



Wanstead & Snaresbrook Cricket Club

COVID Analysis: Coaching and Team Management Protocols

23 April 2021 Update of Club Risk Analysis (“RA”) - 7th April 2021

It is recognised that all RAs require continual review, and this is particularly so under the Covid environment. This update reflects (i) amendments to the management of identified risk with the benefit of experience following finalisation of the club’s RA on 7th April and (ii) clarification of some requirements in the ECB’s 26th March announcement.

The benefit of experience: This COVID Analysis: Coaching and Team Management Protocol - see below - was prepared following a detailed assessment of the ECB’s 26th March announcement. It formed a key element of the club’s RA. It was recognised that against the background of an expected large membership increase compared with the 2020 season and the prospect of a full season of coaching and matches, key challenges would be

- the need to design coaching plans and match formats to minimise contact between players to meet social distancing requirements, and
- to keep numbers of members to safer manageable levels, a high level of streaming - the allocation of members and activities - would need to be incorporated in our daily coaching and match plans, and
- efficiency in recording the registration of members was a prerequisite

Response:

- coaching plans and interclub match formats for juniors were critiqued with some revisions including the division within age groups to reduce numbers on any particular day.
- In addition to the use of our NHS Test and Trace facility, the use of the hand held registration system (“mojo”), which provided a much speedier way to register compared with manual registers, was adopted. Team managers and coaches were provided with this facility. For the busy Friday club night additional members of our welfare team were recruited and also provided with the mojo facility.

Clarification of requirement: Uncertainty arose on the use of our outdoor bar facility (with identified tables of six and an online member registration/ordering system) while cricket activities were in progress and whether parents could attend coaching sessions and junior matches, an existing club safeguarding requirement.

Response:

- We were informed that one adult could attend a junior coaching session or match (adult or junior match)
- Friday Night at Overton Drive presented the biggest challenge to secure a safer environment. It was decided to recruit a Welfare Supervisory Team to manage numbers including the essential need to ensure that members do not stand between tables and that there is adequate additional seating (in clusters of six) for members waiting for a table. We also redesigned the entrance and exit points and provided new signage to manage the new arrangements.
- The Welfare Supervisory Team were appropriately briefed on their role and provided with distinctive tabards.
- Communications:
 - As a consequence of these changes the club's six Match Day Protocols (three adult and three junior relating to each of our three home venues) were amended – refer web site under heading COVID
 - The changes referred to above were also regularly communicated to members by emails and website postings from the Club Chairman and the club's Head of Junior Cricket. The following is a summary of the Chairman's announcement relating to Friday evenings at Overton Drive:

“Junior players and their supervising adult – One Child, One Adult - to use the entrance farther down the car park, where they will be registered and directed by the welfare team.

Those Social Members attending in order to make use of the hospitality facilities, are encouraged not to arrive until after 7pm, and to register with the NHS Test and Trace system by the main entrance doors.

Members can only use the top-BBQ area if they are seated at a table (maximum of six). Drinks can only be ordered using the QR Code on your table. NB any children who are not being coached must sit with and be included in the six. No one should stand between tables.

Members should inform Supervisors if they are about to leave their table. This way we can sanitise the table and organise the next occupants.

If there is no available designated table, members are asked not to wait/loiter in the BBQ area.

Additional seats will be made available in groups of six beyond the chestnut tree; these are not designated seats to enable drinks to be ordered.”

COVID Analysis: Coaching and Team Management Protocol-29th March 2021

Following an initial analysis of the 12th March announcement a draft of this document was circulated to club captains and coaches for comment and input, prior to its finalisation as a club protocol

What does the 12 March ECB Announcement tell us?

- There is the prospect of a full season, but it will not be 'business as usual'. A staged approach for potential relaxation of the lock down has been announced but these are 'the earliest' dates and dependent on a number of other conditions being met. For these reasons, the need to continually review the club's RA has enhanced relevance than in a non-COVID environment. There is also a clear message that measures taken to reduce Covid risk should not result in a relaxation of other safeguarding requirements.
- The announcement does not restrict the number of adult or junior players allowed to take part in a coaching session or a match subject to the following important restrictions:
 - The number of players in a match should reflect the number of players recommended by the ECB for specific ages. For example, in an adult match groups of up to 30 players including officials would be acceptable. A u/9 junior match is recommended to be eight players a side although it could vary a little. A u/11 match could reasonably be eleven a side. There is little doubt about this requirement for u/12's and older, for example the Essex County u/12 Brian Taylor competition is 11 a side and 25/ 30 overs. If both teams have ten u/11 players available it would be perfectly sensible to play a 10 a side match. For planning purposes, we will work on 8 a side for u/10 matches but with a degree of flexibility as it would be unacceptable to exclude one or two available juniors from a match in these circumstances. Our local Met district regulations are for 8 a side for ages up to and including u/11 and we should use this as a template for friendly and interclub matches, for example any match at the conclusion of a coaching session and the club's planned Monday tape ball league.
 - Permitted coaching numbers is a grey area. A basic restriction is that coaching ratios should be 1 coach for 8 players for ages up to 8 years and a 1 to 10 ratio for older juniors. There is need for interpretation, for example the notice refers to 1 coach to 24 participants under certain circumstances; this would be unacceptable to us from a safety viewpoint even if we used an experienced level three coach, our ratio target is 1 to 10. In practice we are happy with a 1 to 8 coaching ratio for eight year olds and 1 to 10 for older juniors subject to variation depending on the nature of the activity and experience of the coach. For non-net coaching, Juniors will be allocated wherever possible to groups of 8 or 10, separated into 4 pairs who will observe 2 metre social distancing, and with one coach to manage the group. The pair will remain during the session, facing each other 12 metres apart (more for older juniors, we can space pairs using the ECB recommended age pitch lengths). We will seek to put girls together and wherever practical have a female coach in these circumstances. If this becomes difficult we may have to join two 8 player groups and play an inter club a match instead.
 - The rule of six- two households or more than six from the same household, applies to spectators who are not allowed to be present until 12 April. This rule will determine our start date because we require the parents of children 9 and younger to be present. We will commence Friday coaching for u/9's and younger on Friday 16 April and for older juniors the week before

What has changed- 2021 challenges:

- full season but not business as usual, step approach to lockdown discontinuation, more players
- analysis and practical issues
 - we are aware that junior coaching on Mondays and Fridays and some junior home matches will be demanding but current indications, based on our current level of registration, coach capacity and familiarity with opponents, indicates a manageable risk. We do not think that it will be necessary to limit the number of members, family members and guests invited to matches and coaching sessions. We will, however, closely monitor numbers with a preparedness to adjust our plan if necessary. This is a live process and we have already closed our 2021 summer membership for some ages. It is a requirement, not an option.
 - existing safeguarding regulations should not be overlooked. For example, first aid and DBS clearance are mentioned specifically as conditions for participation in matches involving juniors. Apparently the ECB is taking steps to bring applications up to date and face to face verification will be available from 12 April. It is important that any new, potential coaches /team managers are processed so that the club can meet this important requirement.
 - be aware of the travel regulations which could impose some practical problems, particularly for away matches. We had hoped for some relaxation. To be clear, car sharing is not currently permitted with someone outside the household or support bubble. We must communicate this to members. It is expected- hopefully- for this restriction to be removed from 17 May (at the earliest).

-parents should arrive five minutes before the start time for coaching, or arrival time for matches. Register (we are trailing two possible alternatives, the use of our hand held mojo signing in equipment or a manual signing in register placed by the site the coaching or match is taking place). The NHI track and trace system is in place and should be adequate for all sessions other than Junior Friday evenings

-players must arrive fully kitted; the changing rooms will not be open (but on the busy Overton Friday evenings there will be toilet facilities using the disabled toilets and we can use the umpires' room as a first aid recovery location).

-players and coaches should bring a drink in a bottle marked (with the players name on it) own food, equipment and hand sanitiser and sun cream. They do not bring more equipment than required, normally a bat, marked ball, helmet, gloves, protective box, pads for hard ball matches. They should not share equipment particularly helmets, gloves, wk keeping gloves. It is the players' responsibility to clean his/hers equipment before and after use. **Please note that some coaches prefer to use club balls and bats which they take responsibility for cleaning.**

-parents/ guests should sit in a separate area from the players, in groups of six (the six rule) socially distanced from each group and the players. The players from each team (or coaching group) should sit apart with each player observing the 2 metre rule and remain so when their side is batting. It is a 1 metre rule during matches, same rules on passing the ball back to the bowler, no saliva, sweat. Two soft cones either side of the popping creases should be used as an indicator for the batsmen to pass each other two metres apart. During the match, the cricket ball will be regularly sanitised. This is every 6 overs or 20 minutes but for junior matches where there are pairs and four overs a pair, every four overs makes sense. Umpires are not allowed to

handle the ball or hold players' clothing/ equipment which must be left just over the boundary. Scorers should sit near to each other but observe the two metre rule, they should not sit together in a score box. A club official will be responsible for setting up the site prior to the match. Cricket captains/ junior managers will be familiar with these requirements. Players and guests only need to know the requirements to socially distance and NOT handle the ball if it goes over the boundary. A good idea is to encourage parents/ guests to bring their own portable chair.

Important reminders from 2020 - before, during and after a cricket event:

- staggering coaching times on Mondays and Fridays will be essential to avoid bottlenecks
- no lingering after the match or coaching session, players and guests to leave promptly using the exits indicated.
- always ask adult players/ parents for feedback, and be prepared to make changes, we are unlikely to get it right first time
- the coach and players must arrive on the time stipulated, and they have a responsibility to observe the social distancing obligation throughout their time at the ground and to leave promptly at the conclusion of the session.
- everyone to be requested to enter and exit the ground where indicated. Coloured cones will be available if required to direct players and their families and officials to their designated areas.
- we need to appoint an official to manage the site; the Site Supervisor is likely to be the team captain /junior manager at Nutter Lane and Fairlop, or a team member appointed by them. Duties to include (before, during and after the session)
 - ensure there is sufficient hand sanitiser/alcohol wipes/washing up liquid.
 - ensure all surfaces are clean and equipment is washed with soapy water and dried completely prior to and after use.
 - explain the safety guidelines of what is expected pre, during and post session including what players are expected to do to maintain compliance with social distancing guidelines and all other health and safety guidelines.

Recap; detail but important

- During the session
 - a lead coach will supervise the overall site and with support from the welfare team to promote the following requirements
 - maintain a minimum of one/ two metres apart to meet social distancing requirements (no handshakes).
 - observe health and safety and emergency first aid guidelines, for busy sessions need first aid/ recovery room, toilet facilities, one in one out.
 - remind players to provide their own equipment if possible, and this must be kept in a zipped bag when not in use.
 - the club prefers to supply balls for coaching and the coach is responsible for disinfecting them in soapy water. Kit should not be shared.
 - coach is responsible for collecting all of their own equipment/kit – do not share equipment if possible.
 - players are responsible for collecting all their own equipment/kit – do not share equipment if possible.
 - avoid high intensity physical exercise where possible.

-If it is a bowling session, player to use their own balls or coach to use plastic balls which have been washed/dried prior to the session – batters to knock or kick ball back to the bowler and not throw it as usual – the batter should not handle the balls. Likely to use buckets of soapy water at coaching site locations to continually sterilise balls, it worked well last year.

-coach to ensure they have appropriate hand coverings (mitt or gloves) when handling the ball during any skill sessions.

-we recommend that coaches avoid sharing balls and other equipment wherever possible and strong hand hygiene should be practiced before, during and after sessions.

- After the session

-players and coaches to wash/sanitise their hands (before and) after the session.

-players leaving a session must maintain a distance of two metres from other players or coaches as they leave the session. Remember: No saliva or sweat should come into contact with the ball at any time.

Comments:

- Both the Friday and Monday junior coaching sessions will be demanding, requiring the careful allocation of player groups, we may need additional chairs in six clusters set out for parents and careful management of entry and exit which we hope the Welfare team can support. We have the NHS track and trace system in place which should be sufficient for many coaching sessions and matches. For busy sessions on Fridays, we are likely to use our Mojo registration system (additional members of the Welfare Volunteer team are being authorised to use this facility). We may use manual record keeping systems as back up. Other arrangements are in place for online net bookings.
- Jon Gritten is preparing a detailed Monday and Friday coaching plan as part of his junior player development plan.
- we should send a more simplified version of these arrangements to adult members and junior parents. Our club chairman, who plays a prominent role in all major club requirements, and who has kept members fully updated with timely announcements, will write to all members when our plans are more fully developed and provide a guide of the key does and don'ts that players and members need to know about.

Input from captains, team managers- practical coaching and warm up issues:

- it is important that captains (of adult teams) and junior managers/ coaches review the above analysis. We need an open dialogue with comments/ suggestions which should include some ideas touched on below.
- Individual coaching styles vary, and this is not discouraged. Coaches accept the added responsibility of observing the need for social distancing. They set appropriate targets and make the sessions fun and rewarding. No protocol is not intended to prevent this or question their competence or the scope of their coaching sessions. Its purpose is to draw attention to the need to use a minimum of equipment to reduce any risk of contamination and to identify coaching drills which may present greater or lesser difficulty in meeting the social distancing obligations.
- Nets:
 - The ECB requirement allows 8 people in a net, but we have agreed to a limit of six, including a coach. The requirements include some complex ideas on

synchronising bowlers run ups, in other words do not commence your run up until the person in the next net has completed his/ hers. The key requirement is to observe a two metre distance which we expect to do because of the width of our nets. There are two ideas coaches may wish to consider, in both cases the coach stands back rather than in the umpire position.

- 1. players gather before their run up at noticeable distances from the stumps, thus net one players waiting to bowl are 15 metres from the bowling crease, net two 12 metres. This means that bowlers waiting to bowl do not mingle with adjacent nets. It is easy to do this and makes a real effort to separate participants from adjacent nets
 - 2. only two players bowl at a time, bowler one bowls six balls, then bowler two bowls six balls etc. This enables the bowler and batter to get to know each other, more match realistic and lends itself to better feedback.
- Equipment:
 - The following equipment **is preferred** (* equipment the coach should bring to the session)
 - -two sets of stumps, preferably plastic ones
 - training balls* (numbered if possible)
 - target stump
 - baseball catcher/ mit*
 - fielding bat (cloud catcher or similar) *
 - cones
 - Equipment **not preferred**, until 17 May (cleaning of the following is difficult)
 - bowling machines
 - slip cradles, katchers, mini nets, wobble balls, tees, bean bags.
 - tape marker
 - Coaching drills:
 - while the requirement is for a two metre social distance, it is recommended that coaches seek at least a five metre distance.
 - Potentially problematic:
 - there are many standard drills which involve players 'bunching'.
 - slip catching with the slip fielders in a row.
 - tag type, ball exchange drills often used in warming up.
 - Safer drills and ways to avoid potential problems.
 - backing up where two back up players are horizontally behind the stumps or the person they are backing up; they can end up colliding (the remedy is to make certain that one of the players backing up is at least five metres behind the other backing up player)
 - players on the boundary can be spaced wide apart i.e., 2 metres apart, they can catch, or field balls thrown by coach and practice three throws (flat, one bounce, two bounce)
 - running between the wickets where two player cross closely (or may collide). A way to avoid this problem is to place two soft flat cones halfway down and on either side of the pitch, each cone a metre outside the pitch edge; the batters are then required to run outside the cones. This will support the many exciting running/ throwing drills.

- slip catching, diving, above head and low catching and long barrier coaching can be made safer by putting players into pairs (the coach doubles up as a player to make an even number), they face their partner ten metres apart, and each pair is five metres apart.
- sprinting towards the stumps with keeper behind the stumps, pick up and underarm throw often results in fielder and keeper coming face to face. This can be addressed by making the distance to the stumps longer with the fielder turning around a cone five metres before the stumps/ wicket keeper.
- tactical discussions sitting on the square, suitably distanced.
- slide stops should not be a problem if fielder is running away from the stumps.
- Other suggestions.
 - some coaches do not like players bringing their own cricket balls (apart for nets, where it makes sense). We will have a stock of incredibles which are easy to wash (keep in bucket of soapy water) and plastic Kwik cricket bats for younger players. The coach cleans this equipment and takes charge. What do you think?
- Remember safe distance warmups and warm downs.

What do you think?

Our coaches make a positive difference to player development. Thank you.

29/03/2021