



ROADMAP FOR THE RETURN OF RECREATIONAL CRICKET FAQs

Why are ECB recommending no recreational cricket matches are played?

The current guidance from UK Government for team sports does not permit matches: "People who play team sports can meet to train together and do things like conditioning or fitness sessions but they must be in separate groups of no more than six and must be 2 metres apart at all times. 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."

What are ECB doing to get cricket played?

We know how frustrating this situation is and how much everyone wants to be back playing. We want that to happen as soon as is permitted. While we don't get advanced warning of Government guidance we do have ongoing dialogue with them and are discussing our proposals for how recreational cricket matches can start. When new UK Government guidance is issued we ask them to approve ECB guidance and then we send it out to clubs, players and volunteers.

What will adapted gameplay look like?

Once cricket matches can be played the gameplay will depend on the size and make up of outdoor groups, social distancing requirements, and guidelines on hygiene. We want everyone to be able to play a game that closely resembles their normal cricket experience providing UK Government guidance allows for this.

Will Step 4 include 11 a-side league cricket in 2020

Providing government guidance on group sizes permits 11 a-side matches then ECB guidance will also permit them. We are in on-going discussions with many leagues who will make their own decisions about the structure of any local competition that they offer. Everyone is working together to try and get the cricket people want to play to happen.

What other restrictions might be in place that affect the game?

Alongside group size, hygiene and social distancing, we will also need to follow UK Government guidance in areas such as travel and facility usage.

Guidance from UK Government would allow our club to provide a takeaway service for food and drink. Why does ECB guidance make no reference to this?
Our guidance is focused on the playing of the game as we believe that is the priority. Clubs can follow the UK Governments guidance for providing takeaway food and drink.

Do you think we'll play club cricket again this year?

We have an absolute ambition to get cricket played as soon as it is safe to do so. Although social distancing is likely to be in place for the foreseeable future, cricket is a non-contact team sport with individual disciplines, as such, we are optimistic about getting cricket played this summer. The safety and wellbeing of the cricket family is our number one priority and that is why we are being led by government and medical advice at every point. Therefore, we will move to step 4 when it is safe to do so and supported by government and medical experts.

When do you think stage four will happen?

The Government have not yet published new guidance relating to sport since their update on May 30. We are not aware of a committed date to revise that, but their daily briefings continue to update widely on relaxing guidelines, should the status of COVID-19 continue to progress positively.

Can ECB do more to get recreational cricket played?? You've managed to get International cricket back on?

It is hugely important that ECB do all we can to ensure recreational cricket played, as soon as it is safe to do so. Because the safety of the cricket family is our first priority, the decision to move into step four 'adapted gameplay' will be made when it is medically safe to do so. In addition, the environment for international cricket is significantly easier for us to control and easier for us to work with Government on achieving solutions to problems that COVID-19 posed. The numbers of people involved are significantly smaller and we were only talking about one or two venues.

Compare that to the English and Welsh sporting public, and the landscape is very different. Over 6,500 cricket clubs, thousands and thousands of players and spread across two countries.

The resumption of international cricket is vital for the funding of the game. The ECB is not-for-profit. Any money that flows into the organisation funds cricket somewhere. Either the England teams, grants and funding to cricket clubs, disability cricket, safeguarding checks, our charity partners – every part of the game has been financially impacted by COVID-19.

You mention a focus on junior cricket – what is that focus and how will you bring around the return of junior cricket first?

We know that for many clubs, a thriving junior section is critical to their long term, health and prosperity. A thriving junior section provides the players of the future, can inspire volunteers and plays a vital role in club finances. With schools returning on a limited basis, we are keen to explore with Government if cricket clubs can support more children (than guidance currently permits) to get active. As always, this plan will need government guidance and the advice of medical experts in delivery.

If I can sit in a pub garden with my mates from July 4, why can't I play cricket?

The government has highlighted some top line plans for the hospitality sector. These plans will encompass detailed guidelines that will be available in the coming weeks. Once we have these, we will update our guidance as to what this means for recreational cricket club facilities. It is important to note that government guidance on the hospitality sector will not necessarily be replicated for community sport. Once the government has shared its next steps for community sport, we will update the guidance for recreational cricket accordingly. With that said, we are optimistic about getting cricket played this summer and we have an ambition to get the game on as soon as it is safe to do so.

When do you envisage we'll get to Stage five, i.e we'll be playing club cricket normally?

Moving to stage five would involve the removal of social distancing measures, at this time, it is hard to see us getting to this stage this summer.

Are you concerned about how this summer has impacted the club game?

There is no question that COVID-19 has impacted all areas of society and community sport is not immune to this. The recreational game is critical to the long term health and prosperity of our game and so it is vital that we support the game through this unprecedented crisis. This is why we initially provided access to more than £20M in grants and loans for the recreational game and worked with local clubs to access a further £24M in government grants and loans. Mobilising the game to return and safely as possible is our next challenge. We have begun significant work to ensure all cricket stakeholders are involved in this consultation.

Why does it look like other sports are ahead of us in terms of the return to sport plans?

We are optimistic about a return to competitive cricket matches this summer. This will be conditional on it being safe to do so, a decision that will be medically led and in line with government advice. Although social distancing is likely to be in place for the foreseeable future, cricket is a non-contact team sport with individual disciplines. We believe this makes cricket uniquely placed as a team sport to be played sooner than other major team sports.