



SEASON 2019/20 RESTART GUIDE

The 2019/20 Premier League season will resume on Wednesday 17 June, with matches taking place behind closed doors.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the overriding priority of the Premier League has been the health and wellbeing of everyone. The safety of players, coaches and club staff has been paramount in the phased return to training and this will continue to be the case when fixtures return.

Strict protocols have been put in place to ensure that stadiums are as safe as possible for everybody present. This document provides an overview of all the official guidelines, as well as explaining how the broadcast experience will differ for fans following at home.



COVID-19 testing programme

The Premier League's COVID-19 testing programme commenced on 17 May, with tests of players and staff at all 20 clubs conducted twice weekly. Anybody who has tested positive has self-isolated for a period of seven days.

The testing programme is managed by biotechnology company Prenetics, which has considerable experience in COVID-19 testing, both in a clinical and community setting. Testing will continue twice weekly once matches resume and only those who have recorded a negative test in the five days leading up to the match can enter the Red Zone in any stadium.

Returning to training

The Premier League introduced a phased return to training in line with the latest Government advice. Stage One permitted small-group training while maintaining social distancing from 19 May. Stage Two was approved on 27 May, allowing a resumption of contact training, while minimising any unnecessary close contact. At all times throughout this period, the safety of training environments was of paramount importance, with a series of protocols put in place to mitigate risk to all players, staff and their families.

Return to matches

On 28 May, Premier League Shareholders agreed to the new provisional restart date of Wednesday 17 June, provided all safety requirements are in place. This was followed by the Government giving the go-ahead for competitive sport to resume in England behind closed doors from 1 June.

The protocols established have been developed in consultation with clubs, players, managers and in line with the guidelines set out by Government. The Return to Training Protocol, testing programmes and risk assessments all remain in place with additional requirements relevant to matchdays being added. Among the core principles are maintaining social distancing, following Public Health England guidance and minimising support from public services.

Broadcast information

All 92 matches will be televised live in the UK by Sky Sports, BT Sport, Amazon Prime and the BBC. A total of 33 fixtures will be free-to-air, shown on Sky Pick, Amazon Prime and BBC Sport. Live commentary of every fixture is available in the UK on BBC Radio 5 Live and talkSPORT.

Sky Sports and BT Sport are also providing offers for season ticket holders who do not have an existing subscription.

International fans should continue to visit [premierleague.com](https://www.premierleague.com) for country-specific scheduling information.



How will clubs ensure stadia are safe on a matchday?

Premier League clubs have worked with local authorities and other partners to develop venue operation plans and COVID-19 stadium risk assessments, minimising both the risk to public health and reliance on local health and other emergency services.

Clubs have to establish a security plan to ensure access to the stadium is only granted to accredited individuals. The number of people who will be present at each stadium for the remainder of the 2019/20 season is approximately 300.

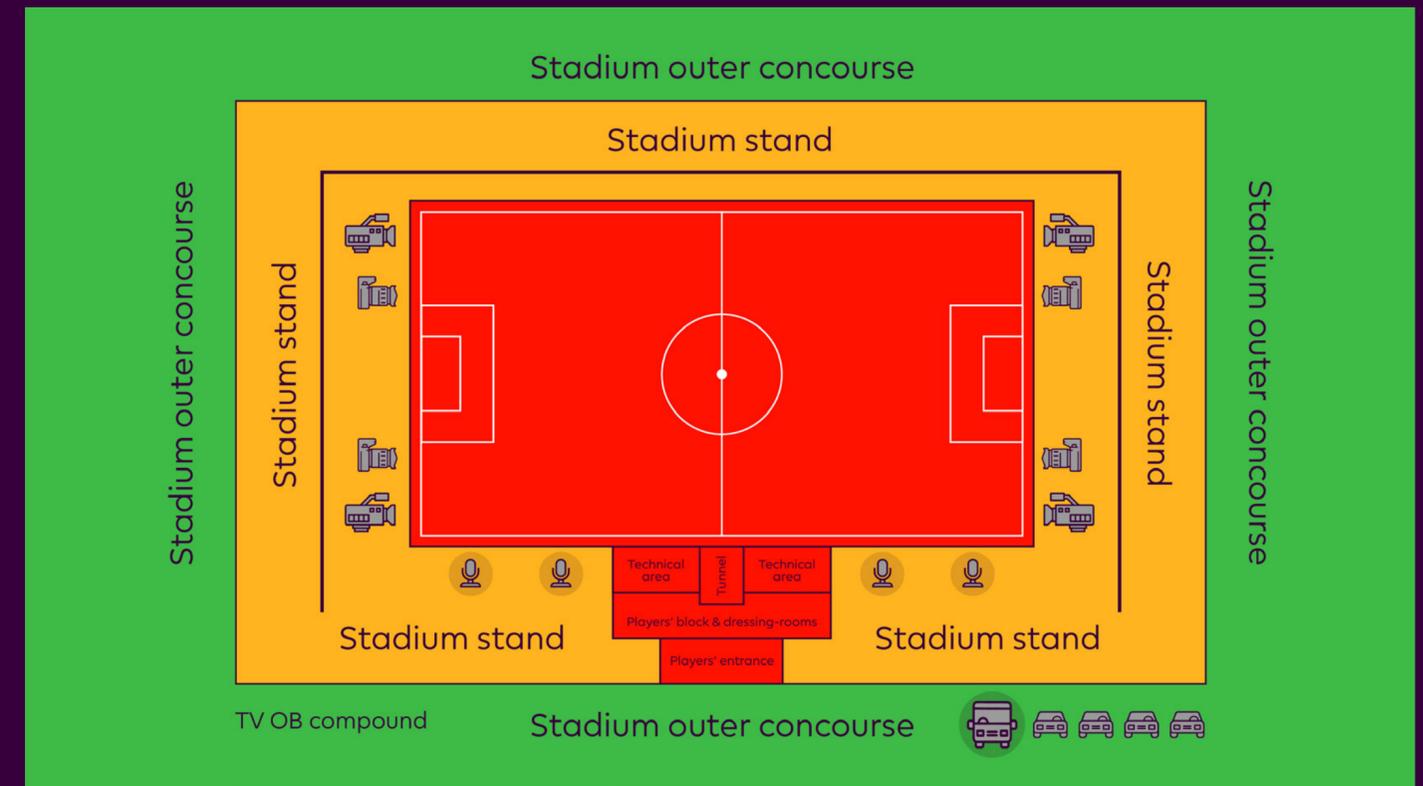
How are teams travelling to matches?

Team travel can be via car, coach, plane or train, but social distancing must be applied in all of these transport modes, ensuring appropriate space between occupied seats and that full hygiene measures are observed. Those driving their own vehicle should travel alone. In line with Government legislations, hotels should be for essential use only. If hotels are used, risk assessments should be conducted and mitigating measures applied.



Stadium zoning

Maps of stadia clearly define the zones and areas where particular people are permitted. Stadia are divided into three zones – Red, Amber and Green – and each zone has unique protocols and procedures related to them.



Red Zone

Only individuals who have undergone tests in the five days prior to a match can enter the Red Zone in any stadium, which includes the pitch, technical area, tunnel and dressing rooms. Those individuals must have a Clinical Passport – a bar code they have printed out or on their mobile phone, which is scanned to check that their most recent test result is negative – before being granted access to stadium.

Amber Zone

This covers all areas of the stadium interior with the exception of the Red Zone, including stands, concourses and pitchside interview areas. Entry and exit points are strictly managed. To gain access, individuals must have completed a medical questionnaire, as well as having their temperature checked upon arrival.

Green Zone

The area outside the stadium where access control points, vehicle parking and OB compounds and units are located. Access will be granted in accordance with the club's COVID-19 policy.



What differences will there be to matchday facilities and procedures?



Dressing rooms

Adequate space must be made available in the team and match officials' dressing rooms to allow for suitable social-distancing measures, meaning additional rooms will be used if necessary. This will differ from club to club. Staggered use of changing facilities is encouraged and use of showers is permitted as long as individuals are socially distanced.



Players' tunnel

Players and match officials will stagger their entry onto and off the pitch. There should be no congregation in or around the tunnel area at any time, and there will be no handshakes. In some stadia, teams will use different tunnels.



Technical area

Team benches will be expanded to enable social-distancing measures during the match. This can include using seats next to the bench or reallocating seats to provide the required distance between people. Those in the technical area must adhere to social distancing measures, with zones clearly marked out.



Medical treatment

Any member of staff performing physiotherapy or soft tissue treatment must wear appropriate PPE, including a surgical face mask, disposable gloves and a disposable plastic apron. Paramedic numbers will be determined by each club and clubs should nominate two members of Red Zone staff to act as stretcher bearers.



Disinfection

Clubs will apply strict cleaning measures at stadia, with widespread disinfection taking place. This will include, but is not limited to, changing facilities, dugouts, the matchball, goal posts, corner flags and substitution boards.



Hygiene

Each home club must ensure that hand sanitiser dispensers are freely available throughout the stadium, as well as clearly signposting handwashing facilities. Attendees with the exception of players and coaching staff on team benches must wear face coverings. This will also be waived at certain times for broadcast presenters and commentators, under social-distancing guidelines.



Media interviews

Post-match broadcast interviews will take place pitchside with social distancing exercised. Boom microphones must be used and cleaned between interviews. Huddle interviews are not permitted. Post-match press conferences will be conducted virtually.



Anti-doping tests

Doping control will still be in operation, with social distancing observed. All anti-doping officials will be tested for COVID-19 before being allowed to attend the Red Zone.

The following guidelines have been issued to players and managers to reduce risk and maximise personal safety:

Social distancing whenever possible



Maintain distance during goal celebrations.



Restrict post-match interaction with opposition team.

Hygiene



No handshakes.



No spitting or nose clearing.



Hand sanitisers should be used before and after every match.



Players should use their own water bottles.

Conduct



No surrounding match officials.



No mass confrontations.



Walkout procedure

After a staggered exit from the tunnel, teams will line up for the Premier League anthem, observing social distancing. There will be no handshake.

Drinks breaks

Drinks breaks will be taken midway through each half, lasting no longer than one minute, with players drinking from their own water bottles. Time will be added on at the end of each half.

Warm-ups and warm-downs

Warm-ups are risk-assessed and modified where required to minimise unnecessary close contact. Match officials require a designated warm-up area. Warm-downs should last no more than 25 minutes and are likely to be staggered for each team.

Replacement match balls

In the absence of ball assistants, spare match balls will be placed at intervals around the pitch, in case one can't be retrieved from the stands without causing a delay to the game. Referees will offer guidance in managing the process.



Match officials

Premier League match officials have been isolating throughout this period, but have kept in regular contact via video conference calls. They have been training regularly and their fitness has been monitored. They are now being tested at the same regularity as Premier League players, and will follow the exact same protocols.

Substitutes

The number of substitutes that can be used during a match is increasing from three to five, in line with the temporary law amendment made by the International Football Association Board. Teams will also be able to have nine players on the bench rather than seven, and will have three opportunities to make substitutions during the match (not including half-time).

VAR Hub

VAR will continue to be in operation at IMG Studios, Stockley Park. There will be a different configuration to the usual VAR Hub set-up in order to allow for social distancing, with additional rooms also being used when required.

One of the most recognisable and important features of Premier League football is the atmosphere created by home and away fans. Working in conjunction with our broadcast partners, a number of innovations have been developed to enhance the broadcast experience in the absence of supporters in the stadium.

- Stadium dressing will include a wrap covering seats in the lower tiers at all 20 stadia. The stadium wraps are designed by each club and aim to improve the environment both visually and acoustically, as well as creating consistency across the competition.
- Clubs can use music at key trigger moments such as kick-off, goals and substitutions by the home club.
- Fans watching from home can choose to select EA Sports Atmospheric Audio, but crowd noise will not be played inside the stadium.
- Live video feeds featuring 16 supporters from each club will be made available to broadcasters and to clubs for use on big screens during matches.
- Where feasible, broadcasters will identify a celebration camera which players can head to after scoring.
- Tunnel cameras to help fans see the build-up to the match (this will not include sound).
- Audio from the coin toss will now be captured live.



Matchday features

- As a show of recognition for the incredible work of NHS workers during the COVID-19 crisis, an NHS badge will feature on player and match official shirts for the remainder of the 2019/20 season.
- A moment's silence will be held before the opening 12 matches to recognise those whose lives have been affected by COVID-19
- For the first 12 matches of the restarted campaign, all player names on the back of shirts will be replaced by Black Lives Matter. A Black Lives Matter sleeve patch will also feature on shirts for the remainder of the season. The Premier League will support players who 'take a knee' before or during matches and will restate its No Room For Racism messaging on LED boards and in communications.



- 'We Are One Team' will feature on a patch on the match balls and on Premier League branding in stadia, reflecting how the League, clubs, fans and players have come together to support the NHS, their communities and society as a whole during the pandemic.



Public health messaging

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, the Premier League and clubs have consistently emphasised the latest health and safety advice from Government and Public Health England.

Both the league and clubs will continue to communicate these messages with fans. As we approach the return of football, and for as long as it is in line with Government advice, supporters will be urged to stay at home to watch matches, not congregate at stadia and not watch matches at other people's houses.

Support for the NHS and communities

During the coronavirus pandemic, the Premier League committed £20million to support the NHS, communities, families and vulnerable groups.

This included a direct financial contribution to NHS Charities Together, to support the mental health of NHS workers and their families affected by the situation.

This funding also allowed clubs to refocus efforts and develop significant outreach programmes for those needing support locally.

Some of the ways clubs have supported communities include:

- **Staying connected** – Making calls to older and vulnerable supporters, as well as community programme participants who may have been isolated

- **Supporting those in need** – With donations to food banks and food parcel deliveries for vulnerable groups

- **Supporting mental and physical health** – Providing free resources to support wellbeing and education

Clubs also offered a range of support to the NHS, including:

- Provision of facilities for medical use and accommodation for NHS staff.
- Parking for NHS staff and transport provided for NHS workers, medicine and food
- Club medical staff supporting or redeployed to the NHS

Premier League players have independently supported the NHS in a number of ways, as well as raising significant funds for the NHS through the #PlayersTogether initiative.

For all the latest updates, visit [premierleague.com](https://www.premierleague.com)

Contact press@premierleague.com for more information.



Upcoming Fixtures

Wednesday 17 June

Previously postponed due to participation in the Carabao Cup Final

18:00 Aston Villa vs. Sheffield United
(live on Sky Sports)

20:15 Manchester City vs. Arsenal
(live on Sky Sports)

Match Round 30 Friday 19 June

18:00 Norwich City vs. Southampton
(live on Sky Sports and live on Sky Pick)

20:15 Tottenham Hotspur vs. Manchester United
(live on Sky Sports)

Saturday 20 June

12:30 Watford vs. Leicester City
(live on BT Sport)

15:00 Brighton & Hove Albion vs. Arsenal
(live on BT Sport)

17:30 West Ham United vs. Wolverhampton Wanderers
(live on Sky Sports)

19:45 AFC Bournemouth vs. Crystal Palace
(live on BBC)

Sunday 21 June

14:00 Newcastle United vs. Sheffield United
(live on Sky Sports and live on Sky Pick)

16:15 Aston Villa vs. Chelsea
(live on Sky Sports)

19:00 Everton vs. Liverpool
(live on Sky Sports and live on Sky Pick)

Monday 22 June

20:00 Manchester City vs. Burnley
(live on Sky Sports)

Match Round 31 Tuesday 23 June

18:00 Leicester City vs. Brighton & Hove Albion
(live on Sky Sports)

20:15 Tottenham Hotspur vs. West Ham United
(live on Sky Sports)

Wednesday 24 June

18:00 Manchester United vs. Sheffield United
(live on Sky Sports and live on Sky Pick)

18:00 Newcastle United vs. Aston Villa
(live on BT Sport)

18:00 Norwich City vs. Everton
(live on BBC)

18:00 Wolverhampton Wanderers vs. AFC Bournemouth
(live on BT Sport)

20:15 Liverpool vs. Crystal Palace
(live on Sky Sports)

Thursday 25 June

18:00 Burnley vs. Watford
(live on Sky Sports and live on Sky Pick)

18:00 Southampton vs. Arsenal
(live on Sky Sports)

20:15 Chelsea vs. Manchester City
(live on BT Sport)

Match Round 32 Saturday 27 June

12:30 Aston Villa vs. Wolverhampton Wanderers
(live on BT Sport)

Sunday 28 June

16:30 Watford vs. Southampton
(live on Sky Sports and live on Sky Pick)

Monday 29 June

20:00 Crystal Palace vs. Burnley
(live on Amazon Prime Video)

Tuesday 30 June

20:15 Brighton & Hove Albion vs. Manchester United
(live on Sky Sports and live on Sky Pick)

Wednesday 01 July

18:00 AFC Bournemouth vs. Newcastle United
(live on Sky Sports and live on Sky Pick)

18:00 Arsenal vs. Norwich City
(live on BT Sport)

18:00 Everton vs. Leicester City
(live on Sky Sports)

20:15 West Ham United vs. Chelsea
(live on Sky Sports)

Thursday 02 July

18:00 Sheffield United vs. Tottenham Hotspur
(live on Sky Sports)

20:15 Manchester City vs. Liverpool
(live on Sky Sports)

For the latest fixture information, visit [premierleague.com/fixtures](https://www.premierleague.com/fixtures)