

The United Kingdom Muaythai Federation Roadmap

‘Return to the Ring’



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Introduction Message

5th June 2020

Dear Nak Muays, Coaches, Officials and Parents

Since the UK entered what is known as ‘lockdown’ in response to tackling the worldwide pandemic of COVID19, life as we know it has changed for everyone. These are uncertain times and as we respond and adapt to the challenges COVID19 has raised we move forward with caution towards returning to some sort of ‘normality’.

The United Kingdom Muay Thai Federation (UKMF) has created this roadmap ‘Return to the Ring’ to act as a guide for how Muaythai in the UK can get back on its feet. No doubt things will evolve and the ongoing review of Government Guidelines will ensure the safety of us all.

As with many other sports, we have been the hardest-hit sector with the sudden closure of gyms and training facilities across the country. With most, if not all, National and International competition being cancelled or re-scheduled for 2021 we are all being challenged on a daily basis to meet our obligations to our members and students.

We, at UKMF, recognise the importance of innovation, collaboration and clarity in our efforts to continue supporting our members. The road back will require a sustained effort from all members to ensure the safety of all concerned and to maintain an uninterrupted growth of grassroots Muaythai in the United Kingdom.

We have set out a FIVE phase plan which aims to guide us through each stage of the pandemic, in terms of participation in Muay Thai. Our recommendations are based on current guidelines and may well change depending on the guidance and conditions set out by the Government.

We realise that many of you are eager to return to training but we have to be cautious in our approach and ensure that the measures adopted are in line with Government policy and ultimately is for the safety and protection of the general public. Our core values will remain as Respect, Tradition, Honour, Fair play, and Excellence.



Team GB Successful 2019



Roadmap: Return to the Ring

Resuming Muaythai Activities in the UK

Phase 1: Stay Connected Online

Online training sessions and support as strict quarantine conditions imposed. ALL gym and training facilities closed with no private training sessions permitted.

Phase 2: Return to Training

Slight easing of restrictions to allow a limited number of participants to train outdoors whilst following strict social distancing and contact rules

Level 1 - No Contact Training, moving to Level 2 - Limited Contact Training

Phase 3: Re-opening of Gyms

Indoor activity permitted gradually over a set period starting with Level 1 - No Contact Training, moving to Level 2 - Limited Contact Training and eventually to Level 3 - Full Contact Training. At this point gyms should be operating as normal, albeit with special measures in place.

Phase 4: Return of Events (Interclubs and Matched Fights)

This phase will be implemented once there is mass testing, vaccinations, and health clearance from Local and National Departments. Participation may be limited initially and then relaxed once the risk levels fall further.

Phase 5: Return to Competition

The final phase will see the return of normal activities and operations and the full lifting of UK Travel restrictions and conditions. This may apply when a mass vaccination has been carried out.

Phase 1: Stay Connected Online

With social media being a hugely popular platform, most members and gym will have a presence online. Be that via their website or through apps such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube Channels. With the emergence of Zoom Video conferencing many have found this tool to be an effective means of staying in contact with students, some even running online training sessions. We will all undoubtedly be maintaining a very high level of dependency of Online resources throughout the entire period.

TOP TIPS FOR TRAINERS & STUDENTS – Get into a regular Routine

Virtual Trainings Sessions ranging from 30mins up to an hour

Set a Timetable with about 3 – 5 Classes a week covering Muaythai Skills, Strength & Conditioning, Nutrition Reminders, Mental development (goal-setting etc)

Maintain some form of regular daily exercise or stretching routine

Online TRAINING SESSIONS – Safeguarding

It is important to ensure you have a Social Media Policy and maintain Safeguarding procedures. In addition, all instructional sessions whether live or recorded should contain a disclaimer stating that “Participants are taking part at their own risk and should correctly prepare themselves for exercise”. It is important that students have a safe training area and have good quality internet connection so that they are able to clearly follow the trainer. You may also want to maintain a register of attendance and update membership charges.

IFMA VIRTUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS – Moving Forward Online

With the announcement that many major events are being cancelled or postponed IFMA have announced an innovative plan to host annual Virtual World Championships online, allowing for a greater number of participants to benefit from our wonderful sport.

The UKMF are also hoping to ensure the following online courses can be delivered soon:

- Introduction of the IGLA Grading Syllabus
- Virtual Instructors Courses
- Virtual Referee & Judges Course
- Annual National Virtual Championships.

Phase 2: Return to Training

With the slight easing of restrictions, outdoor group training has been permitted as of 6th June, but the following guidelines must be followed:

- Groups of no more than 6 people (can include those from other households) (coach + 5 athletes)
- Strictly NO contact and 2 metre social distancing in place
- Students should bring their own equipment (BYOE), water bottles and towels.
- If any gym equipment is used this should be thoroughly sanitised after each session (equipment must not be shared during the session)
- Individuals must not train if they are showing any of the symptoms associated with COVID19, namely a high temperature and/or persistent cough and should self-isolate
- Outdoor training areas must be suitable, Initial Risk Assessments may need updating with additional disclaimers and gyms must also adhere to Safeguarding policies
- This outdoor training could be done in conjunction with virtual training programs.

Please also note that the restriction will in time change and will affect the number of people allowed to train and the level of contact allowed.

Risk Mitigation Plan Tip

You must maintain accurate records of attendance and up to date contact details.

Ensure you communicate to all students to be responsible and if they have any symptoms to self-isolate and seek medical advice

Where possible try to ensure set small groups and staff train with each other and do not allow separate groups to interact.

Clubs with elite athletes/fighter please see Phase 4 Return to Events (page 9) notes on Elite sport return to training guidance.

Phase 3: Re-Opening of Gyms

With lockdown conditions changing rapidly it is important to stay up to date on what level of activity is permitted at any given period. The speed with which we will move from Level 1 to Level 3 is difficult to predict but the Government has provided some indication, although very vague at present, as to what we can expect in the coming months. Prior to opening, gyms must ensure they are fully prepared with appropriate arrangements in place to meet enhanced health and safety criteria to minimise the risk posed by the pandemic.

It is advisable to perhaps start revising timetables, forming smaller classes and making adaptations to premises and operating procedures. For further guidance to assist with the process of preparing and operating your gym please see [Appendix A](#).

LEVEL 1 – NO CONTACT TRAINING (Mid July - End August)

During this period, we expect to see some degree of indoor training resumed. This will include individual bag work, shadow boxing or physical training with NO contact (i.e. no pad work, Sparring, Clinch or any form of physical contact). It is likely that measures such as social distancing, limited class numbers and strict sanitisation standards will still be in place.

LEVEL 2 – LIMITED CONTACT TRAINING (End August to October 2020)

By this stage we can expect to see focus mitts and pad work permitted. We would still not expect to see physical contact being made at this stage.

LEVEL 3 - FULL CONTACT TRAINING (Post October 2020)

It is hoped that by October 2020 gyms should be able to return to running as they were before the pandemic but this is based on the assumption that the infection rate has fallen considerably, mass testing has been carried out and a vaccination has been developed. This is of course the best-case scenario but if sufficient progress is not made, being a full contact sport, we must be prepared for a delayed return to 'business as usual'.

Please note at this point in time the timescales given above are purely indicative. This is something we would all like a clear answer on but these are unprecedented times and many questions remain unanswered as we move forward with caution and due care. Protecting the safety of the public is the most important priority and timings will be subject to ongoing review and close monitoring of the situation. At present all we can do is adopt best practice and take as many precautionary steps as possible to keep risks to a minimum and avoid the spread of infection, whilst allowing people the opportunity to resume their training.

Phase 4: Return of Events

As we steadily move through the phases ultimately clubs will be eagerly awaiting the green light to resume competitive events. As Muay Thai is a full contact sport we can expect it to be some time before even localised small-scale events are permitted. Furthermore, in the current climate, we must be prepared for conducting these events with a much more stringent approach.

Once such events are permitted, we will have to expect to implement measures such as:

- restricted fighter and spectator numbers
- temperature testing
- social distancing
- thorough sanitisation
- test and trace processes

Implementing the above will have a major impact on the way events are organised and run. As we get closer to this phase more detailed guidance will be issued by the UKMF on conducting such events.

Elite sport return to training guidance

Please be mindful of the government guidelines regarding being classified as an Elite Athlete. As a national sporting body, we do not have the resources to comply with Stage One requirements to safely get athletes/fighters back into training.

We understand some athletes/fighters derive a living from competing in a sport, however, the UKMF (representing Muaythai) does not currently qualify as a “relevant sporting body”. Therefore, at present our sport does not nominate athletes to represent either:

(a) Great Britain and Northern Ireland at the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games to be held in Tokyo, or the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games to be held in Beijing,

(b) England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Gibraltar, Guernsey, Jersey or the Isle of Man at the Commonwealth Games to be held in Birmingham in those sports which are not part of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games programme.

Phase 5: Return to Competition

This will be what is hopefully the final phase and return to full normal activity on a local, national and international level. It is unlikely that we can expect this to occur before the year is out. With restrictions on travel and current 14-day travel quarantine period being imposed in some countries, along with each one having different policies it may not be feasible to travel abroad for any events.

Conclusion

The UKMF is committed to supporting our members and providing clear advice and guidance through this difficult period. Many of you will have suffered financial losses as a result of the lockdown and temporary closure of businesses. It has certainly been a stressful and challenging time for gym owners and students alike. What was initially considered to be a short-term measure will undoubtedly affect the way we operate our gyms for some time to come.

The measures being proposed may seem daunting and challenging to implement but given the circumstances it is the only way that we can look to re-open gyms without compromising the health and safety of our members. Ultimately, we can only go by what is permitted by the Government, understandably information released to date has been vague, simply because there are many unknown variables. Therefore, we cannot give any definitive answers but can only go by our knowledge and understanding of the MuayThai sport and awareness of what is being done around us in the wider context to fight the Pandemic and the spread of infection.

The good news is that whereas gyms were initially told they would not re-open until October 2020 we are now looking at July 2020 and on that positive note we hope to get 'back to business' in no time. The most important and productive course of action until that point is to plan, prepare and be on standby.

We will continue to review our guidance and closely monitor Government advice and best practise being adopted by other sports.

All parties should note the following disclaimer:

Please note that the subject matter covered in this guidance is in no way exhaustive and the material does not stand on its own nor is intended to be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining specific legal advice. The information contained in this guidance is given in good faith but any liability of the UKMF or its professional advisors (including their respective members or employees) to you or any third party which may arise out of the reliance by you or any other party of the contents of this guidance is hereby excluded to the fullest extent permitted by law. The UKMF and its professional advisors accept no duty of care or liability for any loss occasioned, whether caused by negligence or otherwise, to any person acting or refraining from actions as a result of any material in this guidance. We would strongly recommend that you consult professional advisors on specific issues before acting or refraining from action on any of the contents of this guidance.

Pre-Opening

Physical Changes to the Gym

1. Sealing off areas and equipment which are shared use and difficult to sanitise after every use (e.g. boxing rings, weights) and rearrange gym layout if necessary
2. Identify and mark areas considered to be high risk, medium risk and low risk
3. Sanitise entire area and all equipment before opening
4. Hand sanitisers/wipes placed at all entry/exit points and in reception and main gym area
5. No air conditioning to be allowed. Open all windows for proper ventilation or provide rotating fans
6. Temporary closure of changing rooms, if practical, or a make-shift changing room close to entrance
7. No locker or shower use allowed
8. Replenishing stock of equipment students can buy for personal use (boxing gloves, shin pads, head guards)
9. Stock up on necessary hygiene and sanitation equipment – disposable gloves, disinfectant, bleach, hand gel
10. Clear 2-meter distancing markings on the floor both internally and externally to allow students to enter one by one
11. Information posters up in visible areas to make students aware and act as a reminder for new protocols e.g.:
 - Keep their distance
 - To avoid the gym if displaying any signs of infection
 - Wash their hand thoroughly when entering and leaving the building or use hand sanitiser
 - Not to share their equipment with others

Organisational Changes

1. Revise your timetable with a scaled back version for the initial phase and fixed staff schedules
2. Smaller class sizes with a possible cap being imposed (this could be anything from 6 up to 20)
3. Classes by appointment only, strictly no drop-ins allowed, all sessions should be pre-booked
4. Classes should be no longer than an hour with a period of 30 minutes after each session to clear the gym and sanitise
5. Review student data and identify those with underlying health conditions or those considered high risk and delay their return
6. Ensuring all students records are up to date including contact details and health status
7. Prepare a waiver and client disclosure sheet for contact tracing if needed
8. Where possible try to implement a no-cash policy using direct debit or contactless payments
9. Increase level and frequency of cleaning routines with a rota and staff scheduled to carry out the set tasks
10. Make sure all instructors/staff are given some form of training to ensure they are aware of new requirements
11. Inform all students of new guidelines and procedures
12. If staff and or students show/have any signs of COVID-19 (temperature, cough and difficulty breathing), they should be sent home immediately

Behavioural Changes

- New codes of conduct should be clearly understood and practiced by all staff, instructors and students:

Staff

- Wear Masks at all times, changing daily (highly recommended)
- Wear disposable gloves, changing daily (strictly imposed)
- Ensure proper waste disposal, separating hazardous or infectious material
- Monitor client entry and exit, only allow clients to enter/leave one at a time

- Do not allow students to enter if they have a fever or display flu like symptoms

Instructors

- Wear masks at all times, changing daily
- Remind students of keeping to social distancing
- Strictly NO CONTACT TRAINING allowed until permitted this includes, but not limited to, focus mitts, pad works, sparring, stretching, warms up etc.
- Do not allow students to remain on premises once a class is over encouraging them to leave promptly
- Ensure students are called out and exit the gym one by one

Students

- Bring your own water bottles and towels
- Bring your own equipment (gloves, hand wraps, shin guards etc.)
- Gym fees should be paid online before attending your class, avoid cash transactions
- Read notices placed for your information and follow protocol

ALL Groups

- Avoid any physical greetings with other students, instructors or other staff members
- Do not come into the gym if you have a temperature or flu like symptoms
- All those using the gym should practice respiratory etiquette – When sneezing cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or flexed elbow
- Encourage local students to walk to the gym avoiding public transport or car sharing with others
- If staff or students feel unwell following training so that other students in the same class can be traced, if necessary

Running the Gym

Pre-Entry

- All footwear should be removed and placed near the entrance/exit point
- Ideally students should wear gym gear under outer wear and remove outer wear as soon as they enter the gym
- Students must sign a waiver and disclosure sheet
- A temperature check should be carried out as soon as students enter the building
- Students should wash hands/use hand sanitizer placed at the entrance point
- A mask must be worn at all times
- Students should form a queue outside (standing 2 meters apart) and wait to be called in, entering one at a time
- Use of lockers is not permitted

Inside the Gym

- Clients must leave their belongings at the designated point near the entrance/exit
- Markings on the floor must be followed, keeping to social distancing
- Students must go directly to the assigned area with no loitering at any point
- Students should not touch any equipment which does not belong to them
- Toilet breaks must be kept to a minimum, unless unavoidable

Leaving the GYM

- Students should take all their belongings with them
- At the exit point they should wash hands or use hand gel provided
- Students should await instructions to leave, exiting one at a time
- Students are encouraged to change their clothing once they arrive home
- Staff should sanitise all areas used to include floorings, equipment and changing area