limited time access, avoiding congestion and maintaining safe hygiene standards to prevent transmission.
- Subject to the safe provision of changing facilities, swimmers should be encouraged to change back into their clothes after competition, away from the venue.

Day of Competition – Warm Up/Swim Down

- A Covid-19 liaison officer needs to be present in addition to warm up marshals.
- Warm up sessions should be planned to ensure there are socially distant flows, segregated areas and necessary phased sessions with gaps to prevent congestion. No stopping and talking!
- Event organisers could offer a dry land warm-up only, with appropriately qualified coaches being responsible for ensuring that swimmers are adequately prepared. Event organisers should provide a clearly designated area, facilitating social distancing compliance.
- Dry land areas should be supervised to ensure that numbers do not exceed agreed capacity.

Day of Competition – Warm Up/Swim Down



Lane swimming 25x12.5m pool 8 to a single lane

Day of Competition – Warm Up/Swim Down

- The maximum number of swimmers in a lane in a warm-up/swim down should be agreed with the venue in line with the risk assessments and follow Swim England club guidance.
- 6 lane 25m pool x 8 swimmers = 48 swimmers
- 8 lane 50m pool x 16 swimmers = 128 swimmers
- A supervisor should be appointed to control the pool based warm-up and swim down ensuring social distancing compliance.

Day of Competition – Marshalling

- *‘Social distancing is an important measure to help minimise the transmission risk of coronavirus. 2m or 1m with risk mitigation (where 2m is not viable) are acceptable’*
- For a small gala, it may be possible to operate with no marshalling. In this case, a clearly defined protocol needs to be in place to avoid overcrowding at the start end of the pool.

Day of Competition – Marshalling

- For larger galas, it may be safer, and confer greater order, to operate a stricter marshalling system. This should be housed in a large space, with clearly defined protocols to ensure that there is no overcrowding of swimmers and social distancing can be maintained. The event organisers may decide to enforce this via rows of socially distanced chairs, with competitors being guided to the start area by volunteers.
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Day of Competition – Marshalling

- If swimmers are marshalled away from the pool area, event organisers should consider whether the volunteer marshals need to use PPE.
- Swimmers should arrive at the marshalling area race-ready. Event organisers may choose to allow the wearing of a tee-shirt and the carrying of water bottle and relevant medical equipment items.
- Swimmers should collect their own belongings at the conclusion of a race. If you want to give them all a plastic sack that is one solution, but not environmentally friendly.
- Swimmers should also be briefed on how to exit the pool at the conclusion of their swim, collect equipment and leave the poolside in a socially distanced manner.

Day of Competition – Officials

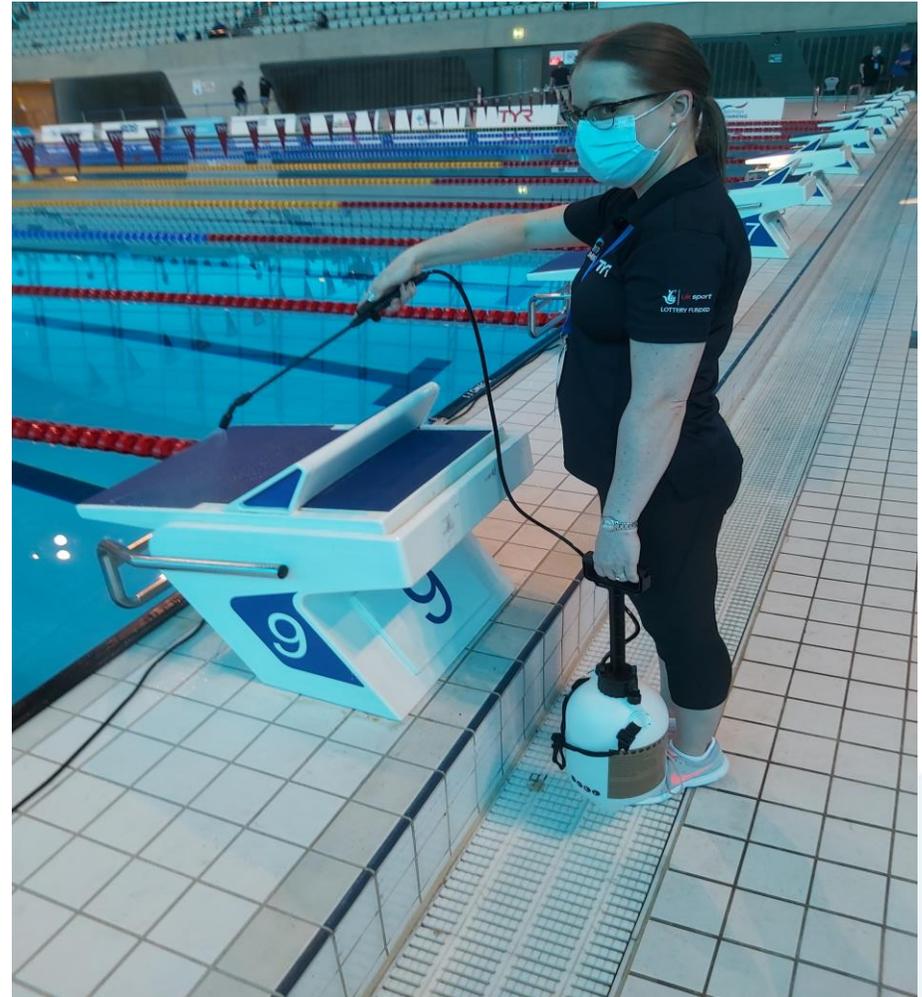
- Event organisers should have provided officials and volunteers with comprehensive competition plans, role descriptors, safety and hygiene procedures and venue flows ahead of the competition day electronically. If a further briefing is necessary on the day of competition, it should be conducted in a socially distanced manner or preferably outside.
- Officials should avoid being in close proximity to swimmers, names should be checked from a distance. Can be a major problem at the start end.
- Where chairs are provided for officials only one official should use the same chair to avoid cross-contamination.

Day of Competition – Officials

- A minimum of officials should be appointed to reduce the number of people in close proximity to the swimmers. One referee and starter is sufficient for a session.
- Officials should judge double lanes at the turn end – for example - the maximum number of officials judging at the turn end at a pool where eight competition lanes are in use, shall be four.
- There should be only one starter appointed per competitive session, to ensure the microphone remains appropriately sanitised.
- The hand-held microphone, chairs and secondary timing buttons should be cleaned with sanitising product at the conclusion of each competition session.

Day of Competition – Equipment

- All equipment to be sanitised before use including starting blocks and backstroke start devices.
- They should be sanitised again during dormant periods.
- False start rope must not be fitted to prevent use by more than one official.



Day of Competition – Equipment

- Chairs should not be provided for swimmers.
- Social distancing must be observed at all times.
- Over the top starts should be encouraged.
- Kit boxes should not be provided – plastic sacks?
- Every time a backstroke starting ledge is used the adjustment device must be sanitised by either using a sanitising agent or dipped in the chlorinated water.
- The cross bar of the starting block to be splashed frequently to reduce the risk of infection.

Day of Competition – Equipment

Para-Swimming

- Para swimmers and/or support staff (not officials) are responsible for the fitting and removing of equipment such as starting devices as allowed by the rules. Personal items/aids such as crutches, walking sticks, wheelchairs etc. should only be handled by the para swimmer or support staff. Tapping devices must only be handled by the “Tappers”.
- Prosthesis (artificial arms, legs and hands), personal aids/wheelchairs, shall only be handled by the swimmer or support staff. Should a swimmer not be accompanied by support staff a volunteer will need to be appointed to move these, particularly if the race finishes at the opposite end of the pool to the start.

Day of Competition – Timing & Results

- Wherever possible race timing and recording activities should take place away from the pool deck area.
- The number of people used should be kept to a minimum to maintain social distancing. The operator may dictate the capacity of a room.
- Timing equipment and meet management systems should be linked electronically.
- The use of pieces of paper should be kept to a minimum
- Volunteers and coaches entering any enclosed area should comply with Government guidelines in force at the time and may be required to wear a mask. Entry should be restricted to essential entry only.

Day of Competition – Timing & Results

- If these processes have to be carried out within the pool area, social distancing must continue to be in place at all times. This may restrict the number of people who can be involved.
- A robust action plan needs to be written to deal with the unfortunate scenario where electronic timing fails, cannot be repaired in a reasonable time and manual timing has to be adopted.
- In this situation it may be prudent not to continue with the competition.
- Results should only be published electronically, and not posted within the venue, unless social distancing laws are sufficiently relaxed to permit it to avoid congregating.

Day of Competition – Additional

- Event organisers may decide to request that all those involved in the competition take responsibility for bringing their own refreshments to the venue, and not share food or drink with people beyond their immediate family.
- It is preferred that formal presentations are not made at the competition
- If necessary prize and award collection should be accommodated ideally elsewhere in the venue, to maximise available space.
- Any medals/prizes should have been sanitised/quarantined for an appropriate time prior to distribution.

Day of Competition – Spectators

- If the Government guidelines allow for spectators to attend the competition, supporters, parents and other spectators' capacity should be carefully determined in line with the total competition and facility limits
- The Risk Assessment must cover this area of operation.
- Spectators should comply with Government guidelines, in force at the time, regarding the maximum number of people allowed to be together in the same group whilst maintaining social distance from other groups at all times and the wearing of masks.

Follow up Questions

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