

# COVID19 – VPCCL Return to Playing Protocols (the 'Protocols')

12 July 2020

## Preamble

Nothing in the Protocols is intended to contradict or in any other way undermine the ECB guidelines for the return of recreational cricket (see [here](#)) or the Government's Coronavirus Guidance or legislation (the 'Guidance') (see [here](#))

Where there is conflict between these Protocols and the Guidance, the ECB and Government guidance will prevail.

For the avoidance of doubt:

Do not leave home if you or someone you live with has any of the following symptoms of Covid 19:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

Check the NHS website if you have symptoms (see [here](#))

*Links to all guidance referred to in this document can be found in the appendix at the end.*

## The Protocols

These Protocols are rules and guidance provided by the VPCCL to facilitate the safe and effective transition to competition from lockdown. The Protocols will apply until further notice and sit alongside the Rules & Playing Conditions for League and Cup Games (see [here](#)).

Engagement in matches and/or competition will be taken as acceptance of the Protocols. Team Captains will be expected to provide either a signed copy of this document confirming that its contents are understood or an email to confirm the same.

These Protocols are designed to keep you, your teammates and others safe in the current pandemic. Teams and players are expected to operate within the letter of the Protocols and the spirit of the Protocols.

## Breach

Breaches of these Protocols will be taken extremely seriously and will be referred to the Committee (or a Sub-Committee agreed by the Committee) under the league's Rule 21.

All players are reminded that not only must ECB and Government Guidance and these Protocols be adhered to, but they must be seen to be adhered to. The matches to which the Protocols apply are conducted in a public place to which members of the public have access. The health and reputation of the league, teams and individuals are jeopardised by non-compliance.

Players are advised that breach of these Protocols may result in disciplinary sanction ranging from warning to expulsion from the league. The sanctions available to the committee include, but are not limited to:

- Warning
- Suspension for a period of time or matches at the Committee's discretion
- Expulsion from the league for a period of 5 years (readmittance to approved by the Committee)

Single incidents by players and/or teams will result in a warning. Persistent and/or serious breaches will result in more serious sanction.

**Example 1:** A player intentionally moving within 1 metre of anyone else for non-cricketing purposes: this would be treated as a Level 3 offence (requiring the removal of the player from the field of play for four overs; *Laws of Cricket, Law 42, Unfair play*. If a fielder, no substitution is allowed, if a batsman, the next batter would come into play)

**Example 2:** A player intentionally spitting or coughing at and within 2 metres of, another person: this would be treated as a Level 4 offence (requiring the removal of the player from the field of play for the rest of the match; *Laws of Cricket, Law 42, Unfair play*. If a fielder, no substitution is allowed, if a batsman, the next batter will come into play)

In both such cases the incident would be reported to the league, who would consider further sanctions as appropriate

### **Covid19 Officers**

1. Captains must appoint at least one Covid19 Officer for each team. The Committee must be notified of the identity of the Covid19 Officer at least 24 hours before the first match (by the Captain or Covid19 Officer).
2. Failure to notify the Committee will lead to the assumption that the Captain is also the Covid19 officer.
3. Players should not make themselves available for selection if they have symptoms or suspect that they have Covid19. Captains should ensure that Players have considered their suitability to play before they attend the Park.
4. As a final check, Captains and/or Covid19 Officers are required to confirm with all players, prior to (but within 30 minutes) of the start of a game:
  - That players are aware of these Protocols;
  - That players have considered whether they have symptoms of Covid19 (see above);
  - That players are fit to play and do not present a risk of Covid19 infection to other players and/or members of the public.
5. Teams should keep a record of attendees at each match, including contact details, to support NHS Test and Trace (see [here](#)).
6. Teams should encourage all participants to report any infection of their household to the league and to the NHS Test and Trace system following a match to limit the spread of the virus.

## The Location

1. The Park is large and is accessed by the public. We play on three pitches in the eastern end. Players should arrive changed or change by the pitch.
2. Players are also reminded that the use of public transport and travel by car is subject to specific guidance from the Government which can be found [here](#). Teams are reminded that if they are able to use alternatives to public transport, then they should do so.
3. The Committee will endeavour to ensure a Committee member is present or near matches whilst they are in play. The Committee member(s) in attendance will be recognisable by the presence of a high-visibility jacket.
4. The Committee member present will be able to discuss these Protocols and matters arising with teams on the day. The Committee member present will expect teams to be able to produce evidence that they are complying with these Protocols. Failure to comply with such a request (for example, to see evidence of sanitising products) may result in a breach of these Protocols.
5. Players should note that the toilet facilities in the Park are open and available. Players are reminded that it is inappropriate to use bushes or trees as toilets. Doing so risks bringing the league into disrepute.

## Adaptations to Play

In order to keep safe distancing, restrictions are necessary to ensure the health and safety of all concerned. The following guidelines are based on the ECB's guidance published on 9 July 2020 and Government guidance as at 12 July 2020, with adaptations for league play at Victoria Park.

**For the purposes of this protocol, "social distancing" means individuals maintaining a distance of 2 metres between each other, except for the specific exceptions during play for wicketkeepers standing up to stumps and slip fielders, where the minimum distance is 1 metre+.**

You can read the government guidance on the social distancing distance [here...](#) .

## The toss

1. It is the responsibility of the home team Captain to provide the coin. The toss should be completed whilst complying with social distancing.

## Players, Sanitising & Distance

1. Players should adhere to Government social distancing guidance at all times (including warm-ups), which means 2 metres between individuals, except for wicket keepers who may stand up to the stumps at a distance of 1 metre+ from the batsman, and except for slip fielders, where the distance between the slips can be 1 metre+.
2. A 'hygiene break' should take place every six overs or every 20 minutes, whichever is sooner, in which the ball is cleaned with an antimicrobial wipe and all players' and umpires' hands are cleaned using a suitable sanitiser.

This hygiene routine should also be followed at the start of any drinks break or the close of an innings. The responsibility for sanitising the ball during the match will lie with the fielding captain, not the umpire.

All individuals will also be expected to sanitise their hands:

- prior to the start of the game;
- after any inadvertent contact with other players; or
- at any other appropriate time.

3. All teams must bring their own anti-bacterial and/or sanitising gels or sprays. Covid19 Officers will be expected to be able to produce these items if requested by a member of the Committee or the opposing Covid19 Officer.

4. Masks may be worn but are not compulsory.

5. Players should refrain from spitting or rinsing out their mouths.

6. Social distancing must always be maintained including during post-wicket celebrations, drinks breaks and tactical discussions.

7. Those wearing gloves are still required to sanitise in accordance with these Protocols.

8. No food or drinks should be shared between players not of the same household. Water bottles or other refreshment containers should not be shared.

9. All those participating are expected to disperse promptly and in accordance with ECB and government guidance on social distancing after the game is concluded.

### **The Ball, Bails, Bats and Other Equipment**

1. Players should minimise handling of the ball in all activity, by limiting contact as it makes its way back to the bowler and using small groups in training; no sweat or saliva should be added to the ball at any time.

2. Bails must be sanitised before the game, between innings and at the conclusion of the game, by the Covid19 Officer of the team that brings the bails.

3. Bat handles, and any other equipment that has been used, must be sanitised before and after an innings.

4. Any item used as a bowling marker must be sanitised before and after use.

5. Batters should sanitise their bat when leaving the field of play and Wicket Keepers should sanitise their gloves.

### **Fielding Teams**

1. Multiple fielders should not chase the same ball in the field (whether retrieving or catching).

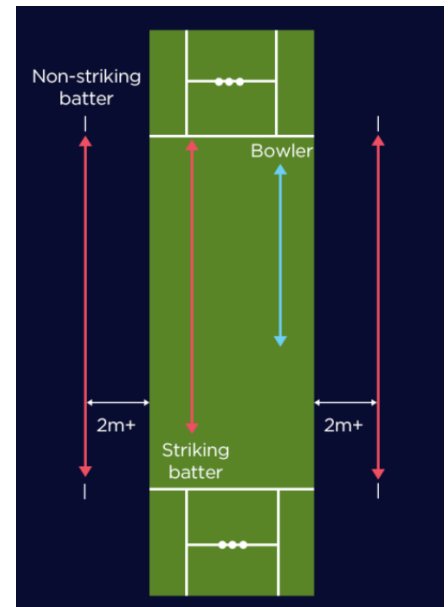
2. Fielders should limit unnecessary touching of the ball.

- Fielders are permitted to wear gloves (note that goalkeeper gloves, baseball mitts or anything similar are excluded from this provision; note also that only the wicketkeeper is permitted to wear wicketkeeping gloves);
- Wicketkeepers should throw or roll the ball direct to bowler rather than to fielders;
- Relay throws should be avoided.

3. Players must not touch each other to congratulate achievements or for any other reason.
4. Fielders should not to remake the wicket once the ball has become dead, this is the role of the umpire.
5. Heated conversations or shouting must be avoided, as this increases the risk of passing any infection to another player
6. Bowlers and fielders must ensure they make all attempts to avoid batsmen and umpires at all times, including when returning to their mark.
7. Bowlers should maintain social distancing when making any appeals.
8. Bowlers should not hand any personal items to the umpire. Bowlers should place these items at the boundary themselves.

### Batting Teams

1. Batsmen should run on opposite sides of the wicket, down a line drawn 2 metres from each side of the wicket. Non-facing batsmen should stand and run at least 2 metres aside from the bowler, umpire and other batsman. (See diagram on right).
2. Batsmen must ensure they make all attempts to avoid bowlers, fielders and umpires at all times.
3. Batsmen must not to 'touch gloves' with each other.
4. Players should use their own kit (especially gloves, helmets and boxes) rather than share team equipment. Players are required to sanitise items that have been shared, both prior to and after use.
5. Those waiting to bat or watching must remain at least 2 metres apart at all times
6. Players practising off the pitch should follow the same guidelines as for match play and ensure that social distancing of at least 2 metres is maintained.



### Umpires

1. The umpire should stand at least 2 metres behind the stumps. The umpire should consider standing further back to allow the bowler to complete their natural run up, ensuring that the umpire has an adequate view of the playing area.
2. Scientific research has shown that there is a minimal risk of infection when the bowler fleetingly passes the umpire so there is no need for the bowler's end umpire to change his normal position or

to move into position once the bowler has passed by. (This is quoted from the ECB/ACO guidance, see [here](#))

3. Umpires should remind incoming batsmen of the requirement to run outside a line drawn 2 meters from the edge of the wicket.
4. Umpires should refrain from any contact with the ball, it can be returned to the base of the stumps at breaks and wickets.
5. Umpires should be responsible for the stumps closest to them and should be the only person replacing the bails if dislodged.
6. Teams should:
  - Limit the number of people acting as umpire
  - Employ one standing umpire at both ends (i.e. one umpire will be consistently the standing umpire, and the other will remain at square-leg throughout).
  - Consider the wearing of gloves by the umpires.

### **Adaptations to Scoring**

1. To assist scorers, player names should be texted or emailed to the opposing Captain prior to the game.
2. Teams are encouraged to use scoring apps such as Cricket Scorer, Chauka, CricHeroes, CricHQ or others to reduce the risk of transmission of the Covid virus.
3. If paper scorecards are used, the following steps should be taken
  - Ideally, only one person will handle the scorecard and pen, otherwise teams should limit the number of people scoring to the fewest possible.
  - Scorers should use their own pens or pencils.
  - Photographs of scorecards should be sent electronically to the opposing Captain and the Committee.
4. Scoreboards should continue to be used where it is safe to do so:
  - Ideally, only one person will adjust the scoreboard, otherwise teams should limit the number of people adjusting the scoreboard to the fewest possible.
  - Those operating the scoreboard should use gloves where it is possible.

### **Spectators**

1. Spectators should remain socially distanced at all times and refrain from all contact with the ball e.g. returning it to the field of play. Spectator groups must be restricted to discrete six person gathering limits and spread out, in line with wider Government guidance.

**All involved will otherwise follow normal COVID-safe rules and guidelines.**

**REMEMBER: Player and public safety are of paramount importance.**

## **Appendix: Guidelines and Rules relevant for the VPCCL Covid protocols:**

1. ECB share guidelines for the return of recreational cricket (9 July 2020)  
<https://www.ecb.co.uk/news/1717108/ecb-share-guidelines-for-the-return-of-recreational-cricket>
2. ECB return to cricket plan for Step 4 (July 2020)  
[https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2020/07/09/f20adb12-c1d2-4cdc-b2e3-80b0c7873fe4/ECB\\_return\\_to\\_cricket\\_plan\\_for\\_step\\_4\\_July\\_2020.pdf](https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2020/07/09/f20adb12-c1d2-4cdc-b2e3-80b0c7873fe4/ECB_return_to_cricket_plan_for_step_4_July_2020.pdf)
3. ECB – Plan for socially distanced cricket matches (infographic) (July 2020)  
[https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2020/07/09/1328225d-8a14-4406-b57f-da813b4d3e21/Socially\\_Distanced\\_Cricket\\_Matches\\_July\\_2020.pdf](https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2020/07/09/1328225d-8a14-4406-b57f-da813b4d3e21/Socially_Distanced_Cricket_Matches_July_2020.pdf)
4. ECB – Roadmap for the return of recreational cricket (July 2020)  
[https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2020/07/09/0540ae50-0fe3-4fe8-a08e-458c1cca49c7/Roadmap\\_for\\_return\\_of\\_recreational\\_cricket\\_11\\_July.pdf](https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2020/07/09/0540ae50-0fe3-4fe8-a08e-458c1cca49c7/Roadmap_for_return_of_recreational_cricket_11_July.pdf)
5. ECB - Covid-19 plan for junior & open-age cricket (infographic) (July 2020)  
[https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2020/07/09/310345a8-245e-49b8-b497-bb6e1a3a9dc3/Playing\\_plan\\_before\\_during\\_after\\_activity.pdf](https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2020/07/09/310345a8-245e-49b8-b497-bb6e1a3a9dc3/Playing_plan_before_during_after_activity.pdf)
6. ACO-ECB - Guidance for umpires and scorers when officiating socially distanced cricket matches in England (July 2020)  
[https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2020/07/09/b3f4f40f-fa4e-468d-ae24-faea0cc37753/Guidance\\_umpires\\_scorers\\_socially\\_distanced\\_cricket\\_matches\\_England.pdf](https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2020/07/09/b3f4f40f-fa4e-468d-ae24-faea0cc37753/Guidance_umpires_scorers_socially_distanced_cricket_matches_England.pdf)
7. ECB - Guidance for officials when officiating socially distanced cricket matches in England (infographic) (July 2020)  
[https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2020/07/09/b3f4f40f-fa4e-468d-ae24-faea0cc37753/Guidance\\_umpires\\_scorers\\_socially\\_distanced\\_cricket\\_matches\\_England.pdf](https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2020/07/09/b3f4f40f-fa4e-468d-ae24-faea0cc37753/Guidance_umpires_scorers_socially_distanced_cricket_matches_England.pdf)
8. ECB – Getting your clubhouse ready for Step 4 (July 2020)  
[https://i.emlfiles4.com/cmpdoc/0/8/7/0/3/1/files/88555\\_getting-your-clubhouse-ready-for-opening.pdf](https://i.emlfiles4.com/cmpdoc/0/8/7/0/3/1/files/88555_getting-your-clubhouse-ready-for-opening.pdf)
9. Government – Staying alert and safe (social distancing)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july>
10. Government – Main Covid 19 guidance  
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
11. NHS - Check if you or your child has coronavirus symptoms  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>
12. NHS Test and Trace: how it works  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>
13. Rules of the Victoria Park Community Cricket League  
<http://www.vpccl.co.uk/rules.html>
14. Laws of Cricket  
<https://www.lords.org/mcc/the-laws-of-cricket>