



Return to Muaythai in a COVID-Safe Environment

MTA policy on return to sport during Covid 19.

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Introduction

The Corona virus restrictions, while disrupting sports such as Muaythai, have been successful in minimising the impact of the pandemic on the Australian population. The low rate of new infections has provided Federal and State/Territory Governments with the opportunity to ease restrictions and start the graduated process of return to normalcy.

The restrictions in force are determined by local Government. These are determined based on the local situation following consultation with the National Cabinet. The Sports Commission has recommended three Stages of restrictions, although the details of each Stage is not published until it is in force. Each state and even local council may vary. Ensure you are in contact with your local council.

I recommend having whatever plans you have approved in writing by your local council before proceeding. You may not need this plan/a specific gym plan unless requested for compliance but you should have one ready.

The Government restrictions applicable to Muaythai are informed by two published references: the National Cabinet's *Roadmap to a COVIDSafe Australia* and the *AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport in a COVID-19 Environment*.

The three steps of the National Cabinet's Roadmap for Sports and Recreation activities are shown in Figure 1 below.

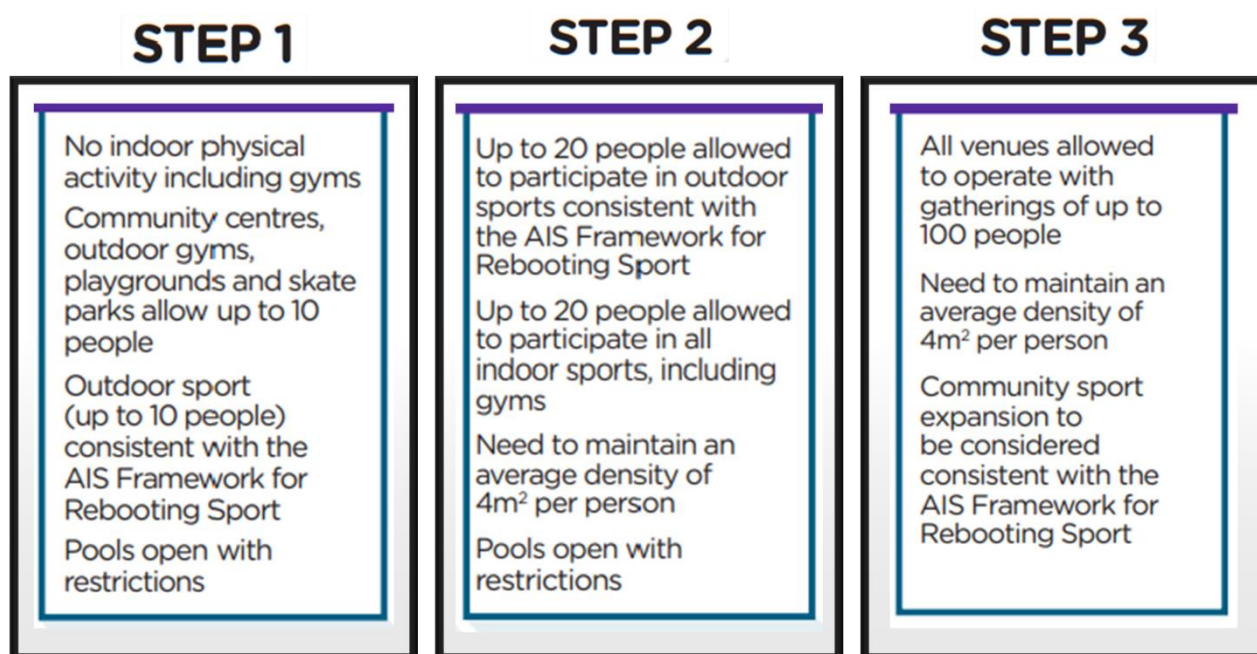


Figure 1: National Cabinet Roadmap for Sports and Recreation Activities

The AIS Framework describes three levels of baseline standards for each sport to apply as each State/Territory eases its restrictions. Table 1 below shows the three levels of baseline standard to be applied for Muaythai, where Level A is the most restrictive and Level C the most relaxed.

Table 1: AIS Framework for Muaythai.

Level A	Level B	Level C
Running/aerobic/agility training (solo), resistance training (solo), technical training (solo). Bag work if access to own equipment, without anyone else present	Shadow sparring allowed. Non-contact technical work with coach, including using bag, speedball, pads, paddles, shields. No contact or sparring.	Full training and competition

Although this Framework also provides three categories of restrictions, its levels do not necessarily align with the three steps of the National Cabinet's Roadmap. Similarly, while each state Government has split its recovery pathway into three stages, the definition of these stages may differ from the National Cabinet's Roadmap steps and the AIS Framework levels. The stages are, however, likely to align with the National Cabinet Roadmap steps in most respects and have formed the basis of planning within this document.

This plan describes the MTA's recommended measures to support its members and affiliated gyms to return to training and competition. These recommendations have been developed to align with the *National Cabinet Roadmap to a COVIDSafe Australia*, the *AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport in a COVID-19 Environment* and your STATE Government direction where possible.

However, the dynamic nature of the situation has seen Government direction change rapidly and this may result in this plan providing contradictory guidance. Members should keep abreast of the latest STATE Government direction and be aware that the Government direction always takes precedence over this plan and all other sources of information.

State Government are likely to require all clubs and gyms to develop their own COVID-19 management plans as a condition of re-opening. Each gym's management plan takes precedence over the contents of this plan for all activities other than competition sparring or tournaments organised by MTA. Gyms are welcome to reproduce any content contained within this plan within their own management plans.

Stage 2 is applicable in some states and the rest are expected to follow in June should the current trend of decreasing virus infection continue. Despite this positive outlook, new outbreaks could see a return to more restrictive stages.

It is advisable to check with your local council and state health authority regards to the use of noodles, focus mitts and Thai pads and not assume this is approved - because others are doing it or you interpret it to be ok.

Virus Transmission

As stated in the AIS Framework, COVID-19 is highly transmissible from person-to-person and readily spreads to close contacts of infected individuals. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces

around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19. The virus can persist in the air for up to three hours and on a variety of surfaces for up to 72 hours

General Principles

Coaches and athletes should always seek to minimise the risk of spreading the virus by applying the following principles:

1. Maximise separation between individuals.
2. Minimise the size of the groups interacting.
3. Minimise the amount of interaction between individuals.
4. Maximise personal hygiene.

These principles need to be balanced against training requirements and commercial considerations while always adhering to the official restrictions currently in force.

Group Training

Individuals participating in group training should minimise exposure by adopting the 'Get in, train and get out' strategy. This means avoiding interaction between participants before and after the session, athletes turning up attired and ready for the session, and avoid socialising before or after training. Individuals should avoid communal change rooms or shower facilities where possible.

Class changeovers present heightened risk as larger numbers of individuals may congregate or pass one another within the training area. Coaches and gym owners should limit these interactions using measures such as:

- Programming longer breaks between classes to allow groups completing classes to exit before the subsequent group enters and commences training.
- Designating routes throughout the training area that avoid/limit interaction between individuals entering, exiting, waiting or training.

Coaches should maintain a record of all individuals attending training sessions (such as attendance sheets or electronic signing in) to support contact tracing should a participant later be diagnosed as carrying the virus.

Coaches and athletes with smartphones are also encouraged to download the COVIDSAFE application to support contact tracing should a member be diagnosed with the virus. All members of a class are recommended to store their phones within Bluetooth range whilst training to allow registration of contact. This may be supported by co-locating all lockers and personal bag storage within the facility.

Distancing between individuals should be maximised wherever possible during the training session. Unless athletes are conducting close-in partner work, individuals should be kept at least 1.5m apart. Floor markings, such as tape, chalk or mat boundaries, should be

used to designate individual training spaces. Coaches and gym staff should ensure that the number of attendees does not exceed 4m² per person average density or the current restriction limits.

Where close-in partner work is conducted, athletes should avoid changing partners wherever practical and remain paired for the session.

Good ventilation can avoid airborne virus particles from lingering within training areas. Training should be conducted outdoors wherever practical, otherwise measures should be adopted to maximise the circulation of fresh air, such as opening windows or using fans.

Hygiene

Individuals should maintain good hygiene at all times. All persons should wash or sanitise their hands immediately before or upon entering the venue or training area.

All athletes should bring a towel to keep their individual training space clean. Personal towels should be used whenever an athlete is doing stationary floorwork indoors or on exercise benches, such as sit-ups, push-ups or bench-press, to prevent pooling of sweat on shared surfaces.

Any bodily excretion, such as blood, mucus or sweat, should be cleaned by its originator and their hands washed immediately afterwards. Participants are to avoid spitting at all times, whether training indoors or outdoors.

Individuals are not to share any equipment that comes into direct contact with the hands or face. This includes: bandages, gloves, focus mitts, skipping ropes, mouthguards, headguards, water bottles and towels. Each athlete should also bring their own disinfectant spray and paper towels for cleaning personal equipment.

Athletes should thoroughly clean and disinfect external surfaces of personal equipment that may have contacted training partners after each training session. Gloves and headguards should be sprayed with a disinfectant solution, wiped clean and left to dry in a ventilated area, preferably in direct sunlight.

Athletes may share other training equipment, such as boxing bags, pads, medicine balls or weights. Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected at the end of each session, prior to commencement of the next class.

Gyms are to provide adequate stocks of soap, paper towels, hand sanitiser and surface disinfectant to support good hand hygiene and cleaning of shared equipment.

Gyms should also regularly conduct thorough cleaning of all facilities and any shared equipment.

Gym staff should avoid handling cash, with electronic payments used in preference.

Tea rooms, canteens and eating areas should not be accessed by athletes and coaches while participating in a class. People entering these areas should always wash/sanitise their hands upon entry.

Showers should not be used in stage 2 unless cleaned each time.

Managing Illness

Any coach, athlete or gym employee demonstrating any cold or flu-like symptoms should avoid training or attending the gym and undergo COVID-19 testing as soon as possible. If a negative result is returned, the individual should avoid returning to the gym or group training until all symptoms have cleared.

If a coach, athlete or gym employee returns a positive COVID-19 test, they are to notify the gym or coach as soon as possible to determine who they may have come into contact with.

Anyone suspected of coming into contact with a COVID-19 positive person, whether through training or elsewhere in the community, must undergo a COVID-19 test and avoid returning to the gym or group training until a negative COVID-19 test result is achieved.

If a gym is notified that a COVID-positive person has visited, the gym should be immediately closed and not re-open until all surfaces and equipment have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Sparring and Physical Contact

Sparring and physical contact between athletes should be limited as much as practical and only be conducted when Government restrictions allow.

Sessions involving physical contact should limit exposure by maintaining the same pairing between partners. Athletes should clean and disinfect the external surfaces of their own gloves and headguards before commencing work with each partner.

Competition/Sparring

No equipment is to be lent or shared. This includes gloves and head gear.

MTA competition events will be conducted in accordance with the other recommendations previously provided within this plan. Athletes should limit sparring to only one opponent, and ensure gloves and headguards have been cleaned and sanitised before changing partners.

All athletes and referees are to have their temperature checked by the Event Coordinator prior to entering the ring.

Clubs are to provide disposable latex gloves for referees and coaches to wear during bouts. Referees and coaches are to change gloves after each bout. Referees should also wear face masks while officiating in the ring.

The Event Coordinator must ensure that appropriate distancing is maintained by all individuals outside the ring, such as spectators or coaches and athletes preparing to spar. The Event Coordinator, in conjunction with gym staff, is also responsible for ensuring that the number of attendees does not exceed 4m² per person average density limit or the current restriction caps.

No one from a non-registered MTA should attend MTA events or sparring to assist tracking if required. NO sparring or competition should be conducted unless every attendant is

known, has filled in a registration form, provided contact details, and made a declaration they do not have Covid 19.

The Event Coordinator is to record details of all individuals attending an event, regardless of whether they are a participant, official or spectator.

Tournaments

No equipment is to be lent or shared. This includes gloves and head gear.

Athletes are required to use their own gloves and headguards for training and competition sparring. State CSA should provide guidance on the use of supplied equipment. The MTA recommends each athlete has their own MTA certified and approved equipment.

Gloving stewards are to ensure athletes sanitise their hands prior to donning competition gloves. Gloving stewards should wear a face mask while standing at the gloving table and sanitise their hands after handling equipment used during a bout.

All athletes and referees are to have their temperature checked by the Medical Supervisor prior to entering the ring.

Referees are to wear disposable latex gloves and face masks while officiating in the ring.

Each athlete may only have one coach corner them during a bout. Coaches must wear disposable latex gloves while cornering a boxer and must change gloves before cornering another boxer.

Event organisers are to provide sufficient hand sanitiser, disposable latex gloves and face masks for each event.

Event organisers must ensure that appropriate distancing is maintained by all individuals outside the ring, such as spectators or coaches and athletes warming up. Event organisers, in conjunction with venue staff, are also responsible for ensuring that the number of attendees does not exceed 4m² per person average density limit or the current restriction caps. Organisers may consider splitting a tournament into several sessions to limit the number of attendees present at any one time.

Event organisers are to record details of all individuals attending an event, regardless of whether they are a participant, official or spectator.

Conclusion

This plan provides the recommended measures to limit the risk of COVID infection as MTA members return to training and competition. It is essential that all members of the MTA adhere to the Federal and State Government's restrictions and apply these measures in a practical manner to help keep the community safe from infection and allow the continued operation of the sport.

Please direct any queries or concerns with the content of this plan to info@muaythaiaustralia.com.au . It will not cover all circumstances and will require updating as the situation changes.